“CON VERA FIDE” (WITH TRUE FAITH):

SICILIAN-AMERICAN FARMING, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

IN WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY, 1920-2010

A Thesis

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study documents Sicilian-American intangible heritage in Woolwich Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey, from 1920 to 2010. Intangible heritage criteria in this analysis is defined as (1) labor practices, (2) value systems and social traditions, and (3) religious rituals. It is loosely based on UNESCO's definition, but also recognizes cultural influence on economic output. The work examines the concept of heritage and analyzes how land, a tangible element, served as an anchor for the physical, social, and economic, development of Woolwich Township. Sicilian-American shared experiences, such as the farming lifestyle, and rituals, including the Sicilian feast, St. Alfio's Day, created a sense of belonging that made the Woolwich Township landscape a place of meaning for the community.

After 1950, Gloucester County transformed from an agricultural county to a residential one. The construction of the New Jersey Turnpike and Interstate 295 made Gloucester County a prime location for people working in Camden and Philadelphia. In the past 30 years, the intangible Sicilian cultural heritage that defined the region for many years has been steadily disappearing. This is due to the aging of first-generation Sicilians who no longer farm, the educational and professional advancement of second-generation Sicilian-Americans, the upcoming consolidation of St. Joseph's Church, the rapid residential development and the decreasing agricultural base in Woolwich Township. In a larger context, this study calls upon historic preservationists to look past the literal built environment and fully examine intangible cultural lifeways to understand a community's significance.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Stephanie Smith was born on October 31, 1984 and grew up in Marlton, New Jersey. Stephanie attended The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) in Ewing, New Jersey from 2003 to 2007. She majored in history with an emphasis in European and Middle Eastern studies. During her tenure at TCNJ, Stephanie was introduced to the field of historic preservation through a course offering. Combining her academic and professional interests, Stephanie completed an undergraduate honors thesis focusing on the history and significance of the Shah Jahan Mosque, England's first-purpose built mosque, from 1889 to 1917. Graduating magna cum laude with honors, Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Arts in history.

After graduation, Stephanie gained preservation experience in the public sector. She interned at the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office under the direction of Andrea Tingey in the Survey and Outreach Unit. She additionally held the position of Grants Assistant at the New Jersey Historical Commission.

Stephanie began her coursework at Cornell University in Fall 2008. Her academic interests focused on farmland preservation and the role of cultural identity in historic preservation. In the summer of 2009, Stephanie interned for the City of Syracuse, New York, updating their historic resource list. Stephanie completed her graduate coursework in May 2010 and took on a contract position as a historian for KSK Architects Planners Historians, Inc. in Philadelphia. Stephanie currently works for Lancaster Farmland Trust as their Municipal Outreach Coordinator.

To my Sicilian great-grandmother, Angelina Grasso – the inspiration for this thesis and a true female model of determination, perseverance and strength.

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I want to single out my preservation mentor and friend, Andrea Tingey, for being my source of inspiration. Your breadth of knowledge, professionalism, constant support, advice and thoughtfulness drove me to reach new heights. I have been truly blessed to spend time with the most gifted classmates – Katie, Anne, Grant, Nathaniel, Emma, Bryan, Nurit, Tom and Meghan. I value the many discussions and laughs in Sibley 102. I am amazed by all your accomplishments thus far, and I know the field has a bright future with all of you in it.

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INTRODUCTION

Summary

In 2003, UNESCO's (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* to recognize and protect the importance of living cultural traditions. Intangible cultural heritage, as defined by UNESCO, consists of "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage."[1] These elements of intangible cultural heritage, passed down through the generations, continually adapt and evolve to provide a sense of identity for a particular group. UNESCO recognizes practices such as oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; and traditional craftsmanship as forms of intangible cultural heritage.[2] Professionally, most historic preservationists in the United States focus on the conservation of *built* cultural and historic heritage fifty years or older. However, in a time of globalization and continual social change toward homogeneity, historic preservationists should look beyond buildings and landscapes to protect not only the built environment, but also the quickly-disappearing living traditions and expressions that give meaning to a particular place.

This study is the first of its kind to document the origins, adaptations, and manifestations of Sicilian-American intangible heritage in Woolwich Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey, from 1920 to 2010. Intangible heritage criteria in this analysis, pinpointed as (1) labor practices, (2) value systems and social traditions, and (3) religious rituals of Sicilian-Americans, is loosely based on UNESCO's definition, but also recognizes cultural influence on economic

[1] "Working Towards a Convention," United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) UNESCO, accessed November 9, 2010, http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00004.
[2] "The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Article 2: Definitions," UNESCO, Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, October 17, 2003, printed in UNESCO's 2009 Infokit, 4. Available at http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00018#1.

output. Sicilian-Americans carried over social and religious traditions from the old country to create a new Sicilian-American identity, one that honored and preserved, but sometimes adapted, native practices to capitalize on American opportunity. Economically, Sicilian-Americans played a vital role in the development and success of Woolwich Township's agricultural industry, growing the tomatoes, sweet potatoes, asparagus, apples and peaches that were sold and processed at prominent distributors and canneries such as South Philadelphia's Italian Market, the Swedesboro Auction, Hurff Canning Factory, and Camden's Campbell Soup Factory.

New Jersey, also known as the Garden State, was a leader in agriculture in the early 20th century, with nearly two-thirds of the state's acreage dedicated to cultivation.[3] Scholarship published on South Jersey agriculture primarily focuses on individuals of English descent. Little study has been dedicated to the role of southeastern European farmers, who traveled to the United States during the immigration boom of the late 19th- and early 20th-century.

Before immigrating to America, many of Woolwich Township's Sicilian residents worked as laborers on *latifondos,* or large agricultural estates, particularly in the eastern province of Catania. Most Sicilian immigrants who moved to Woolwich originally settled in the Italian neighborhoods of South Philadelphia. Recruited and supervised by *padrones,* these immigrants initially worked as migrant laborers in Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland counties during summer harvests. Around the 1920s Woolwich Township, became a destination for migrant workers, especially Sicilian immigrants from Catania, due to the large availability of manual work in the agricultural industry. Determined and hardworking, Sicilian laborers saved their earnings, took advantage of their past farming experience, and bought land of their own. The trend resulted in the emergence of a new class of Sicilian-American farm operators in the 1930s.

[3] Cheryl L. Baisden, *Images of America: South Jersey Farming* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 7.

Sicilian-Americans took ownership of their new settlement by recreating native cultural expressions, sometimes through already existing institutions. Community and social life, as in Catania, centered on the Roman Catholic Church. St. Joseph's Church, located in downtown Swedesboro, served as both the religious and social backbone of the Sicilian community, sponsoring native religious festivals such as St. Alfio's Day. In addition, the establishment of two Sicilian mutual-aid societies, the Gloria Society and the *Societa Independente Italo-Americana Catania*, solidified and strengthened the Sicilian community in Swedesboro. These societies continued the Sicilian tradition of confraternities and provided social activities for its members.

After 1950, Gloucester County changed from an agricultural county to a residential one. The opening of the New Jersey Turnpike, and later Interstate 295, made Gloucester County a prime location for residents working in Camden and Philadelphia.[4] In the past 30 years, the intangible Sicilian cultural heritage has been steadily disappearing. This is evident in, and results from, the aging first-generation Sicilians who no longer farm, the educational and professional advancement of second-generation Sicilian-Americans, the upcoming closure of St. Joseph's Church, the rapid residential development, and the decreasing agricultural base in Woolwich Township. By the 1980s, stiff agricultural competition, the need to stay up-to-date technologically, and the challenges in continuing practice for older Sicilians made it difficult for farmers to turn over profits. Capitalizing on these challenges, real estate developers offered Sicilian farmers lucrative deals to sell the land they worked for several decades. Between 1980 and 2000, Woolwich Township's population increased 169%, from 1,129 to 3,032 persons,[5] the

[4] Maar Associates, "Gloucester County Cultural Resource Survey: Final Report," (Newark: Maar Associates, 1987), 46.
[5] Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), "Township of Woolwich, Gloucester County, Farmland Protection Plan" (Philadelphia: DVRPC, 2009), 25.

majority comprised of professional-class commuters to Philadelphia. The 1998 approval of the 4,500-unit residential development Weatherby triggered a rampant development trend that was allowed by municipal officials.[6] By July 2006, Woolwich Township had a population of 8,612, almost three times its population in 2000.[7] Since then, active farmland has quickly turned into subdivisions, significantly diminishing the township's agricultural base.

The study examines the concept of heritage and analyzes how land, a tangible element, serves as an essential anchor for physical, social, economic, and social development of particular places.[8] The land itself, and the places created in the fields and in the homes of Sicilian-American farmers are "made into places by attributing meaning through shared experiences, lifestyles, and rituals", which create a sense of belonging.[9] With the loss of land, the community itself is at risk of losing its identity and its related traditions. In a larger context, this study calls upon historic preservationists to look past the built environment and fully examine intangible cultural heritage to understand a community's significance. Meaning can be expressed in the tangible, farming operations on the landscape, as well as the intangible resources of value systems and social traditions. Sicilian-American cultural expression in Woolwich Township has been a continually changing process, losing the original meaning and memory with the passing of the original immigrants, but constantly reinterpreted with the advent of new technology and the changing lifestyles of later generations.

The process of continual adaptation is a product of the community's value to "better" oneself through venues such as a college education and full-time profession. Many Sicilian

[6] Melvin Kernan Development Strategies, "Woolwich Township TDR Executive Summary," (West Deptford, New Jersey: Melvin Kernan, February 2007), 10.
[7] DVRPC, 25.
[8] Mary Lorena Kenny, "Deeply Rooted in the Present: Making Heritage in Brazilian Quilombos," in *Intangible Heritage,* ed. Laurajane Smith and Natsuki Akagawa (New York: Routledge, 2009), 159.
[9] Mary Lorena Kenny, "Deeply Rooted in the Present: Making Heritage in Brazilian Quilombos," in *Intangible Heritage,* ed. Laurajane Smith and Natsuki Akagawa (New York: Routledge, 2009), 159.

farmers wished for their children to not continue the family farming business due to its long hours, marginal profits, and economic instability. With the evolution of the community, much of the native culture has disappeared on the landscape, but traditions still exist at a much smaller scale within domestic and local religious spheres. With the quick passing of second-generation farmers, who passed along their immigrant parents' traditions, the window is closing to document and preserve the traditions that still survive. Few materials documenting the Sicilian community exist at the Swedesboro-Woolwich Historical Society. Utilizing the Society as a repository, the initiation of a comprehensive oral-history project and the solicitation of historic photographs would highlight the presence of the community in the 20th-century historical record. A survey of Woolwich Township's farmhouses and associated agricultural buildings would highlight the built resources Sicilian-Americans left on the physical landscape. Also, empowerment within the Sicilian community itself to celebrate its heritage in other venues other than the church would help continue its cultural tradition. Awareness would promote a sensitive and responsible approach to managing physical and social change in Woolwich Township, and could potentially provide outlets to celebrate Woolwich Township's 20th-century ethnic history.

Geographic Boundary

Woolwich Township is located in Gloucester County, which is in the southwestern region of New Jersey and borders the Delaware River. The township is bounded by Greenwich Township to the north, Logan Township to the Northwest, East Greenwich Township to the Northeast, Harrison Township to the East, South Harrison Township to the southeast, and Pilesgrove and Oldman's Township, located in Salem County, to the Southwest. Woolwich Township surrounds Swedesboro Borough. Swedesboro has a downtown; Kings Highway is its main thoroughfare. Woolwich Township serves as the rural outlying area surrounding the denser

Borough. Woolwich Township's landscape remained relatively unchanged from the early 19th- to the mid 20th-century, characterized by flat, open farmland with sparsely scattered farmhouses and farm outbuildings. Woolwich and Swedesboro were considered one municipality until 1902, when Swedesboro incorporated itself as a separate borough. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Swedesboro and Woolwich Township have been integrally linked in their social, political and economic development. Woolwich Township served as the agricultural producer of the area, while Swedesboro served as the location to sell and process the fresh produce. Sicilian-Americans lived and worked in Woolwich Township, but utilized downtown Swedesboro, primarily inhabited by professionals of northwestern European descent, to go to church and gather for Sicilian-American social celebrations.

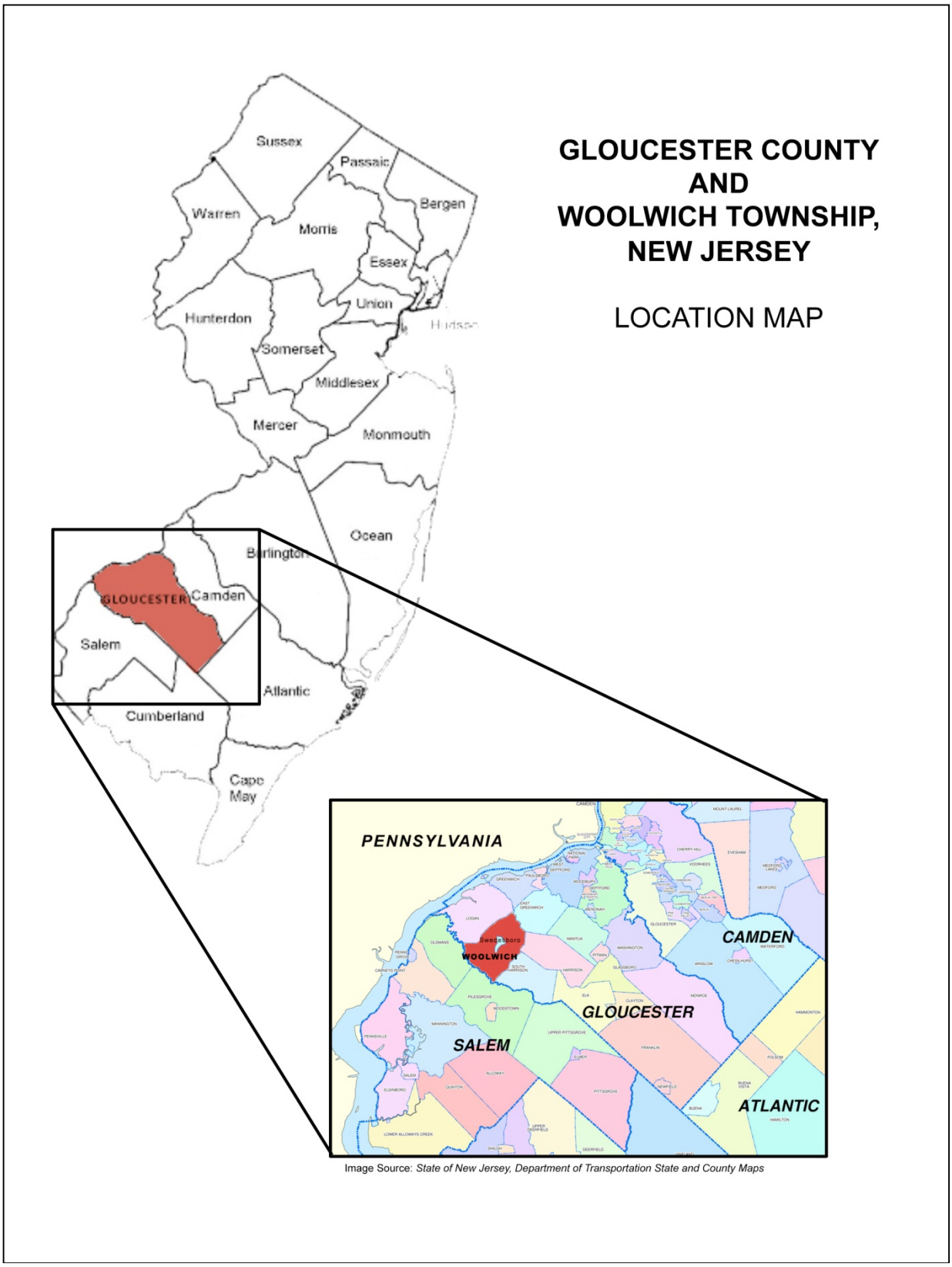


Illustration 1. Gloucester County and Woolwich Township Location Map.

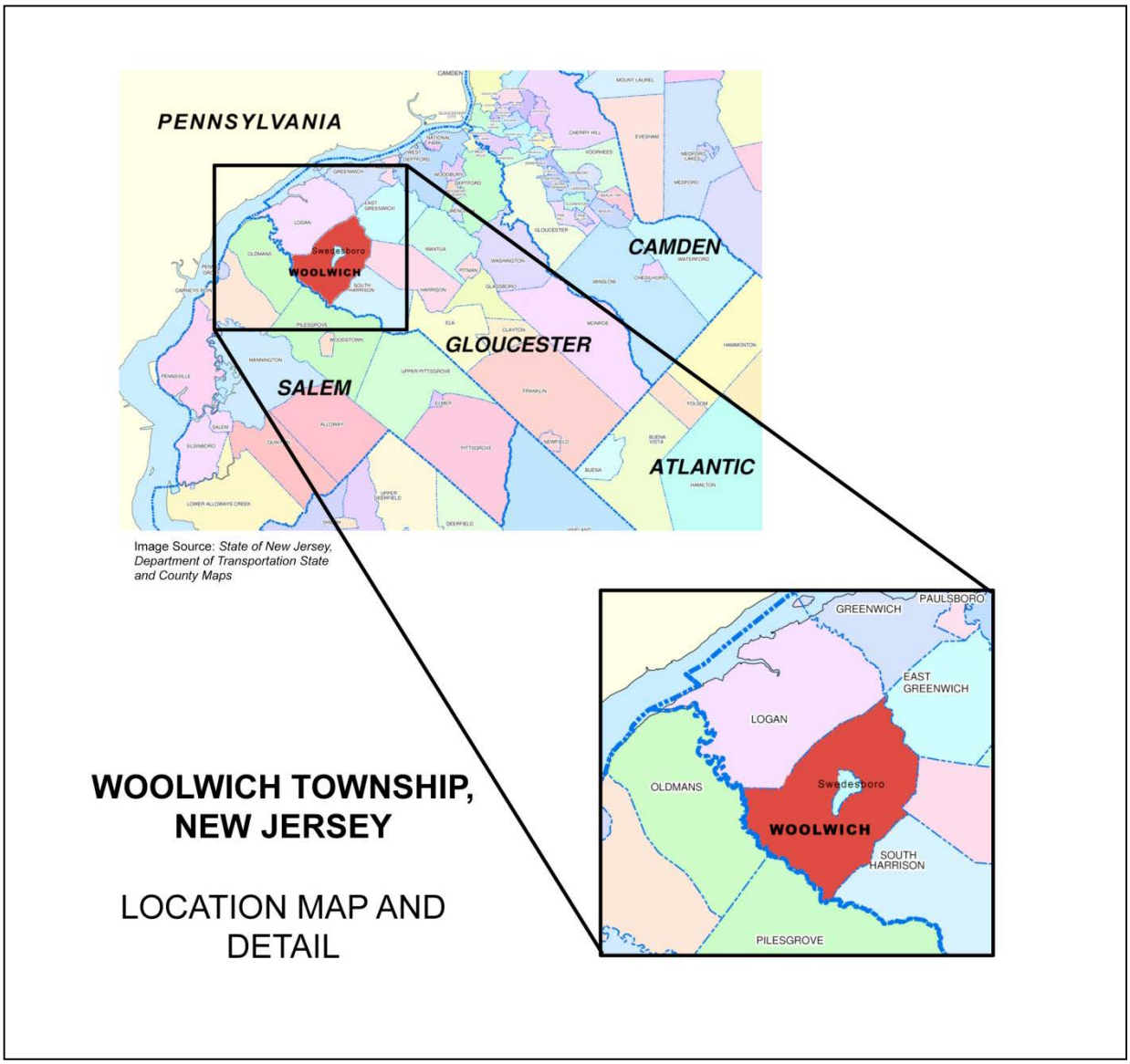


Illustration 2. Woolwich Township Location Map and Detail.

Literature Review

This is the first attempt to document Sicilian-American heritage and its social and economic contributions in the development of Woolwich Township during the 20th century. Many secondary sources have addressed concepts peripheral to this study, such as theoretical issues in intangible cultural heritage, Italian immigration to America, the development and success of New Jersey's agricultural industry, the transplantation and adaptation of Sicilian

culture in America, and recent residential development and its implications in Southern New Jersey. These sources have informed the historical background of this analysis.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

The idea of intangible cultural heritage arguably reaches back in an official sense to the 1972 World Heritage Convention (WHC), which recognized the impact of natural and cultural heritage. However, academic discourse concerning the topic has amplified since the adoption of the UNESCO's 2003 Convention. The most up-to-date information can be found on UNESCO's website (http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/), which outlines the basic precepts in a downloadable, seven-brochure kit. An analysis of the Convention and its unfolding impacts has been published in a few edited books, including *Intangible Heritage Embodied* and *Intangible Heritage*. *Intangible Heritage Embodied*, edited by D. Fairchild Ruggles and Helaine Silverman, studies international cases of heritage influenced by issues of loss, reproduction and political interests. *Intangible Heritage*, edited by Laurajane Smith and Natusuki Akagawa, provides reflections on the concept's origins, present practices, and economic implications. These sources served as the basis for analyzing the impact of Sicilian-American labor practices and culture on Woolwich Township's physical landscape during the 20th century.

Sicilian History and Native Cultural Practices

Several books have been written about general Sicilian history; however, few of them are available in English. The most complete compilation of sources in English is the *World Bibliographical Series, Volume 213: Sicily*. The book provides resources on various topics such as geography, history, language, religion, social conditions, politics, agriculture, employment and newspapers. In terms of living conditions prior to immigration, Donna Reeder's *Widows in White: Migration and the Transformation of Rural Italian Women* and Donna Gabbacia's

Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers provide well-crafted narratives on the latifundia system, life as part of the peasant class, the late 19th- and early 20th-century political upheavals, the role of honor and kinship in familial relationships, and the impetus for immigration. In finding information about Sicilian cultural practices, an 1897 primary source entitled *Customs and Habits of the Sicilian Peasant* provides invaluable information on native Sicilian practices during the time of the Sicilian immigration boom. Topics include customs in grape and vegetable picking in the fields, the role of the patron saint, marriage customs, the celebration of spring, the importance of Sunday, and peasant living conditions. In a more analytical light, Herman Tak's *South Italian Festivals: A Local History of Ritual and Change* examine ideas of ritual and change in his case study of Calvello, Southern Italy. Tak examines issues such as place, religion and politics and its effect on cultural identity in Calvello.

Italian Immigration

There have been numerous sources dedicated to the study of Italian immigration to the United States. The majority of these sources look at Italian immigration to America in an urban context. Studies on Italian urban communities provide solid background information on settlement patterns, employment opportunities, and assimilation issues, but it is difficult to apply these trends to rural America, where different spatial, economic, living and social conditions exist.

Dennis J. Starr's *The Italians of New Jersey: A Historical Introduction and Bibliography* provides a general history of Italian-Americans in New Jersey. The work provides a background on immigration and settlement patterns in New Jersey, employment profiles, the Americanization movement, the role of churches, family life, and the establishment of mutual aid

societies. The bibliography provides a comprehensive gathering of Italian American-related sources in the state.

Carol Lynn McKibben's *Beyond Cannery Row: Sicilian Women, Immigration and Community in Monterey, California, 1915-1999*, examines the Sicilian immigrant community of Monterey, California, examining the significance of female Sicilian immigrants in boosting the city's canning industry and re-creating Sicilian American identity through familial relationships, ritual activities, and citizenship. McKibben's work informed my methodology and approach to the economic and social contributions of Sicilians in Woolwich Township.

Michael J. Eula's *Between Peasant and Urban Villager: Italian-Americans of New Jersey and New York, 1880-1980*, provided information on structures, discourses and rhetoric of working class Italian culture, particularly on religion in both Italy and America around the turn of the century.

Barbara Cunningham's compiled work, *The New Jersey Ethnic Experience*, documents over 31 different ethnic communities in New Jersey. Rudolph Vecoli's chapter on Italians examines their occupations in agriculture, skilled and unskilled labor, Italian organizations, political involvement, religious influences, and the development of an Italo-American identity. The chapter provides a context for the different themes targeted in this thesis.

Gloucester County/Woolwich Township/Swedesboro History

There exists no one definitive history on 20th-century Gloucester County or Woolwich Township history. Most Gloucester County and Swedesboro history sources focus on its original settlement and colonial history. Frank H. Stewart's four-volume set, *Notes on Old Gloucester County, New Jersey*, provides the single largest collection of news snippets, death notices, marriage announcements, journal entries, and settling family names up to 1900 for Gloucester

County in one publication. For purposes of this thesis, most 20th-century histories were compiled from newspaper articles. Gloucester County has been mentioned in several general New Jersey history books, including John T. Cunningham's *This is New Jersey.*

A county-wide cultural resource survey of Gloucester County was conducted in 1987 by MAAR Associates in Newark, Delaware. A solid report for the preservation field in the 1980s, the survey addressed the history, land-use patterns, prehistoric settlements, and the building traditions and types of the county by historic period, including frontier settlements, transformation from colony to state, the industrial era and suburbanization through 1940. MAAR Associates made clear the survey was a first stab at documentation and listed several research problems and future recommendations in their report. One was addressing the idea of ethnicity in specialty farming. The report states, "…to acknowledge the importance of Italians in local truck farming today, it is important to identify…when the Italians first settled in the area. Any other group not yet recognized also needs attention."[10] The report lays out further research questions, stating, "Social and economic history…may need attention. These relate to clarification of the following: 1) Time when specialty farming replaced diversity farming in Gloucester County; 2) ethnic background of those farmers who instituted the change."[11] This thesis builds upon MAAR's research questions regarding the role of ethnicity in farming, specifically in Woolwich Township.

