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CLELIA FAZZARI // Le Voci di Antonimina

(The timestamps align with the start of the video)

00:00

Many husbands left for America along with my grandfather and abandoned their wives, who waited for them to return, but they never came back .
And they left wives and children.

When there was the 1918 war, my grandfather went to America because there was little work here. So he went to America, and when the war broke out, we had no more news from them, and he didn't even send money.

00:30

My grandmother, having no more news, thought my grandfather had died .
After a long time, however, there were some Calabrian prisoners of war, and my grandfather sent news of himself through them . After a long time, my mother was already big, she was 12 or 13 years old, and he made twelve trips to America .

01:00

My grandfather then began to provide by buying a house, clothes, everything .
He gave my mother the opportunity to get married, spending 70,000 lire and also buying her a house .

Because back then the money was there; exchanging the dollar for the lira yielded more . One dollar was a lot here, and so he did many things .

01:30

He thus gave his children the opportunity to get married and so forth . Then he returned from America and died here .
He had an American pension, both he and his wife .
For the sake of his family here, so as not to abandon them, he would come and go from America every two, three, or four years .

02:00

He went and came back because he didn't like taking the family to live in America .
When he returned here permanently, he was already of retirement age .
So while he was in America he sent money here; there it was the dollar and here the lira, and exchanging the dollar for the lira—which had more value—yielded more .

02:30

There it was the dollar and here it was the lira .
In America there was more work, more things .
Here, on the other hand, people worked in farming and the countryside, and he worked as a laborer for little money because the wage was low .
In America no, America was America, he sent money and grandma exchanged it .

03:00

She would go to the bank and exchange it, and get double what he sent; they became rich, with America they enriched themselves .

He made twelve trips; it took twenty-two days at sea because back then people didn't travel by plane .

Twelve trips, because my grandfather didn't like the American environment .

03:30

Since he thought in the old-fashioned way, I have cousins there forever .
And he didn't like the American environment, otherwise we always said to him,
"Grandpa, why didn't you take us to America?"
"Shut up", he would say, "America is not for you!"
But he lived a life of hardship; he returned in 1947, the year of peace .

04:00

When he returned the first time, I said, "I have a sister ('hermana') in America, a sister, her name is Teresa .
We were nursed by the same mother because we were born in the same period and my mother didn't have milk to breastfeed, so she nursed me .
And she is in America; first her father went, and then he took his family with him .

04:30

Their family moved to America when I was older, I was 6 years old .
When my "foster sister's" mother called me, she told me that life there was nicer
and to go live there because they were doing better than how people were doing here .
But I couldn't go .

Argentina is not like America .
When I was little, I did everything .

05:00

I played, we played hopscotch, hide and seek .

My sisters and I went to church for Mass—home and church, because back then there

were no cell phones .

06:00

Once upon a time, we respected each other and loved each other; even in the countryside, we cared for one another .
We all used to gather in the countryside .

At Christmas, our grandparents bought us new shoes, every Christmas .
Then for Epiphany, they gave us 500 lire and a bit of fabric so we could make our own clothes .

06:30

In those days for Epiphany, the grandparents gave me gifts; after the grandparents stopped, my mother gave them to me .

On the night of Epiphany, they made us gifts, telling us that these gifts were brought by the Befana who entered the house coming down the chimney, and it was either the grandparents or the mother making us the little gifts .

07:00

For whoever didn't get a gift from their grandparents, their mother would make it, and vice versa; however, it was a deeply felt holiday . It seemed as if the Befana were a good woman, going around bringing gifts in the early days .

Later on, though, I heard my grandparents or my mother waking up that night to leave me the gift .

I went to elementary school, and there was a teacher where we did two hours of handcrafts, and I learned *punteggiato* [Note: *Punteggiato* refers to a traditional needlework technique involving stippling or dotted embroidery stitches] .

07:30

Then at age 12, I went to the nuns, and there they taught me how to embroider . Then

step by step, I put effort into it and learned to embroider, and I made many things with embroidery .
Not anymore now because my hand doesn't work well anymore and neither does my sight, but I still do a little something .
I am old, I am almost eighty years old .

