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FESTA ITALIA IN MONTEREY

A study of the Italian women immigrants in Monterey

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INTRODUCTION

When Vita Davi recalled her first encounter with Monterey, she focused not on Monterey or the United States as a new environment, but on its familiarity and a connection to her native Trapani, Sicily. "I could have been in Trapani," she said. "The whole place [Monterey] was familiar. The people made [Monterey] like home. Everyone encouraged me, helped me. We were very, very close. It was family to family."¹ This pattern of movement came to be known as the story of chain migration, as opposed to the individual immigration stories that historians traditionally focused on.

In recent years, scholars have sought to rectify our understanding of migration, and to emphasize that it was a complex process that must be viewed from many different angles. This new awareness requires revision at a multitude of local levels. The focus of this analysis is on one such locale, Monterey, California, 1880-1998. Studies of Italian Monterey have largely concentrated on the fishing industry, and the individual male actors who built it.² Yet, the history of Monterey's Sicilian community largely supports the recent body of scholarship on chain migration, as well as on the significance of female migrants in making the whole enterprise work.

Sicilian migrants to Monterey originated mainly from four villages in Sicily and only thirty-five family groups.³ They came in three distinct waves, beginning around 1880. The first wave came mainly from the villages of Isola Della Femina and San Vita Lo Capo, by way of Northern Africa. Some went first to Detroit or Milwaukee where there were kin connections, before settling in Pittsburg or Martinez, California where they could pursue their occupations as fishermen.

The advent of World War I ended the flow of this first big migration, although there continued to be considerable movement between Monterey and Pittsburg and also between San Francisco and the two smaller towns. The second wave of migration from Sicily began between 1919 and 1922, in the years after World War I, and lasted until the next war again interrupted travel between the two countries. The second wave was not as large as the first, about fifteen hundred more relatives came. All of these migrants had kin and village ties to the first settlers.

The late forties brought a third wave of migrants. As with the first two groups, these tended to be either young people of marriageable age, of both sexes, who wanted to find work, or the occasional child, parent, or grandparent who was needed to complete a family circle.

The Sicilian women who migrated to and from Monterey in the period 1880-1998 have a fascinating tale to tell, one that is of critical importance to the

historical record. The purpose of this study was to give women who made up the Italian community of Monterey a voice in the historical record.

Women created an Italian-American self-identified community in Monterey in four significant ways. First, they were willing to migrate with all of the personal changes that migration implied, rather than insisting that their migrant husbands return home to Sicily, and continue traditional lives. Second, they provided a critical part of the labor force in the Sicilian fishing industry by their work in the canneries, making the industrialization process in Monterey practical, which, in turn, made possible the economic prosperity of the community as a whole. Third, they generally controlled family finances and chose to invest in long term real estate, such as small businesses and rental properties, rather than only in canneries and fishing boats. This cemented their economic connection to Monterey and went beyond fishing as the only economic enterprise. And fourth, they re-created the *festas* and the social events that gave meaning to transplanted Italians and Sicilians and bonded one to another. This made it possible to overcome differences due to *campanilismo*⁴ that separated Sicilians from mainland Italians and Sicilians of other provinces from one another. The *festas*, rosary groups, and church events also smoothed over differences of class that became increasingly apparent as some families thrived economically and others did not. It is with this fourth effort to create community that is the focus of the following essay.

FESTA ITALIA

It would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of Sicilian women in the rituals of Sicilian community life, either for their own self-identities or for the identity of the community as a whole. They always had a role, and usually placed themselves squarely in the center of whatever ritual activity happened at a given moment. Many Sicilian community rituals excluded men entirely, and even male-centered rituals required the support and usually the presence of women. Sicilians celebrated, in ritualized form, everything from the full moon as a respite from fishing every month, to baptisms, weddings, funerals, and baby and bridal showers. Women gathered in one another's homes for ritualized sewing circles and prayer groups. Most important, women re-created the large-scale *festas* that celebrated Sicilian culture in the public space of Monterey. Ritual defined one critical part of who they were. The Santa Rosalia Festa was the single most important ritual event in the Sicilian community from its inception in 1935 well into the 1990's.