New Jersey Agricultural History

Several books have been written about New Jersey's agricultural past through different lenses: production, technology, economic benefit and identity. John T. Cunningham's *Garden State: The Story of Agriculture in New Jersey*, identifies the types of farming operations in New

[10] Maar Associaties, "Gloucester County Cultural Resource Survey," 107.
[11] Ibid, 105.

Jersey during the first half of the 20th century, and well as modes of production and processing within the state, such as truck farming and South Jersey canneries. Charles H. Harrison's *Tending the Garden State: Preserving Agriculture in New Jersey*, establishes the significance of the industry and examines present programs to boost agriculture and preserve farmland amidst New Jersey's development pressures. Brief explanations and applications of easements, TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) programs, and recommendations for updating the state's Development and Redevelopment plans are addressed. Allison Hayes-Conroy's *South Jersey Under the Stars* analyzes the agriculture in New Jersey and its role in determining both farmers and residents' feeling of place.

Background and Method

The impetus for this project stemmed from a curiosity in understanding my own family history through the lens of social and rural preservation. The approach to this study is a cross between a social history and a cultural landscape study. The paper seeks to examine how Sicilian culture manifested itself in place, including downtowns, public spaces, private arenas, religious centers and outlying farming areas in Woolwich Township, New Jersey. It discusses culture through the lens of immigration, assimilation, kinship, native labor practices, and religion. This project acknowledges a growing loss of Sicilian-American ties to their ancestral roots as farmers through both voluntary and involuntary means. The choice of later generations to climb the American economic and social ladder, encouraged by their Sicilian immigrant parents, and the Township's irresponsible planning tactics of the 1990s, are both sources of this loss.

Because there exists no official history for the Sicilian-American population in Woolwich Township, this project afforded the opportunity to conduct interviews with first generation

surviving farmers. It was necessary to use family connections to make contact with the farmers, since I was not initially considered part of the community. Because the remaining population is so small, most of the project is based on a series of personal contacts that opened a network of interview possibilities. The town barber, Phil Bellace, provided an overview of the community and a few initial contacts. Utilizing both him and my mother as a reference, interviews were chosen on community members' recommendations. Talking to one person led to another person and so forth.

Interviews were usually conducted with two or three people together to generate a discussion about the topics. This led to a greater understanding of the point at hand, and helped fill in holes from primary sources. Two major interviews provided much of the information underpinning this thesis; one, a second generation Sicilian-American married couple in their 80s, whose parents were integral members of the Woolwich Township's original Sicilian-American farming, social and religious community. They still actively farm about 60 acres in Woolwich Township. However, for the purposes of this thesis, they wished to remain anonymous. When referring to them within this study, false names are used, Giovanni and Josephine Nucifora, marked with an asterisk (*), to identify them. The other was with Catherine Garrozo and her sister Angie Grasso. Both interview topics included family background, life in Sicily, the immigration experience for their parents, their settlement in Woolwich Township, involvement with the church and the Sicilian Societies, the farming business, and opinions on Woolwich Township's current development trends. Informal conversations with later-generation relatives of other original Sicilian immigrant families, such as the Patane, Grasso and Maugeri families, confirmed farming and festival experiences during the second half of the 20th-century. Interviews were conducted with second generation Sicilian-Americans, namely Phil Bellace and

RoseAnn Quattrochi Smith. Conversations with life-long Swedesboro residents not within the Sicilian-American community, Edie Rohrman and Lois Stanley, provided a non-Sicilian viewpoint of the immigrant community during this time. Varying interviews by generation and background gave a full view of Sicilian-American heritage during the 20th century.

Local newspapers such as the *Swedesboro Times* and the *Gloucester County Times* corroborated facts stated in the oral histories. The Gloucester County Historical Society holds folders of newspaper articles by town and subject matter, and their files on Swedesboro and Woolwich Township helped inform the narrative on general Swedesboro history, St. Joseph's Church and the Swedesboro Auction. The Swedesboro-Woolwich Historical Society provided a ledger book of piecemeal farm insurance surveys in Swedesboro. While not complete, it still assisted in understanding the use of individual farm structures for many Sicilian-American farms from 1930 to 1983. New Jersey and Federal Population Census manuscripts assisted in calculating percentages of Sicilian-Americans living in Swedesboro and Woolwich Township in the early years. The greatest wealth of information came from residents of Swedesboro and Woolwich Township, who donated or shared their personal photographs and family histories. Local, county and state repositories hold very little information regarding Sicilian-American populations. Assistance in identifying Sicilians in photos formed an understanding of the complex familial and social network in Woolwich Township.

Chapter One focuses on the historical context of Sicilian immigration to Woolwich Township, namely the conditions of Sicily in the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries, the impetus to leave their native land, initial settlement in Philadelphia, and a background of Swedesboro Borough and Woolwich Township, New Jersey. The chapter highlights the roots of native cultural practices that were carried over and reproduced in Woolwich Township. Chapter Two

focuses on Sicilian-American labor practices, Sicilian farm development, methodology of planting, harvesting and selling, and Sicilian-American farming family case studies. Chapter Three details the social traditions of Woolwich Township's Sicilian-American community with the analysis of two Woolwich Township Sicilian societies. Chapter Four examines the role of religion in the Sicilian-American community, specifically St. Joseph's Catholic Church and the integration of Sicilian-American religious festivals such as St. Alfio's and St. Joseph's Day on Swedesboro's landscape. Chapter Five discusses the contributions of Woolwich Township's Sicilian-American community and documents the loss of heritage due to intense residential development and the educational and professional advancement of proceeding generations. The chapter also discusses the status of Sicilian-American farms today, the adoption of Woolwich Township's new Transfer of Development Rights program, and analyzes the implications of the Township's new farmland protection plan. The Conclusion provides recommendations for preservation and documentation of the Sicilian-American community and their cultural practices, overall conclusions, and new questions for further research.

CHAPTER I

THE ROOTS: INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE ORIGINS OF SICILIAN INFLUENCE IN WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP

During the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries, immigration was a major contributor to the growth and development of industry, agriculture, politics and culture of the United States, especially in New Jersey, where in 1900, 50% of the state's population was foreign-born.[12] To fully understand the context for Sicilian immigration to Woolwich Township, it is imperative to examine the social, economic and political conditions in Sicily prior to immigration. Economic hardship and lack of social mobility propelled Sicilians to look for better opportunities abroad. Most rural Italians sought new opportunities in American urban areas. However, Sicilians who initially settled in Philadelphia and then moved to Woolwich Township drew upon their past agricultural experiences to advance themselves and thrive as first-time landowners and independent farmers. Sicilians carried with them to America the kinship ties, value systems, cultural beliefs and labor methods they practiced in their native land. These included strong social networks, ideas of familial honor and pride, and the development of mutual aid societies.

Status of Sicily in the Late 19th- and Early 20th- Centuries

Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, is located between Europe and the coast of North Africa. It is composed of nine provinces with Palermo as the island's capital. Sicily possesses a very complicated history; it had been settled, invaded, ruled, and occupied by several different countries and cultures, including the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines,

[12] Kise Franks & Straw (KF&S), "New Jersey Statewide Context: Immigration and Agricultural, Industrial, Commercial and Urban Expansion 1850-1920," Prepared for The Office of New Jersey Heritage, Trenton, New Jersey (Philadelphia PA: KF&S, 21 December 1990), 7.

Arabs, Normans, German, French, Spanish, Austrians, English, and finally Italians. Sicily was officially unified with Italy in the 1860s.[13]

Sicily has always been considered the outsider to its ruling countries, and has suffered from an identity crisis of sorts, usually tolerated as the ugly stepsister to its relative Italy. To add to its unsavory reputation, perhaps the most character-defining feature of the island is its economic struggles, presently and historically. Due to its geographic isolation, Sicily has struggled to modernize with the rest of the European continent, being described as "stuck…along the continuum between the developed countries and the underdeveloped or peripheral countries of Asia, Africa and central or South America."[14] These challenges, amongst others, drove Sicilians in mass numbers to America at the turn of the 20th century.

Illustration 3. Location of the Province of Catania, Sicily.

[13] Valentina Olivastri, *Sicily*, World Bibliographical Series, Vol. 213 (Oxford, England: Clio Press, 1998), xv-xvi.
[14] Donna Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 18.

Life in Sicily During the 19th- and 20th-Century

The cultural, political and economic climate in Sicily in the late 19th-century established particular attitudes and customs that were carried out and practiced in America, such as strong connections to family, community and agriculture. Sicily's harsh geographical features also indirectly played into the development of Sicilian lifeways. During the late 19th-century, Sicily was comprised of a few commercial centers, namely Palmero, Catania and Messina, but mostly made up of agricultural villages, or agrotowns.[15] Factors such as the mountainous topography, poor road links between towns and the prevalence of bandits in the outlying areas spurred the growth of densely-populated villages. Landownership in Sicily operated under the *latifundium* system, which also contributed significantly to the development of agrotowns. *Latifundios* are large landed estates under the control of one elite person or family. It was first introduced to Sicily by the Romans and remained the system for land tenure through the 20th century. Rural, low-class residents were not able to acquire their own lands since the majority of land was owned by local barons or the church. Because the island was always being invaded and thus never able to form its own strong centralized state, real control remained in the hands of landowners, only strengthening the *latifundia* system. Therefore, the majority of rural Sicilians were continually tied to the land. Most Sicilians either rented lands from the elite estate owners in exchange for part of the crop or worked as laborers on the *latifundia*, usually working and living on the land. In many instances, barons leased their land to a middleman, or *gabellotti*, who managed the day-to-day activities. For day laborers, contracts were signed or orally agreed upon between worker and estate owners, providing laborers with very little profit for their work. According to Linda Reeder, "The system conspired to prevent workers from ever gaining access

[15] Linda Reeder, *Widows in White: Migration and the Transformation of Rural Italian Women, Sicily, 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 25.

to land. Even so, rural Sicilians still dreamed of someday owning enough land to live comfortably off the rental income and join the ranks of the landowners. Land brought social status and security."[16]

The majority of Sicilians who lived in rural areas lived and worked on a landowner's farm as peasants. The treatment and living conditions of Sicilian peasants varied based on the sympathy and generosity of the landowner. Living quarters were often modest, mostly shacks or small cottages. A peasant lifestyle was comprised of long, difficult days of planting and picking in the fields. Families were strengthened by the enormous amount of time they spent in the fields. At night, the family stuck together as a core unit.[17]

Land reforms in 1806 outlawed the church and aristocracy from land privileges and called for a privatization of feudal lands, hoping to break the *latifundia* system. However, rural Sicilians could not afford to buy land. The only two groups that had resources to do so were the *gabellotti*, who earned good money managing the estates, and the *civili*, a small but growing class of entrepreneurial and professional Sicilians. Unfamiliar with contemporary land management schemes, the *gabellotti* and the *civili* followed the previous land management system, barely improving economic and social conditions for rural Sicilians. Lacking power, rural Sicilans became resentful of the new system, causing peasant rebellions across the island. After these reforms, 50 percent of the land was still held by large landowners, hardly changing the uneven distribution of property in Sicily.[18]

[16] Reeder, *Widows in White*, 30.
[17] Interview with RoseAnn Quattrochi Smith, granddaughter of Sicilian immigrant, Angelina Grasso, January 2010.
[18] Reeder, 31.

Creation of Mutual Aid Societies

Peasants only had two options to change their lifestyle for the better. They either had to organize themselves or migrate to another county.[19] By the 1880s, rural peasants across the island established mutual aid societies, which fought for one political purpose and pooled resources to help each other when in need. Mutual aid societies were formed for several reasons. Many academics argue regarding their purpose. Some scholars believe these societies were "family-oriented yet community-based"[20] circles that offset expensive funeral costs. Others understand the societies as a tangible manifestation of existing informal social or religious networks associated with a particular allegiance to a local patron saint. A few see these societies as an early form of trade unions and worker's political parties. However one sees it, these organizations regularly provided education, credit and cultural programs to artisans and to peasants.[21] Extensions of these societies were carried over and established in America in the early 20th century.

In relation to this case study, most Sicilians who settled in Swedesboro came from the province of Catania, located on the eastern side of the island. Little information exists in English specifically on the development of the province. Interviews with surviving farmers state that families worked mostly in agriculture and in some professional positions before relocating to America. Its location by the water and a dense urban core offered other industries and specialized trades, providing Sicilians with other employment opportunities. However, most of Catania was rural, with little choice but to work farms for local landowners.

[19] Reeder, 34.
[20] Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants*, 33.
[21] Ibid.

Community, Family and Honor

Poor rural Sicilians emphasized honor and family because they did not possess material wealth in native Sicily. The social structure in rural Sicily relied heavily on the link between economy, family and the individual.[22] Family defined a rural Sicilian's identity. The only advancement tool laborers possessed was a good name. Reputation was a determining factor in making respectable marriage arrangements and contributed in social and economic advancement. In rural Sicily, "honor had become a tangible quantity in Sicilian culture, something that could be measured and traded, a valuable commodity in a land where few claimed significant wealth."[23] Because peasants earned so little, a family's reputation served as a bargaining tool to arrange good marriages and strengthen social networks.[24] Many times these ties infiltrated other classes, creating new connections and allowing limited advancement within the *latifundia* system. Even though capital was easier to access in America than in Sicily, Sicilians continued to value these principles of reputation in the New World.

The physical development of Sicilian agricultural villages was influenced by the formation of social networks and marriage customs.

> The location of each separate household testified to the new social relations created by every marriage. In Sutera and Milocca, neighbours were usually related through birth or ritual. Newlyweds moved into their own houses, but they were not far away from their parents or siblings…parents commonly lived next door to a child, and siblings generally lived in the same neighborhood. Kin networks strongly influenced housing patterns because residential property was generally acquired through family. A child generally received his or her portion of the family patrimony in the form of housing (and land in case of sons) on marriage or the death of a parent. If a family was too poor to buy or build a separate house for the adult children, existing houses were divided among family members."[25]

Customs of close familial proximity to each other were also carried and exercised in America.

[22] Reeder, 37.
[23] Reeder, 48.
[24] Reeder, 48.
[25] Reeder, 43.

Family Structure

The position of men and women in household were unequal. The gendered meanings of marriage, housing and work reflected the centrality of male authority, which was articulated through a rigid culture of honor, which located each person within the framework of family. In the Sicilian family, the father holds absolute and indisputable control. The mother governs the house and the children, almost as an extension of her husband, who she obeys and loves even when he does not deserve it. Men dominated the family; however, their power rested on the actions of wives, sons and daughters.[26]

Women still worked in the fields and were required to juggle the multiple roles of housewife, mother and laborer. The unrecognized, but arguably most important role of Sicilian women, was their ability to solidify social networks. The interactions with sisters, aunts, cousins and neighbors that took place in the kitchens and around the home provided important economic and social resources for immediate and extended families. While men used weekly social organizations to also keep social ties, the contacts that women made daily within their networks provided material and physical assistance to other Sicilians. [27]

The Impetus to Leave Sicily

By the late 20th century, the strains of the peasant class came to a head. Mutual aid societies spread throughout the countryside, focusing on political issues such as further land reform. Frustrations accumulated when the state failed to fix their grievances and check the rising power and wealth of the non-noble *gabellotti* and the *civili*. Protests of the *Fasci* were generated in the form of labor strikes, with rural Sicilians refusing to work the land, send their children to school, or follow government regulations. In addition, they participated in local

[26] Reeder, 48.
[27] Reeder, 45-46.

protest marches. Most of these demonstrations resulted in violence between Sicilian deputies of the Parliament and the agricultural workers, although they still worked to break up the *latifundia* system by pooling their money and attempting to buy land from the landowners. These "combined strategies of collective ownership and direct occupation" were not successful until the 1920s. With failed land reforms, unsuccessful rural cooperatives, and meaningless strikes to change the land tenure system, Sicilians had only two options: suffer under the unchanging latifundia system or immigrate abroad.[28] Most rural Sicilians took the latter option. To them, immigration offered a chance to better their lives and fulfill their aspirations of land ownership.

Immigration Trends

During the late 19th- and early 20th- centuries, the growth of industrial cities, the development of transportation networks, and widespread economic hardship of the proletariat spurred migratory movements across the globe. About 50 million people left Europe from 1864 to 1924. The majority immigrated to the United States.[29] European immigrants who came to America arrived in two different waves. The first wave, which lasted from 1850 to 1890, primarily consisted of northern and western Europeans. The second wave, from 1890 to 1920, comprised mostly southern and eastern Europeans. Most immigrants were unskilled laborers from rural areas who left to seek economic advancement or religious and political freedom. They secured a variety of employment opportunities on farms, railroads, public works, factories and mines. [30] Between 1876 to 1914, almost 14 million Italians left their homeland, half of

[28] Reeder, 54.
[29] Dennis Starr, *The Italians of New Jersey: A Historical Introduction and Bibliography*, (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1985), 2.
[30] Kise Franks & Straw, "New Jersey Statewide Context: Immigration and Agricultural, Industrial, Commercial and Urban Expansion 1850-1920," 7-9.

whom immigrated to the United States. From 1891 to 1915, more Italians entered the United States than did immigrants from any other country.[31]

Italian Settlement and Demographic Patterns Nationwide and in New Jersey

United States

Emigration from Italy occurred in two phases: a first migration to other European countries pre-1886 and a second migration of out of the county to North and South America after 1887.[32] By the turn of the century, Italian immigrants to the United States comprised 10 percent (480,000 people) of all foreigners in the country. Initial settlement patterns were dispersed throughout the United States, but quickly transitioned into dense concentrations in the Northeast. According to U.S. Immigration Commission statistics, 2,284,601 Italians entered the country from 1899 to 1910. Eighty-three percent were from southern Italy and Sicily, and seventy-eight percent were male. Between men and women, over 80 percent were between the ages of 14 and 44.[33] Between 1899 and 1910, less than one percent were professionals, and 15.6 percent were skilled workers. Three quarters were categorized by either farm laborers (31.9 percent) or laborers (43.4 percent).[34]

By 1910, Italians mostly settled in the Mid-Atlantic region, with New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey having the largest populations of Italians. Southern New England, including Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, and the Midwest, such as Illinois and Ohio, also had significant Italian populations.[35]

[31] Starr, 3.
[32] Starr, 3.
[33] Starr, 4-5.
[34] Starr, 5-6.
[35] Starr, 4.

New Jersey

Few Italians settled in New Jersey before the Civil War. In 1850, eighteen other states and the District of Columbia had more Italians than New Jersey. By 1900, more Italians lived in New Jersey than in any other state, except New York and Pennsylvania, and New Jersey had 8.6 percent of all Italians in the country. Italians continue to be the largest immigrant or racial group in New Jersey.[36] Many Italians ended up settling in New Jersey after first entering elsewhere, mostly New York or Philadelphia. However, reports of the United States Commissioner General of Immigration showed that 118,680 Italians reported New Jersey as their destination between 1899 and 1910. Eighty-nine percent came from central or southern Italy (which includes Sicily).[37] In 1910, the largest immigrant groups in New Jersey were Italians (32.2%), Russians (28.6%), Austrians (17.8%) and Hungarians (13.6%).[38]

Most immigrants came to America because of economic reasons, even more motivated by seeing relatives or friends also settling in America. Popular during the first half of the 20th century, Italian neighborhoods were organized by regions from the motherland. The idea of *campanilismo,* or Italian parochialism, influenced the characteristics of Italian settlements. According to Vecoli, "While small colonies of Italians were scattered about the state, the bulk of Italian immigrants was highly concentrated in the industrial cities. The pioneer settlers from a particular town sent for their relatives and friends who in turn sent for their relatives and friends, and so on. As a result, colonies of persons hailing from the same towns were established in the

[36] Starr, 7.
[37] Starr, 8.
[38] Kise Franks & Straw, 9.

cities of new Jersey."[39] For example, Umbrians and mainland southerners dominated the Chambersburg section of Trenton, and Sicilians from the Villalba area settled in north Trenton.[40]

Even though most Italians had previously worked in agriculture, many were now attracted to the urban and industrial areas, such as Trenton and Newark. In 1900, 95 percent of Italian males were employed in nonagricultural occupations.[41] The majority of European immigrants did not flock toward agricultural opportunities, despite their previous farming experience. Most opted for industry's higher wages and job security and the simultaneous advantages of assimilation and cultural identity offered in the cities. Newark by far had the largest number, followed by Jersey City, Paterson, Hoboken, and Union, on the Delaware, Trenton and Camden also had sizable Italian populations. Each of these cities received its immigrants from different provinces of Italy as determined by the process of chain migration.[42]

Agriculture also offered economic opportunities to the immigrant in the cranberry bogs of the Pine Barrens, the crop farms of southwestern and central New Jersey and the dairy farms of northwestern New Jersey. Some European ethnic groups did respond to the demand for agricultural labor. Italians, for example, are known for their contribution to South Jersey's fruit industry, although many of the migrant berry pickers were only seasonal residents of the state."[43] Italian agricultural colonies were established at Vineland and Hammonton. Italian migrant laborers were the backbone of the state's agricultural labor force until after World War II. According to Starr, "Italians from Philadelphia, Camden, Trenton and Delaware picked the onions, cranberries, blueberries and other crops at harvest time. A 1931 state survey of

[39] Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Italian People of New Jersey," in *The New Jersey Ethnic Experience*, edited by Barbara Cunningham (Union City, New Jersey: William H. Wise & Co., 1977), 281.
[40] Starr, 8.
[41] Starr, 12.
[42] Vecoli, 281.
[43] Kise Franks & Straw, 11.

migratory child labor indicated that New Jersey crop growers preferred Italian family laborers over other types because of their dependability, reliability and experience. The same study found that 98 percent of the migrant farmer husbands had been born in Italy.[44]

The influx of immigrants transformed the face of the rural workforce. Many of the northern European immigrants arriving between 1860 and 1890 found employment on New Jersey farms. In the 1880s, Vineland, founded in 1861 by Charles K. Landis, became the center of a half dozen small settlements in Cumberland, Salem, Atlantic and Gloucester counties colonized largely by Italian vine dressers and small farmers. These early Italian immigrants, originally from northern Italy and later from southern Italy and Sicily, began as day laborers in factories, on railroads or in berry fields and gradually bought land and became farmers. The Italians introduced peppers to the country of the grape, peach tree, berry patch and sweet potato vine. By the turn of the century, southern Italians had also created a flourishing settlement in the vicinity of Hammonton, Atlantic County. By 1920, foreign-born whites comprised 22 percent of New Jersey's farmers and more foreign-born whites owned their farms than did native whites, only 13.1 percent of immigrants being tenants.[45]

Conclusion

The immigration experience altered the identities of many Italians who settled in America, adding the new element of adaptation in a social, economic, and political sense. Life in Sicily, however, instilled social systems that were transported to America, such as the preservation of regional social networks in settlement patterns, the establishment of mutual aid societies in America, an unbroken emphasis on kinship ties and family honor, and in a few cases, the continuation of agricultural pursuits. These values were reinterpreted, but still represented

[44] Starr, 12.
[45] Kise Franks & Straw, 27-28.

authentic native practices in a different setting. The preservation and continuation of these practices made relevant the Italian community's presence in New Jersey and the United States.

CHAPTER II

ON THE FARM: SICILIAN-AMERICAN LABOR PRACTICES IN WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP

Woolwich Township's Sicilian community was one of the minority groups that continued with agriculture in America. During the same time, New Jersey became a leader in agricultural production. The southern counties grew a significant portion of produce sold in the state. The combination of the growing agriculture industry and the influx of immigrants to the United States provided numerous employment opportunities for newly-arrived Sicilians, who had initially settled in Philadelphia. By engaging in a lifestyle that was already familiar to them and starting as seasonal migrant workers on farms in Woolwich Township, Sicilians quickly thrived in agriculture and bought their own farms from German and English predecessors. They were also adjusting to becoming landowners for the first time in their life. With very little education, these farmers quickly learned enough reading, writing, and math to start their businesses. At the same time, major advances in agriculture not available in Sicily prompted Sicilian farmers to stay up-to-date on agricultural technology. Farmers were shifting from labor intensive to labor-saving devices. During the industrial period between the 1880s and 1920, farms shifted from diversified businesses to specialized truck farming aimed at supplying large markets by rail and water. Many Sicilians specialized in asparagus, sweet potatoes, peppers and tomatoes. Contracts with canneries such as Delmonte and Campbell Soup Company augmented profits in the later months of the production season. To Sicilians, the land served both as an economic resource and an outlet to continue their native lifeways in the fields.

