

[Mrs. John Parioli]

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1. Folklore

FORM A Circumstances or interview

Vermont

Mary Tomasi

63 Barre Street, Montpelier, Vermont

November 4, 1938

1. Date of interview - 8-9:30 p.m. November 1, 1938
2. Place of interview - Home of informant
3. Name of informant - Mrs. John Parioli, Sibley Ave., Montpelier, Vermont
6. Description of surroundings-

The narrow, slate-stone path which winds around the side of the small, box-like house to the kitchen is covered with a labyrinth of chalked designs - names, caricatures, triangles. They bring a bit of life to the cheerless grey house, and laugh at the somber, rough bits of granite which flank the walk. They are pieces of waste granite, grout, - and the visitor fools instinctively that he is walking into the home of a granite worker. The kitchen breathes none of the exterior drabness. It is colorful and alive, and smells so good. The walls are a pale yellow, the table cloth on the plain, kitchen table is a square of warm red and white checks. The big black stove extends shimmering arms of warmth to welcome you as you step in from the early frosty November evening. A large copper kettle bubbles and sin s

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contentedly, and wisps of cloudy, splay-smelling vapor 2 rise from the agate sauce pan, and band under the fresh current of air from the opened door to twist its way tantalizingly to the visitor's nostrils.

FORM C Text of Interview

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Q. It smells good Mrs. Parioli. Are you having supper at this late hour?

A. Supper so late- ma no, I be ashame'! My Johnnie do the dishes two - no - three hour ago. This is the risotto the risotto for the spiriti. You know, the Day of the Dead.

Q. Yes, I know. This is the eve of All Souls Day. But you don't actually believe that story, do you Mrs. P., that the spirits of the dead visit their former homes on All Souls Day?

A. Ah, who know that but the Dio! When I was little my nonno (grandfather) say that his nonno before him put out a big dish of risotto for the Day of the Dead, an' in the morning, he say, the dish is empty, clean. The spiriti have come in the night, hongry from the long trip to their home, an' they eat the risotto every bit. That is what the nonno of my nonno tell. Maybe the first nonno, he believe it. The second nonno, maybe he believe, maybe no. But all the time in Ponte for 2 the Day of the Dead, the [mama?] say, "Make the risotto far the spiriti." So now, here in America I do the same. Maybe I believe, maybe no. Anyway,

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while it cook an' smell so good on the stove, I think an' pray for the dead,- for the nonno of the nonno, papa, the baby brother that drown in the river in Ponte, an' for my poor Giovanni who die three year this month. An' too, it save the work tomorrow. Tomorrow I go to church for the dead, an' when I come home,- see, the dinner is ready. I put the risotto on the stove fire, ten minutes an' it is hot for Johnnie who come from school.

Q. What does your son Johnnie think of the story?

A. Johnnie? Oh, he sit down to eat an' he say, "the best risotto yet, mama," an' tell about the spiriti, an' he listen one minute, two, an' then his eye it begin to shine an' turn away from me, an' he talk about the football game the High School make this Saturday next in Barre.

Q. Johnnie played a good game last Saturday in Waterbury.

A. Oh, that Johnnie, he love football better than the books. All the time I am scare' he come home with the neck broke, or the arm, or the leg. An' he hug me an' laugh an' say, "Mama, I am the strongest in the school, I am strong like the ox," An' I say, " Si, your poor papa, he was strong, too. He have the best body of all the cutters, he proud of it, an' try to keep it the best. He laugh at pie an' 3 cakes an' sof' sweet food. Always for him it was meat an' potato, an' rice, an' the spaghetti - everything for to make him strong an' make him muscle. But just the same he got the disease the muscles got soft, he cough three year ago he die.... My Johnnie, he is like his papa an' he is not. He like the strong food an' he like the sof', an' every day he want both....