The religious *festa* is a deeply rooted part of Italian tradition. Each geographical area in Italy celebrates several of its own patron saints. Legends, stories of miracles, and special ceremony are all elements in the celebration. People, mostly women, prostrate themselves, hoping for protection from illness, tragedy, even from simply bad luck.⁵ Monterey had nothing like this tradition before 1935, and the Sicilians who settled here missed it.

The ICF and the Santa Rosalia *festa* celebrated the connections to each other and the identity as fisherfolk, and demonstrated to the larger community of Monterey what a powerfully positive force Sicilians were becoming. Equally

important, was the choice of Santa Rosalia. She was not only the patron saint of fishermen of Sicilian Palermo, but an important symbol for Sicilian women in the fishing community.

Many miracles at sea in the waters surrounding Palermo were attributed to the intervention of Santa Rosalia. Palermo and its surrounding coastal villages were people with fisherfolk, who came to associate Santa Rosalia with the safety of fishermen. Immigrants from Palermo (and vicinity), who had settled in Pittsburg, California brought the *fiesta* with them. It was here, in 1934, that Mrs. Francesca Giamona witnessed the Sicilian celebration of Santa Rosalia on American soil, and was inspired to hold one like it in Monterey.

Santa Rosalia appealed to Mrs. Giamona and to Sicilians in Monterey for the same reasons that she appealed to Sicilians in Palermo or Pittsburg. They were fisherfolk and she was widely known as the patron saint of fishermen. At a deeper level, however, they had immigrated as poor, hardworking, people who struggled desperately for a modicum of economic security. Although many had achieved a measure of financial security through fishing, no one forgot their roots. It was wonderful to them that someone born into wealth and an easy life would reject that comfort on religious grounds. "She was a real aristocrat, you know, but she gave up her whole life, everything, for God. This is something you must be called to," explained Jenny Russo.⁶

Santa Rosalia's refusal to become a wife or mother in a strongly patriarchal society which demanded these roles of women was equally incredible. Her choices gave her a freedom from the menial, from hardships, from the meanness of the real world that Italian women accepted every day as a normal part of their lives. These women might also have chosen a religious life with its seclusion and privacy; its freedom from the hardships of the mundane world.

Their choice to be wives of fishermen, with all of the risk that occupation required, meant a great deal. In honoring this woman saint they reminded one another of what they did and what they might have done. Men participated, but it was clearly a women's event. "It was always a women's event. It was the only time I remember women being really in charge. It was women on parade!" remembered Rosalie Ferrante of the *fiesta* in the late 1940's.

In 1935, Francesca Giamona, Rosa Ferrante, Giovanna Balbo and Dominica Enea got together in their rosary group and decided to make the Santa Rosalia *fiesta* in Monterey.⁷ Jenny Russo recalled:

The Santa Rosalia Festival got started with three or four ladies from the ICF [Italian Catholic Federation]. They wanted to do something to honor her. She was the patron saint of fishermen and Monterey was, after all, a fishing town. We brought her out every year on her day which was about the 4th of September. We wanted to do it on the full moon so the men could participate too. It was very solemn, very special.⁸

Their idea spread from rosary group to rosary group throughout the Sicilian neighborhoods of Monterey. Women were delegated to approach businessmen for help in raising money for the event. They only spoke to Sicilian businessmen, of

course. While it would not have been acceptable for women to solicit businessmen normally, religion gave them a respectable, acceptable reason to organize and work publicly. They also organized themselves into sewing groups and cooking groups to make costumes and prepare the banquet that would follow the procession and religious service.⁹

Above all, Santa Rosalia was unmistakably a female centered and religiously oriented event at its inception and for a decade to follow. Rosalie Ferrante remembered the *fiesta* as a child in the 1940's:

I was just a little girl. I remember being taken down to Cannery Row and being surprised. It was empty of men. There were no men anywhere, no trucks, no work going on. *It was only women, all women, housewives. I remember being really confused by this.*

My mother dressed me as an angel, and we got to wear lipstick, and then I was on a float. My Nonna [grandmother] was dressed in a white gown with a matching hat. *It was fun to see my grandmother out of the house, without her apron, directing people. I never saw her leave the house before. She told people where to line up, what to do. It was strange and exciting.*¹⁰

These women recalled the early days of the *fiesta* with a reverence for its piety and simplicity. It was richly spiritual and at the same time, authentically Sicilian. In the 1930's and 1940's the *fiesta* included the entire Sicilian community, with participants from Italians of other regional origins as well.