History of Agriculture in New Jersey

Agriculture has been an integral part of New Jersey's history since the Leni Lenape Indians and the first European settlements, that is, from the state's early Dutch influence to the English, Scottish, Irish, Swedish and German farmers of the 18th- and early 19th-centuries. Agriculture sustained its landowners, provided employment opportunities to poorer colonial settlers and created a solid economic base in the 20th century. New Jersey's soils, varied in texture, water-holding capacity and productivity, availability of fertile marl, and the state's milder climate conditions offered a wide spectrum of producible crops.[46] Agricultural land was a prime attraction for colonists from both Britain and New England's colonies. Pioneer farmers could both sustain themselves and receive cash income from selling leftover produce. Early commercial crops included corn and cattle, although the Dutch have been credited with diversifying the agricultural base with the introduction of cabbage, lettuce, carrots, radishes, parsnips, beets, spinach and onions.[47]

Woolwich Township is located on the inner coastal plain, which is comprised of sand, gravel, clay and marl. The clay and marl region is the most fertile and productive part of the state. Marl is a greenish-colored sandy soil, a rich fertilizer with lime, phosphorus, nitrogen, and iron deposits. The plain begins in Monmouth County and extends through the lower parts of Middlesex and Mercer Counties, into western Burlington County and reaches into Camden, Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland Counties. New Jersey earned the name "the Garden State" as a result of its famous productive soil. Most of the state's potatoes, tomatoes, vegetables and fruits are grown within the plain, and the state's major food processing plants are also located in

[46] *New Jersey Agriculture*, State of New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Circular No. 267 (Trenton, New Jersey: State of New Jersey, 1937), 5.
[47] Charles A. Stansfield, Jr., *A Geography of New Jersey: The City in the Garden* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 185.

the same region.[48] Burlington became a national leader in the value of sweet corn produced. Gloucester and Cumberland became leaders in asparagus and string beans. The tomato became one of the most productive crops in New Jersey agriculture. All four counties took the lead in tomato production while also raising significant crops of white and sweet potatoes, onions, peaches, apples, pears, cantaloupes and small fruits.[49]

Farmers grew crops for city markets, creating an interdependency between rural and urban areas. The combination of productive soils and its key location led to the state's agricultural success. Situated between two large east coast cities, Philadelphia and New York, urban areas created continual demand for produce. In return, farmers obtained agricultural tools and necessities made in the city.[50] The close proximity of farmer to consumer aided in quick adjustments to market demands, beating out larger farm productions in the West. In addition, agriculture was greatly stimulated by improved transportation facilities. Built between 1830 and 1880, the railroad stimulated the production of such perishables as fruit, vegetables and milk. Railroads transformed agriculture in New Jersey from general to specialized farming and played an important role in rebuilding New Jersey's soils."[51] They also both bolstered and undermined New Jersey farmers' profits. The motor truck also revolutionized agricultural transportation. The improved road system made possible the movement of great quantities of perishable produce directly from the farm to city markets. It was universally adopted by fruit and vegetable growers for transporting produce to Philadelphia, Newark, New York and other nearby markets.[52]

[48] Kise Franks & Straw, 37.
[49] Kise Franks & Straw, 37.
[50] Allison Hayes-Conroy, *South Jersey Under the Stars: Essays on Culture, Agriculture, and Place* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 92.
[51] Kise Franks & Straw, 26.
[52] Kise Franks & Straw, 26.

New Jersey produce could be shipped to new markets in the Southern, Midwestern and western United States, and this created stiff nationwide competition. However, New Jersey farmers found continued success in the local market, shipping fresh produce everyday to nearby markets at low cost. Tomatoes, peppers, and sweet corn, as well as fresh fruits like peaches and apples were popular crops on farms within a twenty mile radius of Philadelphia.[53] According to Hayes-Conroy, "Urban consumers often chose Jersey fruits and vegetables over others, associating them with just-picked freshness."

With the advancement of specialized farming in the age of industrialization, farmers created their own production niches on the most profitable crops. In addition, the chemical advances in fertilizers and pesticides tested by the New Jersey's Agricultural Extension enabled farmers to produce larger and better tasting crops, making New Jersey a mecca for agriculturalists.[54]

History of Woolwich Township/Swedesboro and its Agriculture

Woolwich Township's rich agricultural history followed the statewide trend of the 19th- and 20th-centuries. Its history reaches back to 1638, when Woolwich Township and Swedesboro Borough were originally settled by the New Sweden Company.[55] The New Sweden Colony included parts of present day Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Swedesboro was originally called Raccoon Creek or Raccoon (1640), named after the Indian reference (*Memirako* or *Naraticon*) to the Creek that runs thorough the town. The Swedes settled around the Creek the built the town's first houses, cowsheds and church.[56] The area which included Woolwich Township was originally part of a larger Greenwich Township, which was

[53] Hayes-Conroy, 94
[54] Hayes-Conroy, 93-94.
[55] MAAR Associates, 57.
[56] "History of Swedesboro." Gloucester County Historical Society. Swesdesboro Vertical File. Accessed January 2010.

incorporated in 1694. In 1767, South Greenwich residents created Woolwich Township as a separate municipal entity.[57] The town developed in the early 18th century due to both water and road accessibility. The establishment of Kings Highway in 1691, constructed by the English Colonial government, connected Burlington and Salem and allowed travelers to rest in Swedesboro.[58] The need for lodging and restaurants spurred development of the town. In 1766, Raccoon was renamed to Swedesboro, after its first European inhabitants.

The agriculture of Gloucester County made Swedesboro one of the first commercial vegetable shipping centers in the United States.[59] Three factors contributed in making the town a prominent fruit and vegetable headquarters: its location on Raccoon Creek, the construction of Kings Highway, and the establishment of the Swedesboro-Woodstown Railroad. Raccoon Creek was the first water route used to move timber to the shipyards along the Delaware. It provided a major shipping route for vegetables to market from about 1830. Kings Highway rose as the major highway to Philadelphia, when the horse and wagon became the system of moving the products of the farm to the consumer. The establishment of the railroad in 1869 marked the start of commercial fruit and vegetable production in the area. Before the railroad, the production of fruits and vegetables were centered in cities such as Boston, New York and Philadelphia.

Sweet potatoes were the cash crop in Swedesboro during the 1830s, with the first recorded large-scale shipment. The United States Agricultural Census of 1880 report Gloucester County was growing 9,951 acres of sweet potatoes. In 1890, 9,370 acres were recorded being grown in the county. Farmers in Swedesboro contributed to the sweet potato industry by constructing large storage houses next to the railroad. Storage houses extended the marketing

[57] MAAR Associates, 61.
[58] Swedesboro Walking Tour. http://www.historicswedesboro.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/House_Walking_Tour.pdf.
[59] Kirby, Amos. "Swedesboro: First Commercial Vegetable Center." The Newtown Press. Swedesboro Agriculture folder, held at the Gloucester County Historical Society.

season to year-around.[60] Tomatoes also became popular produce due to South Jersey's sandy soils and records show tomatoes being grown as early as the 1860s. In addition, asparagus was the 2nd largest crop in Woolwich Township and continued to be popular through the mid-20th century.[61]

Sicilian Settlement in Woolwich Township

Two interviews with surviving farmers confirmed limited economic opportunities for their parents in Sicily. The Sicilians who eventually settled in Woolwich Township first came to Philadelphia through Ellis Island. Most moved to the city's oldest and largest Italian settlement, South Philadelphia, which had its own Italian stores, doctors, banks, churches, and bakeries. Its social and economic life centered around the section's Italian Market, the oldest outdoor market in the country.[62] South Philadelphia possessed a plethora of Italian banks, such as the Bank of Frank DiBernadino, that offered a variety of services for immigrants, including communication outlets to Italy, steamship tickets to and from Italy, real estate offerings, and employment openings. [63]

Most knew of friends or relatives who travelled to America before them, and many times those living in the states would make living and working arrangements for newly-arrived immigrants.[64] With the little savings they brought over from Sicily, heads of households or entire families rented, or if they could afford it, owned an apartment or rowhouse in South Philadelphia. For many Sicilians, opportunities to work as migrant laborers in the field of Southern New Jersey provided steady employment during the summer months, usually March

[60] Kirby, Amos. "Swedesboro: First Commercial Vegetable Center." The Newtown Press. Swedesboro Agriculture folder, held at the Gloucester County Historical Society.
[61] Kirby, Amos. "Swedesboro: First Commercial Vegetable Center." The Newtown Press. Swedesboro Agriculture folder, held at the Gloucester County Historical Society.
[62] Donna J. Giacomo, *Images of America: Italians of Philadelphia* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 31.
[63] Giacomo, 31.
[64] Interview with Giovanni Nucifora*.

through September. Entire Sicilian families packed up for the summer and moved to worker housing on the farms in Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland County. According to Josephine Nucifora*:

> My family was originally from Sicily. It was all mountains. My mother came with her mother to Philadelphia, and then my mother met my father in Philadelphia. We lived at 916 S. Camac Street. Not many people had work then. It was the Depression – the 30s. A breadman would come around, and said to my father, "I got a farm you could work because I deliver bread there too. If you go work on the farm, you could make a living." My father said, "Yeah, get the kids going, we'll all work on the farm." And every year we did that. Lots of Italians came to work on the farms. I was little, 5 or 6 around then. I was nine years old when I started working on the farm in 1939.

After the production season was over in late September and early October, families would move back to Philadelphia. Many first generation children moved back to the city after the school year had started. Due to the production season, many first generation children never finished school and instead worked on the farms with their families. Josephine added:

> I went to public school, up to 9th grade and quit. We had to quit early to come onto the farm. March, you would stop school to go work on the farm. Then we would go back in the middle of September when the students had already started school. When I got back to school, they didn't know what to do with me. I wasn't there to get promoted at the end of the previous year. This happened every year and at 16 I got tired of it and quit. Then I came onto the farm and I met my husband and that was it. And my mother said, "You don't want to live on a farm!" I said, "Yes I do!" I was a city girl, but I would never go back to the city. I never went to work in the city. The farm was my first job because I was close to my family so they could watch me.

Back in Philadelphia after the production season, Sicilians picked up a variety of jobs to make ends meet during the winter. Interviews noted factories, oil refineries, and construction projects as off-season employment in the city.[65] [66] Many women sewed jackets in their Philadelphia apartments to earn a few more dollars while taking care of their young children.[67]

Tracking Italian Population Growth in Woolwich Township - 1915

[65] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.
[66] Interview with Giovanni and Josephine Nucifora*.
[67] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.

Italian immigration to the United States skyrocketed in the 1890s. Sicilian settlement in Woolwich Township did not significantly appear until the 1920s and 1930s. Sicilians who eventually settled in Woolwich Township were either still in Sicily or just settling in Philadelphia in 1915. Population numbers for Swedesboro Borough and Woolwich Township in the Supervisor's Report for the 1915 New Jersey State Census show a clear ethnic delineation between residents of Swedesboro and Woolwich Township.[68]

New Jersey 1915 State Census		
	Swedesboro	*Woolwich Township*
Total Number of Inhabitants	1738	1311
Males	862	788
Females	876	523
White Males	783	553
White Females	795	435
Colored Males	79	235
Colored Females	81	88
Persons American Born	1638	1113
" English	11	0
" Irish	26	13
" German	36	16
" Italian	**4**	**155**
" Born in Other Countries	23	16
Number of Naturalized Citizens	1669	13
" " Professional Pursuits	14	2
" " Commercial Pursuits	81	7
" " Skilled Laborers	233	17
" " Unskilled Laborers	263	441
" " Farmers	47	178
" " Other Occupations	71	19
Number Persons Can Read	1426	898
" " " Write	1422	892
" " " Speak English	1455	1028

Table 1. New Jersey 1915 State Census

[68] The last New Jersey State census was conducted in 1915. The New Jersey state census broke down population by ethnicity in small, rural areas. The US Federal Census information only tallies ethnicity in highly-populated urban areas. The 1930 Federal Census manuscripts, released 70 years after the survey, is the most recent source to indicate Sicilian population numbers in Woolwich Township. Ethnicity can only be determined in these manuscripts by surname or place of birth.

As seen in the 1915 Census, English farmers were still the majority of landowners in Woolwich Township in the early 20th century. Italians comprised 11.8% of the permanent population in 1915. During the summer months, Italian presence in the area increased as part of the unskilled labor employment base. From the numbers, it is clear that Sicilians were attracted to Woolwich Township for its opportunities in the agricultural industry. Swedesboro Borough was the center for more specialized and higher-class professions and did not accommodate for an unskilled labor pool. However, by the 1950s, Sicilians who had become wealthy farmers were able to move "up" into Swedesboro Borough, where dwellings were more expensive.

Life as a Sicilian Migrant Laborer

The population that eventually grew in Woolwich Township was largely from the Province of Catania, located on the east coast of Sicily. Interviews noted hometowns from Catania (city), Milo, Acrieale, and Sant'Alfio, all located in the vicinity of Mt. Etna. Several Sicilian-American surnames in the Woolwich Township echoed place or building names in Catania including Nicolosi, Nucifori, Mangano, Caselle (for Casella), Bonaccorsi, Leone, and Calatabiano.

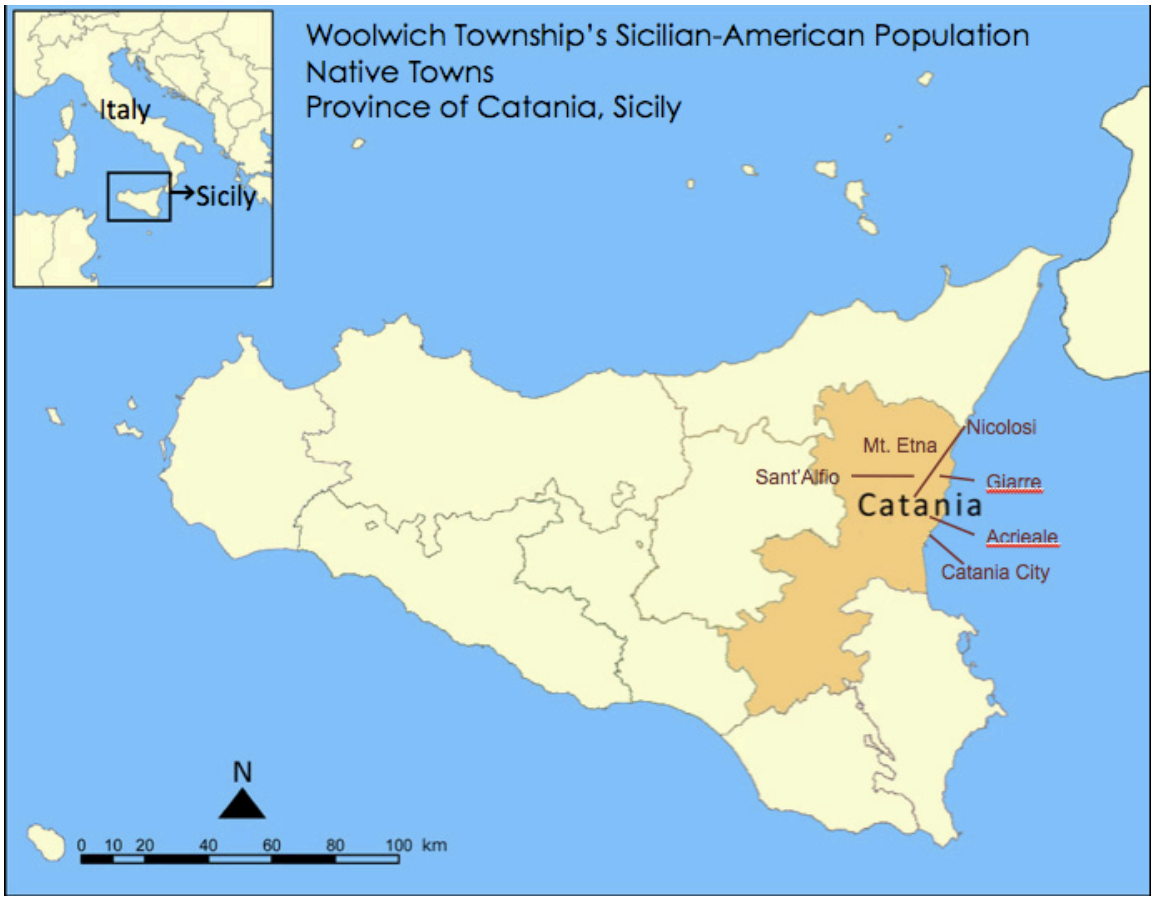


Illustration 4. Native Towns of Woolwich Township's Sicilian-American Population.

Initially, most Sicilians entered the South Jersey agricultural industry as seasonal laborers or sharecroppers, who were tenant farmers who gave a specified amount of crops to the landowner in lieu of rent. According to interviews, several Italian farmers, some more established than others, worked different sections of the same landowner's property.[69] In the 1910s and early 1920s, most Sicilian laborers worked for predominantly German and English farmers in Woolwich Township. Prominent landowners included John Rode, Howard Rode, Wilbur Costello, and Howard Sadler. According to interviews, when migrant farm labor contracts were confirmed between Sicilian immigrants and South Jersey farmers, some landowners would come into the city and pick up their labor force in March. By the late 1920s

[69] Interview with Giovanni Nucifora*.

and early 1930s, many of these farmers were Italian and preferred to help out and hire fellow Italians on their farms. Most laborers packed all of their belongings, which sometimes was very little, and loaded it onto the truck for their several-month stay in South Jersey. According to Josephine Nucifora:

> We lived in a rowhouse in Philadelphia. It was just me, my mother, my father, and two brothers. Just one family lived there. My parents owned the house. We went to the farm every year putting money towards the house and finally paid for it. We left it empty when we were at the farms. People just closed doors and left. To get to the farms, we would call them (the farmers) to come pick us up with a truck. I was so embarrassed. The neighbors could see all of our belongings. I had to put all my stuff in an open truck. All our mattresses, blankets, furniture. They came at 4 a.m. with the truck, it was a little street. We put all our stuff in the truck and went to the farm.

When they arrived on the farm, families were housed in very basic accommodations. Conditions of the farm for Sicilians before the days of inspection were very poor. Family histories noted Sicilian migrant laborers living in one-room shacks on the property. Refrigerators, electricity, stoves, and a bathroom were not mandated by state officials in the early 20th century.[70] Shacks had little insulation or electricity, and many times had previous uses such as fertilizer storage.[71]

Crops varied in Woolwich Township. Farmers grew both fruit and produce, including peaches, apples, tomatoes, asparagus, eggplants, and sweet potatoes. The life of a migrant laborer was difficult. Before working in the farms every morning, laborers first had other tasks such as cleaning the stalls and currying the horses. Then at six in the morning, laborers were expected to be out in the fields.[72]

1930 US Federal Census Population Schedule

By 1930, Italians comprised 31% of Woolwich Township's population, compared to 11.8% in 1915. The census records show the majority of Italians living in Woolwich Township

[70] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.
[71] *The Story of Venerando & Rosaria Maccarone: The Gift of Family*, 28. Compiled family history held by interviewee Angie Grasso.
[72] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.

identified their occupations as farmer or farm laborer in the truck farming industry. Most arrived in America from 1906 to 1917 or 1920 to 1924. Most male heads of households were in their 30s or early 40s, and the majority of households had between two and seven children.[73]

Development of Sicilian-Owned Farms

When they saved enough money, Sicilians bought their own farms, usually adjacent to a family member's tract of land. In starting up their own agricultural pursuits, many relied on other family members who owned land to sell or donate land to them. These immigrants utilized kinship ties to get themselves off the ground financially, very similar to the system they used in Sicily. According to Catherine Garozzo, "gradually my father started working on my uncle's farm, because my uncle bought a farm. He worked for him and he lived in South Jersey and from there my father bought his own farm."[74]

Families produced a lot of children in order to work the farm operation. Children of farmers worked in the fields as soon as they could make a contribution. One interviewee noted he was as young as six years old when he started performing simple farm chores. Older brothers served as a model and set expectations for younger siblings, who would eventually take over their responsibilities when the older brothers moved and started their own farms. Established farmers would buy land adjacent to their farms, enabling Sicilians to expand operations and subdivide to their children, who built their own houses on the property and started their own farming operations.

According to interviews, when it came time to harvest produce, the entire family worked. According to one interviewee, she went to school up to seventh grade because her mother was having other children and she needed her to stay home and take care of the babies so the mother

[73] 1930 Federal Census Population Schedule, Woolwich Township, District 46 and 47.
[74] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.

could be out in the fields. Farming in the 1930s was comprised of mostly low-technology hand labor. When it came time to plant potatoes, some children were given the responsibility of dropping the plants while the father or older farm hand would plant them with a punch and tongue. Children would still be missing school for part of the year during the 1930s and 1940s. Sons held even more responsibility, armed with task of cultivating the ground with the horse. Hours in the field were long, sometimes as much as 15 hours a day during the high season.

Most Sicilians both in Sicily and in their early experiences in America were only used to the labor side of farming. However, when Sicilians eventually saved enough to buy their own land, they quickly learned to become businessmen. Many farmers had little education, and they were forced to teach themselves basic writing and arithmetic to tally production numbers. According to one interview, a farmer's father had only three years of education in Sicily, and when he bought the farm in Woolwich Township he bought his own ledger book and managed to work out payments to laborers, some production numbers, and even writing letters in English. However, Italian was still the primary language spoken in the household. Most Sicilians held onto their native language and frequently used it to converse. Only when they had to speak to a non-Italian would they try to use English. When their children, born in America, were sent to school, they quickly became bilingual in English and Italian. Many times children translated for parents who did not like or were uncomfortable using English.[75]

[75] Interview with Giovanni Nucifora*.

Illustration 5. Samuel DiBella Proudly Standing with His Pumpkins.
Courtesy of Rosemary DiBella-Wright.

It took planning and experimentation to produce as many crops as possible during a given season. Many farmers divided their farm by crop and stuck with fruit or produce in the beginning. Many Sicilian farmers had orchards for their peaches and apples. Interviews noted that peaches would be available by Independence Day through the end of July. Apples came in during September.[76]

[76] Interview with Giovanni Nucifora*.

Illustration 6. Joseph DiBella and Family Showing Off Their Apple Trees, Roma Studios, Philadelphia. Courtesy of Rosemary Wright-DiBella.

According to interviews, most farmers had a seed house on the property. In February, they would start planting tomato and pepper seeds for the upcoming harvest. As the years progressed, seeds were planted and stored in greenhouses with electric heat at night and backup generators. In the fields, technology such as plastic covering with trickle irrigation used precise amounts of water for each crop. However, large amount of labor for picking stayed the same, depending on the crop.

To help on the farm, many Italians utilized migrant laborers to harvest fields. In the 1930s, Italians predominantly hired other Italians who did not possess enough capital to purchase their own farms. According to interviews, Italians helped each other before they contracted out

for other types of laborers. Most did not stay for long, only until they saved enough to buy their own property to farm themselves. Migrant laborers, usually from Puerto Rico, could be obtained through South Jersey labor camps. Most migrant laborers came from the local Glassboro labor camp. Farmers would contract with the camp and would receive the men as needed. Many times, these laborers were strangers to one another. Older sons of farmers would be responsible for taking laborers to town on the weekend to run errands. Farmers would prepare the house before they came, including putting curtains on the windows and providing fresh linens. Due to labor codes, all accommodations had electricity, a refrigerator, electric stove, and a bathroom. State inspectors came out to monitor for acceptable living condition and violations.[77]

(Gendered) Family Environment

Activities and expectations were usually divided by gender and age. Women mostly picked and packed and left the planting, cultivating, spraying, and plowing to the men. Working hard on the farm, Sicilian-Americans still did not turn over huge profits. Most Sicilians lived simple lives as they did in Sicily and used resources on the farm to sustain their lifestyles. An interviewee noted limited resources on the farm:

> We had one cow to supply the family milk. We had pigs and we had calves so we had our own fresh meat. We had our own chickens so we had eggs, poultry for cooking, fresh pork, and veal. We grew all of this ourselves and the women would can all the food they could for the winter so our cellars were always stocked. If we were poor we didn't know it because we had plenty to eat. We never went to bed hungry. And when the tractors came in, the vehicles…well first we got the truck because it was needed for farming. And then nothing was ever bought on time payment. The policy was if you didn't have the money to pay cash for it, you didn't buy it. We were without a car for a long time until we had the money to buy it.[78]

In some instances, the male head of household passed away, leaving the farm operation to the wife and children. The wife now served a multitude of roles: the head of household, the

[77] Interview with Giovanni Nucifora*.
[78] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.

farm operator, the cook, the housekeeper, and the mother. Some sold the farm, others continued with operations. If keeping the farm, the women stepped up, quickly becoming shrewd businesswomen to survive. In the case of Catherine Garozzo, migrant labor was key to keep the business running. She hired 15 Puerto Ricans from the Glassboro labor camp, relied on the help of her two sons, and acquired high school students during the summer to pick the tomatoes and pack the trucks to be delivered to the Campbell Soup Company.

