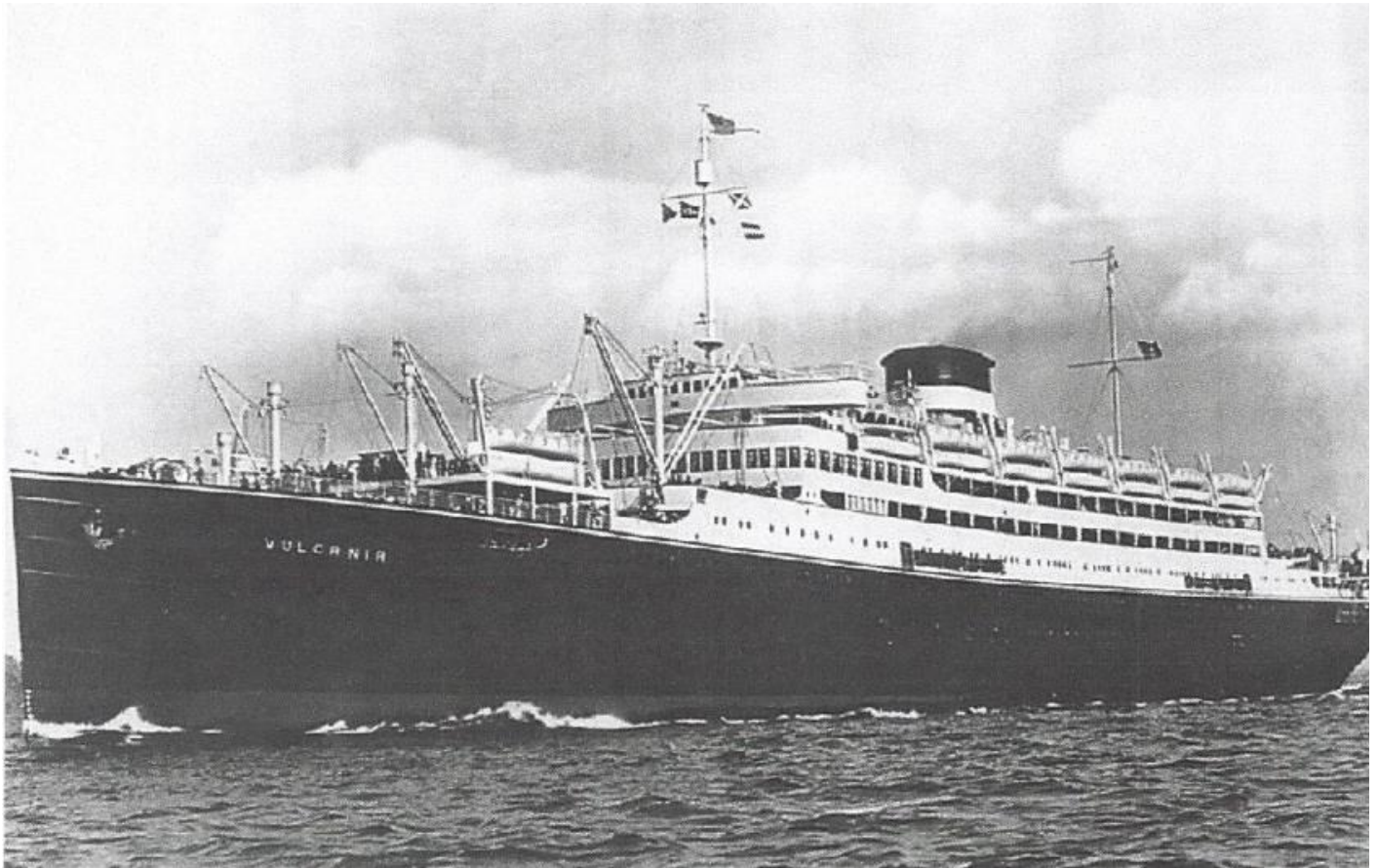


# JOSEPHINE A. SASSANO

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW DATE: OCTOBER 10, 2023



HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of*  
**HAMMONTON**

EST. 1960

**Historical Society of Hammonton Oral History**  
**Josephine Sassano**

<b>Date of Interview</b>	October 10, 2023
<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	Janet Hasulak
<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	Josephine Sassano
<b>Others Present</b>	

**My name is Janet Hasulak and I'm sitting here with Josephine Sassano. It is October 10, 2023. We are working on the oral history project for Hammonton's Historical Society. Thank you for participating in this.**

No problem.

**Question: Can you tell me what your full name is?**

My full name is – from when I was born?

**Question: Explain that because that's interesting.**

I was born in Italy, so my name was Giuseppina Aida Sassano and now, my name is Josephine A. Sassano. That's what I use on my license and my signature and my passport. The A is for Aida, because my father loved opera. But back then, you had to use the name of your grandparent. All the children were named after their grandparents. My father's father's name was Luciano. There were five brothers. They all have a son named Luciano. His mother's name was Angela and my sister's name is Angela.

**Question: That was the traditional thing to do?**

The traditional so, then the next female or male would be named after the mother's father or mother. My mother's mother's name was Giuseppina so, I was named Giuseppina.

**Question: Very nice. I like traditions. That's pretty cool. What's your age, Jo?**

I'm 63. I was born on January 23, 1960.

**Question: Were you born in a hospital? Where were you born?**

No. I was born in a home in Italy in a small town near Naples called Casaluce.

**Question: How do you spell Casa Luce?**

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Casaluce is C-A-S-A L-U-C-E.

**Question: How long did you actually stay there?**

I was two-and-a-half when we came here, two and three-quarters, whatever. I was born January. We came in September.

**Question: Do you remember living in Italy?**

No, I don't, unfortunately. My sister was five, she remembers some.

**Question: What were the circumstances under which your parents emigrated?**

They emigrated in '62, but my father had applied for travel to the US long before that. They got married in 1956, my parents did. It was before then, that he had applied. After they were married, he got this letter saying that there was work. He could come for work, they needed tailors. My father was a tailor, which was what they needed at the Kessler Clothing Factory here in Hammonton. They were bringing in people from Italy. A lot of the men from the late '50s, early '60s, they were all working at the shop. He got this letter saying, "Do you want to come?" At the time business was not good in Italy because he was working and people weren't paying. It was after the war and a lot of things were going on. They agreed to come. That's what made him pack up and borrow money and come here. We came on the ship "Vulcania" and traveled from Naples to New York.

**Question: Your mother as well. They were married at the time.**

They were married at the time. Yes, they had my sister and myself and then, my brother. Like I said, she was eight months pregnant and had to lie and say she was six months or they would not let her on the ship.

**Question: They were very brave. That was challenging.**

They were brave because they had no one here. They knew no English. My father had had polio as a child so he had a clubfoot. He was kind of disabled. My mother was pregnant, two little girls and they got on the ship and no one knew the language. Talk about brave. I couldn't do it.

**Question: Yes. I can only imagine. I don't think that would be me.**

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Yes, leave your family, everything, but they did.

**Question: They were adventurous, I must say.**

Yes, they were. Yes.

**Question: What are your first memories of your childhood home?**

I just remember when we lived on Third Street. It was on the corner. It's still there, the house, corner of 3rd and Cherry. We were on the second floor. We used to play in the backyard. It was fun. That's some of the pictures with the car.

**Question: Your pictures are great. We will definitely be including them.**

Yes, I'll give these to Eileen, and she can scan them or whatever she does with them. We walked to school.

**Question: Where was your grade school that you went to?**

It was where the St. Joseph's Academy is now. That middle building, the little red schoolhouse. That's where I went, I guess until sixth grade, seventh grade. Sixth grade because then in seventh grade, we went to what is now the Middle School on Liberty Street. That was then the high school.

**Question: It was public school?**

Public school all the way, yes. We went to St. Joe's – that was our church. Actually, I think when we first got here, St. Joe's wasn't built. It was being built because my brother was christened at – his baptism was at St. Martin's. I think that's where they say it was, but I'm not really sure. The hospital was not here yet because my mother had him in Atlantic City, that's where the hospital was, I guess. I remember her saying that she knew she had to learn two words, and it was pain and nurse.

**Question: That was smart.**

Yes. He was born apparently the dead of winter. It was October 26, but she said there was a lot of snow on the ground.

**Question: For heaven's sake. A lot more snow back in those years.**

Yes.

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**Question: Do you remember your brother being born?**

No.

**Question: Was there another home that you all lived in besides the one that you just described?**

When we first came, we ended up at the motel that used to be The Lakefront Motel that's now the Red Carpet. The Red Carpet Inn on the pike. It's just a tiny little motel. But back then, we stayed there for a few days until we had the apartment on 3rd Street. We were there until '67, I believe. Because then there was a possibility of work for my father back in Italy again because he was disabled, and they had this program or something. We all went over there and then it fell through so we came back and then, we lived on Pleasant Street. Then in '74 we bought the house on 2nd Street and that's where my parents lived for the rest of their lives.

**Question: That became more of the family home at that point?**

Yes.

**Question: Did your brother and sister remain in Hammonton as well?**

My sister is in Hammonton. My brother's in Sewell. He's very close.