The planning for the *fiesta* traditionally began about two months in advance. Sicilian women in the ICF worked with the Carmelite nuns to make beautiful banners to be carried in the procession. In the 1940's, the women and sisters made a living rosary that the women of the ICF carried from San Carlos Church to the Wharf for the blessing of the boats. They used corks (representing the fishing industry) and made crepe paper roses. They sewed a plain brown dress for a wooden representation of Santa Rosalia, with a crown of roses on her head. She would be carried on the shoulders of their husband fishermen in tribute on the feast day, exactly as she was carried in Palermo. No one who was not Sicilian participated in this crucial element of the celebration.

The women went to all the Italian businessmen and boat owners and collected money to sponsor the event. By the late thirties and forties, they organized little girls (always of Sicilian ancestry) to be angels and chose one of their daughters each year to represent Santa Rosalia, dressing her in traditional brown dress, garland and cross. "Women picked the angels and queen, which was a competitive thing," recalled Rosalie Ferrante. She remembered long hours of "sewing costumes, decorating the church, the floats, planning and cooking the community feast."

On the day of the *fiesta*, the entire Italian community gathered at San Carlos Church for High Mass, which was said in a mixture of Italian and Latin, and included incense, singing, and the saying of the Rosary. It sometimes had to be held outside, in the church school's playground area, in order to accommodate the huge crowd. Families then went home for a few hours of lunch and rest before

returning to the church to say a special rosary in honor of the saint. They gathered at 2 o'clock and started the procession.

The band from Pittsburg came first, followed by the local parish priest with the altar boys. The girl representing Santa Rosalia came next. "I had to be Santa Rosalia every year until 1941 when the war broke out, and we stopped the *fiesta* for those years" remembered Josephine Giamona Weber. "I didn't want to do it: I was shy. But my mother made me. In the end I always gave in to her. *It was important to her.*"¹³ Three fishermen followed the young girl, carrying the wooden statue of Santa Rosalia on their shoulders. And then came the women. Fifty to a hundred women, were dressed in long white gowns, mid-calf in length, with wool skirts and white shirts on top. They wore yellow satin neck-ties and white caps, as they solemnly carried the living rosary. The yellow and white represented the colors of the ICF. "They were so proud, so beautiful," remembered Catherine Loccoco. The rest of the community followed. The procession slowly made its way down Abrego Street to the wharf, where the priest blessed each fishing boat in turn, in the name of the Saint. A wreath commemorating all the fishermen who had died at sea that year was thrown out onto the water, accompanied by prayer and solemnity. Afterwards, the people walked to the Parish Hall where Italian desserts and coffee, made by the community of women, were served. Eventually tables were set up on the beach by the wharf. Everyone brought their pasta and bread and fried fish. Everything was shared, including the homemade wine.¹¹

The ICF and the Santa Rosalia *fiesta* provided everyone, but especially women who served as the organizers and workers, with an opportunity to go beyond their fishing boat loyalties, beyond loyalties to smaller kin groups, and to celebrate their connections to one another, their identity as fisherfolk, and to demonstrate to the larger community of Monterey what a powerfully positive force Sicilians were becoming. Equally important, was the choice of Santa Rosalia. She was not only the patron saint of fishermen of Sicilian Palermo, but an important symbol for Sicilian women in the fishing community.

The *fiesta* not only strengthened identity for Monterey's Sicilian women, it also gave new immigrants an opportunity to come together with Sicilian-Americans and merge into their new community. Vitina Spadaro came to America in 1937, from Marettimo. The Santa Rosalia *Festa* was, for her, a defining moment as a new immigrant and member of Monterey's community of Sicilian women:

I was eight years old, just a little girl, when I arrived in Monterey. It was September, and the Santa Rosalia Festival was happening. They asked me to be an angel, and to say a prayer in Italian. I was frightened and tried very hard to speak loud enough so that everyone could hear me. Then I looked up. I saw her. Santa Rosalia. She looked real, really alive to me. She seemed to be smiling, and a warm feeling came over me. It was as though she knew. She knew I would be devoted to her. And I was. From then on I worked for her, honored her. I can honestly pray to her. She is truly in my heart.¹²

The Santa Rosalia Festival succeeded in giving her a sense of belonging to her new environment, to a new community, while at the same time, it was familiar and deeply spiritual. "Every year, from that moment, on, I worked for that festival.