Family and Kinship Ties

Continuing the same Sicilian attitudes towards the family, Sicilian-American farmers prioritized kinship ties above all else. According to Catherine Garozzo:

> We didn't have a heater in the house, but today I would call that a blessing because the family was all in one room and we conversed and my father told stories and we were a close-knit family because we weren't scattered all over the house.

Giovanni Nucifora* also spoke of strong familial and native connections. He said, "As far as socializing, it was the family that kept together. In the winter time other farmers would drop in and talk about their progress, hardships, children." In addition, outside of family, the entire Sicilian-American community in Woolwich Township was considered an extension of family. While in Sicily, peasants from other towns, but within the same province, would have considered each other complete strangers. However, in Woolwich Township, with the majority of the population from Catania, Sicilians generally banded together as one cohesive group. Catherine Garozzo and her sister Angie Grasso explains:

> Catherine: A lot of Sicilians came from same area. My family was from Giarre, but my father-in-law came from another area. However, it was still in Sicily, especially Catania, very close by. Like a magnet, everyone came to the same place.
>
> Angie: …and they became an extended family. Whenever there was a wedding, all the people were invited because they had brothers and sisters in Sicily who could not come

* Name changed for anonymity purposes.

over. The other farmers were their family.

The community stuck together socially, and they also assisted one another in their farming operations. Giovanni* said, "Now if a neighbor had a problem, if a crop had to be picked, or if someone was sick and they needed extra help, you go to that farm. You help. No money exchanged hands. No money. In my area we went and helped. Because you never knew when you needed them. We did a lot of that." Sicilians created social and business networks within the community, for example regularly giving business to the Sicilian photography company, Roma Studios, for family pictures and the local Italian doctor for health needs. Giovanni* stated, "Your grandfather the electrician did work for my dad and did work for me. We had bad wires in the yard and in the packing house. He redid all that for us. And they are still there. They are still as good now as it was then."

The Growing Season [79]

The growing season spanned from March to September. With intense planning, each farmer had their own unique approach to farming, carefully picking and choosing crops that were best for their soils. Farmers had to pay close attention to soil, weather and market issues to try to have the most productive system. Above all, farmers learned how to be flexible year in and year out in a constantly changing environment. Many times crop production was hit or miss, depending on the weather and the market. However, tomatoes were South Jersey cash crops and the backbone of many Sicilian-American farms. Tomato production occurred in two stages: the early tomatoes were sent to market while the later tomatoes were processed and canned. Many farmers had contracts with canning companies such as Campbell's and Delmonte for the second

[79] Agricultural Census information is available at the county, not municipal, level. While conclusions can be drawn from Gloucester County numbers, no state or federal survey exists to determine exactly how much produce was cultivated within Woolwich Township by Sicilian-American farmers during the 20th century. In addition, records at the Swedesboro Auction could not be accessed for this project. While not complete, these records could indicate types and quantities of produce from Sicilian-American farms were sold to buyers from 1938 to the present.

half of tomato season. The first ones for market were picked blush to allow for ripening during the delivery process. However, canneries mandated picking red, mature tomatoes for the canning process.[80]

Asparagus was another Woolwich Township specialty. Asparagus season lasted from mid-May to July 4th. Tomatoes began around the 4th of July. After the market tomatoes, the canhouse tomatoes would come in, and the season would wrap up with sweet potatoes. Corn was also a favorite with Sicilian-American farms. The land was divided by crop, for example five acres of peppers, ten acres of tomatoes, five acres of squash and rotated on an annual basis. Other combinations included asparagus, tomatoes and peppers. Some crops were changed in and out by year, introducing other produce such as eggplant in off years to balance the nutrients in the soil.

Illustration 7. Sicilian farmers and Migrant Laborers in Woolwich Township, 1940s.
Courtesy of Angie Grasso and Catherine Garozzo.

[80] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.

Role of Swedesboro Auction and Produce Markets

Most Sicilian farmers grew both fresh and processed market produce. In the early 1900s, the introduction of South Jersey produce auctions served as a secondary outlet to those in the city. These auctions afforded more selling opportunities and allowed farmers to negotiate fair prices collectively from wholesale and retail buyers. In addition, the auctions served as daily meeting places for local farmers. Auctions were found in several towns in South Jersey, from Beverly to Vineland.[81] Woolwich Township's local auction, Swedesboro Auction, and the Philadelphia Market provided two outlets for farmers to sell their crops.

Swedesboro Auction, Inc.

In the mid-20th century, the Swedesboro Auction served as one of the largest vegetable auctions in the East, selling produce such as asparagus, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, melons, sweet corn, cucumbers, and squash. The auction was established and owned by the Swedesboro area farmers and was directed by a nine-man Board of Directors. Through the auction, Sicilians rose from farmers to entrepreneurial businessmen.

Before the establishment of the auction, farmers sold their fresh produce at an open market at the corner of Kings Highway and Railroad Avenue in downtown Swedesboro and sold on the street.[82] With two-horse wagons, farmers lined up and presented their produce for buyers, who would visit each wagon and bid on the products.[83]

[81] Hayes-Conroy, 98.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Catherine Garozzo Interview.

Illustration 8. Swedesboro Auction between 1938 and 1958.
Photo courtesy of the Gloucester County Historical Society.

Illustration 9. 1941 Swedesboro Auction Board of Directors.
Courtesy of the *New Town Press*

The Auction, as it was known in the late 20th century, was established in 1938 by Harry and William W. Folker, Sicilian Mario Nucifora, John Rode and William Rainey. With a loan, they purchased a lot at the corner of Anderson and Leahy Streets, where it still stands today.[84] In the first year, they elected Sicilian Salvatore Maccarone as president and sold 186 shares of stock. Sicilians played a large role in the development and management of the Auction. In the 1941 photograph of the Board of Directors shown above, seven out of twelve Directors were Sicilian, including auction master Frank Centurione.[85] In 1939 and 1940, only a year or two after its official opening, the Swedesboro Auction led the state in number of packages sold and the value of those products.[86] By the end of 1941, the market was the first produce auction in New Jersey to handle more than one million packages, as well as the first to exceed the million dollar mark in sales.[87] In 1942, the Auction led all the auction blocks in New Jersey in sales and volume for a third year running.[88]

The Auction Process

Trucks from local farmers lined up along Locke Avenue and through the auction lot waiting for the market to open. The auction lasted several hours, six days a week, from asparagus season in early May until the end of sweet potatoes in September.[89] The farmer took the truck to the auction and lined up behind the other trucks. One at a time, a truck would go through the auction building and the buyers would be on each side. As each truck entered the sales area, a sample container would be taken and the contents displayed to the buyers, sitting on

[84] "Swedesboro Auction Continues Its Tradition for 65th Year." Swedesboro Agriculture Folder, Held at the Gloucester County Historical Society.
[85] Jeff Wolfe, "A Little Bit of Farming History Will Remain at Swedesboro Auction Site," The *New Town Press*, July 2013, 9.
[86] "Auction Market Sets Sales Record," *The Swedesboro News*, October 9, 1940, 1.
[87] "Local Auction Shows Big Increase In Year's Work," *The Swedesboro News*, December 3, 1941, 1.
[88] "Auction Led State 3rd Year ; Schorn Elected President," *The Swedesboro News*, January 27, 1943, 1.
[89] Catherine Garozzo Interview.

either side of the trucks. Buyers would start bidding on the offerings with the bidding process managed by the main auctioneer.

Illustration 10. Trucks Lining up at Swedesboro Auction, Railroad Avenue, Date Unknown. Source: *Images of America, Swedesboro and Woolwich Township.*

The seller would then deliver the goods to the buyer's warehouse or to the loading docks for later pick up. Interviews also noted trucks from New York and Philadelphia would be there to load the winning bids and take them to their respective cities. Buyers bought from several different farmers during the course of one day. The main items sold at the Swedesboro Auction were red and green peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, asparagus, and sweet potatoes.[90] In 1944, it was noted that Swedesboro was the largest shipping point for asparagus.[91]

The majority of buyers were local produce brokers from Pedricktown, Salem and Vineland, but a few chain buyers were regular participants.[92] According to Catherine Garozzo, the most successful farmers in Woolwich Township also became buyers, including the Casella

[90] "Auction Market Sales List," *The Swedesboro News*, September 24, 1941, 3.
[91] "Asparagus Season Nears Height," *The Swedesboro News*, May 10, 1944, 1- 2.
[92] Interview with Giovanni Nucifora*.

Brothers and the Duper family.[93] Catherine Garozzo described a particularly successful year at the market:

> The first year we farmed after my husband passed away, God was helping us, we had beautiful tomatoes. This one buyer, DeBaum, would go up to my son in line and say, 'How many do you have of Lady Catherine?' He said the buyers in New York, because I was a woman, would call me Lady Catherine. Joe would say maybe 375 and he would mark them down in his book. And then when the truck got up, guaranteed he would bid and he wouldn't let them go. And one day DeBaum's father was there and he told his father, 'I would be willing to bet we could dump this basket and you can't find one that you can't use.' And his father said, 'No way," dumped the basket, and couldn't find one. 'That's Lady Catherine.' I used to pack all the big ones and the kids used to pack the #2s, and I would try to make a good package. If it wasn't just perfect, out it went. One farmer said, 'How could it be possible that you get that much more money than I do? How could your tomatoes be that good?" He went down to our truck, looked at them and said, "I'll be damned they are better than mine." The following year we did the exactly same thing, but we didn't have the same kind of tomatoes. It's the season, it's the weather. And we did everything just the same.

In terms of profits, when there was short supply the price went up. If buyers came on a busy day with long truck lines and large supply of produce, farmers profits per package decreased. Farmers' bottom lines were at the mercy of the weather, the buyers, and the competition.

[93] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.

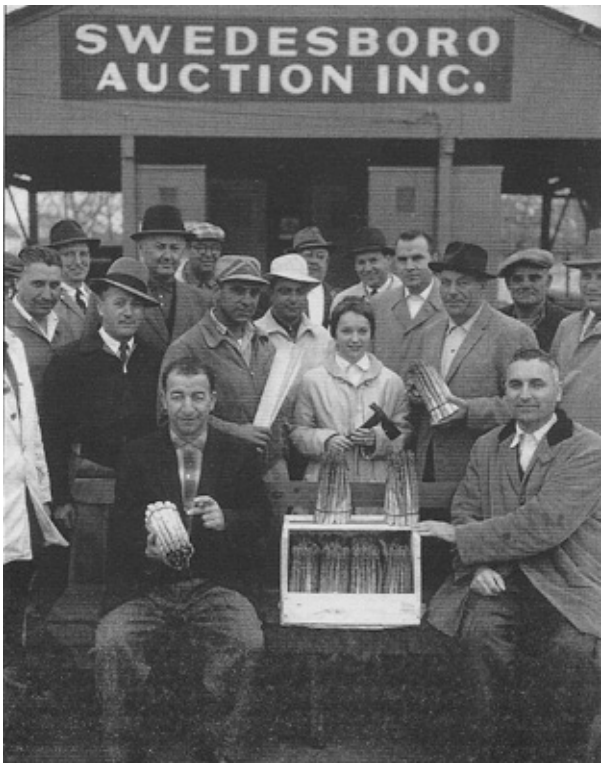


Illustration 11. Swedesboro Auction in the 1950s.
Source: *Images of America, Swedesboro and Woolwich Township.*

Even with all of the Auction's success, during World War II, *The Swedesboro News* reported there were "still thousands of dollars worth of asparagus going to waste due to the inability of the farmers to secure workers." Centrione and the Auction group pushed for the opening of a migratory labor camp, which was being built outside of Swedesboro.[94] The establishment of this camp, which housed 400 farm workers,[95] boosted manpower while many farmhands were abroad fighting. These migratory camps, which contracted seasonal workers out from Jamaica and Puerto Rico, became an integral part of the farming operations' successes from the 1940s through the 1970s. It also acted as a step up for Sicilians who were once in the same position as seasonal laborers. By the 1940s, Sicilians were firmly planted as farm owners and operators.

[94] "Auction Block Sets Pair of New Records," *The Swedesboro News*, May 13, 1942, 1-4.
[95] "Camp Ready for 400 Workers," *The Swedesboro News*, May 20, 1942, 1.

Sales and volume at the Auction steadied through the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Total sales volume in 1972 were 473,336 packages with a cash value of $2,381,640. In the same year there were 179 Swedesboro area farmers selling produce through the auction to about 50 buyers.[96]

Hurff Canning Factory and Campbell Soup; Role of Processing Plants and Canneries

To diversify profits, most farmers planted a mix crops for fresh market and for canning. The late 19th- and early 20th-century introduction of canneries and processed foods, especially Beefsteak tomato canning, was made popular by the Campbell Soup Company of Camden, New Jersey. South Jersey was known for its canneries, with companies located in Bridgeton, Salem, Camden and Swedesboro. These canneries relied on local area farms for the large quantities of produce needed to can products. The tomato was used to produce a variety of products, including whole tomatoes, puree, catsup, pulp and juice. The highest production of tomatoes came from Salem, Burlington and Gloucester counties."[97]

Many Sicilian-American farmers contracted with canneries in advance for the sale of their tomatoes. Most farmers contracted with New Jersey companies such as the Hurff Canning Factory (eventually DelMonte) in Swedesboro, Heinz in Salem, and Campbell Soup in Camden. Interviews described an application process in which the canning company would approve farmers, and then set up contracts with the operation. Farmers would buy the seeds from the canning company to standardize the tomato product. Periodically, cannery inspectors would come out to the farms to make sure the crops were up to productions standards.

Woolwich Township Sicilian-American Farmers Case Studies, 1930-1970

[96] *Information on Business and Agriculture in Gloucester County*, from Public Relations Tours of the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture taken between 1961 – 1981, held at the Gloucester County Historical Society, Woodbury, New Jersey, 65.
[97] Kise Franks & Straw, 27.

Most Sicilians living in Woolwich Township in the 1930s and 1940s were connected to the agricultural in some way. The years between 1930 and 1970 were crucial for Sicilian economic and social development and diversification. These decades witnessed strides of Sicilians expanding their influence from farming to holding political positions, establishing large scale produce distribution operations, and relocating to Swedesboro Borough to perform skilled work.

These decades also saw the development and modernization of agricultural techniques, ushering in a transition from native, traditional agricultural practices to experimentation with new technological advances in conjunction with Rutgers University Cooperative Extension. It was also when second generation children, who lived and worked on the farm for most of their lives, had their own families who sought higher degrees instead of taking on the family farming business. The following case studies outline how several of the original immigrant families continued farming and carved their own niche to thrive as small business owners in an increasingly competitive and global market. These case studies were originally highlighted in *Information on Business and Agriculture in Gloucester County*, published by the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture yearly from 1961 to 1981. The publication highlighted the county's model farming productions. Many farmers have the same surnames and are related. Most are second-generation farmers, who inherited the land from their Sicilian parents, who immigrated to America, initially served as migrant laborers, bought their own land and started their own farming businesses. The case studies provide a glimpse into each Sicilian-American farmer's approach to agriculture, showing diversity in crop selection, usage in machinery, and the roles of family members in the business. Farming families in the 1980s and 1990s started to

face the challenge and hard decision to continue farming in the face of growing development pressure. Many outlined here ended up selling their land to developers.

The Casella Family Farm

The Casella Family was one of the most influential and wealthy Sicilian-American families in Woolwich Township, New Jersey. Leaders in the social, economic, and religious realms of Swedesboro and Woolwich Township, the Casellas were also responsible for continuing the Sicilian tradition of St. Alfio's Day, Catania's patron saint, by financing and organizing the first St. Alfio's feast in 1938.

Their farming business was highlighted in the 1980s in the Gloucester County Agricultural Business publications. At this time, three generations of the Casella family were involved in the family business. In 1926, Sam, John and Anthony Casella organized the company, Casella Brothers Sons, Inc., which specialized in growing and distributing produce. In the 1970s, the five sons of Sam and John ran the company, who owned a total of 600 acres in the 1970s for peaches and apples. The sons delineated responsibilities for themselves, such as managing the farm growing operation, running the fruit and vegetable buying, and handling the shipping sector of the corporation. Major peach varieties included Redhaven, Casella Special, Blake and Rio-oso-gem. The brothers grew primarily Starkrimson Red Delicious apples.

Earning large profits on their farming business, the Casella family added to their business holdings by establishing a fruit and vegetable brokerage firm on Helms Avenue in Swedesboro. They bought asparagus, tomatoes, peppers, peaches, apples, sweet potatoes, and squash from other farmers at the Swedesboro Auction to sell at the major chain stores along the east coast and as far west as Chicago. The Casella Brothers additionally sold farm-related productions, such as fertilizers, spray materials, and fruit and vegetable containers to other growers. By the 1970s, 25

people were employed year-round by the Casella Brothers. During the harvest season, more than 75 people were needed to pick, pack and ship the produce they grew.[98]

Tax assessment records show the Casella family sold all of their land by 2000. The Casellas, one of the leading Sicilian families in Woolwich Township, serves as the prominent example of the trend to sell agricultural land for development as the next generation moved away from farming to become college-educated professionals.

Thomas and Frank Sorbello

Thomas and Frank Sorbello rented 350 acres out of 450 acres of their farm on Russell Mill Road from their father, Alfio S. Sorbello, one of the first Sicilian-American farmers in Woolwich Township. Alfio immigrated to America in 1920 and worked as a farm laborer. In 1936, Alfio and his wife Grace purchased the farm on Russell Mill Road. In the 1970s, Thomas and Frank owned significant acreage in agriculture in Woolwich Township. They diversified their produce with 20 acres of fresh tomatoes, 70 acres of process tomatoes, 50 acres of peppers, 20 acres of cucumbers, 40 acres of asparagus, 50 acres of squash, 150 acres of soybeans and 50 acres of rye.

The Sorbellos represented one of only a few farm partnerships in Gloucester County. Many second-generation Sicilian-Americans opted out of farming, going to college for unrelated degrees. However, second-generation Thomas and Frank came back to farming full-time in 1973 after Frank graduated from the University of Delaware with a degree in Civil Engineering. Applying both their practical and educational skills, they installed a large underground irrigation system in the 1970s. In cooperation with the Gloucester County Soil Conservation District, they constructed a four million gallon pond. The Sorbellos also worked to further agricultural

[98] *Information on Business and Agriculture in Gloucester County*, 77.

technology by working in conjunction with professor Dr. Howard Ellison of Rutgers University during this time, offering four acres of their land to plant a trial breed of asparagus.

Frank Musumeci

In 1938, Frank Musumeci and his wife bought a 140-acre farm on Swedesboro-Paulsboro Road. Vegetable growers, they produced both fresh market and processing crops, including asparagus, tomatoes, peppers and watermelons. Musumeci and his wife had four children, two of which were actively engaged in the farming operation in 1966. In the 1960s, the Musumeci farm extensively used irrigation in dry weather. A nearby farm pond provided the irrigation water, which was pumped through portable aluminum pipe. The farm used migrant labor, about 26 men per year, to pick and pack vegetables. They lived in one labor house located on the property. Musumeci emerged as a leader in Swedesboro's agricultural community as past president of the Swedesboro Auction, a director of the New Jersey Asparagus Council, and a Trustee of the New Jersey Vegetable Growers Association. In the 1960s, he served as the Treasurer to the Swedesboro Auction and was a member of the Executive Committee of the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture.

Since the 1950s, the Musumeci family worked in conjunction with Rutgers University in growing variety trials of tomatoes, eggplants and peppers. In 1966, the Musumeci family also sought to experiment with new forms of agriculture-related technology, working with Rutgers to test soil fumigants to control soil insects and diseases.[99]

Musumeci Brothers

Frank H. Musumeci and his sons, Harry, Alfred and Anthony operated a 180-acre vegetable farm west of downtown Swedesboro. In 1968, Landtect, a development corporation, purchased the farm for industrial use and the Musumeci Brothers leased the land from them.

[99] *Information on Business and Agriculture in Gloucester County*, 38.

From late 1960s onward, selling and leasing farmland became a trend in Gloucester County, until it ready for development.

Frank H. arrived as an immigrant at Ellis Island in 1929. He purchased the farm in 1943, and in the 1960s, bought an additional 100-acre property in Salem County.

The Musumeci Brothers stand out in Woolwich Township farming because they were one of the few corporate farms in Gloucester County. Alfred served as the president; Harry, the secretary and Frank H. and Anthony were the directors. The Musumeci Brothers grew for both the fresh and processed market. From 1946 through the 1980s, they held a contract with Campbell Soup. In the 1960s they grew 50 acres of asparagus, 35 of process tomatoes, 25 of fresh tomatoes, 18 of sweet corn, 7 of cucumbers and the remainder in soybeans. In 1968, the Musumeci Brothers were the first Gloucester County growers to experiment with 8 acres of summer squash grown on aluminized paper, which produces bumper crops without pesticides.

Responsibility of the business was divided equally over the four partners, each with its own tasks. Frank H. handled the technical side of the business, delivering the produce to the Swedesboro Auction daily during growing season. Harry took a leadership role as the Director of the Swedesboro Auction and the Chairman of the Gloucester County Cucumbers Growers Association.[100]

Maugeri Farm

Salvatore (Sam) Maugeri immigrated to America with his wife Alfia from Catania, Sicily in 1922. They began as summer migrant workers, picking crops in the fields as farm laborers, and later upgraded to sharecroppers with an experienced farmer. They bought their own farm in 1928 along Oldmans Creek, south of downtown Swedesboro, and operated a very profitable business for many years. When Salvatore retired, Joseph and Anne Maugeri inherited the farm.

[100] Ibid, 59.

The Maugeri's grew both fresh and processed market produce, holding a contract with Campbell Soup Company.[101]

Illustration 12. Salvatore "Sam" Maugeri Farming on His Tractor.
Courtesy of www.maugerifarms.com

Joe grew the family operation by purchasing another farm on Oldmans Creek Road. The farm became the family's living and business headquarters. Other land was leased for additional production. As of the 1970s, the family owned 110 acres and rented 90 acres. They grew 70 acres of asparagus, 25 of sweet corn, 20 of fresh tomatoes, 70 of canhouse tomatoes, 8 of melons, 1 of cucumbers, 2 of squash, 30 of sweet potatoes, 15 of rye and 25 acres of soybeans. Around the same time, the Maugeri's used 17 migrant laborers and invested $80,000 in modern machinery and equipment to run the business.

[101] "About Magueri Farms." Accessed March 13, 2010. http://www.maugerifarms.com/about_maugeri_farms_south_jersey_produce_sales.htm.

Illustration 13. Maugeri Taking Produce to Auction.
Courtesy of www.maugerifarms.com

Illustration 14. Tomatoes Picked from Maugeri Farm.
Courtesy of www.maguerifarms.com

Despite several Sicilian-American farming operations closing in the 1990s for the development of residential homes, the Maugeri farm stayed in business. Today, Maugeri Farms is run by Sam and Joe Jr., third generation growers. They cultivate over 600 acres in the same

region around the original farm. They sell their produce to wholesale distributors and markets. The Maugeri's also supply roadside farm stands in some parts of Pennsylvania and throughout New Jersey.[102] The Maugeris have stayed successful by staying on top of agricultural trends and adapting to the market. Despite others choosing professional careers over the family business, the Maugeris' dedicated themselves to the family farm over several generations. It is one of the few examples in Woolwich Township where Sicilian-American farms still successfully exist.

Conclusion

Sicilians-Americans drove Woolwich Township's agricultural industry through the second half of the 20th century. By 1960, Sicilian-American farmers comprised at least half of land ownership and production in Woolwich Township. The community slowly but surely advanced up in the American class system, from seasonal immigrant laborers to successful, profitable farm operators. The auctions and the canneries helped diversify Sicilian-American farm operations. Most importantly, the auctions served as a daily gathering place for the Sicilian-American farmers in a business setting. The auction was an outlet for their products, selling the tangible results of their native labor practices. Every farmer could see what the other was producing, and high-quality, high-selling produce garnered respect from other farmers and elevated their status within the community. The auction stood as a place where agricultural, and subsequently, community, leaders emerged in a public setting within the Sicilian-American circle. The Casella, Sorbello and Maugeri families became local farming empires. All three were at the forefront of agricultural progress and technological advances. They entered the political sphere, serving on executive committees of local and county agricultural boards and formed partnerships with Rutgers University to experiment with new agricultural methods and

[102] "About Magueri Farms." Accessed March 13, 2010. http://www.maugerifarms.com/about_maugeri_farms_south_jersey_produce_sales.htm.

products. Sicilian native practices such as capitalizing upon past agricultural experiences and families working as an essential unit allowed for the success of Sicilian farm operations, making Sicilian-Americans a very public, influential group in Woolwich Township during the mid-20th century.