**Question: Very close. That's nice for family's sake. Back to your schooling, do you remember any of your teachers? How would you describe your preschool?**

Yes. My kindergarten teacher, I still see her, Mrs. Silvesti. Yes, most of my teachers. In fact, Marie Fucetola was one of my teachers in middle school, and she's in St. Vincent de Paul now. A lot of the teachers, they were all good. Mr. Phillips, I remember him in fourth grade. First grade was Mrs. Macri. Second grade was – oh, I can't remember her name. Sixth grade was Mrs. Hines.

**Question: But isn't it funny how some of them can just stand out in your memory so clear?**

Yes.

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**Question: Or there'll be certain instances that you remember a particular bulletin board you worked on or an incident when they've made you feel special. Usually it says something about when they made you feel smart.**

Yes.

**Question: It's fun to think back on.**

School was fun. I enjoyed school. I was a good student. My parents were big on school. You had to do your work. Even though they didn't know the language, I remember going through vocabulary my dad. He would go through and test us.

**Question: He will make it his business to see that you studied.**

Oh, yes. I think the first thing they did was buy the encyclopedia, the World Book Encyclopedia for us.

**Question: How did you do with being bilingual of knowing Italian at home and English?**

It was fine. I didn't really have too much of a problem. We helped them a lot. My father wouldn't speak too much. He read a lot so he could read things. He knew what was going on, but he wasn't good at –

**Question: He could read English?**

Yes. He would read the paper. He would get the Italian papers at Dan's Stationery. They used to sell the Italian newspapers. He would get that all the time. The Hammonton News was big then too. He would get and read it cover to cover. Somehow, he knew what was going on, but he was shy about speaking it. He let my mother do that. She wasn't real good, but she was much better than he was.

**Question: There became some instances where they depended on your translation?**

Yes. We'd have to go to the bank or something with them just to make sure. It just became a way of life. We didn't really think too much about it. When you're young, you don't realize that you're poor or this or that. It wasn't like it is now. School, it wasn't as cliquy or anything. You just went to school and you did what you had to do.

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**Question: I get that. It's what your normal is so you don't fashion it especially as a child.**

It was our normal. We never really went on trips or anything. We would go to the lake or we do this. We just drive around, look at the lights at Christmas time.

**Question: That was a nice afternoon.**

Yes, yes.

**Question: Who were some of your best friends during your school years?**

Well, I had one friend, Gloria and I'm still friends with her. Later on in high school, we made more friends. I'm still friends with all of them. We get together every once in a while. One friend of mine, we play cards every Monday with a group.

**Question: That's really special.**

Yes, it doesn't happen that often. I know a lot of people – well, one girl. Her husband was not from here. Every time we get together, he even says it, "It's unusual that you're still friends with people you went to school with." I was like, "Well, it was a small town. I guess we were a small group."

**Question: You remained here?**

Yes.

**Question: Just the fact that you remained here is unusual.**

I did live in Mays Landing for a few years, but I was still always here because my parents were here.

**Question: Amazing. That's what's very special about this community in particular. Now, thinking about your teenage years, what year have you been in high school? The early 70s?**

'74, I graduated in '78.

**Question: How would you describe how the teenagers like to dress back in that day?**

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When I started high school, I think we couldn't wear jeans, that's for sure. I think when I started, we couldn't wear pants either. Or maybe I was a little bit – right around there where then we were able to.

#### **Question: Became more acceptable later?**

Yes, it was more acceptable. I was shy. I didn't have too many friends. I just had basically the friends from school and that kind of thing.

#### **Question: Did you join clubs or participate in anything like that?**

I was a library aid and in the language club. I was in the National Honor Society. I was not good at sports. That's why I'm so surprised and everyone else is that I even play pickle ball now. It's like, "You what? You play something? A sport?" I was like, "Yes, I do, actually and I really enjoy it." But I wish I had done more of it early on, but oh, well, better late than never. But it's a funny thing that when people hear the fact that you play something, anything pickle ball.

#### **Question: How did the kids dress? What was considered cool?**

Oh, I think it was bell bottoms, the bright colors, the big hair. That came a little bit later too in the 80s.

#### **Question: More in the 80s.**

Yes. But it had started, I guess. Jeans, we couldn't wear jeans.

#### **Question: But pants were allowed?**

Pants were allowed.

#### **Question: They had to look a little more dressy –**

Yes.

#### **Question: – and appropriate. The same was true for boys?**

I believe, yes. Oh, I should've brought my yearbook too. I have the yearbook

#### **Question: You can get that for me later.**

Yes.

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**Question: What would have been considered wild back then?**

I think T shirts, but I think some people did wear T-shirts. I can't remember exactly.

**Question: What would you do for fun? Were there arranged dances?**

There were dances that we'd go to and just hang out there. Like I said, I wasn't with the wild crowd at all. It was always, you go at the time and you leave at the time. You just did whatever. I don't think it was because my parents were strict or anything. It's just, I think in our nature, we're shy people, our family.

**Question: You conform.**

Yes. You follow the rules. Good student, you did your homework, you did what needed to be done.

**Question: That was what you were supposed to be doing.**

Yes. It was important. My parents both had only a fifth grade education. I think my father would have gone really far if he had gotten more education, but his father, because he was disabled, had a clubfoot, just didn't think he was worthy of going further. He sent him to the tailor school.

**Question: It was almost thought of as an investment venture to spend money on someone's education. Unfortunately, then bequeath the disabilities.**

He was really a smart man. He really was. My mother was very smart too. Like I said, back then, it was after the war, they didn't have the opportunities to further their education or whatever. She did work in a department store for a while.

**Question: In Italy?**

In Italy, yes.

**Question: What did your mother do when she came to the States with everything and her children?**

Well, she then worked at the shop. She worked at the shop after my brother could go to a babysitter.

**Question: Was she a seamstress?**

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Yes. Although she wasn't trained, but she could sew anything. In fact, she did alterations for people in town, and they would come over and she fixed their clothes. Later on in her life she worked at Whitehall after the shop closed down and whatnot.

**Question: Whitehall, was that a pharmaceutical company?**

Yes. That was on Grand Street.

**Question: Were you married or have you ever been married?**

I'm not married. No. My brother is, my sister was. She got divorced also. But my brother has been married 36 years.

**Question: Do you have a lot of nieces and nephews?**

Two nieces, two nephews.

**Question: What are their names?**

My sister's children are Andrew and Francesca. My brother's are Noah and Lauren.

**Question: Your sister's name is?**

Angela.

**Question: Angela?**

Cavallaro.

**Question: Cavallaro. Your brother's name is?**

Luciano Sassano. We call him Lou.

**Question: What was your mother's maiden name?**

Ricotta. Like the cheese.

**Question: Like the cheese. That I'll remember. She was born where?**

She was born in Agrigento, Sicily. She was born in Sicily. She was the youngest of 12. Well, some of her nieces and nephews were older than she was. Her parents had seven boys in a row and then five girls in a row. A lot of her brothers, some

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died in the war. I don't know too much about all of them, but some died in the war. I guess after the war, it was really bad in Sicily. They all took off. One went to England and Germany and Belgium. We're still in touch with some of the cousins in Belgium and England and Germany.

**Question: That's wonderful. I was about to ask if any of them come to the States?**

None of them came to the States. Now, my mother used to say that her father used to come to work in the mines in Chicago to make some money and go back. But every time he would come, one of his sons would die of something so he said he was never coming back. But he would come here, apparently. It's kind of a running joke now that we said we must have relatives in Chicago somewhere because back then, who knows? He could have had another family here for all we know.

**Question: Many men did that.**

Yes. I wouldn't be surprised, but no one has come. But my mother's older sister married my father's younger brother. That's how my mother met my father because she went to visit her sister who was up near Naples with my uncle.

**Question: She married her brother-in-law's younger brother?**

Her brother-in-law's older brother. The two brothers married two sisters. My mother was 10 years younger than my dad, my father. Her older sister married my father's younger brother. They were only a few years apart.

**Question: Now I get it. What stories did your mother tell? You mentioned earlier that your mother had a fifth grade education. Was she required – I mean that loosely, but was that just what people did back then?**

I think you went as far as you could afford and then the war hit. They lived in Sicily and I know she used to say that when the bombs would come over, they'd hide in the catacombs to avoid the bombs coming down. She was little and her sisters, they would all be in the catacombs playing with rabbits and things. They didn't realize. They were children.

**Question: They were still being children. That's amazing.**

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Yes. My father, during the war, he would make the caps for the American soldiers.

**Question: He did them service.**

They would give him cigarettes. That's when he started smoking when he was 13 years old, 12 or 13.

**Question: That became their currency?**

That's what they would trade. He'd make them the suits or hats or whatever and they would give him cigarettes.

**Question: What other memories do you know? Anything more about the school your mother attended? Or her memories as a child? She was the youngest of 12. That in itself is interesting.**

She was the youngest of 12. She didn't even know a lot of her older brothers.

**Question: They were already out of the house.**

They were already out of the house. A few of them had died in the war.

**Question: Tragedy what war can do. Was she raised Catholic? I assume she was.**

Yes. They were both raised Catholic.

**Question: Your mother worked outside of the house as a seamstress. How was your mother's health? She stayed well until she got older?**

Well, both my parents died by the time they were 70. They were young.