I participated as a child. When I grew up, I ordered the flowers, decorated the floats, helped with the food, the entertainment. I have always been involved."

Vitina Spadaro's dedication to Santa Rosalia and the festival, necessarily brought her into the circle of Sicilian women who formed the nucleus of the Catholic Church and of the ICF, which in turn, formed the nucleus of the Sicilian community. Mrs. Spadaro became an integral member of that community. The Santa Rosalia festival was a critical catalyst for her, and for many other new immigrant girls and women. Their involvement in making it happen accelerated the process of establishing their own roots in an alien land. Anita Mairoana Ferrante remembered her own and her mother's immigration experience and entree into Monterey:

*They[Sicilian immigrants] were going back in their minds to the warmth of their country and bringing that feeling here. It united us. The first thing my mother did was ask to join the festa. That's how we were incorporated into the community; through the festa. That was truly how it worked. They started clubs, union too. The Fishermen's Union, the ICF, she wanted to become part of the community. And she wanted us to become part of the community too.*¹³

Mike Maiorana (second cousin to Anita Ferrante) explained:

I think Italian women are so family oriented that unless they get involved in something like that [the religious *festa*] they don't leave the shell of their family. For women it [immigration] was a choice; leave my parents or leave my husband [who was going to America]. It was a hard decision for them. For my mother, for my wife. There's a very strong bond there. Sicilians are very protective--against danger, against failure. My mom really dominated my decision process. They rarely even visited people outside of their families. So to get involved in the ICF and the *festa* was a big thing. Those organizations give them a feeling of service and connections outside the family circle. It was social and religious. Religion was a primary motivation--even for women who were shy. *When they came to Monterey they wanted to develop that same feeling they had for their native village--this place belongs to me.*¹⁴

Yet, in 1930's and 1940's Monterey, the community being built did not include every immigrant from Italy. It was clearly a Sicilian community. And Santa Rosalia was a Sicilian community event. "If you were not Sicilian, you were an outsider," remembered Theresa Canepa, 62, whose family immigrated from Genoa and is now a Monterey City Councilwoman. "I was never in the parade. I never got to be an angel or a princess. That was for the Sicilian girls."¹⁵

Jenny Russo, 85, who is Sicilian, disagreed. "Of course we were building a community here," she recalled in an interview about the origins of the *festa* for Santa Rosalia, and of the Italian Catholic Federation, which sponsored it:

We wanted to have something for ourselves. It was in the 1930's, 1931 when we started the ICF and 1935 when we started the Santa Rosalia *fiesta*. The fishing was good and we were all doing good. We wanted to be together, like family. It was all Italian. Only Italian. The Santa Rosalia Festival represented that. The real meaning of the *fiesta*, for us, in being Italian, was religious. We didn't allow divorcees to join the ICF. Only married couples. But it didn't matter if you were Sicilian, Genovese, Napoleon. We wanted to make a social group of Italians in the church. We would gather for a little dessert, coffee, a little dancing, a little singing. It was nice for us.¹⁶

At first, the greater community of Monterey paid little attention to what the Sicilian fishing community was doing. There was a tiny mention of the Santa Rosalia Festival in the back pages of a chatty, local publication, What's Doing magazine in 1937, but none at all in the widely read, only major newspaper, The Monterey Herald. In a small, one paragraph article, titled "New and Old Festivals," What's Doing magazine explained that Mexican fiestas, Italian-American feast days, and American festivals such as the Fourth of July have much in common, but feast days are distinguished for their religious overtones and tend to be "set apart for their solemn, sacred character." The writer described the Santa Rosalia *fiesta* in two sentences as follows:

Of the groups comprising the population of the Monterey Peninsula, those of Italian-American ancestry have observed many feast-days, brought with them all the traditional, colorful celebrations of their native Sicily. All of which brings us to the feast of Santa Rosalia, that will be celebrated Sunday, September 16th.