CHAPTER III

PUBLIC CIRCLES: SOCIAL TRADITIONS OF WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP'S SICILIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Working endlessly on the farm, Sicilians had limited opportunities to socialize during growing season. As the Sicilian population grew in Swedesboro and Woolwich Township by the 1930s, a group of male, Sicilian farmers formed Sicilian-American Societies, modeled after mutual aid societies back in Europe, to provide further socialization and cultural opportunities. The Church and the Societies visibly brought the population of Sicilian farmers into downtown Swedesboro, where they utilized the downtown's built resources and public spaces to celebrate their native culture. The Societies represented both tangible and intangible elements of Sicilian-American culture. The tangible, the Gloria Society house, created a community space for farmers, allowing Sicilians to recreate rituals and garner a sense of belonging. The intangible also emerged in these spaces, supporting the Sicilian value system of strengthening kinship and community ties.

The creation of Italian mutual aid societies was typical for many immigrant communities in America during the late 19th- and early 20th-century. In most cases, the membership was limited to those from a particular town. In Newark, for example, Societa Vallatese, a Societa Caposelese and a Societa Teorese were only a few Italian societies established within the city. The organizations united immigrants in mutual assistance, providing sick and death benefits, and in social activities. Carrying on the tradition of the confraternities of Italy and Sicily, the societies also sponsored feasts of the patron saints. These associations served useful functions

and continued the sentiment of *campanilismo*, or devotion to one's native region, city, town, or village.[103]

The Gloria Society

On March 21, 1938, nine Sicilian farmers in Woolwich Township, Nunzio Tropea, Mario Nucifora, Guiseppe DiBella, Giovanni Caltabiano, Salvatore LaSpina, A. Salvatore Mangano, Venerando Maccarone, Orazio Finocchiaro, and Mario Casella, all of Swedesboro, founded the Societa Gloria Italo-Americana. Known as the Gloria Society, New Jersey Incorporation Records state, "the purposes for which this corporation is formed are educational, cultural and beneficiary."[104] While the majority of its members came from the province of Catania, many were still strangers to one another. This form of cooperation and organization helped create a sense of collective Sicilian-American identity for the first time in Woolwich Township.[105]

No written documents pertaining to the Gloria Society survive. Any account of the society's events have been transmitted through interviews with involved Sicilians. In an interview with Giovanni Nucifora[*], whose father was one of the nine founders of the Society, he stated that the Society owned a house on Kings Highway in downtown Swedesboro, which is vacant, but still standing today. The house, or "Italian Hall," was used for meetings and social events, such as engagement and baptism parties, wedding receptions, and spaghetti dinners.[106] Giovanni* stated he remembered on Sundays his father leaving home to work on the house. In starting the organization, Giovanni explained

> They were owning something for the first time. And they wanted to start something that other people had, like a club, to better themselves, to recognize

[103] Vecoli, 282.
[104] "Certificate for Incorporation of the Societa Gloria Italo Americana." New Jersey Certificates of Incorporation, 1932 – 1941, page 423. Held by Lois Stanley, Swedesboro Historical Society.
[105] Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 117.
[*] Name changed for anonymity purposes.
[106] Interview with Catherine Garozzo and Sowell, 117.

> that they were somebody, but not in an arrogant way. They bought a big house and a carpenter that used to do work for my father gutted the inside and made a hall out of it. It was right across from the high school. They had a sign that said founded in 1938. They would have meetings, if they got sick, they paid their dues, it was a good thing. Only for meetings, no one lived there. I do believe they bought the house, because they sold it later.

The founders worked hard to create a prime downtown space for their society to show legitimacy of the community. They were proud of their accomplishments, rising to the status of landowners in a short amount of time, and finally had the capital necessary to formalize the Sicilian-American connection within Woolwich Township. Interviews hinted at the start of a creation of an Italian-professional class, with Italian businessmen joining the society. Giovanni* remembers his father's dedication to the society, saying

> I never attended the meetings, but I remember my dad, he was crazy for the society. He went to meetings every week. He was working the farm then, and go there when they were gutting the house. Every Sunday he had a suitcase there he would have these minutes about what happened at the meetings. Off he goes…he shaped up, he would go to the place. It was an enjoyable thing for the men. It was for farmers and their children of age. I couldn't; I was too young. Some of the Italian businessmen went, all Italian.

Illustration 15. Gloria Society House on Kings Highway, Date Unknown.
Courtesy of Lois Stanley.

Illustration 16. Gloria Society House in 2010.
Photo by Author, January 2010.

The Society as a Gathering Place

The society primarily served as social opportunity and used the house to celebrate Italian engagements, weddings, and Christenings. Catherine Garozzo remembers her sister and brother, Mary and Sam, getting engaged at the house. According to Angie Grasso, "a lot of young people finally looked at each other and realized they were interested in each other and got married because of those gatherings."[107] Giovanni Nucifora[*] and his wife Josephine[*] also used the house to host their engagement party. Josephine worked on Giovanni's father's farm since she was 10 years old. According to Josephine

> I'd seen him and I said, "I like that kid." He was probably 15 then. My mother and father went to another farm and I didn't see him for a long while, 5 or 6 years. One day I said to my father you know what I want to go back to that farm, I don't want to work on another farm. So that's what happened, I started looking at him and he started looking at me. I told my father I wanted to marry him. My father came over to his father's house and we made arrangements. We got married when I was 18 in 1949.

[107] Catherine Garozzo Interview.
[*] Name changed for anonymity purposes.
[*] Name changed for anonymity purposes.

The photo below shows the Gloria Society Trustees at one of the organization's celebrations. Banners and flags, which included an American flag, were continually present in the group's photos. Ceremonial personal materials, such as sashes, ribbons and rings, demonstrated the group's membership hierarchy and created a sense of organized collectivity. A ring signified one of the highest positions in the organization.

Illustration 17. Gloria Society Trustees, Late 1930s.
Courtesy of Giovanni Nucifora*

Illustration 18. Ring of the Gloria Society. Courtesy of Giovanni Nucifora.*
Photo taken by Author, January 2010.

Illustration 19. Gloria Society Dinner at St. Joseph's Church, 1938.
Courtesy of Phil Bellace.

The only photograph that shows the widespread membership of the Gloria Society was one taken at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in 1938. A total of 157 Sicilians appear in the photo. In interviews with Giovanni Nucifora* and Catherine Garrozzo, who are seen in the picture, the event was a banquet for the Society. Catherine Garozzo remembers being a server for this event. Trustees and their wives are line up in the back wearing sashes, in front of American and the

Gloria Society flag. All men in the photos are wearing ribbons, to indicate membership in the organization. A priest stands in the back, in between the trustees, signifying a religious affiliation to the event and the society. Religion was frequently infused within the organization's activities.

Catania Society

Only nine months after the establishment of the Gloria Society, a competitor society was created in December 1939. Officially named "Societa Independente Italo-Americana Catania," after the province in their native Sicily, this society began after a rift occurred in the Gloria Society with some of its members. Despite asking several people about the Catania Society, very little information is known about it, except for a few photos taken in 1939. The images indicate the Catania Society served a purpose similar to the Gloria Society.

Illustration 20. Catania Society Flag Christening, September 20, 1939.
Photo courtesy of Phil Bellace.

Illustrations 20 and 21 are from the same flag christening event, held on September 20, 1939. The location of the christening is unknown. The above photo shows the male members of the society, all wearing pins or badges of varying sizes. One male in the center wears a satin sash.

Whether the organization was male-only is unknown, but it seems likely. In the lower photo, flowers ornament the stage as the American flag and the Catania Society banner serve as a background for the photo. From interviews, people in the photo have been identified as part of the Casella family.[108]

Illustration 21. Catania Society Flag Christening, September 20, 1939.
Photo courtesy of Phil Bellace.

Figure 22. The Catania Society on its 1st Anniversary, December 14, 1939.
Photo courtesy of Phil Bellace.

[108] Interview with Phil Bellace.

One of the only known photos of the Catania Society's members is from their one-year anniversary gathering. A total of 130 men appear in the photo. Again, only one man in the photo is wearing a sash, perhaps representing an officer's title.

Illustration 23. Catania Society Float, Circa 1940s.
Photo courtesy of Anthony and Barbara Casella.

Gender Roles in the Society

Based on interviews, the members of the society were strictly male. Women and children were not allowed to go to the meetings, but were invited to the social gatherings hosted at the house. Catherine, seen in the banquet photo, stated she was there to serve. In addition, she commented her mother was present to cook. She remembered her mom and two other women whose husbands belonged to the society going to Philadelphia to buy all the kitchenware to accommodate the functions at the house.[109]

When Guiseppe DiBella, one of the Gloria Society's founders, died in 1954, the Society gave him a grand funeral. Recounting the funeral, Giovanni* stated

> They gave him a great honor, since he was one of the founding members. They put the coffin out and placed it on a wheeled wagon and pushed him down Kings Highway, down Railroad Avenue and onto the church. He was such a strong man. They honored him. He must have been something because he had a Gloria Society ring. He had it on until he died.

The procession route mimicked the St. Alfio's Day procession route. Using a ritual associated with patron saints, the Society honored Giuseppe DiBella in the same fashion as their martyrs. According to Giovanni Nucifora*, the success of the Gloria Society continued for about 15 years. He stated, "It stayed for a while, then the old people start to die. The newer generation, two of my brothers joined it, one did not join it. If no one steps forward it dies out." The Gloria Society primarily served the first Sicilian-Americans who settled in Woolwich Township. Most likely the initial settlers were a part of mutual aid societies back in Sicily and sought to continue the tradition.

Conclusion

The Gloria and Catania Societies primarily served the first Sicilian-Americans who settled in Woolwich Township. Limitations on age and gender prevented the long-term success

[109] Interview with Catherine Garozzo.

of the organization, dying out shortly after the death of its founders. Women found other social outlets, however often related to the church, such as rosary clubs. However short-lived, the organization and its house on Kings Highway provided an outward statement of the Sicilian-American presence in Woolwich Township. The photos are striking visuals of the community in the late 1930s. Spread out by hundreds of acres over rural lands throughout the township, the number of people in these photos still indicate a well-organized agrarian community, which collectively honored and recreated their native practices within the downtown area of Swedesboro.

CHAPTER IV

THE CORE THREAD: ROLE OF RELIGION IN SICILIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE

The Catholic Church served as the primary outlet for community gathering, and in many ways, helped form a new Sicilian-American identity that still possessed elements of their native past. Weekly, even daily, masses, weddings, baptisms, communions, confirmations, and funerals provided social outlets with other farmers. Swedesboro's St. Joseph's Catholic Church supported mostly Irish and Sicilian residents. Most priests were of Irish descent, but Sicilians constituted the majority of the congregation. Farmers utilized the church to celebrate their native festival, St. Alfio's Day. They celebrated this special holiday using native elements such as statues, songs, and a procession to recreate the celebration. According to UNESCO, these "celebrations of big shoulder-borne processional structures" were accepted and inscribed as an intangible cultural heritage in Italy in 2013. The nomination extended to four different Italian processional festivals. St. Alfio's Day in Swedesboro follows the same tradition. In addition to St. Alfio's, Sicilians recognized their new home and church in America by creating a feast day to honor St. Joseph, Swedesboro's Catholic Church's patron saint. These feasts included patriotic songs that reflected their status and identity as American citizens.

Religion was the backbone in the lives of Sicilians. While Sicilians went to church every Sunday, religion was also incorporated within private spaces of the home. Statues, paintings, and artifacts were common items found in Sicilian homes. Intangible elements such as prayer rituals before meals and recognition of God within daily practices including cooking and farming demonstrated the omnipresence of religion in a Sicilian's life.

Role of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, located on Broad Street in Swedesboro, drew in Sicilian populations from the outlying township to downtown, composed predominantly of Northern European immigants. The establishment of St. Joseph's parish precedes Sicilian immigration to Swedesboro. St. Joseph's was organized in 1848, and the first church, which primarily served Irish Catholics, was built in 1861.[110] The church's first location was on Church Street, one block northeast of the present site. The church was altered several times and moved to Broad Street in 1898. In the same year, a rectory was built adjacent to the site.[111]

To serve a growing congregation, the first church was moved to the back of the lot and a new church, which is present today, was constructed in its place in 1925. Designed in the Tudor Gothic style to fit 600 people, the edifice was built with Homesburg granite and accented with Indiana limestone.[112]

[110] "St. Joseph's Church, Swedesboro, Will Mark 100th Anniversary." Gloucester County Times, November 18, 1954. Swedesboro Catholic Church Folder, Gloucester County Historical Society.
[111] "Fifty Years of Catholicism: Sketch of St. Joseph's Church, and the Men Who Have Labored in the Parish." *The Constitution*, January 12, 1903. Swedesboro Catholic Church Folder, Gloucester County Historical Society.
[112] "St. Joseph's Church, Swedesboro, New Jersey." Swedesboro Catholic Church Folder, Gloucester County Historical Society.

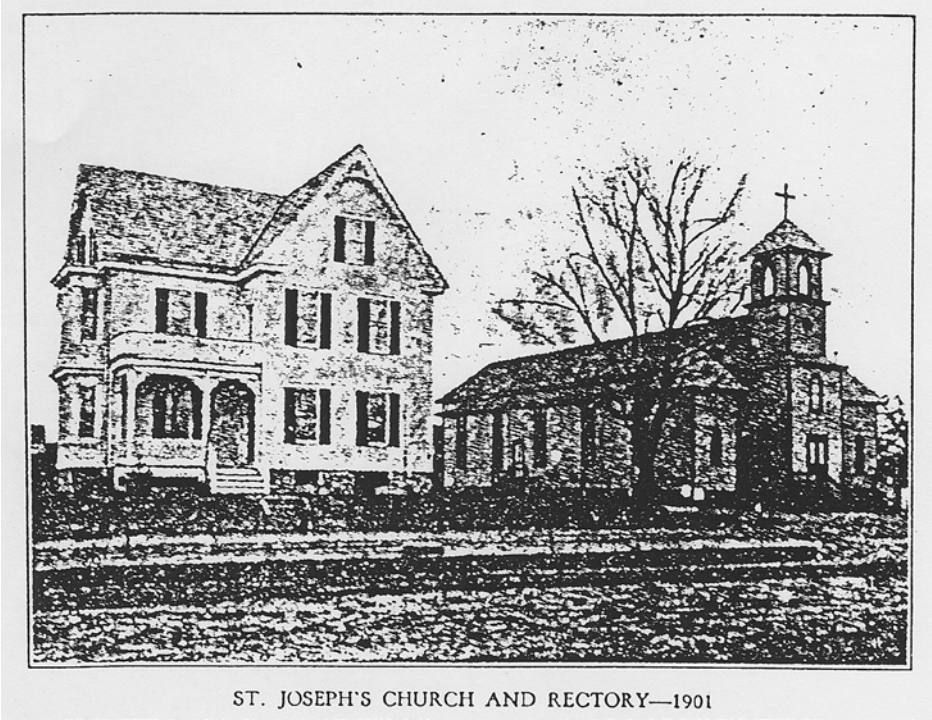


Illustration 24. St. Joseph's Church and Rectory, 1901.
Source: *St. Joseph's Church, Swedesboro, NJ.*

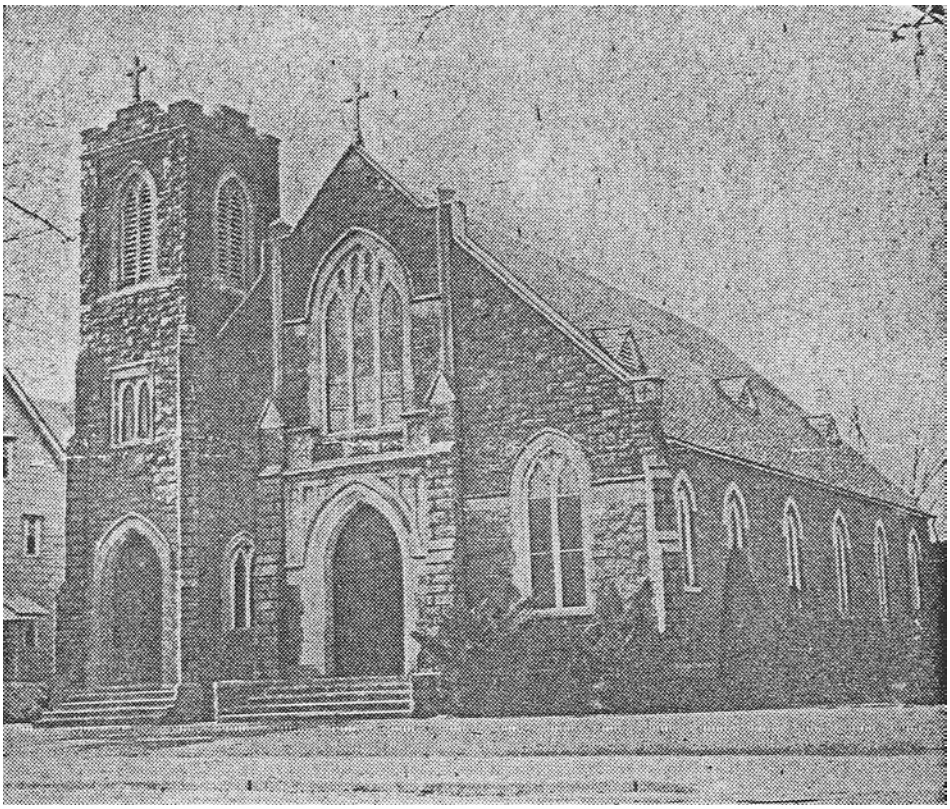


Illustration 25. St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 1966.
Source: "Swedesboro Parish Strong," *Courier-Post*, 05 March 1966.

Irish Catholicism vs. Southern Italian Catholicism

Religion was a central part of Sicilian life, and it continued with immigrant settlement in America. Some of the larger Italian populations in New Jersey, such as in Newark, Jersey City and Vineland, established special Italian parishes with Italian priests.[113] However, in Swedesboro, Sicilians shared St. Joseph's parish with the Irish population in town. The majority of priests who served St. Joseph's were also of Irish, rather than Italian background. Many secondary sources have cited that "Italian immigrants appeared little better than heathen to many 'American' Catholics."[114] For example, Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Newark was known for its Italian religious traditions, such as the celebration of certain Italian patron saint's feast days, of which Irish Diocesan authorities begrudgingly recognized. According to Michael J. Eula, "Irish priests continued to advocate the rigid and impersonal theology of the Church while ignoring such manifestations of southern Italian theology as the feast."[115] In Swedesboro, the Irish were the second largest constituency at St. Joseph's, but no indication of the tension between the two ethnicities surfaced in the interviews. Irish leadership did not inhibit Sicilians from coming to mass or instituting Sicilian customs through the church. For Sicilians, the church served as, at the very least, a weekly gathering point for farmers working in the fields and by the late 1930s, as a platform to celebrate their own feast days.

St. Alfio's Day

Festivals play an important role in Sicilian culture. Most festivals honored a particular patron saint in a yearly celebration. According to an 1897 account of Sicilian peasant customs, observer Salvatore Salomone-Marino commented on the influence of Sicilian patron saints,

[113] Vecoli, 287.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Michael J. Eula, *Between Peasant and Urban Villager: Italian-Americans of New Jersey and New York, 1880-1980* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1993), 242.

"…but then, immediately superior to all the individual Saints of Paradise is, for one town, their Patron Saint…God is the Holy of Holies; but this is an exception; all legends, all traditions, all past and present actions show as clear as day how the Patron saint has no one superior to himself, that he is all powerful and has absolute rule over everyone."[116] Due to their faith in Roman Catholicism and the desire to recreate the culture from their native country, Sicilians continued their festivals in America. For many provinces in Catania, Sicilians celebrate the life and martyrdom of three brothers, Saints Alfio, Filadelfo and Cirino.

The Story of Saints Alfio, Filadelfo and Cirino

Three brothers, Alfio, Filadelfo and Cirino, were born of noble parents between 231 and 234 AD in Prefetta, a Spanish town in Gascony, now a portion of southern France. Tutored by a Christian Greek and following in the footsteps of their Christian parents, the three sons developed into supporters of the Christian faith. Benedicta, their mother, denounced the pagan values of the Roman Empire and its ruler, Decius Augustus, and was publically beheaded. Augustus announced the ban on Christianity and threatened Christian believers with torture and death. The three brothers were arrested by local authorities for their Christian beliefs and sent off to Rome to see Decius Augustus himself. Tortured many times over, they did not retreat from their Christian beliefs and were sent to Sicily to face the cruel Governor, Tortellas. As punishment for their beliefs, the three brothers were burdened with a heavy wood beam on their backs and ordered to march from Taormina to Lentini. The brothers passed through the province of Catania. They were imprisoned and tortured at Lentini, however, through their strong Christian faith they educated and converted several Sicilians and Roman soldiers to Christianity

[116] Rosalie N. Norris, ed., *Customs and Habits of Sicilian Peasants* (London: Associated University Press, 1981), 172.

by performing miracles. Afraid of their growing influence, Alfio, Filadelfo and Cirino were executed in Lentini around the 10th of May in 253.[117]

Illustration 26. Popular St. Alfio Illustration, found in homes throughout Woolwich Township, NJ. Photo courtesy of Catherine Garozzo and Angie Grasso.

Origin of St. Alfio's Day in Swedesboro

The Sicilians in Woolwich Township carried over the same festivals from Catania to America. After immigrating to America and settling with other Catanians in Woolwich Township, celebrating St. Alfio's Day was a natural way to remember and honor their homeland. In 1937, the Patane brothers, Giuseppe, Angelo, and Agostino commissioned the production and importation of the three holy martyr statues to recreate the festival in Swedesboro. In 1938, the Casella Family, the leading Sicilian farming family in Woolwich Township, financed the first St. Alfio feast.[118]

[117] "Feast of Saint Alfio." Pamphlet. Held by Louis Stanley of the Swedesboro Historical Society. 5 May 2002, 6.
[118] Ibid.

The feast, which is still celebrated today, was originally organized by an all-male, Sicilian committee that collected donations for the expenses of the festival. Every year a new committee was appointed by the current members. All proceeds from the festivals were donated to St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Swedesboro.[119] It was reported at the height of its popularity, the event cost about $10,000 per year.[120] The story was translated and printed into a pamphlet, commissioned by Sicilian farmers in Woolwich Township, Samuel, John and A.R. Casella and Mario Nucifora in 1947.

St. Alfio's Day – A Description

St. Alfio's Day is celebrated the first weekend in May. In preparation of the feast, the statues, which are stored in St. Joseph's Church, are brought out of storage and placed near the side altar the Saturday before the celebration. Flowers and red, white and green candles drawing upon Italy's national colors are placed around the statues. On Sunday, the feast begins with mass at 11:00 a.m. in honor of the saints. After mass, the statues are carried outside the church and a procession of the statues makes its way around town as a celebration to the martyrs and to Christianity. Catherine Garozzo recounts her experience:

> One year my father was on the Committee. They appointed a Musemusci daughter and me to lead. There were always two girl leaders in white dresses. Our parents took us to Philadelphia to a bridal shop. And we dressed up in gowns and led the procession. I must have been 17. All the kids were dressed in white in their first communion dresses, but they don't do that anymore. Some carried banners, some carried baskets of flowers. And we went all around town. Down on Main Street, the doctor would be taking pictures on the porch, and then down Railroad Avenue, down around the auction market then up Broad Street and back to the church. We had a band playing a lot of Sicilian music from the old country. All the Italian parishioners walked behind the procession, all of them. At night we had fireworks, a lot of fireworks.

[119] Interview with Phil Bellace, October 2009.
[120] Interview with Phil Bellace, October 2009.

According to Herman Tak, "The ritual climax is nearly always a procession, usually dedicated to one of the local patron saints. Festivals are expressions of fierce localisms."[121] A band leads the procession playing marching songs. The priest, choir members, altar boys and girls, school children with banners and girls dressed in their Communion outfits lead the way. Then the Holy Martyrs follow on a four-wheeled cart called a "vera" in Italian. The committee members push the vera through the streets. The parish community follows behind the statues in a show of dedication. The crowd honors the martyrs by shouting, "Con vera fide" and "Viva St. Alfio", meaning "with true faith" and "long live St.Alfio."[122] Spectators offer money to the saints, which are taken and pinned to ribbons fastened to the statues. The procession heads to Kings Highway, the main street in Swedesboro, to the roundabout at the southwestern end of the thoroughfare. In an American adaptation, the procession pauses and sings patriotic songs such as the Star Spangled Banner at the flagpole.

[121] Herman Tak, *South Italian Festivals: A Local History of Ritual and Change* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), 17.
[122] "Feast of Saint Alfio, 5 May 2002." Pamphlet. Held by Louis Stanley of the Swedesboro Historical Society, page 7.

