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TERESA MONTELEONE // Le Voci di Antonimina

(The timestamps align with the start of the video)

00:00:00:22 - 00:00:33:09

My rebellious spirit you could see when the first time my father didn't let me go to Piedmont to make the application. But then my husband helped me and I went away. I freed myself and I went. It was the first, the second time. I was rebellious because I wanted to go to school, but my mom didn't want to because she was jealous/protective.

00:00:33:12 - 00:01:10:10

Three. I had learned to smoke cigarettes, but I would hide here, hide there. My husband knew. Be careful though. My mother no. My father would buy them for me, hide them for me and I would take them back. Do you see a father? Does a father help his daughter? I don't know. Yes, maybe I would have done it too. I tell you the truth for a daughter,

there's nothing you wouldn't pay. My name is Teresa Monteleone, I am part of the family.

00:01:10:10 - 00:02:00:12

She, Monteleone was a very large family, the Monteleones were, let's say that in this family I was born, there were many of us, I was born into the family with my dad and my mom who were actually cousins, even my father was the son of a Monteleone who had a lot of land, a lot, and so there were four daughters and one boy. So someone had to take care of the land, and so they didn't send my father to study.

00:02:00:12 - 00:02:33:07

My grandfather says you have to dance with [work] the land. Then these kids were left orphans, because my grandmother died young at 30. But they managed because then there was an aunt from somewhere else and a helping hand arrived. I was a favorite granddaughter because they all loved me.

00:02:33:09 - 00:03:20:24

They all loved me. My brother and I grew up well, a united family and my mom, my father took good care of us even though they were humble peasants, they took quite good care of us. In the summer we went to the countryside because we had this land and this house where we lived. It was a nice, bright, spacious house and even a cousin of mine came to live with us and all the roads.

00:03:20:26 - 00:04:26:26

To the sea we went little, we went, my mom took us for 15 days, something like that and we went on foot from one area to another to catch the bus. Once both I and my brother grew up, my father wanted us to go to school at all costs, why are you laughing? I don't know, they didn't send me, but you must go study and we went. Once school was finished, school I went locally [to Locri] we all went to Locri because at the time Locri was the closest, we graduated, I met my husband then, while he was coming to my house to visit me he walked, he had a strange walk with these shoes that tap and I recognized him, I recognized him.

00:04:26:27 - 00:05:05:09

I would look out the window and in the evening we would see each other like this. Then, I tell the truth, we met like this, but then they were friends with my brother too and he came to my house. After that the years passed and then we got married. Instead, my husband, my father and my mom lived far apart, only that my father went and played with a whistle.

00:05:05:12 - 00:05:51:26

Here with the slippers goes a whistle and my mom understood it and looked out. My

father-in-law was older, my mother-in-law was younger, there was a twelve-year difference between them, there was a twelve-year difference and you know what my... my father-in-law said to my mother-in-law: "Even if they don't want to, I want you anyway. You will be my wife" and my mother-in-law didn't know how to walk around the village because her father wouldn't let her go out, because she was beautiful and her father was jealous.

00:05:51:28 - 00:06:14:12

When she had to go down to go down. She was embarrassed. No, but there was a priest, my uncle, because I am from a family, on both sides and the other. There were two things.

00:06:14:14 - 00:07:00:22

Priests, one is what's-his-name, one is a Jesuit and the other was the town priest. The Jesuits. We have a Jesuit and he is buried in the Posillipo areas, Naples, something like that, they didn't give him to us to bring him [back], because their law made them stay there. Anyway, without dwelling on all these things, I tell the truth, we were... we got married, me and my husband, we had two children and then Sarah had two babies.

00:07:00:25 - 00:07:47:26

We are doing well like this, well. I am not doing well because I was always used to my husband, I was a young girl when we got together, you understand? And so if you want... good thing I have my daughters close by. Anyway, in that period there was a job application notice that you could go north to get a permanent position. In 1995 I went. I didn't want to go because then I felt remorse that I was leaving two small children, people with him and with my mom.

00:07:47:26 - 00:08:34:06

Though I must say the truth that my mom came to live here and I left. I went to Arengo, which would be a small village near Novara. Before leaving, I won't tell you, they called me from the land. No. It was one morning, they made me leave. The next day I called my husband because he was working. The next day he told me I'm coming, I'll accompany you the first time and so you know, I had a lot of things to carry and we went.

00:08:34:08 - 00:08:56:03

He stayed one day and I stayed a year. But in that year I went and back and forth. Maybe I was the first of Antonio [Antonimina] to leave for work after the famous emigration plus someone until two.

00:08:56:06 - 00:09:31:00

You know, not everyone looked upon me favorably because they said "how did she leave to breastfeed the children" but I didn't listen to anyone because it was a bit my character and it still is my character and my husband helped me in that precise choice. Every now and then I would return because I wanted to see the little girls, I took the plane in those days and I came alone.

00:09:31:02 - 00:10:11:21

I would arrive in Reggio or Lamezia. He would come pick me up and I would come. I saw the little girls for two or three days and then I went back to the shape [north]. They would tell me at school, "You Calabrians come here, you take the job and then you don't return to Del Trio [the north]." You don't know me, but I return, in fact punctual every time I went, taking what I needed and then returning.

00:10:11:25 - 00:10:58:09

I taught the gypsies [Roma]. It was Brancaleone, a town near Reggio, and I traveled every day that I went there to the gg [day]. But the older ones in the afternoon, the gypsies welcomed me very well, very well, they loved me, but I... everyone told me, "Look they steal, nothing like this ever happened here," they loved me, in fact they invited me to their homes, but I didn't go because I had nausea [felt uneasy].