Two photographs accompanied the small article. One was of a handful of Italian fishermen following a horse-drawn float in a Columbus Day celebration. The other photograph was of a group of Chinese people carrying lanterns, an American flag, and a large crucifix with the following explanation attached:

Frankly, we don't know when this picture was taken or why, but these early-day Chinese fishermen of the Peninsula were celebrating some festival or other by parading with flags, Chinese lanterns and cymbals.

Neither photograph had anything to do with the article, much less with the Santa Rosalia *fiesta*. The lack of recognition, much less appreciation, on the part of Monterey Peninsula residents for the economic contribution that Sicilians made to the area in these years was noticeable. Without mentioning Italians by name William D' Avee, a Carmel writer, made the following observation in an article titled "Monterey and the Canned Sardine":

Monterey has three major sources of income: the fisheries, the tourist trade and the armed forces. Its attitude toward the first

of these is little short of neurotic. To say that Monterey is 'proud' of its major industry is misleading. The pride of Monterey in the sardine industry is a far cry from the pride, say, of Pittsburgh in the steel business or Detroit in its autos. It is an industrial development of which an ordinary community would be very proud. It is a development of which Monterey seems scarcely aware.

Sicilians created an insular self-sustaining community in the 1930's. They were ignored by the relatively small, heterogeneous American society in spite of their economic significance. They did not participate in the rituals of American life in the same way they celebrated rituals brought over from Sicily. The Fourth of July, for example, paled in significance to Santa Rosalia.¹⁷

Yet, by 1935, the Sicilian fishing community was getting harder to ignore. The industry itself flourished in Monterey. Italians of many regions flocked into the city and dominated other ethnic groups in terms of sheer numbers. There are no city directories for the years 1931-38. However, there were 684 people with Italian surnames listed in the city directory of Monterey for 1930 (out of 5,000 listings). By 1939, 995 listings had Italian surnames (out of 5300 listings). During this period the population of Monterey grew from approximately 9,000 to 11,000. There were sprinklings of other ethnic groups, but no other group was as large as the Italians.¹⁸

Italians not only formed the largest ethnic community in the city, they definitely dominated the fishing industry. Japanese, Portuguese, Slavonians, and Scandinavians were represented, but not in the numbers that Italians were. At the level of boat ownership, out of 150 boats fishing in Monterey in 1935, 90% were owned and operated by Italians.¹⁹ They dominated ownership of the newly industrialized canneries as well. Between 1939 and 1949 Italians established or took over half the canneries on the Wharf.²⁰ All of this meant a major contribution to the city's economic base. Italians bought real estate as quickly as they could. Home ownership meant a great deal to them, and gave them social and economic stake in the city of Monterey.

Each year the Santa Rosalia *fiesta* reflected that stake. It became increasingly ostentatious and inclusive. Groups of men from various Italian organizations such as the Sons of Italy and the Knights of Columbus were added to the procession in the late 1930's. By the end of the 1940's, a pony cart with children dressed in traditional costumes, and groups of Tarantella dancers joined, along with a queen and court of the *fiesta*, chosen by lot from the pool of daughters of fishermen. The women of the ICF who started the event raised money for a real stone statue. Now Santa Rosalia could not be carried, but was led through the procession on a float, which women spent weeks decorating. The simple religious event began to look more like a parade than a traditional *fiesta*.²¹

Instead of coffee and homemade desserts, the entire Italian community gathered at the wharf for a gigantic barbecue. Anyone and everyone was welcomed. The Bishop came from San Francisco with an entourage to bless the boats en masse, rather than individually. A huge ceremonial wreath replaced the simple, small one to be thrown out to sea in memory of the fishermen who had died.²² People continued their celebrations beyond the parade with parties on the boats which had been decorated for the occasion with garlands of flowers and Italian flags. The

Monterey Herald ran front page stories with full page photographs covering the *fiesta*, and the City of Monterey made overtures to the ICF, wanting to run the event. Women and the ICF steadfastly refused.²³

A break occurred during the war years. Santa Rosalia was not celebrated in deference to the war effort. With the end of the war, however, the *fiesta* picked up where it had left off. 1948 was the year of the last big fishing season, but for several years afterwards the *fiesta* grew, perhaps in a frantic effort to **will** the sardines, and with them, prosperity and security, back to Monterey.