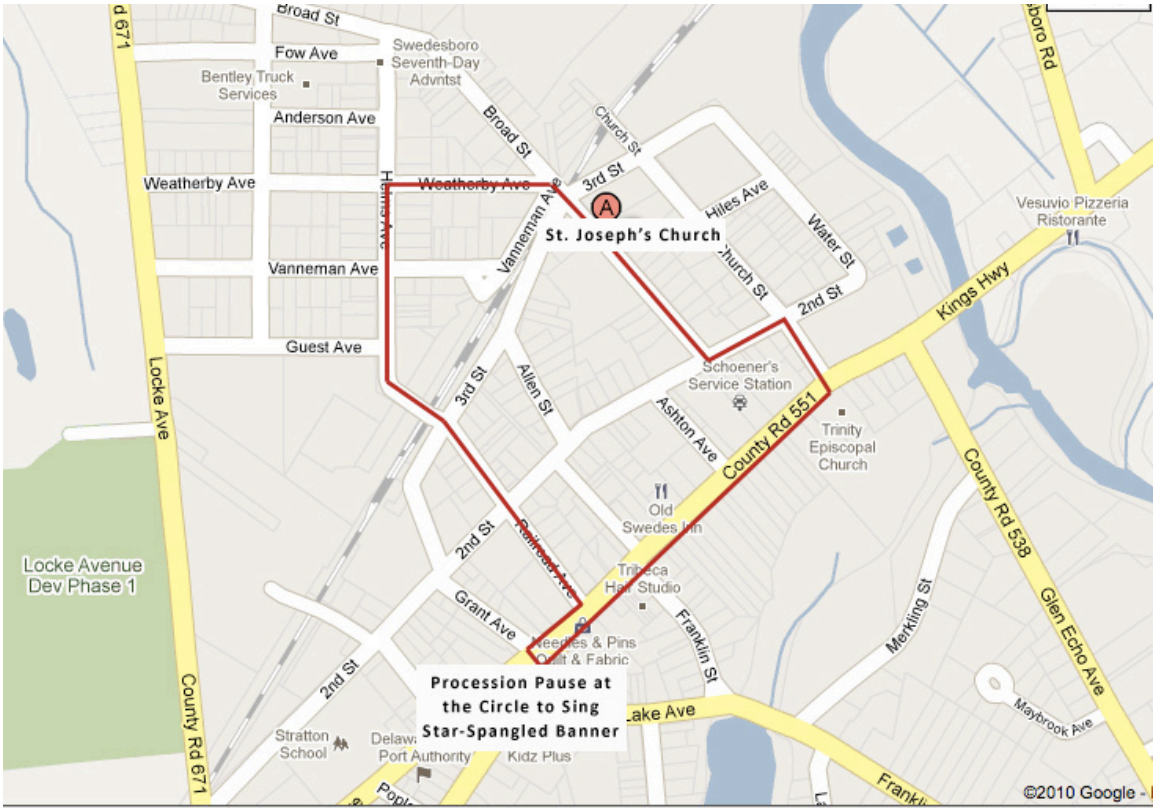


Illustration 27. Saint Alfio's Day Procession Map, Swedesboro, New Jersey.

The insertion of patriotic songs connects directly to secular issues of immigration and identity. The adaptation exemplifies the transformation of a once Sicilian peasant identity to one that recognizes status as American citizens. The addition of this ritual might also serve to visibly show while the festival has Sicilian roots, it also recognizes and honors the diversity of the United States. The songs also served as a commonality between Sicilians and non-Sicilian, non-Catholic festival onlookers.

After the patriotic pause, the procession proceeds down Railroad Avenue back to the church. Vendors from as far as Philadelphia line the street across from the church to sell food. Sicilians, non-Sicilians, Catholics, and town residents socialize and feast upon Italian treats. According to Angie Grasso, "No one worked; everybody was there."

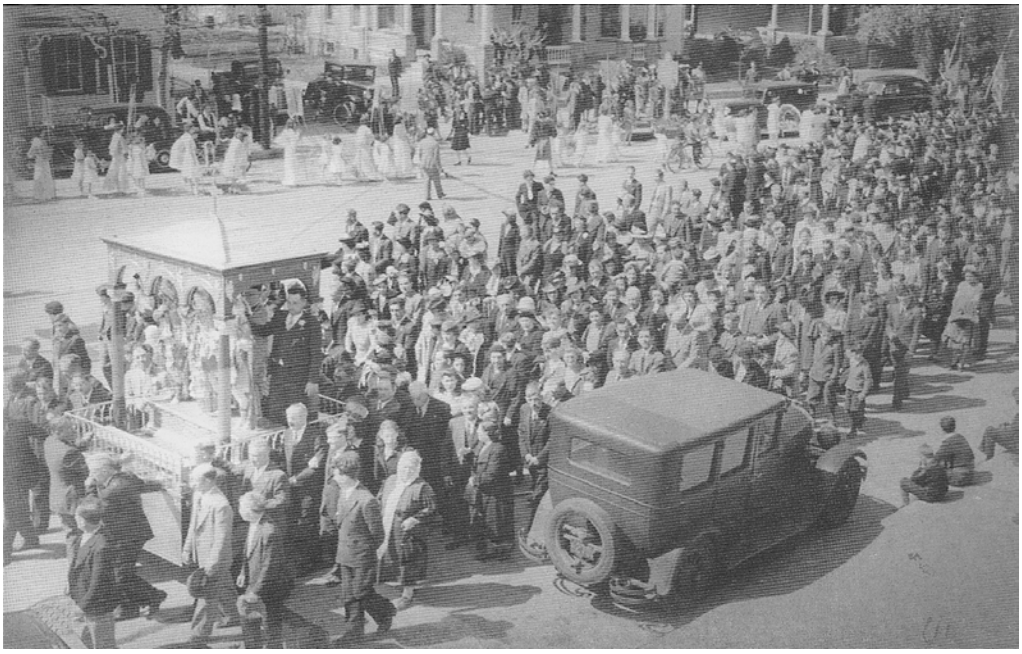


Illustration 28. St. Alfio's Day Procession in Swedsboro, 1953.
Source: *Swedesboro and Woolwich Township Images of America.*

As the years went on, the festival became smaller and smaller. According to an interview, "It hasn't collapsed. St. Alfio's is for everybody, but it is mostly for the farmers, since it started in Sicily."[123] The public influence of native feasts such as St. Alfio is slowly diminishing in Swedesboro, although it still holds great personal meaning to the Sicilian residents in Woolwich Township. The image of the three martyrs can be seen in both the private and public sphere on refrigerators and in dining rooms in private homes, in barber shops, and at local produce stands. The tradition has faded, but the image stays alive.

[123] Interview with Angie Grasso.

Illustration 29. St. Alfio's Day Feast Procession, 2010.
Photo taken by Author, May 2010.

Illustration 30. St. Alfio's Statues on Feast Day, 1950's.
Courtesy of RoseAnn Quattrochi Smith.

Illustration 31. St. Alfio's Day Feast outside St. Joseph's Church, 2010.
Photo taken by Author, May 2010.

St. Joseph's Feast

St. Joseph's Day, celebrated in March, is an American adaptation of the St. Alfio feast, celebrating the patron saint of the Catholic Church in Swedesboro. St. Joseph's Day follows the same format as St. Alfio's. The festival possesses its own committee. The day begins with mass, a procession of the statue and food and auction afterward. Catherine Garozzo describes St. Joseph's Day, "The Americans don't recognize St. Alfio. They don't know they were martyrs, but St. Joseph, the world knows St. Joseph because he was Jesus' father." Angie Grasso continued, "This was a tradition that came from Sicily. It wasn't known over here. The immigrants brought over the tradition celebrating with procession, music, flowers, and everything and flowers. St. Joseph's was still done in the Sicilian way. An adaptation of St. Alfio's." St. Alfio's was for and prepared by Sicilians, but the entire congregation, regardless of

ethnic or professional background celebrated St. Joseph's Day. Sicilians used St. Joseph's Day as an assimilation tool, drawing upon native practices to connect with non-Sicilians.

Connection between Religion and Farming/Gardening

Religion was a powerful daily presence for all Italians. Sicilian-Americans firmly believed in God's power to make or break a season for farmers. According to Catherine Garozzo

> When my boys and I were farming, one year we had ordered all these plants from down south, all these tomatoes plants and of course you could only keep them so many days in boxes. You have to plant them otherwise they go bad. The next day was St. Alfio's Day and I thought I'm sure St. Alfio will understand that these things have to be planted so we planted them. We worked all day long we planted a great big field and that night it froze. And the man from Campbell Soup came and checked our field and he counted 25 plants and if a certain amount of plants, say for instance out of 25, if there was 15 or 18 dead it wouldn't pay to replant. It would pay to knock everything down and start all over. And that's what we had to do. And we had to plant them all over again. I guess St. Alfio wanted us to go to church instead. You are not supposed to work on St. Alfio's Day.

It was firmly believed farmers did not do any work on St. Alfio's. It was expected Sicilians went to church and honored the saint.

Sicilian agricultural practices, even in recreational gardening, fused with religious beliefs. Many Sicilians in Woolwich Township and Swedesboro had their own flower gardens in addition to the farm. Specialty Sicilian or Italian flowers, shrubs and trees comprised these gardens, in particular fig trees. In honor of the saints, many Sicilian gardens were ornamented with Blessed Mother statues and other religious figures.

Conclusion

Religion was a pervasive force in the daily lives of Sicilian-American farmers. It united Sicilians in a physical and emotional sense within the family and the community. Rituals associated with Catholicism created a Sicilian-American identity that recognized God in everyday life – at home, at church, in the fields and even within the Sicilian Societies. Both St.

Alfio's and St. Joseph's Day follow the Italian tradition of celebrations of big shoulder-borne processional structures, which was added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013. While the St. Alfio structures were placed on a cart for the procession, the event serves the same purpose. According to UNESCO, these celebrations processional structures provide their communities of practitioners a sense of identity and belonging and strengthen social cohesion. UNESCO identifies the elements central to its nomination: (1) the fundamental component of coordinated and equitable sharing of tasks, which bind the communities together through mutual respect, cooperation and joint effort; (2) communication among the bearers who share responsibility in the event also results in the development of an exchange network, (3) the celebrations require the involvement of musicians, singers, and skilled artisans, and (4) the festive communities informally pass down the knowledge and techniques to recreate the event every year, a process that bridges cultural continuity and reinforces a strong sense of identity.[124] Both St. Alfio's and St. Joseph's Day required voluntary associations to help plan and fundraise for the annual event. Some committee members served for many years, and typically offered their seat to their son when they were ready to step down. All of the celebratory elements, including music, processional costumes (confirmation dresses for the girls), and cuisine were rooted in native traditions. St. Alfio's Day was a reminder to all Sicilians of their past and gave them the opportunity to practice, recreate, transmit, and celebrate their cultural identity to pass onto future generations.

[124] "Celebrations of big shoulder-borne processional structures," UNESCO website. Accessed 15 March 2016. http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/00721

CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY DEGRADATION: CONTRIBUTIONS AND LOSS OF SICILIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE IN WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP

Through the 20th century, Woolwich Township's landscape became a recreated version of Catania, Sicily with the community's labor practices, social gatherings, and religious traditions. The land tied them together these activities. It gave the residents a communal sense of belonging and a new identity that celebrated their Sicilian roots mixed with their new American freedom. The Sicilian-American community continued, supported and improved the agricultural industry in southern New Jersey. By the 1990s, however, a combination of factors led to the dilution of cultural traditions and community cohesion. The main two movements that jeopardized the continuation of Sicilian intangible cultural heritage in Woolwich were: (1) the loss of agricultural land to residential subdivisions and (2) the community's own values to continually better themselves. No longer sharing a farming lifestyle, a communal social and religious venue, and leaving behind the location that connected them, Sicilian-American cultural heritage has been reinvented at smaller scales (or sometimes even lost) across the Woolwich Township landscape. To address the land conversion issue, Woolwich Township recognized the irreversible trend of development and adopted a TDR and Farmland Protection Plan for the municipality. The land use tool will help preserve remaining agricultural lands. This planning tactic is only the first step in preserving the remaining Sicilian-American culture within the township. Many members of the community who once drove the agricultural industry are now gone, leaving the next generation, who are mostly comprised of non-farmers, to informally pass their cultural traditions to their children. Many of these cultural traditions have changed from recreating native practices to holding traditions simply in memory of a generation passed.

Impact of Sicilian-Americans on Development of Swedesboro

Through the 20th century, the physical and economic development of Woolwich Township was driven by Sicilian-American cultural traditions. In terms of economic output, Sicilian-Americans utilized agricultural traditions to succeed financially. Their talents in farming bolstered them to become leaders in agriculture in Woolwich Township. Assuming leadership positions on town board and agricultural committees, Sicilian-Americans quickly rose as influential businessmen and later politicians in Woolwich Township, legitimizing their presence among their English and German farming predecessors.

Cause of Loss of Farming and Sicilian-American Cultural Tradition

The changing landscape and economy of southern New Jersey and Woolwich Township in the second half of the 20th century directly resulted in the loss of the key element that tied Sicilian intangible cultural heritage together: land. The drastic growth in residential development, the rise in property values, and the subsequent loss of farmland extinguished the original agrarian lifestyle that mirrored life in Sicily. In addition, Sicilians' own value system led to the evolution and loss of their own native cultures. The community's hard work ethic resulted in leading many children of successive generations to choose higher education and full time careers outside of farming. Many times Sicilian elders encouraged this choice because they wanted to their children to find the stability that farming never offered. Additionally, the planned consolidation of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Swedesboro with other parishes within the same diocese changes the dynamic of St. Joseph's congregation. These factors worked against following traditional Sicilian-American farming systems and continuing Sicilian cultural expressions in their original form.

1. Development Patterns; Loss of Farmers and Active Farmland

For the Sicilian-American community in Woolwich Township, the land served as the connective tissue between social, economic and religious traditions. It became the tangible vehicle to express and continue labor and familial values. A central feature of the Sicilian-American identity was the relationship between a farmer and his/her land. Development patterns of the second half of the 20th century challenged this connection. The introduction of the automobile and the development of Interstate 295 and the New Jersey Turnpike set the stage for New Jersey's suburban sprawl explosion of the past 60 years. Highways and the postwar construction of the Commodore Barry Bridge connecting Chester, Pennsylvania to Bridgeport, New Jersey opened western Gloucester County, including Woolwich Township, to new Philadelphia-commuting residents. As a result, suburbanization of the 1970s and the 1980s spurred a decline in the agricultural industry in Gloucester County. Gloucester County's changing landscape of "Home developments, industrial parks and malls have replaced one-time vegetable fields. Asparagus and sweet potatoes, once significant in Gloucester County, are no longer important."[125] Many farmers could not turn a profit, facing challenges such as competition with large-scale agro-businesses, food globalization, and rising land costs.[126] Woolwich Township's dramatic residential development in the past 20 years has changed the setting for Sicilian-American farmers. Woolwich Township's loss in its agricultural base and rise in residential development has contributed to the loss of Sicilian American farming and their connection to it. Many Sicilian farmers, entering into retirement, sold their land to developers, reducing the amount of acreage dedicated to active farmland.

[125] John T. Cunningham, *This is New Jersey* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 201.
[126] Hayes-Conroy, 111.

The jump in residential development is not just an issue for Woolwich Township. Throughout the state of New Jersey, acreage trends from 1954 to 1997 show a 50% decrease in the state's agricultural land base. Most of this decline occurred between 1954 and 1974 when an average of 35,192 acres of farmland were lost each year. The rate of decline slowed after 1974, and from 1974 to 2002, farmland in the state declined in acreage at an average of 5,561 acres per year.[127] Gloucester County followed the statewide trend of diminishing farmland. Between 1987 and 2002, county lost 11,375 acres of farms, which represented an 18% loss in farmland those years.

However, Woolwich Township may be one of New Jersey's most extreme examples of intense residential development in the state. The Township is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the nation. Between 1980 and 2000, the population has increased 169%, from 1,129 to 3,032 residents.[128] Since 1994, the pace of development on former farmland has quickened through the township, with 1,659 subdivision lots granted approval between 1994 and 2002. [129] The 1998 approval of the 4,500-unit residential development Weatherby jumpstarted a development trend loosely regulated by municipal officials.[130] Another 1,511 lots (including 871 townhouse units) were approved in 2003 and 2004. During the period 1980 to 2001, Woolwich's harvested cropland dropped by over 1,500 acres, according to the New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee *Strategic Targeting Project Report*, issued in 2003."[131] In July 2006, Woolwich Township had a population of 8,612, almost three times the population in 2000. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) projects Woolwich

[127] DVRPC, 3.
[128] DVRPC, 25.
[129] DVRPC, 20.
[130] Melvin Kernan, 10.
[131] DVRPC, 20.

Township's population will increase an additional 202% between 2005 and 2035. The next-fastest growing municipality estimates a rate of 97%, less than half of Woolwich Township.[132]

[132] DVRPC, 25.

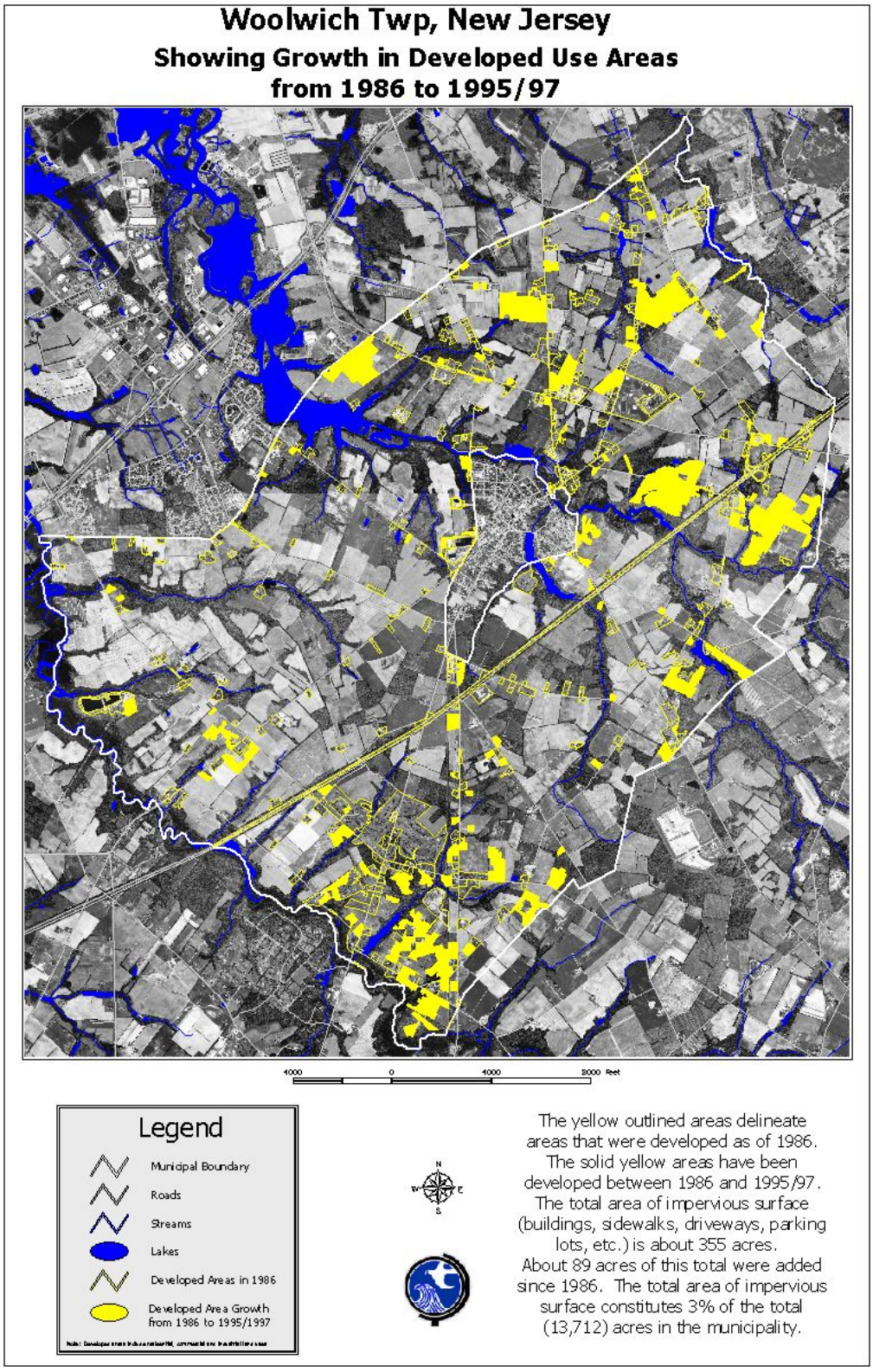


Illustration 32. Developed Use Areas between 1986 and 1995/1997.
Source: http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/images/m4m/gloco/woolwich_tp.jpg

The loss of farming in Woolwich Township is also due to globalization of production markets. The availability of seasonal produce year round and the cheap labor in regions such as South America have driven prices down for farmers, making it more difficult to make a profit. Many farmers still contract with local canneries, and many have started growing soybeans, which is less time and labor-intensive. Many small-scale farmers still have roadside stands in Woolwich Township, but by comparison few survive, including the Patane, Sorbello and Maugeri families. Marking campaigns such as Jersey Fresh, promoted by New Jersey's Department of Agriculture, launched in 1983, has helped bring awareness and boost the agriculture business at these farm markets and roadside stands throughout Woolwich Township and the state.[133]

In the midst of serious development pressure, the majority of Sicilian-American farmers were approached several times by developers for their land. Because farming was proving difficult for elderly residents, the choice to sell their land and live a comfortable retirement was a tempting offer. Many sold off their holdings, most notably the Casella family, one of the most profitable Sicilan-American farming operations in Woolwich Township. The few farmers who held out are presently retired or near-retired. They have survived amidst the development pressure in several different ways. Giovanni and Josephine Nucifora*, both in their 80s, continue to farm soybeans by themselves, which are now harvested using machinery. Catherine Garozzo, who lost her husband in the 1950s, has kept most of her farmland, but has sold off lots to stay financially stable. She also rents other lots to farmers, who grow soybeans on her land. At its height, Catherine and her husband owned 157 acres. Over the past two decades the amount of total cropland in Woolwich Township has decreased 22% and the amount of non-agricultural

[133] http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/md/prog/jerseyfresh.html
* Name changed for anonymity purposes.

land on farms has decreased 57%.[134] Today, many acres of farmland are leased to the remaining active farmers in Woolwich and adjoining townships. Some of this acreage is under option for development. Some is owned by farmers who have retired fully or partly or is held by the heirs of deceased farmers.[135] The combination of development and the loss of the immigrant and first generation "cultural carriers" have precipitated the degradation of Sicilian-American culture in Woolwich Township. Most of the original immigrants died in the 1960s and 1970s, however, many of the cultural traditions survived through first generation farmers who continued those practices.

2. Educational Advancement of Second Generation Children

The professional advancement of second generation Sicilian-Americans, now in their 50s and 60s, also contributed to the break in Sicilian-American tradition. Many second-generation chose not to take over the family farm, sought higher degrees, and worked for Delaware and South Jersey industries such as DuPont, Mobil (now Lukoil), and Valero. The strong desire for first generation Sicilian-Americans to see their children attain the American Dream with a stable regular five-day work weeks was a consistent message in all interviews conducted. Conversations with Sicilian-Americans noted that farming was too difficult as a life-long pursuit, and most encouraged their children to advance with higher degrees and professional careers. Almost all interviewees exhibited aspirations to see their children grow in other professions. Interviews noted that farming was a twelve hour day venture, and they hoped their children could have easier lives with other careers that included perks such as a nine-to-five schedule, a pension, and full health benefits. Continuing with the family farm could not offer any of those incentives. They recognized, but were not discouraged or bothered by, the loss of the family's

[134] DVRPC, 5.
[135] DVRPC, 5.

Sicilian-American farming tradition. In the early to mid-20th century, many Sicilian-American farmers traditionally sold off or gave pieces of land to family members to start their own farming businesses. Today, farmers are instead giving pieces of land to their children not to create farming operations, but to build dwellings for their growing, professional family.

3. Consolidation of St. Joseph's Catholic Church

In the past ten years, the St. Alfio's and the St. Joseph's Day festivals have suffered decreasing attendance. St. Joseph's Day today, originally celebrated with Mass and a procession like St. Alfio's Day has been minimalized to a buffet dinner sponsored by the parish. St. Alfio's Day is still celebrated, but is now a fraction of what it used to be in terms of participants and activities. The mass and procession, the two key native elements, have still been preserved, however, the Sicilian social and cultural elements such as Italian food vendors from Philadelphia are no longer present. The traditional end of the day's fireworks are no longer included due to financial and safety issues. Due to the rise in residential developments around Swedesboro, liability insurance and permits are too expensive for the small amount of money the committee raises each year.[136] Most interviewees noted that St. Alfio's is still one of the few celebrations where old Sicilian-American families can reconnect. Many have passed away or moved out of the area, and the festival, although small, still provides an outlet for reunions once a year.

In addition, changes in population, the decrease in church attendance, and financial hardships within the Catholic Church have resulted in the nationwide trend to consolidate several churches in one regional parish. Churches in Gloucester County have also been targeted due to this trend. The loss of devout Sicilian-American Catholics, many of which went to mass daily, has resulted in dwindling attendance. St. Joseph's Church is consolidating with St. Michael's in Gibbstown and St. John the Evangelist in Paulsboro. These churches will be absorbed as the St.