**Question: That's young by today's standards.**

My mother died of colon cancer in 2001. My father died of an abdominal aneurysm in '92.

**Question: What cemetery is your mom buried in?**

Holy Sepulchre. They're both there.

**Question: They're both buried there. Wow. Is there anything else you'd like to say about your mom personally about her?**

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She was a great lady. We had fun. Even after my father passed away, she was willing to do anything. We went on a lot of cruises and things. She was a good person.

#### **Question: What were her hobbies?**

She liked to sew. She just did a lot of things. She liked to crochet. She did a lot of crocheting. She ended up watching the Spanish novellas on TV because she could understand it. She would call my aunt. My aunt from Italy, the one that was married to my father's brother, she would come over because her husband died young. He was in his early 50s, I think when he passed. She would come often. Every few years she'd come and we used to go all over.

#### **Question: That was a big deal for your mom, I would assume.**

Yes, she used to like that. My dad used to like it too when he was alive because he would take them around everywhere. He loved the idea that he could drive because that was freedom for him. Because in Italy he couldn't drive because they wouldn't give him – I don't know if they just couldn't afford a car or just the times were not good – here he could have the brake adjusted so he didn't have to use his left foot. He just loved to drive. He had a big Bonneville. It was a Bonneville. What is it, Buick? I don't know. We had another Buick, Buick LeSabre. Pontiac Bonneville, that's what it was. This giant white car. He loved it. Oh my gosh. But it was like a boat. It was huge. He loved his cars.

#### **Question: What was your father's full name?**

Guido Sassano. I don't think he had a middle name.

#### **Question: Did he have a nickname?**

No. My mom's name is Concetta. Ricotta was her maiden name, Sassano. The one story she had when people would say, "Can we call you Connie?" She'd say, "No, no, no, no," because Connie in Italian means dog. She was like, "Don't call me Connie."

#### **Question: That was such a common nickname for any Constance and that was just the Italian version of Constance. Your dad, where was he born?**

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He was born in Casaluce, the same town I was. Probably in the same house.

**Question: Wow. He grew up there?**

Yes. He was a tailor. He went to school I think in Naples, the city and then for a while he had gone to Rome to work as a tailor. But then he came back to help his parents and he opened a little tailor shop. He had his own tailor shop, but back then, a lot of people would get their suits and not pay so it was a struggle, I think.

**Question: I bet, for any small business. I'm sure during wartime, over there was difficult.**

Yes and after.

**Question: How would you describe what your dad looked like?**

He wasn't a big man. You have some pictures. There are some pictures.

**Question: It's just good visually to be able to lay eyes on him. He's a handsome man.**

He was.

**Question: Your mom's gorgeous.**

I have more pictures. I love this picture of him because he's so proud that I graduated college.

**Question: Oh, he is beaming in this picture. He is really beaming. I can only imagine for somebody who had a fifth grade education and worked so hard all of his life to care for his family to then see his daughter succeed like that.**

Well, my sister graduated from ACC. She had a two-year college degree. I went to Drexel. My brother went to Drexel also.

**Question: That's quite an accomplishment. He helped get you through. That was amazing for him. It can't be minimized. Neither your father or your mother were married before they met each other?**

No-

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**Question: Before that relationship took off. Your dad was not in the military because of his disability. That wouldn't have been done back in the day. Do you know where his ancestors came from? Were they all from Italy?**

Yes, as far as I know.

**Question: How many siblings did he have?**

They were seven in his family. He was the second oldest. That whole generation, both my parents, they're all gone. All the aunts and uncles are gone. We have the cousins left.

**Question: That's a milestone when that happens within the family.**

Yes. In fact, we had one uncle that came here in '64, his youngest brother.

**Question: He was the last to go?**

Well, he was the last to go. But he also was the only one that came here and lived in Hammonton.

**Question: That was the only sibling?**

My uncle, Aurelio, was the only one that came. The others all stayed in Italy and they moved around. One lived in Florence. In fact, my cousins are still there. The other one I'm not sure. One lived in Naples. He had two sisters. There were five brothers, two sisters. One sister died really young. She was in her early 30s, died of cancer. The other sister she ended up in a nursing home. She was 90, I think.

**Question: That's a good run if you can make it into your 90s.**

Yes. Both my grandparents I think were in their 80s when they passed.

**Question: You have some good longevity in your family.**

Yes. Three of my father's siblings died of cancer. The youngest sister and also two older brothers. The youngest brother came here. My grandfather, I guess wanted him to be taken care of or whatever. He sent him here and told my dad to watch over him.

**Question: The older brother?**

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No. My uncle, the youngest one, he married and came here in '64. It gets complicated, but he married my mother's oldest sister's daughter. Three brothers married two sisters and a niece.

**Question: I get it. The family's intermingled that much.**

Yes. They came here. Basically, we were always together. My aunt and uncle, they had a girl and a boy. With our cousins, especially the girl – because then the boy was 10 years later, we were always together. She was like part of our family.

**Question: That's very special also. Were there cousins close in age to you that would have been your counterpart, so to speak?**

No. She was four years younger than me, two years younger than my brother. She was the baby so we still call her babe. Her brother was 10 years younger than her. He's now in Florida with his family. All our other cousins are in Italy.

**Question: What is her given name? What is her name?**

Angela.

**Question: She's another Angela.**

Because she was the first daughter.

**Question: The Angelas and the Lucianos, did they all have nicknames to differentiate?**

It was always Luciano of Guido, Luciano of Aurelio.

**Question: Just curious as to how the family handle that. I know of many Anna's in town.**

A lot of them have nicknames, yes.

**Question: They either have a nickname or be Anna Mae and Annabel. There'd be multiple Anna's all throughout the whole family. I'm always curious as to how the family handles that. Did your parents ever talk about how they met and fell in love?**

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Well, they met when my mother went to visit her sister whose husband was my father's brother. That's how they met, yes. They actually got married in Sicily. I have some wedding pictures. Not real formal.

**Question: They would be nice. We'll include those.**

Yes. I'll have to get some more and then I'll bring the whole thing to Eileen.

**Question: That would be great. Or I can hand them off to Eileen.**

Yes, I'll get some more pictures.

**Question: Back to your dad now. You mentioned he was a very well-accomplished tailor. What were his hobbies? What did he do?**

He loved to read. He was an avid reader. He loved the opera. That's why my name is Aida, my middle name. He loved to sing. He was like my brother. Very musically inclined, very Renaissance-y. Very curious. We had a back room where they have their sewing machines. You'd always hear the opera going on because he had the record player and the records. He had tapes after. I didn't even know, but after he had died, we found old cassette tapes of English and Italian that he was learning after we came.

**Question: He was working on improving his English.**

Always. He was always learning. He was always reading things.

**Question: He had a natural curiosity.**

Oh, yes. He loved the garden. He worked in the garden, grows tomatoes and eggplants and whatever. He also loved his dog, Duke.

**Question: Was your mother a good cook as well as a good seamstress?**

She was good at everything. She always said she was never a really good cook because she used to work when she was young and didn't do as much as her other sisters, but she was really good. We still try to make her sauce. We can't get it just right it. No matter how hard we try, my sister and I tried to duplicate things that she used to make and it's not quite right.

**Question: A little off the mark?**

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Something's not right.

**Question: It's still not mom's, I get that.**

Yes, exactly. Yes.

**Question: It's interesting how she made that comparison with her sisters to figure out where her place in the housewife line up would be.**

Yes. Because she had this old cookbook. She said my father gave it to her because she told him, "You're going to marry me, but I'm not the best cook," so he gave her a cookbook.

**Question: Just to show you where all the priorities were.**

Yes. You got to learn to cook.

**Question: People had to be practical.**

Yes.

**Question: Who do you think you resemble the most out of your parents? Do you resemble anybody in the family?**

I think more my mother a little bit. But a lot of my father in certain ways, I think.

**Question: You see that also. You already mentioned your brother and your sister and their names. That's pretty cool. Tell me the birth dates of your sister and your brother.**

My sister was born on June 18, 1957. My brother was October 26, 1962.

**Question: Your sister was the oldest and your brother was the youngest. We established that. Any special talents and skills that your siblings had?**

My brother has every single talent you can think of. He was in a band. He was musically inclined. He's very smart, really. He's an artist. He can paint. He can draw. He can do plumbing, electrical, carpentry, tiling, gardening. My sister is very smart also.

**Question: He is a renaissance man.**

He is. He really is.

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**Question: Are there any stories you remember about growing up with your brother and sister? Any mischief that you got into?**

We always used to ride our bikes down Pleasant Street all the way to the school and back. We would go bug hunting. We used to catch little grasshoppers. Normal things. Play outside. In the winter, we used to play carnival because the carnival was right down the street basically when we lived on Pleasant Street. We used to set up the coin toss and get all the dishes and everything from the cabinets.

**Question: You would make your own carnival.**

We would make our own carnival. We'd play carnival. We'd play library and get all the books and put them in one place and then check out and do all that stuff. We used to go into the library, coming to think of it. I don't think the building is there anymore. It used to be down in the basement of where the Town Hall is now.

**Question: I think where the Historical Society Museum is, that that was once the library.**

But that was where it used to be. But it was down stairs. There was a down stairs like in the basement where all the children's books were and we used to love going there.