08:00

Twenty-two of these all emigrated, they went to Biella .
In 1964 I started going to school because there were no teachers .

08:30

At school, I obtained the fifth-grade diploma; then they passed a law, so I continued further and did sixth grade .
Then, through a private course, I got my middle school diploma .
I was already grown up, I was already past thirty years old; a private teacher came, and that's how I earned this diploma .

09:00

We asked our parents for permission, not because there was no freedom, but there was less than today .
And school was wonderful because they taught us so many things .
They taught us how to greet each other, how to show respect for the elderly . It was a wonderful education!
In those days, many were illiterate, like my grandmother for example; my mother, on the other hand

09:30

attended school with Master Pelle, the father of Donna Rita .
Those were beautiful times, at least for me they were beautiful times .
People my age back then all went to school .
They all got the fifth-grade diploma .
Then for the most part, the others continued, and I cried because I wanted to keep studying at the school in Locri, but my father didn't let me go .
He didn't let me go because he said female children shouldn't be wandering around .

10:00
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And he told me that if I wanted, I could go learn how to sew and embroider, but not to school in Locri .
And I cried for days on end because I wanted to go to school in Locri .
And he thought this because once upon a time there was more reserve, and female daughters were only supposed to do home and church, and that's it; there wasn't the freedom there is today, if today a girl wants to go somewhere, she goes .
I remember I was already grown up and my father would say, "At 5:00 you have to be home."

10:30

And at 4:30 I was home . And this applied to everyone because that was the mentality back then .
Not now, and now they do well!

He told me he wouldn't let me go to America, and I obeyed . Now, if young people want to, they leave . Then I got used to that environment and couldn't leave anymore . One must cultivate that desire to know .

11:00

And I grew up like this, and this is how I go forward .
For me, it was all normal and I didn't care about anything; if later on they had told me "no no, you can go to America", it wouldn't have even crossed my mind, I wouldn't have gone .
I like that environment, and I still like it .

Once upon a time, look, they were too much . Because parents might arrange a marriage, and that wasn't nice . Now they do well!

This point is right, because they should choose for themselves .
Everyone must choose the person they like and appreciate, not them arranging the marriage .
I don't like that environment .

For example, someone would go and say "so-andv-so wants your daughter", and they

agreed, took a little time, and made the marriages .
Arranged marriages for the most part .

12:30

In fact, my parents wanted to see me settled, and it was my free choice .
The choice of marriage wasn't something you could do like "this is the dress" .
If I didn't feel the desire to have a family, why would I get married!
I wouldn't have listened to myself!

13:00

My parents supported me because they wanted me to get married.
My mother was 16 years old and my dad was 32; they had sixty-two years of marriage .
When my mother died, my father told her that for her he had acted as a father, a brother, and a husband .
In our family we always loved each other, everyone .

13:30

Mom, dad, and children, everyone . We grew up together .
I was the youngest and I bossed the older ones around .
It was arranged, but a girl at 16 years old and him at 32—however, she was happy because my father was quite good and polite .
They had trust and freedom, because back then they were more reserved .
For example, in a certain place they shouldn't go, with that person they shouldn't speak .

14:00

Not now, because now it's different times .
Once upon a time no, because you couldn't; we had to stay closed inside without looking at this one or that one .
When someone was married, she couldn't go around alone with others; she had to have her father or mother accompanying them because they didn't let them go alone.
And once upon a time, women were slaves . Husbands subdued women, deciding for them where to go or where not to go.

14:30

Husbands kept them as slaves, some of them, but others didn't .
However, for the most part, there was too much jealousy .
In my time, they worked in the countryside; we had the clothes we sewed, these things .
Homemakers, mostly homemakers .

15:00

This here: we sewed, we embroidered, we went to the countryside, we gathered olives and acorns .

15:05

My name is Clelia Fazzari, born in Antonimina on 07/13/1947 .