In 1952, Jerome Lucido, son of a fisherman but himself a local banker, and the Sons of Italy took over officially from the women of the ICF. Instead of a paean to the saint and to Italian women, it became a cultural extravaganza, a sort of Italian Pride Day with less obvious connections to religion. It was always meant to express the connections among Sicilians, and even with less of a religious force, the *fiesta* organizers never lost sight of the purpose of community building through this religious ritual. The very ostentatiousness of the *fiesta* in the 1950's and 1960's signified the entree of Monterey Sicilians into the ranks of the middle class. They were no longer poor fisherfolk, but people of property and political power who could afford to stage a real event. Some women simply dropped out at this point, citing the lack of religious piety in the Italian *fiesta*-turned-American parade.²⁴ Many more women stayed with the *fiesta*, and continued to work as support systems: organizing the children, the princesses, the food, and the sewing of costumes.²⁵

The Sons of Italy, in contrast to the ICF, was organized in 1928 by Antonio Brucia along political rather than religious lines. "You could be a heathen and be a member of the Sons of Italy," recalled Mary Darling, Mr. Brucia's daughter, who, along with her four sisters was utilized by her father as a notary public, translator and interpreter, and political organizer. Mr. Brucia, owner of Brucia's Tavern on Alvarado Street in downtown Monterey, sought to broaden, maximize and consolidate Sicilian political power in Monterey:

My father believed in the vote, in citizenship. He was responsible for more than 500 Italians becoming American citizens. He filled out their citizenship papers, acted as their witness, and took them to the County Court in Salinas to pass their test and take their oath.

While the ICF built community on religious foundations, Mr. Brucia and the Sons of Italy worked to build political solidarity along ethnic lines. Both groups saw community-building through organization at the small group level as an essential requisite for Sicilians to survive in the promising, but often hostile American environment. Mrs. Darling remembered her father openly lobbying for the economic and political interests of the fishermen he helped:

When there were elections in Monterey, he would approach the candidates and pull out his 'black book' with the names of the 500 citizens and ask the candidate what he would do for the Italian fishermen in exchange for their vote. In this way, he was able to have the city buy a fire boat in case a fishing boat caught on fire,

have an Italian (Frank Marinello) put on the police force so he could act as interpreter. My father helped elect a councilman (Shedo "Buck" Russo) who later became Mayor [of Monterey]. My father formed the local Sons of Italy Lodge, and became its first president.

The political activism by the members of the Sons of Italy combined with the social and religious activism of the Italian Catholic Federation created a powerful feeling of strength for Sicilians, even as fishing hit a snag with the worrisome scarcity of the sardines year after years in the 1950's and 1960's. Political and socio-religious activism were brought together in the ritual of the *fiesta*. The 1950's and 1960's were years of grand parades and floats, festival queens, and a great show of Sicilian community power. The community was in the process of switching gears, beginning to be aware of and capitalize on the incipient tourism industry.

The Monterey Herald ran full page stories covering the festival with another page of photographs in this decade. In dramatic contrast to the era of the thirties when the Santa Rosalia *fiesta* was ignored by the community at large and certainly by the news media, the headline in 1952 read: "Parade is Highlight of Weekend Events Here: 20,000 Persons Watch Colorful Spectacle of Fisherman's Festival". The article was significantly located in the News section of the paper, right next to the editorials. The Sicilians had created a solid, middle class community and had also made their mark on the consciousness of the city by 1952.

According to the Herald article that year, 3500 people took part in the parade itself "in a colorful display of religious and patriotic devotion." The event was clearly meant to be both political and religious but always Italian-centered. Photographs of smiling nuns preceding the statue of the saint in the parade were juxtaposed with Italian community leaders and local political dignitaries. There is a huge photograph of the blessing of the boats, and many shots of the Bishop and religious dignitaries. Yet, the article also gave a detailed description of the order of the procession, which was in marked contrast to the small religious events of the 1930's and 1940's. Political power as well as cultural and spiritual solidarity, was evident in highly ritualized form:

Leading off the parade was the civic division with city and county officials, the Monterey police and fire departments and the gaily caparisoned Monterey County Sheriff's Posse. The Festival Committee rode in a decorated purse seine skiff.