**Question: But it was the same building?**

I think it was. I'm not sure.

**Question: I think it was too. I don't always have my facts straight, but I just remember vaguely.**

It was right there near where the Town Hall is now.

**Question: It's back behind it, wasn't it? Back over in that direction?**

Yes, on Vine Street. It must have been right there. Yes. Or maybe where the theater is now. Somewhere around there, like in between there. I'm not sure exactly.

**Question: Behind the new buildings, but before the theater.**

Before the theater.

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**Question: Top back a little way right in there. That's what someone described to me.**

That could be where it was. But the library I remember was downstairs. There was an outdoor step so you had to go down.

**Question: Do you remember your grandparents?**

No. I only saw them when we went back in '67. I remember them from that. I remember they had a wine cellar. You could smell the wine because they would make their own wine. At that point, I think they were more like farmers or something. They had a plot of land next to the house. I vaguely remember all this. I remember they had chickens and they would cut the head off and the chicken without the head would be running around. That just stuck with me really, oh my gosh. I remember they had a well. You had to bring the bucket up and then bring the bucket. It was just very interesting actually.

**Question: What's interesting is all that seems quaint to us and so different, but for them, that was just what they did.**

Back then, yes. That was nothing.

**Question: That was no different than us like, "Oh, yes, we have a faucet. We turn it on. What's the big deal?" That's just what they did.**

Yes.

**Question: Jumping back to your parents a little bit and this is a little on the downside, what would you say the greatest tragedy that your mother and father had, or adversity that your parents had to cope with?**

I think just leaving their families. I remember when their parents died, my grandparents died, they couldn't be there. I think that was really hard for them.

**Question: It had to hurt.**

Yes. She never talked about it, but I know she has said she had a miscarriage in between each one of us. When they first came here, I think it was really difficult because I remember her saying shortly after they got here and my brother was born, the whole thing and they had debt because they had borrowed the \$500 to

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come here or whatever it was on the invoice here. \$540 to get all of us here with the trunks. I still have some of the trunks.

**Question: Wow. That would probably be by the equivalent of about \$5000 nowadays.**

Whatever. But it was an enormous amount back then. But at one point after they got here, I think she said it was the winter my dad got really sick and couldn't work. He thought he was going to get \$2.50 an hour. But when he got here, it was only \$1.25 with the possibility of getting to \$2.50.

**Question: It had to be a shock. A big letdown.**

Yes, really. He was trained. He would make some suits for my brother and stuff. It was these wonderful suits with all that stitching all by hand. Kessler's was really a sweatshop.

**Question: Talk a little bit about that. What're your memories and what stories have you heard about that?**

Well, they worked there. Now I can say it was a sweatshop, but we used to go there every once in a while. That's why I would like to have some pictures. We never had pictures. There were all these coats and pieces of fabric all over the place. It was a sweatshop. I remember the steam.

**Question: Just like you see in the movies?**

Yes, yes.

**Question: A lot of people crammed in one big open room all together?**

Yes and it was all piecework. They'd have these tickets because every week they would have to take these tickets and stick them on this thing.

**Question: Is that to show exactly how much they worked?**

How much they worked so they got paid with that. He had gotten sick right after we got here apparently. My mother said we didn't have food. We didn't have anything. She kept praying and somehow somebody dropped off a box of food.

**Question: Oh my goodness.**

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She said it came from heaven. She never knew who it was until 10 years later, she found out who brought that food and she went to thank them.

**Question: I'm getting chills.**

I know because it was really – now, I work with St. Vincent de Paul and we see a lot of this stuff and it's like, "Oh my gosh." I'm sure that was a very difficult time.

**Question: That had to be. Just to trust that everything's going to be okay.**

Because she has a new baby, he was sick and he couldn't work.

**Question: It was a horrible predicament for a woman to be in for the whole family.**

And when you think of the immigrants now, some of them, you don't know what they're going through.

**Question: You really don't.**

You can't imagine. A lot of them are just trying to better their lives. Why did they come here? They came here for us.

**Question: They did.**

Not for them because they lost everything really. They lost their families. They did it to give us a better life, for their children.

**Question: For their children. They gave up a lot. They sacrificed.**

Absolutely.

**Question: That's not overusing the word. That was a very big sacrifice.**

It was. I wouldn't do it.

**Question: No, because there would be too many unknowns.**

Absolutely. You're going into a whole new country. No language.

**Question: Yes, definitely too many unknowns. Back to your grandparents.**

My mother's mother, I think I met once, again back in '67.

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**Question: Do you recall her name?**

Giuseppina. I forget her maiden name. Oh, it was Tuzzolino, T-U-Z-Z-O-L-I-N-O.

**Question: Again, this is your mother's mother?**

Yes, my mother's mother. She married Salvatore Ricotta. Ricotta like the cheese.

**Question: Any stories about her?**

Apparently she was the town – not doctor, but people would go to her.

**Question: A healer.**

A healer kind of thing. She knew all the herbs and things. She always had stuff in her house. My mother wished – just like I wish I had learned more sewing. She wished she had learned more from her mother about that.

**Question: I admire both skills. That's very important for even just raising a family and being part of a community. Your grandmother or any of your grandparents, the grandmother you just mentioned, she passed away over in Italy, obviously.**

Yes. She's the one that had the 12 children and saw a lot of them die. Some of them young and then others in the war.

**Question: Did she have an influence on you? Even just her reputation.**

Yes, I just know about her. I don't really know her. Both the other grandparents as well. I didn't really know them.

**Question: Were they very educated themselves?**

No, I don't think they were even – I don't think so. No. Probably less than their children.

**Question: That was just commonplace during that time?**

Yes. I have a picture of my grandfather in World War I. He was in World War I.

**Question: Which grandfather was that?**

## Historical Society of Hammonton Oral History

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My father's father, Luciano. My mother's father died young. Because she said he used to come here in the mines so he died of a lung thing. He had a stroke when she was very young and then he died. That's all I really know about him.

**Question: They had amazingly large families back then. I think to get food on the table, you got out to work.**

Especially after the war, yes.

**Question: Bring in money and bring in what was needed. That was all understandable.**

Yes.

**Question: Any more that you want to say about your parents' occupation or anything more about them or your memories of them?**

No, my father retired with disability. He had had a heart attack and then, he retired from the shop. My mother kept working until the shop closed. She worked at Whitehall until she retired. When my father retired, my mother was working at Whitehall – because I worked at the gas company in Folsom. Well, I lived at home most of the time. In '88, I guess, I bought a little condo in Mays Landing, but I was always there. At lunchtime, I go have lunch with my dad. After work, I'd go with him and we used to do all sorts of things.

**Question: That's nice that the family remains as close as they did.**

Yes. We used to drive around. He liked to drive around and look at the town and just find roads that he hadn't gone to. He was good that way.

**Question: That's so cool. Tell me more about yourself, though. We've touched on what you did up until the time you graduated. You mentioned that you graduated from Drexel. What was your Major at Drexel? Can you tell us the story?**

Well, I started at Drexel as a Computer Science major, a regular student, whatever. We had co-ops. I did a coop at NAFEC, which is the FAA Tech Center. I had another co-op at the gas company, my second co-op. At that point, I couldn't get any more loans so I was going to have to quit and it was the worst thing in the

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world. I was devastated. Literally, I prayed and I prayed. While I was on co-op, knowing that I was going to have to quit and get more money, work somewhere, get more money to go back, to continue, somebody at the gas company had a heart attack in the IT department. They needed somebody to fill in. Another person in the IT department got promoted and moved up somewhere to customer service. They needed somebody and they asked me if I wanted to work full-time. It was a prayer answered and they would offer tuition refund.

**Question: You could continue.**

Then, I could continue. I continued at night. I had to change my major because they didn't have Computer Science in the evening college at Drexel. I went to business administration.

**Question: That was a godsend.**

Literally, it was a prayer answered.

**Question: It was a big door opening for you.**

It was. The guy survived the heart attack. He came back eventually. I was a junior programmer when I started in '80. I had taken a COBOL course, but I learned there on the job basically. I got into the building and all that stuff.

**Question: How many years were you working for them?**

I worked for them almost – it was 39 and a half years. I retired in '20.

**Question: That's a big accomplishment.**

Yes. I was always in IT, but it was in different areas. I started out as a junior programmer, and then I became a regular programmer and then I became a senior programmer. I was a systems analyst for a while then I went into system administrator, which was just a title, whatever. I then got into management and retired as the IT manager.

**Question: That business administration major part came in handy for you.**

It was a godsend and I was very lucky.

**Historical Society of Hammonton Oral History**  
**Josephine Sassano**

**Question: What are your hobbies? You mentioned earlier to me that you played pickleball now.**

I do play pickleball. I like photography. I really do like photography. I do a lot of that. I love reading. Puzzles, I love puzzles. I do tons of puzzles. Now just going places. I went to Ireland this year.

**Question: Doing some traveling.**

Yes. Well, I retired March 1, 2020 and March 6, 2020 is when everything shut down.

**Question: Yes, it did. Yes, it did.**

All my plans went out the window for two years basically.

**Question: As a result of the pandemic, of course.**

Yes, yes. Now, I'm getting back into trying to do things and go places.

