

Guide to the Tina Sanecki Papers

CMS.093

Finding aid prepared by Mary Elizabeth Brown

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

December 14, 2013

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies
June 1998

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Summary Information

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Repository | Center for Migration Studies |
| Creator | Sanecki, Tina |
| Title | Tina Sanecki Papers |
| Date [bulk] | Bulk, 1910-1930 |
| Date [inclusive] | 1901-1998 |
| Extent | 0.25 Linear feet in one manuscript box. |
| Language | English |

Language of Materials note The documents are in Italian and English.

Abstract CMS 093 documents the family of Petrina ("Tina") Gemma Ribis Sanecki (1924-2012) through an interview preserved on cassette tape, and copies of photographs and family documents. The collection documents her parents, Pietro Ribis and Giuseppina Ferrante, marriage and immigration to the United States and the family's life in Brooklyn in the early 20th century. The collection documents significant events in the family's life, including weddings, confirmations, and other religious events.

Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Tina Sanecki Papers (CMS 093); Box 1; Folder #.

Biographical/Historical note

Petrina ("Tina") Gemma Sanecki Ribis was born March 17, 1924, in Brooklyn to Sicilian-born Pietro Ribis and his Malta-born wife, Giuseppina Ferrante. The patriarch, Pietro Ribis, emigrated from Sicily to New York in 1901. He began as a day laborer and advanced to ownership of a small cement contractor business. He became U.S. citizen in 1909. In about September of 1910, another family who lived in the same Brooklyn tenement that he lived in let him know that a young woman of the family had just arrived in the United States. Her name was Giuseppina Ferrante; she had been born in Malfi and left in Italy to be raised in a convent while her mother came to the United States. When she turned nineteen years old, her family brought her to the United States to arrange a good marriage for her. She and Pietro courted for three months, and married November 29, 1910.

Pietro and Giuseppina had five daughters: Salvatrice Giuseppina ("Sally"), born Sunday, September 3, 1911, at 4:30 p.m., Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace"), born Wednesday, April 30, 1913, 2:00 a.m., Maria Luiusa ("Mary"), born Monday, November 2 (All Soul's Day), 1914, 6:00 a.m., Giuseppina Lina ("Josie"), born Friday, January 26, 1917, 10:30 p.m., and Petrina ("Tina") Gemma, born Monday, March 17, 1924, at 3:10 a.m. The family lived in Brooklyn, moving to larger homes as the family grew. Pietro Ribis had a friend whose home in Highland, New York, provided his family with a vacation spot and himself with a place to take his gun and hunt for pheasants.

Pietro Ribis suffered a heart attack in his forties, and credited Saint Joseph with his recovery, leading him to observe the saint's feast day, March 19, in the traditional Sicilian manner. As the feast day approached, he purchased vast quantities of food for his wife, mother and sisters to cook, and set up his porch and living room to display it. On the feast day, a family consisting of a father, mother and young boy were chosen to represent the Holy Family of Mary, Joseph and Jesus searching for food and lodging on their Flight into Egypt. The poor were invited to share the banquet, and to take home food.

Some measure of this Italian family's assimilation may be had the courtship story of daughter Grace. Grace lived at home rather than being sheltered in a convent so her mother could work. Indeed, it was Grace who left high school without a diploma in order to work as a typist in an office. Rather than having her parents arrange her marriage, she struck up an acquaintance with a frequent visitor to her office, Salvatore ("Alfred") Muscatel. Grace and Alfred married February 9, 1932, and left for a honeymoon in Atlantic City. This event happened when Tina was a month short of eight years old, and served as a kind of endpoint for her discussion of her earliest memories.

Sanecki was the fifth child and fifth daughter in the family. She grew up in Brooklyn, with occasional vacations at the home of a family friend in Highland, New York. She married Casimir Sanecki and moved to Staten Island. She had two children, Douglas and Lynda. They in turn each had two children: Patrick and Kristin Sanecki, and Caren and Mark Rodriguez.

Later in life, Tina donated her time to the Center for Migration Studies through Staten Island Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Her stories about her growing up caught the ear of the Director of the CMS Library and Archives, Diana J. Zimmerman, who arranged for her to deposit copies of family documents and photographs, and to sit for an interview discussing them June 2, 1998.

Tina died Thursday, November 15, 2012, on Staten Island. By that time, her family had grown to include three great-grandchildren: Alex, Joel and Walker. Her family arranged for a final visitation at Colonial Funeral Home on Staten Island on Sunday, November 18, 2012. A funeral Mass was celebrated Monday, November 19, 2012, at Saint Ann's Church on Staten Island, and she was interred at Long Island National Cemetery, 2040 Wellwood Avenue, Farmingdale, New York.

Scope and Contents note

CMS 093 documents the story of the Ribis family through the memories and materials of one of its second-generation members. The collection documents the combination of tradition and assimilation in an Italian-American family. The collection is made up of photocopies of vital documents related to the Ribis family, photographs of the family at events in the early 20th century, and an oral history with Sanecki in 1998.

Arrangement note

CMS 093 is arranged into three series:

Series I: Documents

Series II: Photographs

Series III: Audiotape

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies June 1998

Revision Description

Mary Elizabeth Brown inputted the original finding aid into Archivists' Toolkit. Nicole M. Greenhouse checked the work. December 13, 2013

Conditions Governing Access note

Open to researchers by appointment.

Conditions Governing Use note

Copyright is owned by the Center for Migration Studies. Permission to publish materials must be requested before use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Petrina ("Tina") Gemma Ribis Sanecki deposited these copies of family documents and these photographs, and sat for this audiotape interview at the Center for Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, New York, June 2, 1998.