Then came the military, led by a Coast Guard shore rescue unit and the crack 6th Infantry Band and a battalion of troops from Fort Ord. The Navy was represented by the Electronics Band from Treasure Island and marching units from the Postgraduate School and the Naval Auxillary Air Station here. Two tanks made up the noisy entry from the Peninsula's National Guard outfit.²⁶

The article continued to describe at some length the many drill teams, bands, drum corps, floats, and horse marching units that participated. It ended with

the following comment, "And of course, the theme of the parade was emphasized by the long line of devout marchers from the Italian Catholic Federation...[who] carried huge rosaries fashioned out of brilliantly colored tinsel balls."²⁷

Interviews and newspaper articles made clear that men and women together led and controlled the *fiesta*. Masculine symbols such as military marching units and bands, representatives of local government, police and fire fighting units were all prominent in the celebrations that occurred in the 1950's. Women remained critical and integral actors, however, and the *fiesta* never lost the thread of religious purpose that continued to be the meaningful inducement for women's continued involvement, especially for newly arrived immigrant women.²⁸

The fishing industry was on the decline by 1952, although everyone still felt hopeful about the next season. "It wasn't like it just ended. We all thought, 'Hey, maybe next year it will be better.' So we held on. We kept going, trying to make things work," remembered Ray "Spats" Lucido, who lost his cannery in these years, and was forced to drive a taxicab in order to support his family.²⁹ "People got kind of quiet, depressed. We didn't want to admit things were so bad," said his sister, Betty Lucido.³⁰

The Santa Rosalia Festival became almost a frantic attempt to keep the community together in spite of economic realities that ought to have forced emigration elsewhere. Mike Maiorana, a youth in the 1950's recalled his frustration at the obvious demise of the industry, but the stubborn allegiance of Monterey fishermen to the Sicilian community as a permanent fixture in the city of Monterey:

The sardines kept moving south, to San Pedro, and the fishermen in Monterey kept getting poorer and poorer. The San Pedro fishermen made money, but our families wouldn't leave. I wondered why. I asked my Dad--why don't we move to San Pedro? What are we doing here? He couldn't really explain it to me, but what he said amounted to that they had a home here. They worked hard at making a community, which meant for them a physical feeling of ownership, of place. People who were rivals in Sicily came together in Monterey, even if it was only a little bit. It's remarkable that they created a community because they were always separated by village allegiances in Sicily.³¹

By the middle decades of the 1960's, some families did move, mostly to the San Pedro area.³² The ritual of the *fiesta* persisted, but increasingly lost its importance both for Sicilians and for the city of Monterey. Even huge tributes to Santa Rosalia would not bring back the sardines. Sicilians began to come to terms with a sense of loss, that there was an end to the abundance that had once seemed limitless. It was a sad and confusing time.³³

Many former cannery workers found work in retail or laundries when canneries closed or burned. Fishermen found jobs in restaurants or service industries as tourism picked up. The frugal and fortunate had savings enough to invest in commercial property, small business, or rental property in Monterey.³⁴

There was an attempt to restore the ritual of Santa Rosalia in the early 1970's. Organizers believed that it was a critical tribute to the community that steadfastly remained in Monterey in spite of economic exigencies that ought to have

forced a mass emigration elsewhere, as was so often the case in the social history of Sicilians. It remained even more an Italian Pride Day and cultural food festival during the 1970's and 1980's.³⁵

In 1991, Josephine Favazza head of the ICF, restored the position of the ICF in running the *fiesta*, renamed Festa Italia, and dedicated to Italians of all regions, not just Sicilians. The nineties marked years of compromise. The *fiesta* included the women of the ICF, but also involved many new members of the community who never fished or worked in canneries, and whose families were never involved in fishing.³⁶ The nineties Santa Rosalia Festas were filled with nostalgia and reminisces, rather than authentic ritual celebrations that directly related to everyday lives of the participants as fisherfolk.