**Question: That's marvelous. What are your hobbies?**

Traveling, reading, photography, puzzles, and pickle ball. We have a bunch of friends that we play cards once a week. I like spending time with family. We don't even get together that often now because everybody's got their own thing going. I can crochet. I'm making a baby blanket for my nephew's daughter. She's going to have a baby at the end of this month so I'm working on that. But I can only make square things. But that's all you need for a baby blanket. I can only make square things, rectangle things.

**Question: Tell me about your religion. I know your religion is a big part of your life that's why I asked that.**

Well, I'm Catholic. I'm really the only one in my family that goes to church.

**Question: You're a practicing Catholic.**

Yes. I don't necessarily believe everything the Catholic Church does. But I believe in the saints and I believe in God. I have my own version of Catholic religion.

**Question: I get that.**

## Historical Society of Hammonton Oral History

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I think especially since I'm alone, I have to believe in something. That gets me through the week. I go into church on Sunday. It gets me through the week.

**Question: As a human being, you're nourishing the spiritual side of your life and it's working for you.**

Yes, it is. It is.

**Question: That is all part of just self-care and taking care of yourself. You're staying centered, that sort of thing. Can you think of anything else that we should talk about that maybe we haven't talked about?**

I don't know. I think we talked about everything.

**Question: If there's anything that you do think of later, we can do an addendum if need be. I really, really appreciate you taking time out of your day to come and talk and tell me about yourself.**

No problem. I didn't fill out. I had started this, filling out some of this.

**Question: The photos that you brought or if you have any others, it would be marvelous.**

Yes, I'm going to get some more. I like the passport ones. I thought these were great. When I saw them, I was like, "Oh my gosh. I have to copy this." The look on my face.

**Question: A step back in time.**

My mom always had the story about me being born. I was 14 pounds, 7 kilos. She said I was the easiest one. But people used to tell her she was going to have twins. She potentially surprised everything.

**Question: Some twins aren't that big.**

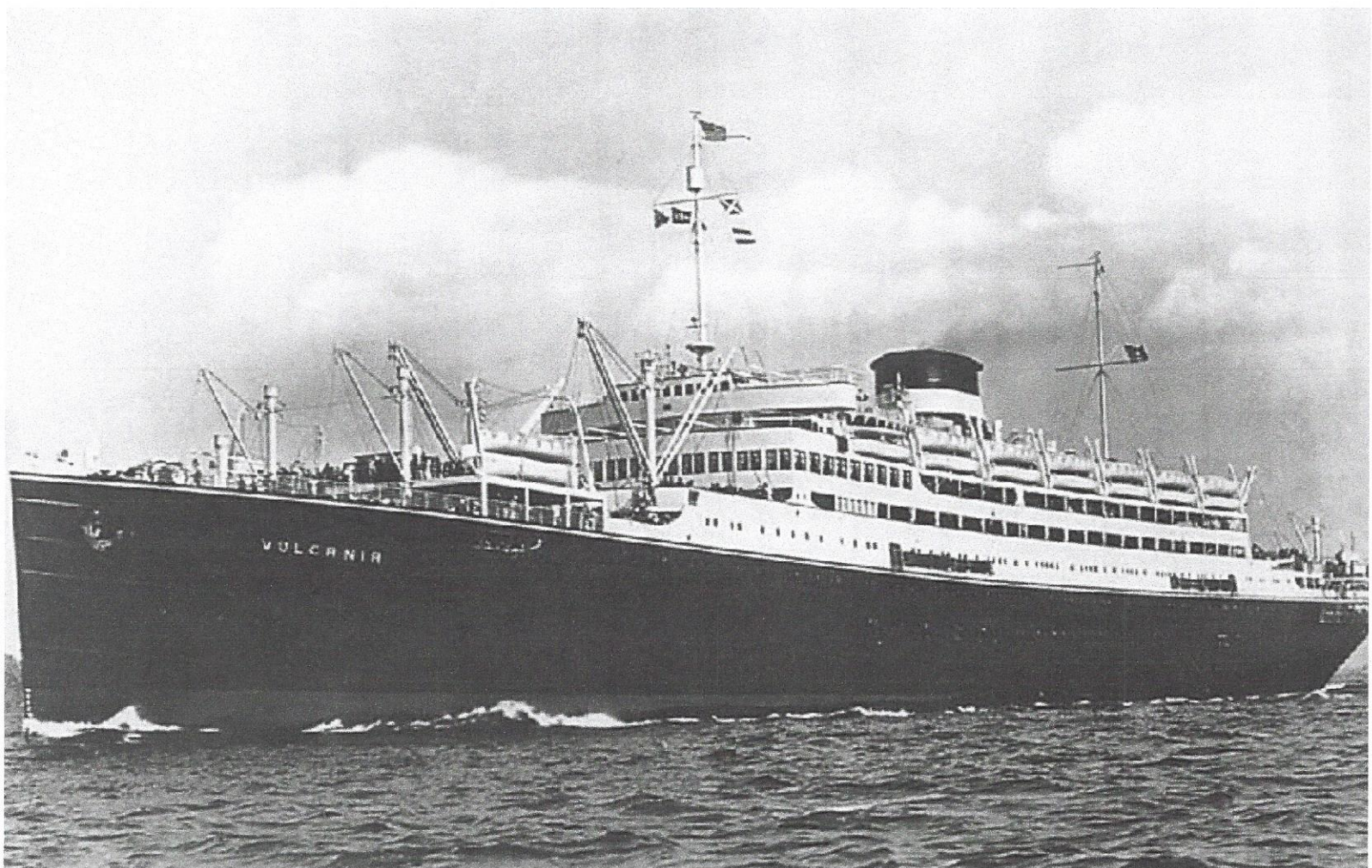
I know, I know. I keep saying that's why I never lost it, whatever. I just kept doubling – double the size. That's our story.

**Question: You have very nice family pictures. Again, I really appreciate you being here and we'll talk a little further.**

Okay. Thank you.

**Historical Society of Hammonton Oral History  
Josephine Sassano**

**[End of Interview]**



DATI E CONNOTATI DEL TITOLARE  
 SIGNALEMENT DU (DE LA) TITULAIRE  
 DESCRIPTION OF HOLDER  
 PASSINHABERBESCHREIBUNG

Professione *Casaliga* statura *158*  
 Profession *Casaliga* taille *158*  
 Profession *Casaliga* height *158*  
 Beruf *Casaliga* Grösse *158*

nato a *Casteltermine* occhi *Castani*  
 lieu de naissance *Agnigento* couleur des yeux  
 place of birth *Agnigento* colour of eyes  
 Geburtsort *Agnigento* Farbe der Augen

il *7-7-1933* capelli *Castani*  
 date de naissance *7-7-1933* couleur des cheveux  
 date of birth *7-7-1933* colour of hair  
 Geburtsdatum *7-7-1933* Haarfarbe *Castani*

domiciliato a *Carluce* segni particolari *N.N.*  
 domicile *Carluce* signes particuliers  
 domicile *Carluce* special identification marks  
 Wohnort *Carluce* besondere Kennzeichen

FIGLI  
 ENFANTS  
 CHILDREN  
 KINDER

Nome Prénom Name Vorname	Data di nascita Date de naissance Date of birth Geburtsdatum	Visto Visa Visa Sichtvermerk
<i>2</i> <i>Angela</i>	<i>18-6-1957</i>	
<i>2</i> <i>Gibesejuna</i>	<i>25-1-1960</i>	

*IL QUESTORE*



Firma del titolare  
 Signature du (de la) Titulaire  
 Signature of Holder  
 Unterschrift des Passinhabers

*Preston Concetto*

Autenticazione della firma  
 Légalisation de la signature  
 Authenticity of the signature  
 Beglaubigung der Unterschrift

*Di Nicotè Concetto*

Firma dell'Autorità  
 Signature de l'Autorité  
 Signature of the issuing Authority  
 Unterschrift der ausstellenden Behörde

*IL QUESTORE*  
*W. Martorel*



Dato il *9 MAG. 1962*  
 Délivré le  
 Date  
 Ausgestellt am

Nr. 552592/P

DATI E CONNOTATI DEL TITOLARE  
 SIGNALEMENT DU (DE LA) TITULAIRE  
 DESCRIPTION OF HOLDER  
 PASSINHABERBESCHREIBUNG

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 Profession *Sardo* taille *158*  
 Profession *Sardo* height *158*  
 Beruf *Sardo* Grösse *158*

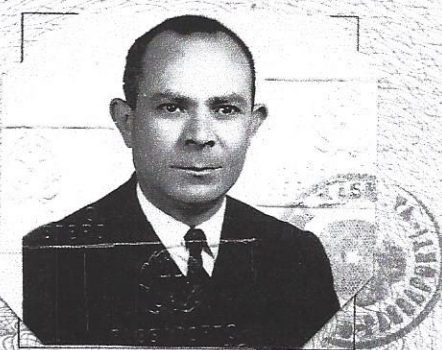
nato a *Carluce* occhi *castani*  
 lieu de naissance *Carluce* couleur des yeux  
 place of birth *Carluce* colour of eyes  
 Geburtsort *Carluce* Farbe der Augen

il *31-1-922* capelli *castani*  
 date de naissance *31-1-922* couleur des cheveux  
 date of birth *31-1-922* colour of hair  
 Geburtsdatum *31-1-922* Haarfarbe

domiciliato a *Carluce* segni particolari */*  
 domicile *Carluce* signes particuliers  
 domicile *Carluce* special identification marks  
 Wohnort *Carluce* besondere Kennzeichen