Processing Information note

Mary Elizabeth Brown processed this collection in June 1998. Each item in this collection has been inserted into an archivally sound clear plastic sleeve. All the sleeves have been placed in a three-ring binder, and then in an archival box. In 2013, this collection was entered into the Archivists' Toolkit in compliance with DACS and folder descriptions were simplified from the original print finding aid. (The original finding aid is available in print upon request). Folder titles in the container list online may vary from the the physical folder titles.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Staten Island (New York, N.Y.)

Subject(s)

- Italian Americans |z New York (State) |z New York.
- Weddings |x Pictorial Works

Other Finding Aids note

The original inventory is available in print upon request.

Collection Inventory

Documents 1901-1910 (Bulk, 1910)

Scope and Contents note

This series contains seven photocopies of passports for Pietro Ribis and Giuseppina Ferrante, issued by the Kingdom of Italy in 1901 and 1910, respectively. The collection also contains Ribis's naturalization certificate, documents related Ribis and Ferrante's marriage, and a family tree.

| | Box | Folder |
|---|------------|---------------|
| Passport issued to Pietro Ribis by the Kingdom of Italy January 31, 1901 (Bulk, 1901) | 1 | 1 |
| Passport issued to Giuseppina Ferrante by the Kingdom of Italy July 18, 1910 (Bulk, 1910) | 1 | 2 |
| Certificate of naturalization issued to Pietro Ribis by the District Court of the United States held in Brooklyn July 30, 1909 (Bulk, 1909) | 1 | 3 |
| Certificate of freedom to marry issued to Pietro Ribis by his native commune in Italy November 11, 1910 (Bulk, 1910) | 1 | 4 |
| Marriage certificate issued to Pietro Ribis and Giuseppina Ferrante by the Reverend Florio Marcucci at Our Lady of Peace, Brooklyn November 29, 1910 (Bulk, 1910) | 1 | 5 |

Photographs

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Marriage certificate issued to Pietro Ribis and Giuseppina Ferranted by Eugene W. Scheffer, Secretary of the Board of Health of the City of New York December 7, 1910 (Bulk, 1910) | 1 | 6 |
|--|---|---|

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|----------------------|---|---|
| Record of the Family | 1 | 7 |
|----------------------|---|---|

Photographs 1910-1930**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains 13 photographs of the Ribis and Sanecki family, including their wedding, confirmation, images of the family in the Brooklyn neighborhood, on vacation in Highland, NY, the annual Saint Joseph table, and other events.

| | | |
|--|------------|-------------------|
| | Box | Photograph |
|--|------------|-------------------|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Wedding picture of Pietro Ribis and Giuseppina Ferrante, Our Lady of Peace, Brooklyn, New York November 29, 1910 (Bulk, 1910) | 1 | 1 |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Confirmation picture of Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace") Ribis (later Muscatel) 1926 (Bulk, 1926) | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pietro Ribis, his wife Giuseppina Ferrante and daughter Petrina ("Tina") Gemma Ribis (later Sanecki), the latter at age two 1926 (Bulk, 1926) | 1 | 3 |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Giuseppipna Lina ("Josie") Ribis, Salvatrice Giuseppina ("Sally") Ribis, Pietro Ribis, Giuseppina Ferrante Ribis, Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace") Ribis (later Muscatel), Salvator ("Alfred") Muscatel, Petrina Gemma ("Tina") Ribis (later Sanecki) and two girlfriends, Dahlgren Place, Brooklyn 1930 (Bulk, 1930) | 1 | 4 |
|---|---|---|

Photographs

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace") Ribis (later Muscatel) and Salvatrice Giuseppina ("Sally") Ribis, Highland, New York 1928 (Bulk, 1928) | 1 | 5 |
| Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace") Ribis (later Muscatel), Highland, New York 1928 (Bulk, 1928) | 1 | 6 |
| Saint Joseph's Table March 19, 1929 (Bulk, 1929) | 1 | 7 |
| Pietro Ribis and his dog Rex, Highland, New York 1930 (Bulk, 1930) | 1 | 8 |
| Giuseppina Lina ("Josie") Ribis, Maria Luisa ("Mary") Ribis, Pietro Ribis, Giuseppina Ferrante Ribis, Salvatrice Giuseppina ("Sally") Ribis, Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace") Ribis (later Muscatel), Petrina Gemma ("Tina") Ribis (later Sanecki), Brooklyn, New York February 8, 1932 (Bulk, 1932) | 1 | 9 |
| Wedding picture with Salvatrice Giuseppina ("Sally") Ribis (later Muscatel), Petrina Gemma ("Tina") Ribis (later Sanecki), Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace") Ribis (later Muscatel), Giuseppina Lina ("Josie") Ribis, Maria Luisa ("Mary") Ribis, and two friends, Brooklyn, New York February 9, 1921 (Bulk, 1921) | 1 | 17 |
| Salvatore ("Alfred") Muscatel and Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace") Ribis Muscatel, Atlantic City, New Jersey February 11, 1932 (Bulk, 1932) | 1 | 11 |
| Salvatore (Alfred)"Muscatel, Atlantic City, New Jersey February 11, 1932 (Bulk, 1932) | 1 | 12 |
| Maria Grazia Rosaria ("Grace") Ribis Muscatel, Atlantic City, New Jersey February 11, 1932 (Bulk, 1932) | 1 | 13 |

Audiotape

Audiotape June 2, 1998 (Bulk, 1998)**Box****Folder**

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Scope and Contents note

This series contains an oral history and an index of its contents. Sanecki sat down with Mary Brown at CMS and recorded a conversation about her family photographs. She also discussed her parent's courtship, how her parents felt about having five daughters but no sons, her sister Grace's courtship and wedding, and her own honeymoon.