[136] Correspondence with Mary Ann Grasso, May 5, 2010.

Clare of Assisi Parish. St. Joseph's Church will still be used as one of two worship sites for the new parish.[137]

The Sicilian-American Community Today

When asked about the present situation, conversations with members of Woolwich Township's Sicilian-American community express an accepting disappointment in the fading of their rich cultural tradition. When questioned, most see this as a permanent loss, although they reminisce with fond memories of the past. Many still try to carry on the old activities, but they are continually being reshaped to fit the daily lives of later generations. Pure native traditions have not been reclaimed or revived within the third generation community, many of which do not live in Woolwich Township, nor do they live an agricultural lifestyle. Most children have been "Americanized" and not invested in keeping the original traditions alive. They identify themselves as American with Sicilian background. When speaking to second or third generation Sicilian-Americans, busy daily schedules, such as long work hours, appointments, and children's extracurricular activities have prevented participation in continuing time-consuming native traditions. These traditions are now served to honor the original immigrants who came from Sicily to start a new life.

Woolwich Township's TDR and Farmland Protection Plan: A Physical and Cultural Conservation Tool?

Woolwich Township has recognized the economic ramifications of rampant residential development on the municipality's agricultural industry. The residential development has resulted in extremely high taxes for Woolwich Township residents. With few commercial uses in

[137] "08.27.2010 Decrees Issued Establishing Two New Parishes," Diocese of Camden, accessed 29 July 2016. http://www.camdendiocese.org/082710-decrees-issued-establishing-two-new-parishes/.

town to offset the increased infrastructure, police and fire service, and school costs, residents are burdened with overwhelming tax obligations each year.

To ease the tax burden on residents, direct development, preserve farmland, and bring business to Woolwich Township, the municipality adopted a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program in 2005. In 2004, the state of New Jersey legally established a TDR program throughout the state. Six municipalities, including Woolwich Township, were selected by the state to develop TDR programs.[138] Woolwich's TDR program establishes sending area of large parcels across the township, including a very large area of farmland in the section of the township south of the Weatherby development, along Oldmans Creek.[139] Two receiving areas were established: the Route 322 receiving area and the Auburn receiving area. Route 322's receiving area, the larger of the two, encompasses 743 acres. Planned development along the Route 322 corridor includes two non-contiguous sections. The first section, Woolwich New Town, is comprised of a mix of housing, commercial uses, public buildings and open space on 647 acres. Of the 3,217 new houses planned, only 100 will be single family in order bring in more single person households to limit or cut down on educational services costs. The second section will contain strictly commercial uses to bring business and cut down on taxes for Woolwich Township residents.

[138] DVRPC, 26
[139] DVRPC, 26.

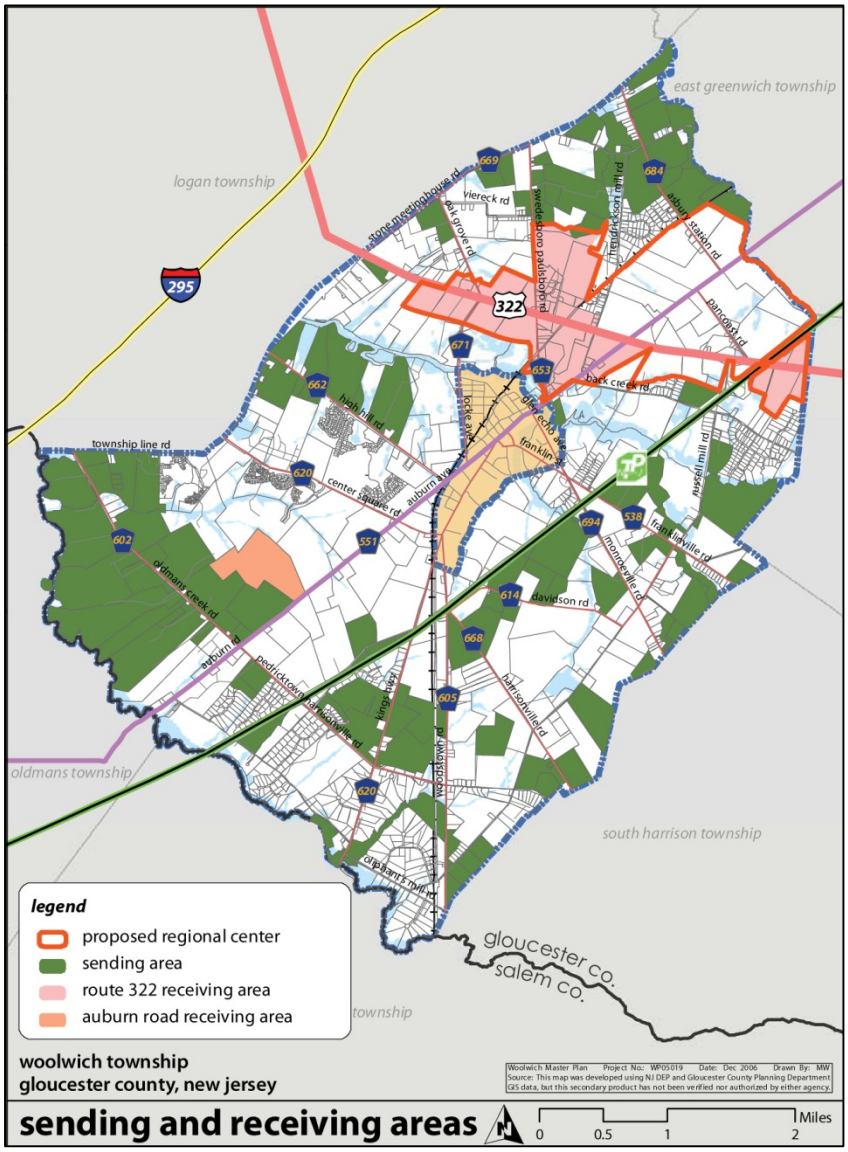


Illustration 33. Woolwich Township's TDR Sending and Receiving Areas.
Source: Woolwich Township TDR Executive Summary, Melvin Kernan Development Strategies.

The second receiving area is the Auburn Road receiving zone, which will help develop the unfinished Weatherby plan with adjacent denser homes, commercial center and connecting roads, making pedestrian and biking forms of transportation possible in the area to cut down on vehicular traffic.

Before the adoption of the revised Farmland Protection plan, Woolwich Township made several attempts at farmland preservation. In 2003 and 2004, Woolwich obtained a Green Acres

grant to document and plan to protect their natural resources. They complied a new master plan and changed some of its zoning. In 2005, the township developed its first farmland protection plan and applied for and was awarded an agricultural planning incentive grant. The township also adopted a conservation design ordinance to retain open space and agricultural land on sites where development project were planned. In 2006, Woolwich contracted with the South Jersey Land & Water Trust to work with local farmers on farmland preservation projects and has continued with that assistance in 2007 and 2008."[140] However, those particular farmland preservation efforts were done in isolation without analyzing the greater planning efforts. To address the high tax issue and its farmland preservation efforts, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission developed a farmland protection plan in conjunction with Woolwich Township's new TDR plan in 2008.

According to the DVRPC's Farmland Protection Plan, Woolwich still possesses continuous tracts of active agricultural land that contain soils of statewide importance. According to tax records, farm-assessed land in the township totals 7,025 acres or 51% of all land area."[141] However, tax assessment records differ from field observation. While 51% of Woolwich's land area is assessed as farms, much of this land is not being used in its highest and best use, either sitting fallow for some months or not actively being cultivated. The Census of Agriculture reports that the average age of farmers in Gloucester County was 54 in 2002, the same as in 1997. Of principal operators in 2002, 140 (20%) are female and 552 (80%) are male. Individuals or families, rather than entities such as real estate companies, owned 89% (617) of all farms in Gloucester County."[142] The Census of Agriculture does not note the ethnic background

[140] DVRPC, 1.
[141] DVRPC, 1.
[142] DVRPC, 4.

of farmers, however, the Farmland Protection Plan's list of names of owners with eligible farm parcels for preservation indicate Sicilian background.

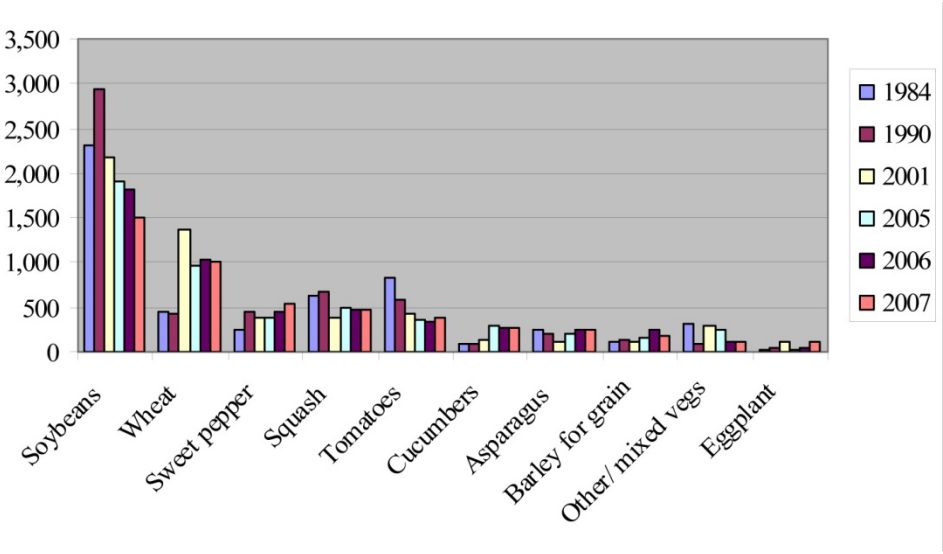


Illustration 34. Dominant Crops in Woolwich Township, 2007.
Source: DVRPC's Township of Woolwich Farmland Protection Plan, p. 14.

Soybean production has overtaken traditional produce operations in Woolwich Township, however, some operations continue to grow a wide variety of vegetables. Because the agricultural tradition still survives in a reduced version today, Woolwich Township's TDR plan's sending areas are comprised of targeted farms for preservation. Criteria for lands in a sending zone include: undeveloped land, generally greater than 10 acres in size, parcels that adjoin preserved land and those free from development restrictions or easements.[143] In the decade that Woolwich Township has tried to preserve farmland, it is clear that conservation easements are not the only answer to preserve available farmland within the municipality. The cost of easements on all targeted farms in the three sending areas would be prohibitive if purchase of development easements with the state, county and municipality were only sources of funding.

Each farm is unique, so providing different preservation options to farm owners help make preservation more possible for different situations. Farmers may choose to preserve their

[143] Melvin Kernan, 6.

farms through strictly purchase of development rights or the TDR program, depending on personal needs and preferences. In addition to these two options, some farms may be preserved through Gloucester County's farmland preservation program.[144] Several options ensure the preservation and survival of the agricultural industry in Woolwich Township."[145]

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, changes in social and economic conditions in Woolwich Township have precipitated a change in Sicilian-American heritage in Woolwich Township. With most 2nd and 3rd generation Sicilians now working in professional careers, Sicilian ties to the land, and in addition, their heritage, has evolved and reinvented on a smaller scale. The adoption of the new TDR and Farmland Protection Plan successfully addresses Woolwich Township's two biggest problems: high taxes and the loss of farmland. However, with the financial crisis and housing crash of 2007/2008, all plans have come to a halt. The Farmland Protection Plan is a viable solution to Woolwich Township's development dilemma, however, preservation and/or documentation of the culture also tied to the land is still an important factor to be investigated.

[144] DVRPC, 2.
[145] DVRPC, 6.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nature of Findings

This study examined both the tangible and intangible elements of Sicilian-American heritage in Woolwich Township to give a more complete picture of cultural heritage on South Jersey's landscape. The origins, adaptations, and manifestations of this heritage, including (1) labor practices, (2) value systems and social traditions, and (3) religious rituals of Sicilian-Americans were intimately tied to the land where they lived and farmed. Recreating their former lives as laborers, but now as farm operators in America, Sicilians continued their cultural and labor traditions from the Old World. This connection to the land allowed Sicilians to build a community identity that was firmly rooted in their past agricultural tradition. These traditions were even more authentic recreations of traditions in rural Sicily than those found in the Italian hub of South Philadelphia, which did not support an agricultural lifestyle.

The height of the Sicilian-American presence in Woolwich Township, the mid-19th century, was marked by social clubs, festivals and successful farming operations. The culture was evident in the public and private spheres in Woolwich Township and Swedesboro Borough. The community banded together and utilized built resources such as the Gloria Society House and St. Joseph's Catholic Church as gathering centers. The tangible and intangible culture practiced in these venues supported and continued a Sicilian way of life in an American setting. It created strong business connections and became the setting for successful engagements and marriages within Sicilian families, furthering the longevity of the community. However, most Sicilian-American values pushed for advancement, and farmers encouraged their children to climb the economic ladder. As the generations separated themselves from the land they worked daily, the cultural traditions attached to them dissolved into simpler interpretations.

Agriculture in South Jersey once thrived, but current industries and current populations do not inherently support agriculture as a viable option today. New Jersey serves as a commuter suburb for Philadelphia and New York City. While agricultural still exists in parts of the state, the state has transitioned to other profitable industries, including white-collar financial corporations, pharmaceuticals and some industrial companies. Farmland preservation programs exist at the state and county-level. Many Sicilian-American landowners utilize these tools and have preserved their farms through these programs.

Significance is linked to community values. In South Jersey and across America the emphasis is often placed on material wealth -- the house, the car, new technology -- with little recognition or appreciation of the past. With cookie cutter residential homes popping up in Woolwich Township, the municipality, perhaps without realizing it, has transitioned from a rural area with distinct cultural traditions and a strong agricultural economic base to a mix of residential sprawl and some remaining farms with isolated success. The loss of cultural roots is evident.

Limitations/Omissions

This study attempts to document and analyze the contributions of the Sicilian-American community in Woolwich Township. Several factors limited the scope of work. Time restrictions prevented an exhaustive search for material. Few first-generation Sicilian-American farmers still survive and not all could be interviewed in the time allotted. There is still a list of surviving farmers that would undoubtedly add depth and cohesiveness to this study. The interviews conducted only scratched the surface. More oral histories would round out this first attempt at a comprehensive history of Sicilian-Americans in Woolwich Township. Many residents hold important family heirlooms that would add invaluable information in formulating a greater story.

Setting up connections, meeting the subjects, and building trust within a year and a half only allowed for a few solid interviews. Within the interviews conducted, topics were limited to economic, social, and religious discussions pertinent to the study at hand. Other factors such as interviewee nervousness of being formally interviewed for the first time and the use of tape recording devices could have prevented more thorough or fluid responses.

Also, scarcity of sources, especially primary documents, made it difficult to corroborate facts in interviews. Tracking the Sicilian-American population in Woolwich Township posed the biggest challenge. The US Federal Census breaks down population by ethnicity only in the state's largest urban areas. In order to track ethnic presence in rural areas, one must look to the census manuscripts, released after 70 years of census publication. At the time of this study, 1930 was the latest available manuscript, which provided numbers for only the first decade of this work. The last state census in New Jersey was conducted in 1915, providing no numbers within the project scope. Therefore, the Sicilian American population could only be estimated through property assessment records from 1920 to the present. These numbers reflect only the heads of households, not wives, children, or the tenant staff. Presently it is impossible to track the specific number of Sicilian-Americans in Woolwich Township until all census manuscripts are released.

Sources used in this study were only published in English. Lack of knowledge of the Italian language served as a limitation in accessing and understanding non-English sources. Italian newspapers published in Philadelphia and New York might provide more information regarding these communities. However, through research, it seems these newspapers only held advertisements for employment in these areas and not specific case studies. An in-depth look at

Italian newspapers could provide more information on farming or at the very least, an Italian perspective on it.

In addition, Census of Agriculture numbers were also difficult to find for this study. The Census breaks down agriculture production numbers to the County, not the municipal, level. Gloucester County numbers provides insight on overall production, but the census does not track production numbers in Woolwich Township or by ethnicity of farmer. Attempts to look at the Swedesboro Auction's records were unsuccessful. Having access to these numbers would provide information on Woolwich Township's biggest producers, how many were Sicilian, and what buyers frequented the auction and how far they travelled to buy Woolwich Township produce. These records are limited, but could also provide size and scale of production and a geographic radius of sale outlets. The case studies provided by the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture in Chapter Two were the only source to enumerate the size and variety of crops in a few Sicilian-American farming operations in Woolwich Township. Even though the majority of Woolwich Township's land use was agricultural throughout the 20th century, there exists no one source that fully documents these operations.

Finally, the definition of intangible heritage within this study can be argued and redefined. This study focuses on specific farming practices, social customs, and religious rituals, including Sicilian societies and the St. Alfio and the St. Joseph festivals. Important characteristics that also define Sicilian-American identity in Woolwich Township include food customs, the use of native language, the role of Sicilian paganism and black magic, and the involvement (if any) of the mafia. Italian food customs such as weekly Sunday family gatherings and the Seven Fishes feast during Christmas provided social gathering outlets that

reinforced and continued native Italian traditions. These significant food traditions were excluded due to time limitations.

Further Questions/Investigations/Recommendations

No contextual history exists for the Sicilian-American community in Woolwich Township. This is due to two reasons. First, no one in the community or any academic researcher has created a comprehensive history for this population. Two, the Swedesboro-Woolwich Township Historical Society is limited in their holdings regarding information about the community. The historical society does hold piecemeal information about the town's agricultural industry; however, the information has not been analyzed through the lens of cultural identity. While the historical society may not have these collections yet, there is much potential in creating a 20th-century agricultural ethnic collection. Empowerment and organization within the remaining Sicilian-American community could result in a multitude of opportunities.

UNESCO outlines ways to safeguard these intangible cultural traditions, using the case study of celebrations of big shoulder-borne processional structures, similar to St. Alfio's Day. These processional structure events from Italy were listed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013. These safeguarding measures are broken down into four target categories, listed below[146]:

Target I: DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH

1. Creation of a documented and multimedia inventory, which the community members
2. Scientific publications and financed research activities.

[146] "Nomination File No. 00721: For Inscription in 2013 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity – Celebrations of Big Shoulder-Borne Processional Structures," Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Eighth session, Baku, Azerbaijan, December 2013, http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/celebrations-of-big-shoulder-borne-processional-structures-00721.

3. Adoption of administrative and financial resources to precipitate dialogue between communities, groups, individuals, research centers, NGOs interested in the safeguarding and vitality of the intangible cultural heritage.

Target II: SAFEGUARD

1. Integration of the plans to protect architectural and urban planning monuments with the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

2. Financing of restoration of cultural emergencies linked with the execution of ceremonials.

3. Information campaigns on the objectives of the Convention and the dangers that threaten the elements of intangible cultural heritage.

4. Creation of economic and financial supports at a regional level in favor of master craftsmen who create the processional structures for the ceremonials and the items related to the feasts. Support should be aimed at favoring apprenticeship based on the model of programs for the recognition of Living Human Treasure.

5. Facilitate the creation of independent and autonomous bodies that gather the heritage holders in order to favor the dialogue between them and the institutions.

Target III: PROMOTION AND VALORIZATION

1. Promotion activities at a local level. The Network of the Big Shoulder-borne Processional Structures has intensified its promotion of intangible cultural heritage in every city involved.

2. Creation of a Forum of the communities of Shoulder-borne Processional Structures for a permanent exchange. The Forum got under way in November 2010 through a series of workshops between the members of the communities.

Target IV: TRANSMISSION

1. Study of solutions able to preserve the traditional oral ways of transmission and encourage them in compliance with the principles of the Convention.

Taking UNESCO's recommendations, the following steps are recommended to safeguard the remaining intangible cultural heritage elements found in Woolwich Township. First, a partnership with the Swedesboro-Woolwich Township Historical Society, which possesses a loyal volunteer staff and valuable holdings related to Swedesboro and Woolwich Township history, could result in an oral history documentation project. With grant funding through outlets

such as the New Jersey Historical Commission, a full oral history documentation project could be undertaken to capture the stories of remaining farmers. The project could collect donations or take inventory of family belongings such as family farm ledger books and photos. The most valuable information during this project has been through private family collections. An oral history documentation project will provide a more modern, 20th century approach historical interpretation in Woolwich Township. The historical society has the opportunity to jumpstart this documentation project into a full exhibit at their headquarters at the Borough Hall in downtown Swedesboro, or other location important to the Sicilian-American community. Local visitors to the exhibit could share their own stories and memories of this community to gather more public awareness and support. Information gathered from oral histories and contributions from the exhibit could then be permanently housed at the historical society, which would serve as the primary repository for any future donations, oral or physical.

Second, the remaining Sicilian-American farming operations could use their cultural history to spur heritage tourism within Woolwich Township. The Township, looking for economic development tools, could work with farmers to tie in farmland preservation with ideas of heritage tourism. The municipality began a Tomato and Heritage Festival in 2009, which offers local foods, music and educational exhibits from the Historical Society and other historical organizations in an annual celebration. The Festival highlights the Township's tomato-growing history by hosting a best-tasting tomato competition, and Mr. and Miss Tomato contest for children three to five years old. After conducting an oral history project, this festival would serve as a perfect venue to showcase Sicilian-American immigration in the 20th century and the rise of the agricultural industry in Woolwich Township. Riding on recent popular trends of

buying fresh, local produce, an expanded festival has the potential of garnering substantial visitorship.

Third, a municipal survey of farms and outbuildings would provide an inventory of remaining farm resources and again bring Woolwich Township up to speed in documentation through the 20th century. With development still ongoing, documentation as part of mitigation should be considered if landowners decide to sell their holdings to a developer. Houses and associated farm buildings hold important information regarding agricultural production methods in Woolwich Township. A documentation project involving volunteers at the historical society could document remaining built resources associated with the community if they are slated to be demolished.

Fourth, deed research on each lot should be conducted to track and analyze the rise and decline of the municipality's Sicilian presence. The collected information could be clearly represented through Geographic Information System (GIS) software, visually representing the relationship between ethnicity and land use in Woolwich Township from the early 20th century through the present.

This approach to analyze living traditions associated with natural and built resources promotes a new perspective on the field of historic preservation. Most preservationists determine significance through the lens of the National Register of Historic Places' Criteria for Evaluation only. However, the criteria and the forms can be limiting. The significance of this community extends far more than just the house – in the church, in the fields, and in the homes of the community's farmers. Piecemeal preservation of one built resource does not truly show the larger meaning of significance of traditions across the entire landscape. A multiple resource nomination with a broad theme could encapsulate this effort. This study asks preservationists to

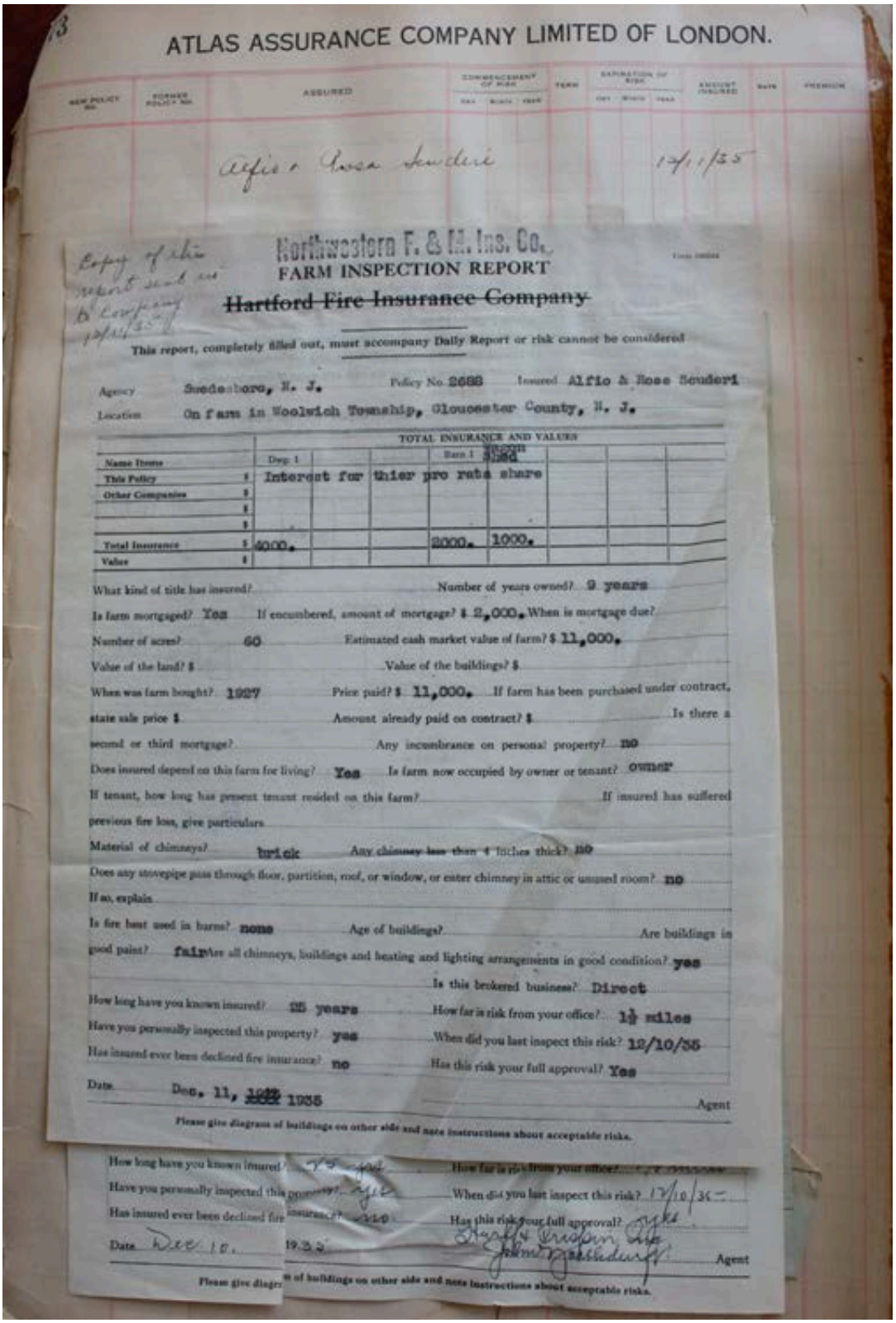
think larger about the geographic boundary of significance and calls for professionals to also think critically about the effect of intangible heritage on the meaning of built resources.