FIGLI  
 ENFANTS  
 CHILDREN  
 KINDER

Nome Prénom Name Vorname	Data di nascita Date de naissance Date of birth Geburtsdatum	Visto Visa Visa Sichtvermerk
<i>Stato civile: coniugato</i>		



Firma del titolare  
 Signature du (de la) Titulaire  
 Signature of Holder  
 Unterschrift des Passinhabers

*Sassano Guido*

Autenticazione della firma  
 Légalisation de la signature  
 Authenticity of the signature  
 Beglaubigung der Unterschrift

*Sassano Guido*

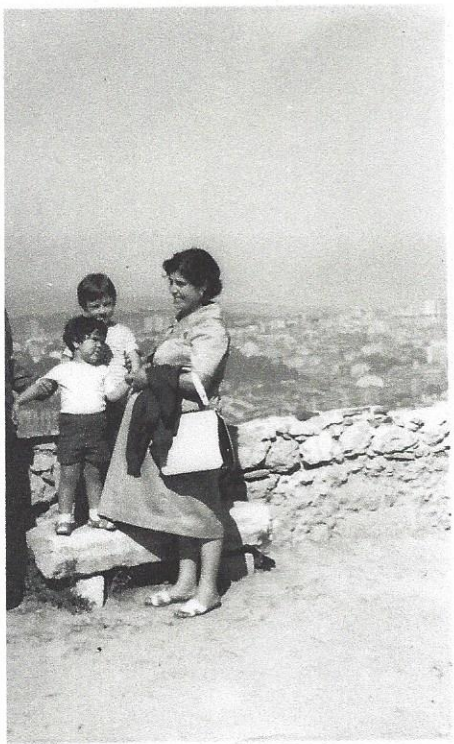
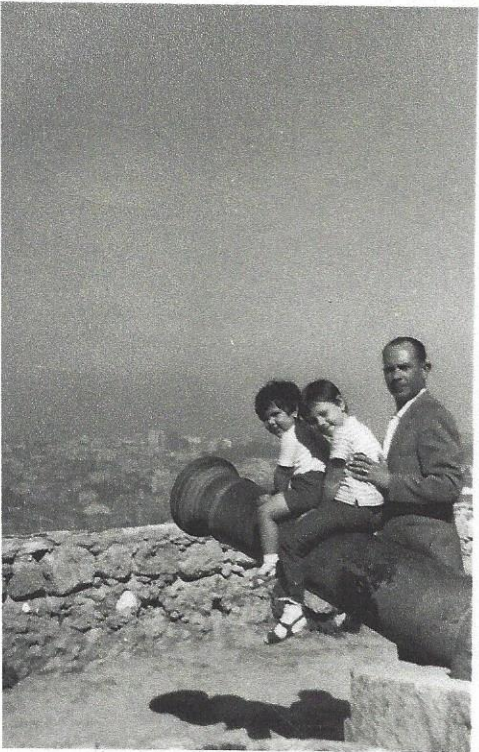
Firma dell'Autorità  
 Signature de l'Autorité  
 Signature of the issuing Authority  
 Unterschrift der ausstellenden Behörde

*IL QUESTORE*  
*W. Martorel*



Dato il *30 APR. 1962*  
 Délivré le  
 Date  
 Ausgestellt am

Nr. 552250/P





Sheet No.

TOURIST

Class (First, Cabin, Tourist, or Other)

CARRIER ITALIAN M/V "VULCANIA" n° 288  
(Nationality, name, and official number of carrier)

Date of arrival/departure ~~XXXX~~ Sept. 4th, 1962  
(Cross out one)

Port of arrival/departure ~~XXXX~~ NEW YORK Sept. 19th, 1962  
(Cross out one)

Last foreign port before arrival in United States HALIFAX N.S.  
(Place and Country)

Sept. 17th, 1962

319  
(Date departed)

If departing, show first port at which carrier arrived in United States on this trip

If departing, show first foreign port after departure from United States

	(1) NAME IN FULL		(2) Nationality and passport number	(3) CREW		(4) Crew (departing U. S. flag vessels only) USCG Z or C.D.B. number and name and address of next of kin	(5) This column for use Government officials only (except when carrying certain passengers. See instructions)
	Family Name	Given name and middle initial		Position	Where shipped or engaged		
1	<del>POLICASTRO</del>	MARGHERITA	Italian 043358	I/151			ARC A11 080839
2	<del>POLITO</del>	NICOLA	USC 0324708				✓
3	<del>POLITO</del>	CATERINA	Italian 7615454	I/151			ARC A12 185112
4	<del>PONZI</del>	BRUNA	Canadian 5-398136	Canad. Res.			C-1
5	<del>PONZI</del>	BELLA	DO	DO			C-1
6	<del>PONZI</del>	EMINIA	Canadian 5-398137	DO			C-1
7	<del>POBRACCHIO</del>	VITO ANTONIO	French 09648	I/VISA			X
8	<del>QUARATIELLO</del>	ANNUNZIATA	Italian 045848	I/151			ARC 6780781
9	<del>QUATRINI</del>	NICOLA	Italian 952942	I/VISA			M-1
10	<del>QUATRINI CESTRA</del>	ANNA	USC 0071995				✓
11	<del>RASO</del>	ELISABETTA	Italian 591467	I/VISA			M-1
12	<del>RECCHIA</del>	DONATO	Italian 1808682	I/VISA			N
13	<del>REFOSCO</del>	ERNESTO	Italian 5613272	I/94			B-2
14	<del>REFOSCO</del>	CONCETTINA	Italian 4756230	I/94			B-2
15	<del>REFOSCO</del>	ANNA	do	3/94			B-2
16	<del>REFOSCO</del>	CLEMENTINA	do	I/94			B-2
17	<del>RIDOLFI</del>	LUCIA	Italian 029815	I/151			ARC A) 868 149
18	<del>ROMA</del>	EUGENIA	Italian 7121206	I/151			ARC A12 041892
19	<del>ROMA</del>	MARIA	Italian 398967	I/151			ARC A12 041891
20	<del>ROSANTO</del>	BALVATORE	Italian 162028	I/VISA			T-1
21	<del>SAGGISE</del>	VITO	Italian 794372	I/VISA			M-1
22	<del>SANTOPADRE</del>	ANGELA ROSA	Italian 8804601	I/VISA			V-21
23	<del>SASSANO</del>	GUIDO	Italian 552250	I/VISA			T-1
24	<del>SASSANO</del>	CONCETTA	Italian 552592	I/VISA			T-2
25	<del>SASSANO</del>	ANGELA	DO	DO			T-3

IMM. & NATZ. SERVICE  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 33  
ADMITTED  
SEP 19 1962

CLASS  
TO

Total Number

CARRIER ITALIAN M/V "VULCANIA" n° 288

(Nationality, name, and official number of carrier)

Date of departure Sept. 4th, 1962

(Cross out one)

Port of arrival/departure NEW YORK Sept. 19th, 1962

(Cross out one)

Last foreign port before arrival in United States HALIFAX N.S.

(Place and Country)

Sept. 17th, 1962

(Date departed)

320

If departing, show first port at which carrier arrived in United States on this trip