Ritual activity continues to envelope Sicilians in Monterey in a warm community of families connected by village and kinship, to the present day. Ritual activities allowed Sicilians to overcome differences of status and class and just be Sicilian together, speaking the same dialects, eating familiar food, sharing a special moment on the calendar with one another. "We are so close," said Mrs. Cardinale of the present day Sicilian community. "Things have changed, sure, but my Mother [who lives with her] still plays cards once a week with her *camares* [women Mrs. Cardinale's mother used to work with as a forelady in the canneries]. I see everyone. We stay in touch." Mrs. Cardinale marched in the 1998 Santa Rosalia Festival, as usual, as part of the living rosary. She remembered being an angel as a little girl.³⁷ Through ritual, Sicilians were bound to each other and also valued and accepted as part of the multicultural population that formed the social landscape of Monterey.

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2. See Peter J. Cutino, Monterey--A View From Garlie Hill, Pacific Grove: Boxwood Press, 1995; Michael Hemp, Cannery Row: A History of Old Ocean Avenue, Pacific Grove: The History Company, 1986; Tom Mangelsdorf, A History of Steinbeck's Cannery Row, Santa Cruz: Western Tanager Press, 1986; Arthur F. McEvoy, The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries 1850-1980, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986; Randall Reinstadt, Where Have All the Sardines Gone: A Pictorial History of Cannery Row: Ghost Town Publications, 1978; Earl H. Rosenberg, "A History of the Fishing and Canning Industries in Monterey California", Master's Thesis, University of Nevada 1961.
3. Robert Enea did painstaking research over a twenty year period on Sicilian family trees in Monterey. He identified the following family groups: Aiello, Balestreri/Balesteri, Bellici, Bruno, Tardio, Crivello, Compagno, Sollecito, San Filippo, Enea, Ferrante, Lucido, Russo, Colletto, Cutino, Balbo, Spadaro, Mineao, Davi, Alliotti, Mairoana, Ventimiglia, Giamona, Cardinale, Cusenza, Riso, Dimaggio, Cefalu, Torrente, Arancio, Maiorana, Catania.
4. *Campanilismo* is taken from the Italian word for "bell" (*campana*). It means that Italians feel an almost family-like bond with anyone living within the range of the village bell, and a rivalry with everyone else. See Richard Gambino, Blood of My Blood, New York: 1974 p. 65.
5. Orsi, The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem 1880-1950 New Haven: Yale 1986 pp. 3-8.
6. Interview with Jenny Russo, July, 1995.
7. Italian Heritage Society historical publication September 8-9, 1979; Interview Catherine Loccoco June, 1994; Interview Domenica Enea, September 1995.
8. Interview with Jenny Russo, July 1995.
9. Interview Anita Maiorana Ferrante September 8, 1995
10. Interview with Rosalie Ferrante, September 1994
11. Interview with Josephine Giamona Weber and Catherine Loccoco, July, 1994.
12. Interview with Vetina Spadaro, September 12, 1995

13. Interview with Anita Maiorana Ferrante, September 8, 1995.
14. Interview Mike Maiorana July 14 1994
15. Interview with Theresa Canepa, February 24, 1998.
16. Interview with Jenny Russo, July, 1995.
17. Peter Cutino, A View From Garlic Hill, Italian Heritage Society, Sept. 1979.
18. Monterey City Directories, 1930, 1939. Monterey Public Library. California Room. John Walton is currently at work on an analysis of class among ethnic groups in Monterey that better documents numbers of Italians located in Monterey in this period.
19. Documents Monterey Maritime Museum Collection; Pacific Fishermen
20. Ibid.
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23. Interview Jenny Russo, Catherine Loccoco, July 1994.
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28. Interview Vettina Spadaro and Anita Maiorana Ferrante
29. Interview Ray and Betty Lucido, September-October 1995.
30. Ibid.
31. Interview Mike Maiorana, August 4, 1995.
32. Interview Peter Cutino, Balestreri family.
33. Sal Colletto family history; Peter Cutino family history; Robert Enea family history; Rosalie Ferrante family history.
34. Spadaro and Cardinale family interviews 1994-1998; Eleanor Fugetta August 1995; Nancy Mangiapane, Phyllis Macaluso, August 1994.
35. Rosalie Ferrante
36. Interviews 1991-1998 board of Festa Italia.
37. Interview Vitina Peroni, Ursual Arancio and Vettina Spadaro March 21, 1998.

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