

## [Nicknames and their Sources—Italy]

LINGUISTIC FLOATING MATERIAL

NICKNAMES - ITALIAN

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK] Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER May Swenson

ADDRESS 509 E. 79th St., Apt. 21, New York City

DATE October 17, 1938

SUBJECT NICKNAMES AND THEIR SOURCES - ITALY

1. Date and time of interview

October 18, 2 to 4:30 PM

2. Place of interview

2910 Avenue D, Brooklyn

3. Name and address of informant

Vincent Viola D'Atri 2910 Ave. D., Brooklyn

## Library of Congress

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

Mildred Shachter 2910 Avenue D., Brooklyn

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

None

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Mr. D'Atri lives in bachelor quarters which he sublets from an Italian family at the above address.

LINGUISTIC FLOATING MATERIAL

NICKNAMES - ITALIAN

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM B Personal History of Informant

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER MAY SWENSON

ADDRESS 509 East 79th Street, Apt. 21

DATE October 17, 1938

SUBJECT NICKNAMES AND THEIR SOURCES - ITALY

1. Ancestry

## Library of Congress

Italian, both father and mother

### 2. Place and date of birth

Sara Cena, Italy, 1900 Moved to New York about 9 years ago

### 3. Family

Two brothers, two sisters

### 4. Places lived in, with dates

### 5. Education, with dates

Public school in Italy. Private study of the English language, and night school in New York

### 6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates

Factory worker in machine industries; typewriters, sewing machines.

### 7. Special skills and interests

Interested in music; plays accordion and mouth-organ. Has written poetry and articles for American-Italian publications.

### 8. Community and religious activities

### 9. Description of informant

Mr. Vincent Viola D'Atri is a short plump man, with smooth dark features, clean shaven, his glistening black hair parted on the side, and brushed in a semi-circle above his forehead. Very mellow, large brown eyes; full lips. His whole appearance and manner is reserved, polite, smiling, and his voice has a melodious lilt, emphasized by a heavy, but charming

## Library of Congress

accent. While talking, he moves his plump little hands with agility; and when trying to think of a word that is slow in coming off the tip of his tongue, the thumb and forefinger of his left hand go to his brow; sporadic wrinkles appear in a sharp V over the bridge of his nose.

10. Other Points gained in interview

2

When I interviewed him, he was very neatly and modestly attired in a dark blue suit, white pin-stripes, pale blue-green shirt, and a silk, salmon-colored tie. He wore yellow oxfords, highly polished, with the toes coming to a perfect point.

Mr. D'Atri was born in Sara [Cena?], in the South of Italy, in 1900. He came to Ameri nine years ago.

LINGUISTIC FLOATING MATERIAL

NICKNAMES - ITALIAN

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER May Swenson

ADDRESS 509 E. 79th St., Apt. 21, New York City

DATE October 17, 1938

SUBJECT NICKNAMES AND THEIR SOURCES - ITALY

## Library of Congress

This is really happen to an uncle of mine — Uncle Vincent, of which I am christened; he went from our little village (Sara Cena, Italy, 4,000 inhabitants) in the south of Italy, to America and stayed there five or six years, then he came back to Italy. This was some years ago; then when the people there living in the village welcomed back their neighbor who have been over in U.S., they were very friendly and curious and asking him about all that he had seen and done in his travels and in America. Naturally, in America they are very interested.

My Uncle had learned a slang of America: “Shut up!” And he said this word whenever he was talking of his experience, meaning you see, to impress with his new learning of the U.S. language, all his friends. He kept saying this word so much, and not ever what it meant, and his friends heard him, and soon they were calling him by that word, “Shut up.” That is the way is often done in Italy, a man called by not his name, but other name of which he reminds by his speech, or something he is doing, or such like that...see? So my Uncle Vincent become “Shut up” and went after that in his town by that name.

\*\*\*\*\*

There was another man I am knowing in Italy; he they call “Golden Chain”. For why they call him that, “Golden Chain”? Because when coming from a big town in North, and after many years away, coming back to his village there, he have got wealthy and have brought a gold watch and chain hanging across his middle of his 2 suit; the chain, a fine gold chain they seen hanging. The word, Golden Chain, in Italian it is “L'oro [Giao?]”. That what they call him “L'oro Giao”..a man of the Golden Chain become his name there.

\*\*\*\*\*

Well, you ask me now, I think of “Shep di Sciasciao”; he have of his christening the name “Joseph” an' live in Sciasciao. They call for short just “Shep”. I tell you his story, and a

## Library of Congress

song. This song like what you want: they put the words after many people sing; one put one word and one another, and it was stretched, so.

This man, "Shep", old man very wealthy, had beautiful daughter, only one daughter young an' nice. He was widow (widower) and the young boys they flock around his beautiful daughter. She very beautiful and very young, and father away in his shop, during day, and boys flock around her, court her. So her father, "Shep di Sciascao", he got mad, he tell daughter to be more careful. She say no; she like the boys; go more an' more to window, see young boys singing in garden; smile at that. Shep, he got mad, make anger with daughter, and after this they made a song in the village. All who know of this affair have much laughter, an' afterwards a song was sung around there, like this: This evening, at three hours of night, In this neighborhood will be fight Shep di Sciascio, he got mad Against his daughter, he become full of rage. An he got mad hard. From his bed he got up, Went outside, in the porch of his house. he hided himself behind the pillar An' he start to throw plaster stone at one her lovers. From inside the door, his slave of a daughter answered: "If you want a stone, then come and get it!"

The above was translated by informant from the following, in Italian: 3 Questa sera a ter ore di notte In questo vicinato correranno botte Shep di Sciascio ci e adirato e contro La piglia so l'epigliato En ci e Adirato forte Scende dal letto e vax davanti la prota. En mitti dentro una garagogna e gittaon, Calle roгна, e risponde la shiava "Della piglia se vuoi, pietre aneni ti pigh!"

This song very funny; not funny in English. Yes, I can make better translation and write it you. In the place where I live, this song was sung around; the young men [?????] and considered very funny.

\*\*\*\*\*

Another nickname was of an artisan shoemaker living in our village, but went away South America. Some time away. He came back; is friends they meet him; he have

## Library of Congress

on eyeglasses. Never have they seen these thing, eyeglasses, in that village before. So ask, "What is it you got with your eyes underneath?" An man he tell, "It Cent-occhi: eyeglasses." After that, this man called by all his friends, "Signor Under-Eyes"!

\*\*\*\*\*