If departing, show first foreign port after departure from United States

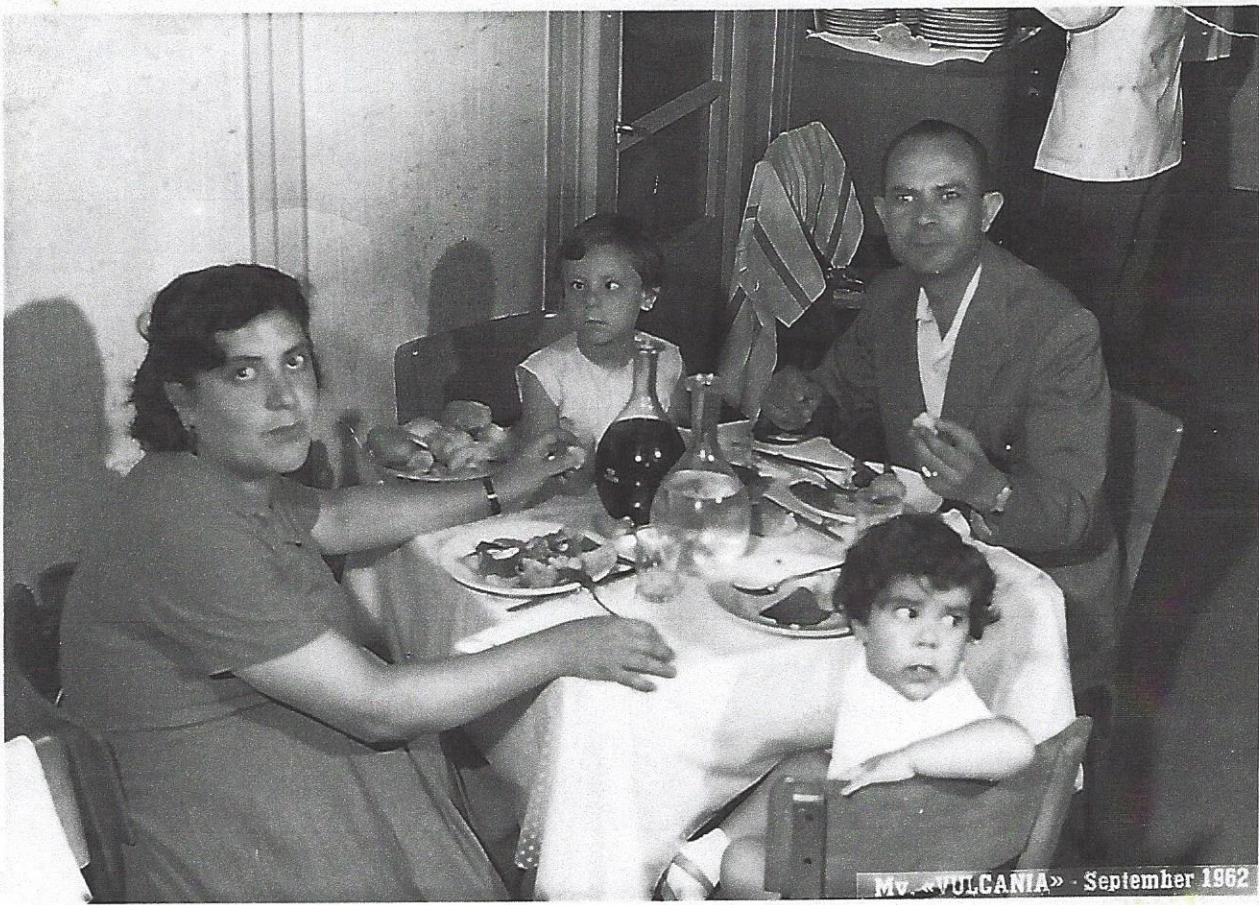
	(1) NAME IN FULL		(2) Nationality and passport number	(3) CREW		(4) Crew (departing U. S. flag vessels only) USC 2 or C.I.B. number and name and address of next of kin	(5) This column for use Government officials only (except when carrying certain passengers. See Instructions)
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1	SASSANO G	GIUSEPPINA	Italian 552592	I/VISA			T-3
2	SAVASTANO	BUONAVENTURA	Italian 8406294	I/VISA			T-1
3	SAVASTANO	CONCETTA	Italian 8406297	I/VISA			T-2
4	SAVASTANO	VINCENZA	Italian 8406296	DO			T-3
5	SAVASTANO	ANNA M.	Italian 8406296	DO			T-3
6	SAVASTANO	VITTORIA	Italian 8406298	DO			T-3
7	SCOPELLITI	FRANCESCO	Italian 399229	I/151			A 874950
8	SCOPELLITI	MARIA	USC C407866				USE V 874950
9	SCOPELLITI	ROSA	Italian 399230	I/151			A 8749548
10	SELVAGGIO	NICOLAIA	Italian 285701	I/VISA			V-1
11	SELVAGGIO	MICHELE	USC Z197541				V
12	SISCA	DOMENICO	Canadian 5-422753	Canad. res.			C1
13	SISCA	ROSARIA	Canadian 5-422752	DO			C1
14	SISCA	VINCENZO	DO	DO			C1
15	SISCA	TERESA	DO	DO			C1
16	SORICE	LUCIA	Italian 674146	I/VISA			U-1
17	SPAZIANI	ANGELO	Italian 8076973	I/151			A 12009233
18	SPAZIANI	CONCIZIO A.	USC C060425				V
19	SPOGNARDI	EUGERIO	Italian 2669774	I/151			A 2911748
20	SPULEO	GENARO	Italian 6030511	I/151			A 12360906
21	STELLIO	ASSUNTA	Italian 158358	I/VISA			T-2
22	STELLIO	IDA	Italian 158357	DO			T-3
23	TESTA	FILomenA	Italian 289584	I/VISA			V 1
24	TESTA	GIROLAMO	Italian DO	DO			V 2
25	TESTA	VITO	Italian 289583	DO			V 2

IMM. & NATZ SERVICE  
 NEW YORK, N. Y. 21  
 ADMITTED

SEP 19 1962

CLASS  
 TO



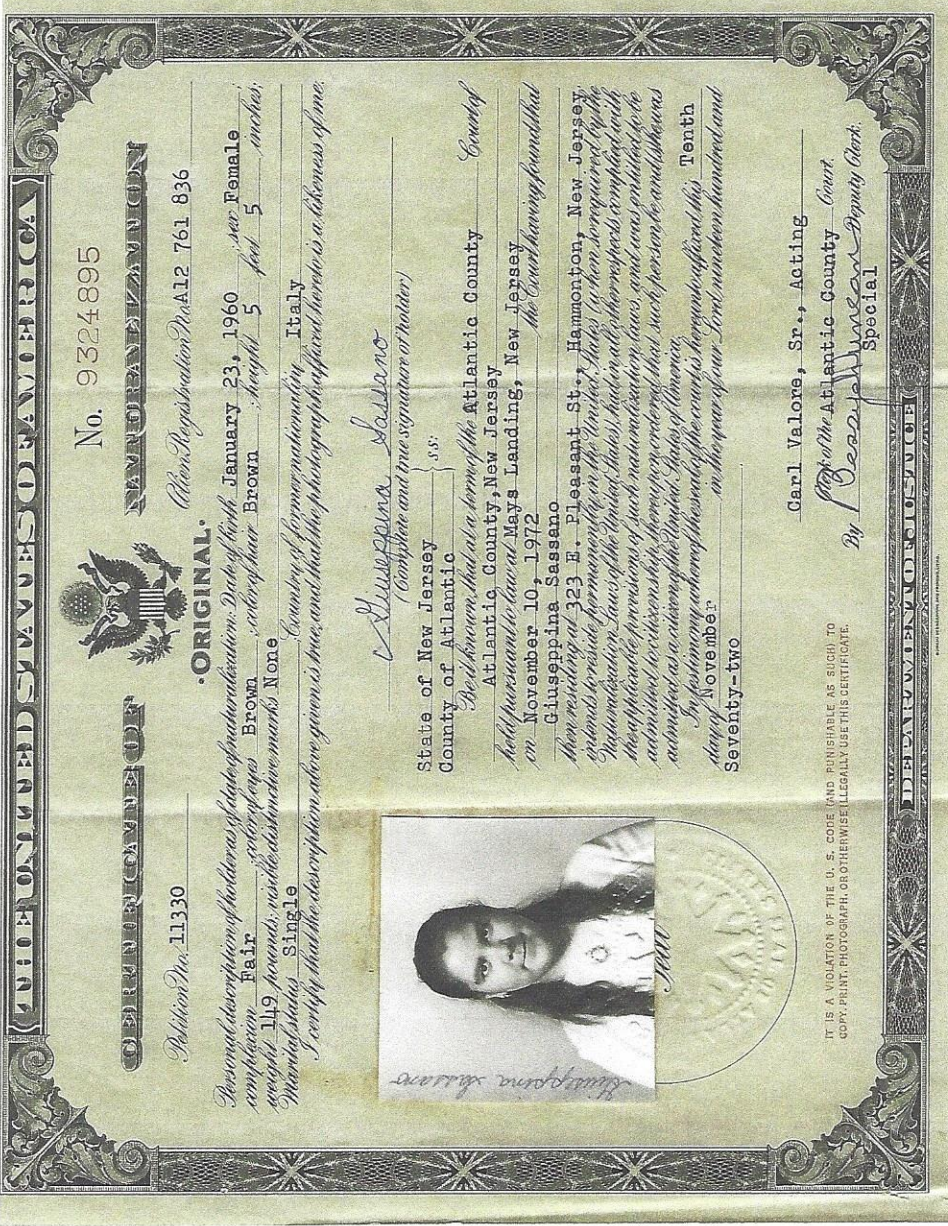


Mv. «VULCANIA» - September 1962



1964





No. 9324895



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Alison Registration No. A12 761 836

**ORIGINAL.**

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Date of birth January 23, 1960, sex Female, complexion Fair, color of hair Brown, height 5 feet 5 inches, weight 119 pounds, visible distinguishing marks None, marital status Single. Country of former nationality Italy. I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph attached hereto is a likeness of me.