00:10:58:12 - 00:12:14:02

As soon as I went the first day, seven came with seven children for me to baptize them. They wanted me to be godmother to seven children, but seven children. You know what it meant to buy seven necklaces, little dresses, lunch for everyone, but to them denied. I said I can't baptize because you tell me how was I going to manage... I confessed another thing to a cousin of mine who takes the moves [is a priest] who passed away last year, I said "look this thing happened to me", he says "it doesn't matter, you did it well, it's not like the photos" and so I didn't baptize them, but I always brought them little dresses, things that they, you know what they did just to go back? They threw them away, because they didn't want clothes, they wanted

00:12:14:02 - 00:12:18:27

money, they didn't want money [wanted money].

00:12:19:00 - 00:12:44:12

Wherever I went they went to funerals, there was a saint who gave them bread. After Mass, you know what she did? They brought that bread to me. Anyway, let's go back. Since I went to the Novara area because she.

00:12:14:14 - 00:13:24:13

There I found myself very well, I had made quite a few friends. So many youngsters

loved me like you wouldn't believe. Then with our smell [intent] of leaving to return home, they felt bad. Anyway, I spent a nice year, a nice image. Imagine me alone who traveled the Novara area alone on foot the first day I was arriving there I wanted to find a place to go eat something.

00:13:24:15 - 00:14:08:19

Walking and walking along the road I saw there was a tavola calda. I went and ordered there. Then I found a house where a cousin of mine lived before, after which I found a lady who thought about the house [rented a room]. But I used to go out of this old man's place, but to stay for quite a bit for a year. Then it comes that I had passed to go down south again.

00:14:08:25 - 00:15:20:07

I called my husband, he was old, everyone happy. Anyway, my life with school, the countryside, even the countryside. I adored it, I loved going to that house. That's why today I didn't feel like going because it makes me emotional. That's the reason where I lived with my brother, with my father, with my mother, i.e., memories play tricks on you, the flood wasn't around no and then everyone died, they left because there was nothing, the village had remained poor, yet however there is a cousin of mine whose grandparents emigrated maybe they were first, in my opinion there was nothing, not even a house almost, they were.

00:15:20:10 - 00:16:18:26

We were well off because we had land. They were peasants of those parents and so come what may the land was a lot and we had money, while a lot of people who didn't have much had to emigrate. Then there was someone who had to go home to Argentina, there was an aunt of mine who went to Australia, before people left for work because there wasn't... that the flood had carried a lot of things away, some people even died, two-three people died and I was with all my strength that I will make it, I will make it, I will make it and in fact I made it.

00:16:18:28 - 00:16:54:26

But I had left my daughters, my husband, my mom, my dad, the whole family. I had some cousin there, but I hadn't managed. What to leave little children then here and so I didn't take them, had I taken them maybe I would have taken them, Sarah in the evening what did she do? She took the book and read the reading to me to make me hear how she read it and I cried over there.

00:16:54:28 - 00:17:27:13

Maria instead cried in silence at night. One evening she called me worried "Mom come home", I say "Why?" "Because I have all my hands full of little spots", she told me, "I have my hands, the little spots." But what was it? That she had made them on herself

with a marker in those conditions to make me return.

00:17:27:15 - 00:18:08:24

She strongly wanted me close. Out front she didn't say anything. People as usual, but behind maybe she was one of the first who went and left the daughters and the husband here, you understand? And people gossiped about us normally. That's how people are used to doing. It's not that they say it so much to your face? No, I remained a rebel, I always have to win.

00:18:08:26 - 00:19:26:12

It was my husband who was very good at keeping quiet, he told me "yes, you always have to win." Another thing along the path of my life, as rebellious as I was, I participated in active political life. I was the only woman who wanted to participate, or participated, there was another lady yes, but I stayed quite a years at the labor union, I went and they were men, mind you, I also gave a political speech on stage and we went to eat pizza. Now instead I have noted with my regret that girls are ashamed, they are ashamed and I don't know why, instead of moving forward we are going backward, I noted this, I always say go do politics because politics is what

00:19:26:13 - 00:20:03:06

you feel, I always felt what I had to say, I said it, but it doesn't move them. There were more of us in my time than now, we were me and then there was another list in the... we were two or three, to find another girl with me it took goodness knows when. No, my husband didn't want to, he came too because he was also active in politics.

00:20:03:09 - 00:20:39:25

He didn't want to show off to become councilors, assessors, mayor and miscellaneous things. But he was always, always, always. Three years ago a director came, they arrived, she had just gotten married, I think the little one. We were at her house and a very current director arrived. They brought a lot of things "We are looking for figures to make a movie."

00:20:39:27 - 00:21:35:26

"I want to gather girls to take a photo, then who gets picked from Rome?" You believe me? I went first to take the photo because girls were ashamed, to tell you. They don't have initiative, they are a bit... And I, "you do something?" When I see that you are organizing I am super happy because the town must not die, it's a nice town ours look, it has always been a town of farmers, but also lawyers, doctors of everything and more there have been, priests, but I don't know why they are ashamed.

00:21:35:27 - 00:22:15:03

Or I tell you something else, they aren't ashamed, they are afraid of people's judgments. And if not, excuse me. When they saw me dressed as a nun now, I am... I went, I went to church, I walked around here and I walked in the mountains, with cold and snow, with strange people. I happened to be in the middle of 78 horses one evening in the dark, in the fog.

00:22:15:06 - 00:22:17:22

However, I didn't have fear.