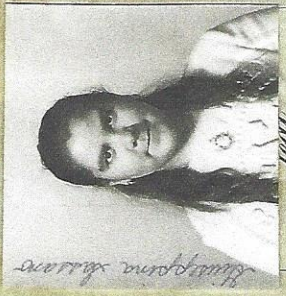
*Giuseppina Sassano*  
(Complete and true signature of holder)

State of New Jersey  
County of Atlantic

Subscribed and sworn to at Mays Landing, New Jersey on November 10, 1972

Giuseppina Sassano  
then residing at 323 E. Pleasant St., Hamonton, New Jersey, naturalized to reside permanently in the United States (to be so required by the National Naturalization Laws of the United States), had on all other respects complied with the applicable provisions of such naturalization laws, and was entitled to be admitted to citizenship, then appearing and that such person is and has been admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

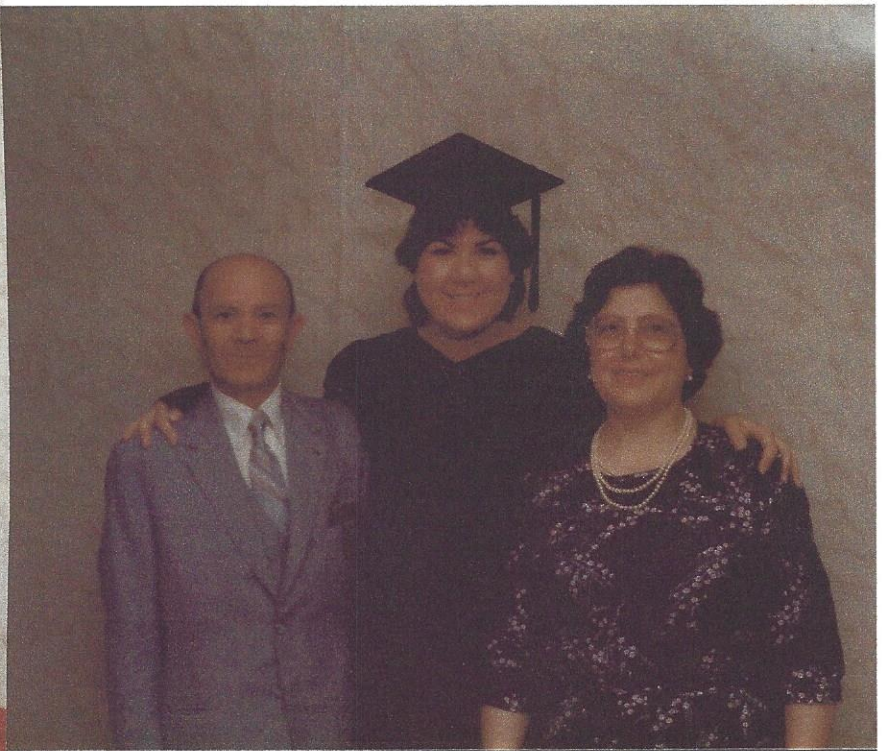
In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this Tenth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and Seventy-two



Carl Valone, Sr., Acting

Clerk of the Atlantic County Court  
By *Richard H. Moran* Deputy Clerk  
Special

IT IS A VIOLATION OF THE U. S. CODE (AND PENALTY THEREUNDER) TO COPY, PRINT, PHOTOGRAPH, OR OTHERWISE ILLEGALLY USE THIS CERTIFICATE.





## Josephine Sassano

It takes a really dedicated student to commute 50 minutes each way two or three times a week to attend school. Josephine Sassano who likes to be called Jo is that student.

Josephine started Drexel as a Computer Science major in the Day School in 1978. She became an Evening College student in 1980. At that time she took a permanent job as a computer programmer with her co-op employer, South Jersey Gas Company in Folsom NJ. Her major in the Evening College is the Management concentration in the Business curriculum.

In addition to her academic involvement with Drexel Evening College, Jo is active in student activities. She was Student Council Representative for the Junior Class. Currently she is Secretary of the Senior Class and a Lexerd staff member. Jo is also a member of the Cross Keys Fraternity and the Administrative Management Society.

Josephine's involvement with her place of business goes beyond work. She is active in the Employee Association and is president of the company camera club.

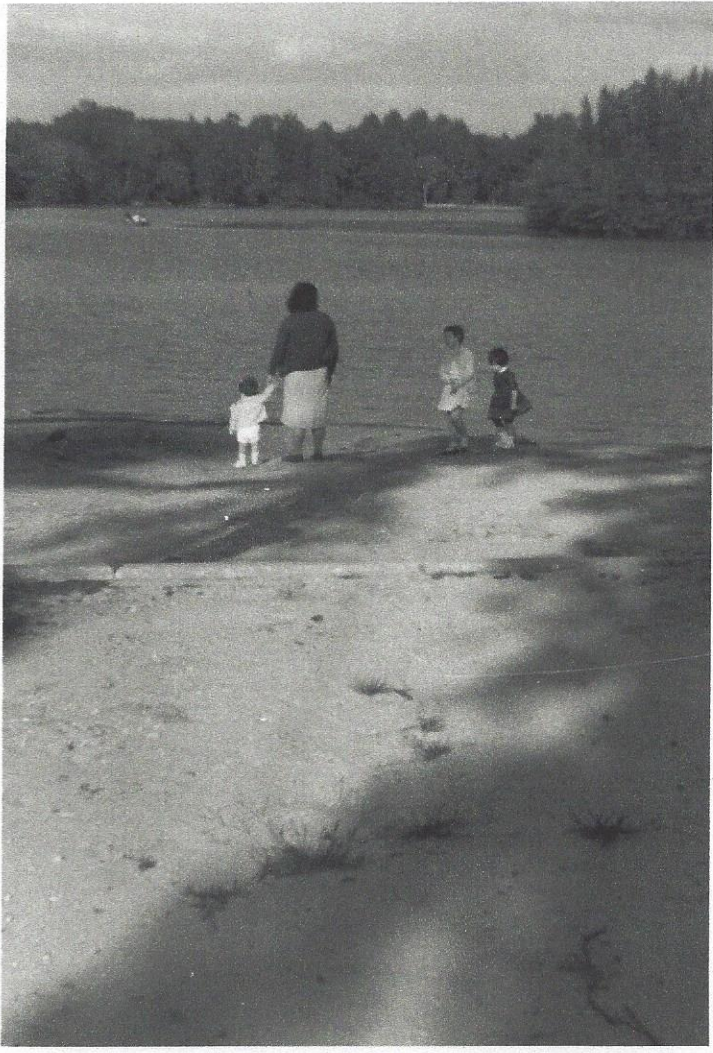
When Jo has "free time", she enjoys photography, reading, puzzle solving and music. To make sure her sound mind is matched by a fit body, Jo recently joined a health club.

People wonder where a person gets the "drive" to go to the Evening College. With Jo, the drive from Hammon-ton, NJ to Drexel and back is a relaxation; it gives her finely tuned mental processes a break.

Josephine Sassano looks forward to her June 1984 graduation with thoughts of more education in the future. After a year's respite, she hopes to resume her studies with a MBA as her goal.

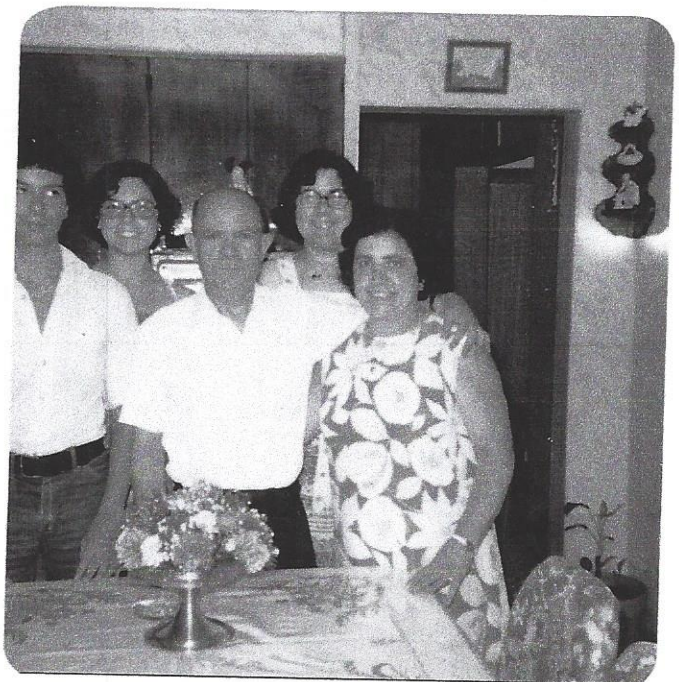
— Helen G. Kohn

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• FEB • 64







SARTORIA  
**SASSANO GUIDO**  
Corso Umberto I, 102 CASALUCE (Caserta)

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SARTORIA DEPOSITARIA DEL GRANDIOSO  
CAMPIONARIO STOFFE PER UOMO  
de "LA SARTOTECNICA", s.p.a.  
MILANO



*Guido Sassano*  
*Sartoria Diplomata per Uomo e Signora*

*Corso Umberto I° n. 102* *(Caserta) Casaluce*

CORSI DI TAGLIO  
DELLA GIA

**SCUOLA MODERNA INTERNAZIONALE DI TAGLIO**  
PER SARTI E SARTE  
AUTORIZZATA DALLO STATO  
FONDATA DAL PROF. COMM. ROCCO ALOI

**ATTESTATO**  
RILASCIATO

*All'alleo Sassano Guido da Casaluce*  
*che nel fare gli esami, dopo aver frequentato il corso regolare di Taglio*  
*per l'Abbigliamento Maschile*  
*riporto punti venti su venti dando prova di indiscussa capacità.*

TORINO, il 30 Giugno 1946

LA DIREZIONE *Prof. Alois* LA COMMISSIONE ESAMINATRICE *Ampliat*

IL SEGRETARIO *medici*  
*Luigi Fullani*



1956





GIUSEPPINA + SALVATORE  
RICOTTA



LUCIANO + ANGELA  
SASSANO