APPENDIX A

FARM INSURANCE SURVEY SAMPLE PHOTOS OF

SICILIAN-AMERICAN FARMS IN WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

1930 – 1983



ATLAS ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED OF LONDON.

Alfio + Rosa Souderi 17/11/35

Copy of this report sent us by company 12/11/35

Northwestern F. & M. Ins. Co.

FARM INSPECTION REPORT

~~Hartford Fire Insurance Company~~

This report, completely filled out, must accompany Daily Report or risk cannot be considered

Agency Swedesboro, N. J. Policy No. 2668 Insured Alfio & Rose Souderi

Location On farm in Woolwich Township, Gloucester County, N. J.

	TOTAL INSURANCE AND VALUES								
Name Items	Dwg. 1			Item 1					
This Policy $	Interest for thier pro rata share								
Other Companies $									
$									
$									
Total Insurance $	4000.			2000.	1000.				
Value $									

What kind of title has insured? Number of years owned? 9 years

Is farm mortgaged? Yes If encumbered, amount of mortgage? $ 2,000. When is mortgage due?

Number of acres? 60 Estimated cash market value of farm? $ 11,000.

Value of the land? $ Value of the buildings? $

When was farm bought? 1927 Price paid? $ 11,000. If farm has been purchased under contract, state sale price $ Amount already paid on contract? $ Is there a second or third mortgage? Any incumbrance on personal property? no

Does insured depend on this farm for living? Yes Is farm now occupied by owner or tenant? owner

If tenant, how long has present tenant resided on this farm? If insured has suffered previous fire loss, give particulars

Material of chimneys? brick Any ~~chimney less than 4 inches thick~~? no

Does any stovepipe pass through floor, partition, roof, or window, or enter chimney in attic or unused room? no

If so, explain

Is fire heat used in barns? none Age of buildings? Are buildings in good paint? fair Are all chimneys, buildings and heating and lighting arrangements in good condition? yes

Is this brokered business? Direct

How long have you known insured? 25 years How far is risk from your office? 1½ miles

Have you personally inspected this property? yes When did you last inspect this risk? 12/10/35

Has insured ever been declined fire insurance? no Has this risk your full approval? Yes

Date Dec. 11, ~~1935~~ 1935 Agent

Please give diagram of buildings on other side and note instructions about acceptable risks.

How long have you known insured? 25 yrs How far is risk from your office? 1½ miles

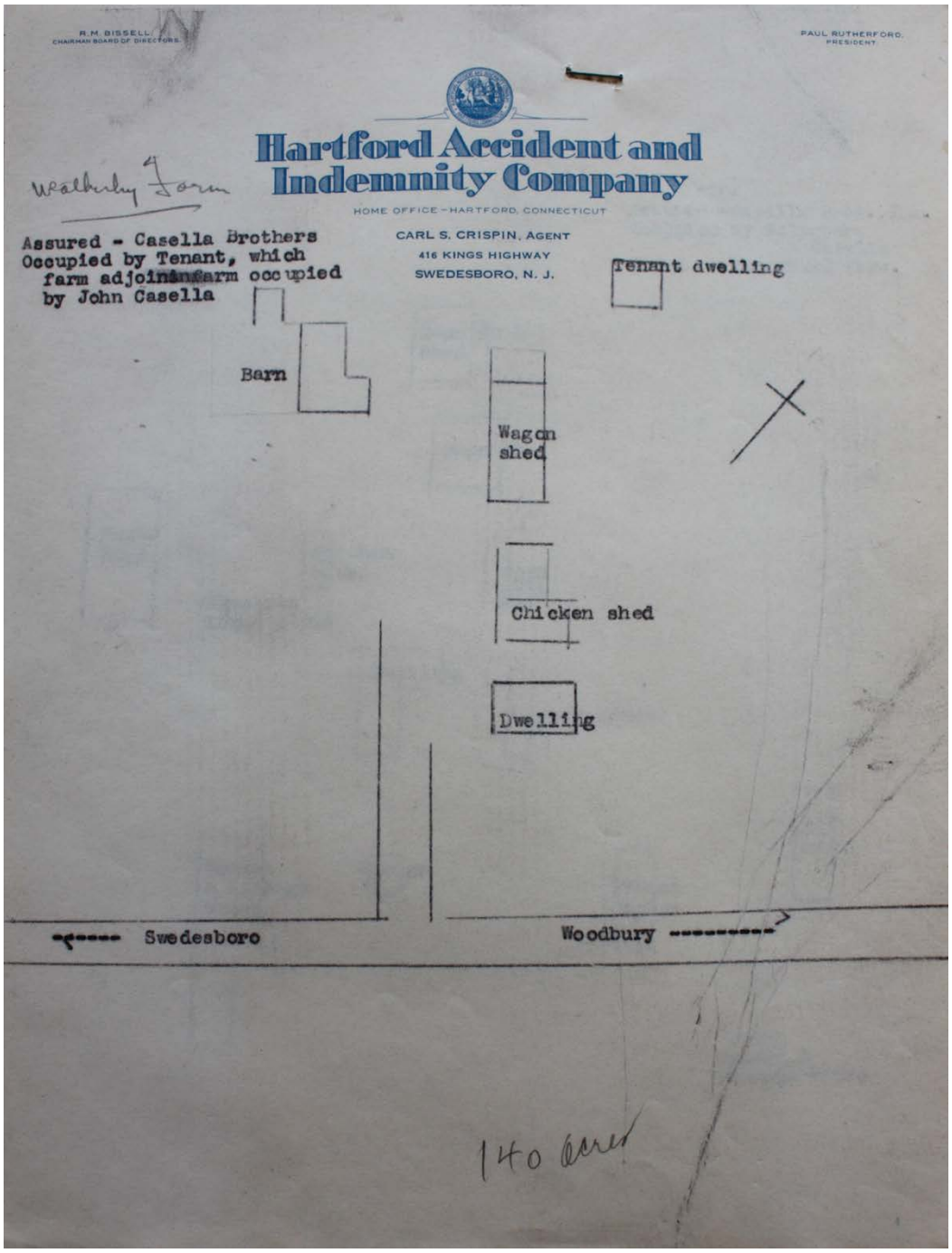
Have you personally inspected this property? yes When did you last inspect this risk? 12/10/35

Has insured ever been declined fire insurance? no Has this risk your full approval? Yes

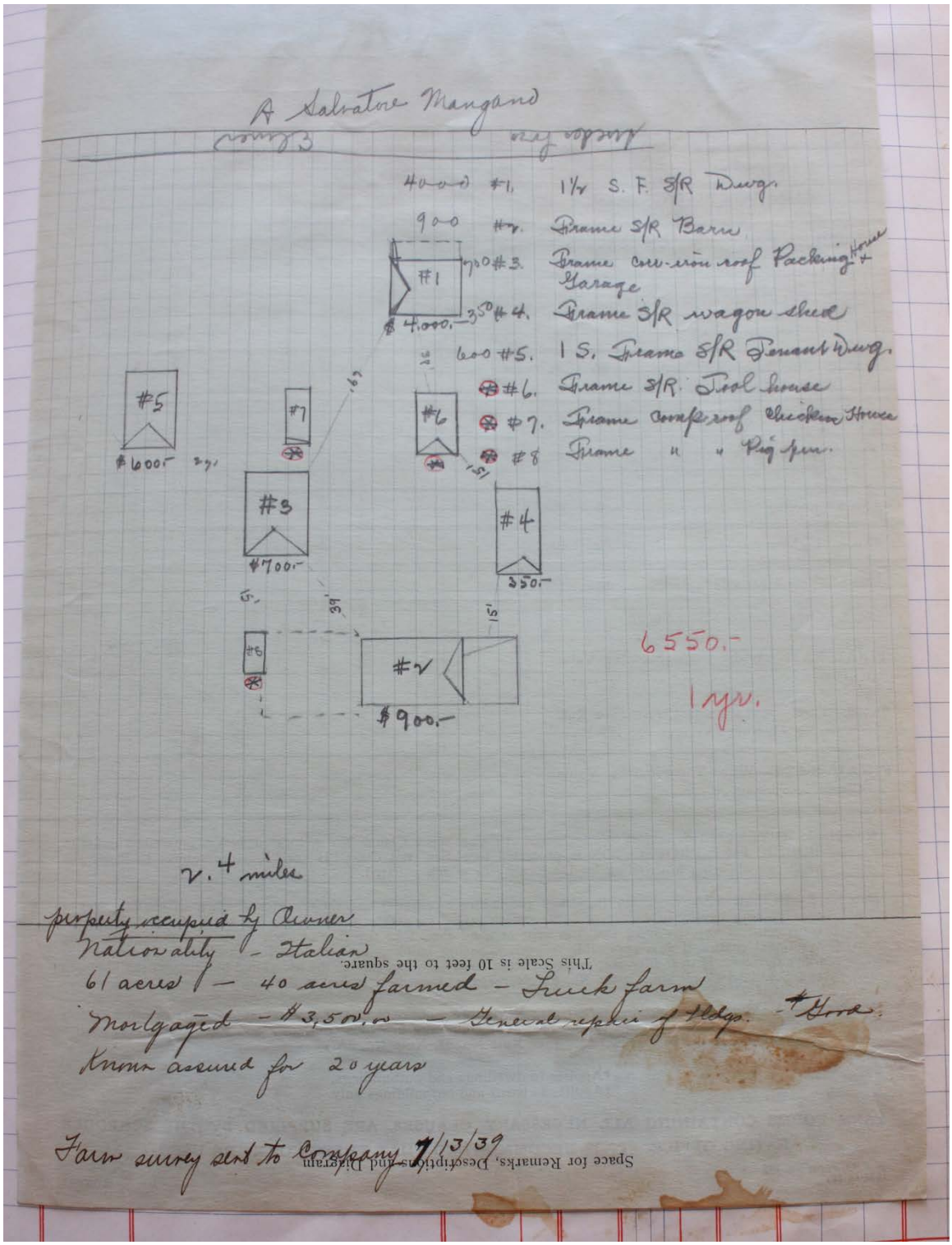
Date Dec 10. 1935 Agent

Please give diagram of buildings on other side and note instructions about acceptable risks.

Northwestern F. & M. Insurance Company, Farm Inspection Report
Alfio & Rose Souderi Farm, 60 acres, December 10, 1935

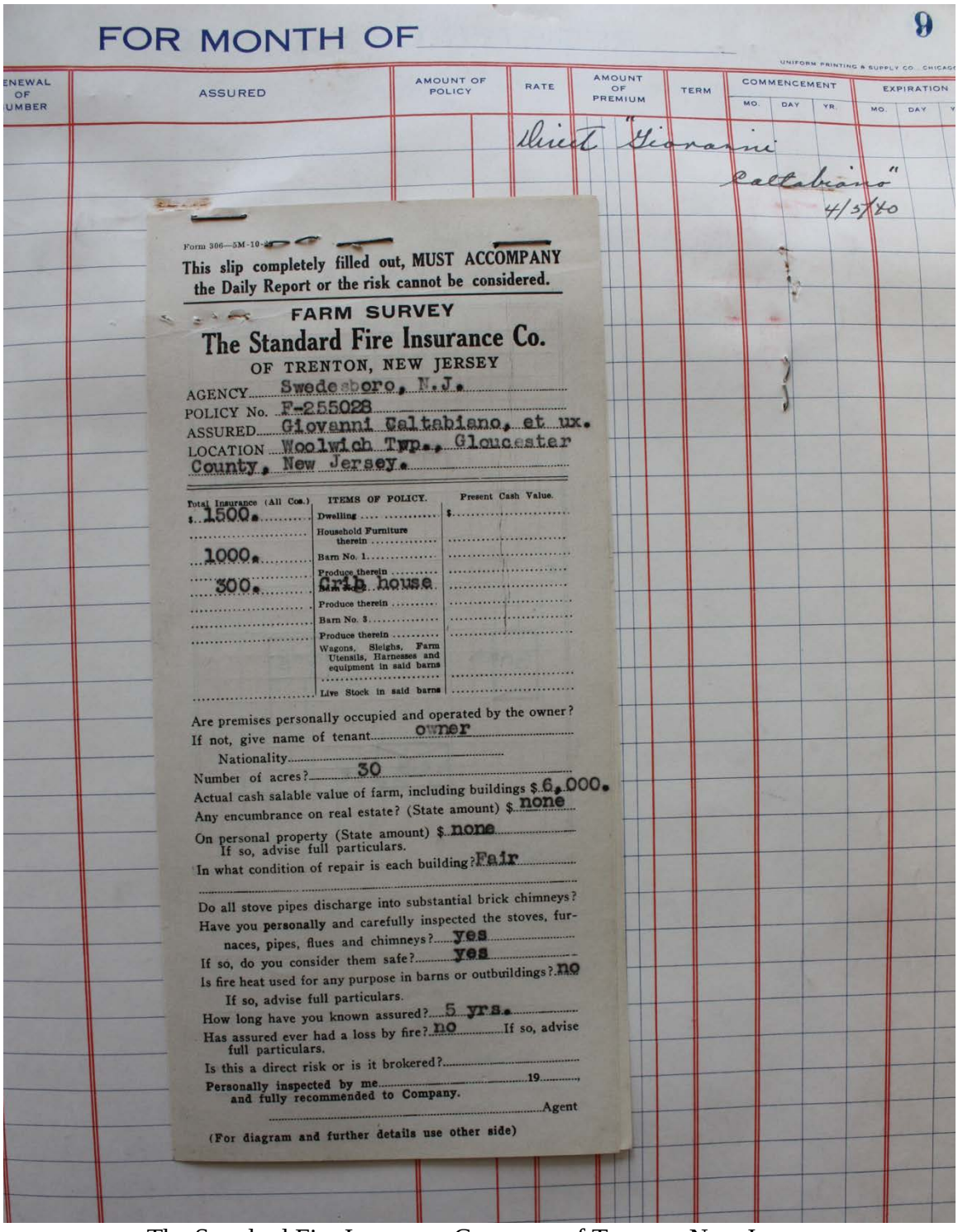


Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company
Casella Brothers Farm, 140 acres
Eventually became the Weatherby Development
Date Unknown



A. Salvatore Mangano Farm, 61 acres
July 13, 1939

Rosario and Jennie Sorbello Farm, 1936



FOR MONTH OF

9

RENEWAL OF NUMBER	ASSURED	AMOUNT OF POLICY	RATE	AMOUNT OF PREMIUM	TERM	COMMENCEMENT MO. DAY YR.	EXPIRATION MO. DAY
	Direct Giovanni Caltabiano					4/5/40	

Form 306—5M-10-

This slip completely filled out, MUST ACCOMPANY the Daily Report or the risk cannot be considered.

FARM SURVEY

The Standard Fire Insurance Co.

OF TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

AGENCY Swedesboro, N.J.

POLICY No. F-255028

ASSURED Giovanni Caltabiano, et ux.

LOCATION Woolwich Twp., Gloucester County, New Jersey.

Total Insurance (All Cos.)	ITEMS OF POLICY.	Present Cash Value.
$ 1500.	Dwelling	$
	Household Furniture therein	
1000.	Barn No. 1.	
	Produce therein	
300.	Crib house	
	Produce therein	
	Barn No. 3.	
	Produce therein	
	Wagons, Sleighs, Farm Utensils, Harnesses and equipment in said barns	
	Live Stock in said barns	

Are premises personally occupied and operated by the owner?

If not, give name of tenant owner

Nationality

Number of acres? 30

Actual cash salable value of farm, including buildings $ 6,000.

Any encumbrance on real estate? (State amount) $ none

On personal property (State amount) $ none

If so, advise full particulars.

In what condition of repair is each building? Fair

Do all stove pipes discharge into substantial brick chimneys?

Have you personally and carefully inspected the stoves, furnaces, pipes, flues and chimneys? yes

If so, do you consider them safe? yes

Is fire heat used for any purpose in barns or outbuildings? no

If so, advise full particulars.

How long have you known assured? 5 yrs.

Has assured ever had a loss by fire? no If so, advise full particulars.

Is this a direct risk or is it brokered?

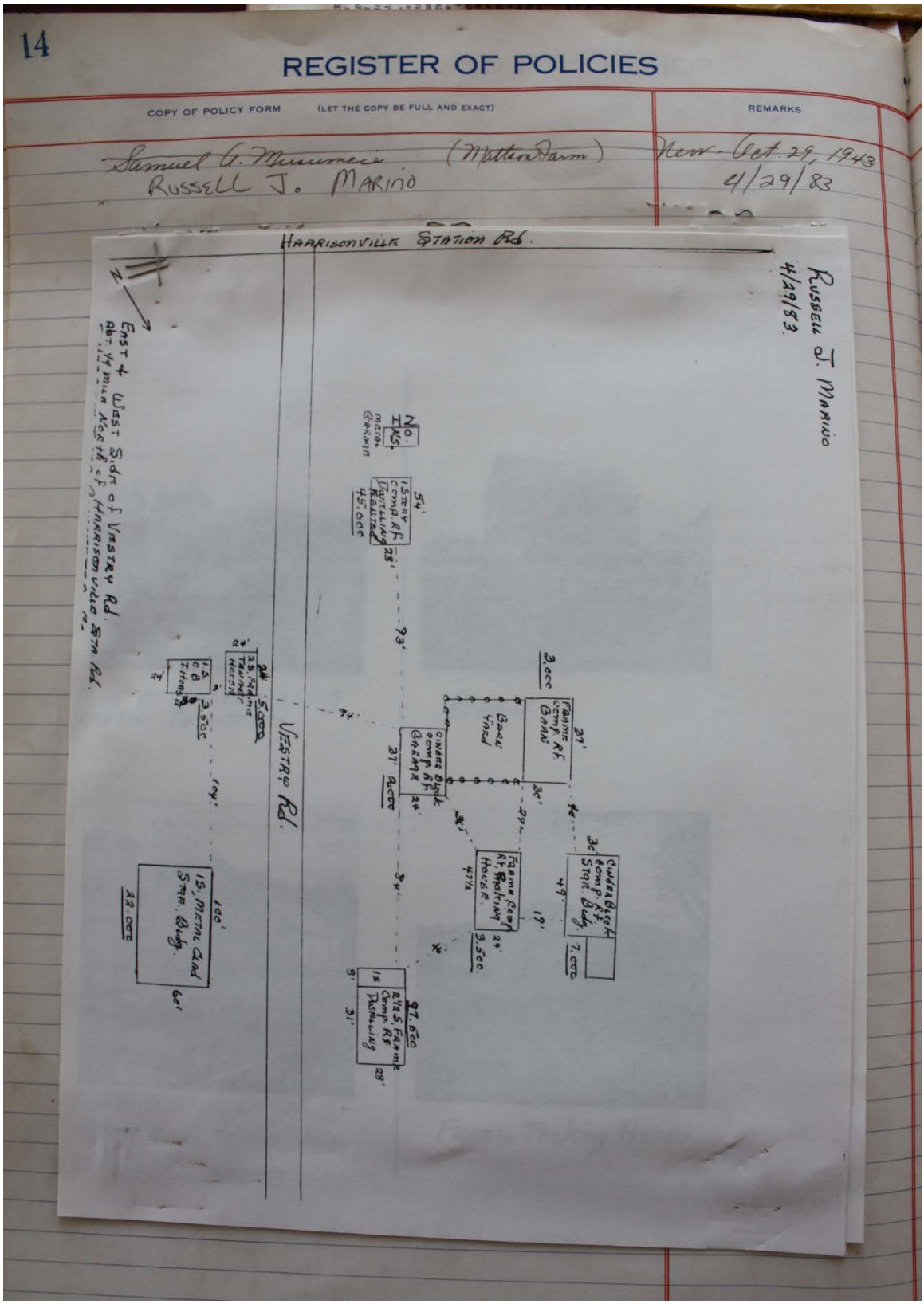
Personally inspected by me 19

and fully recommended to Company.

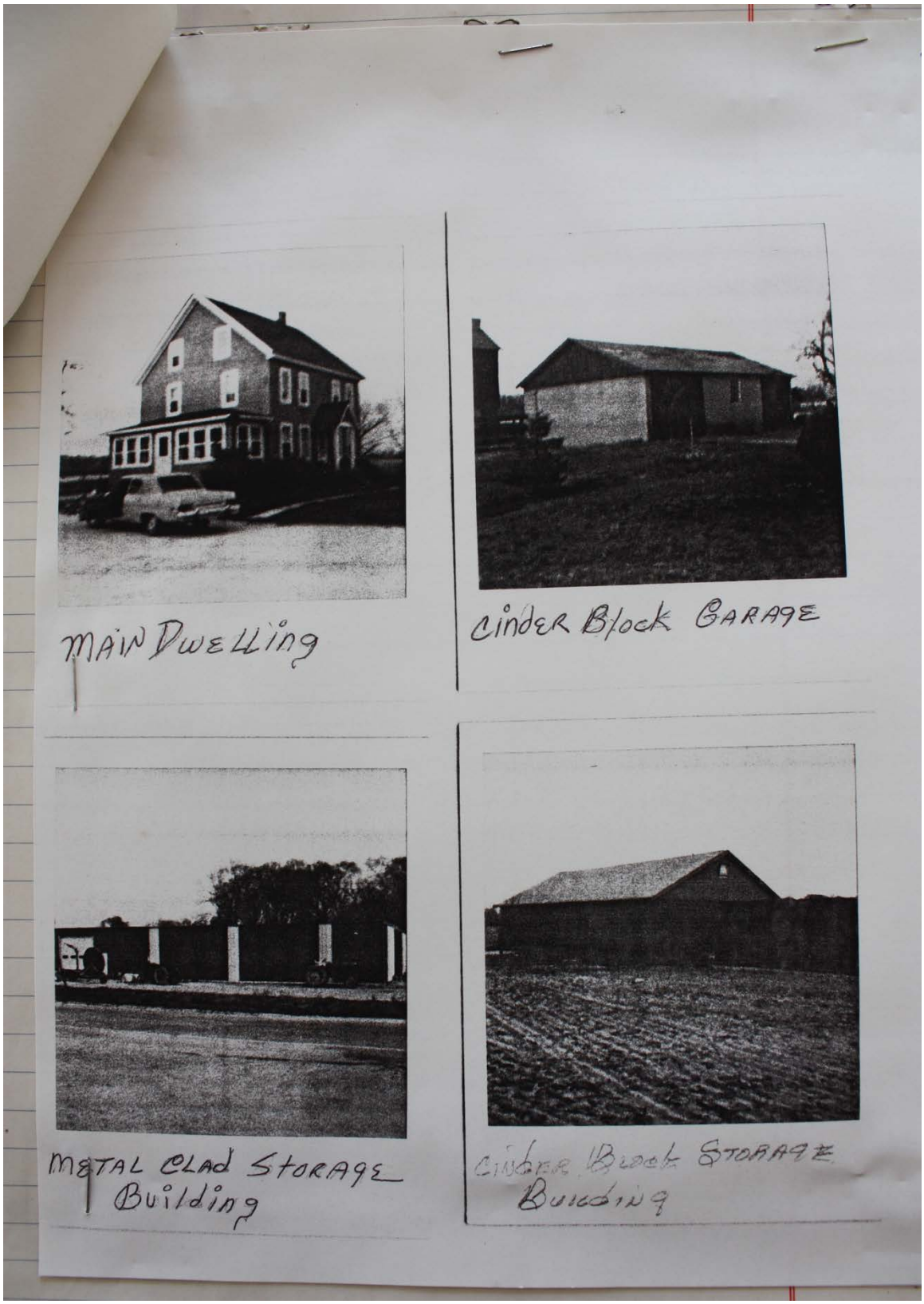
Agent

(For diagram and further details use other side)

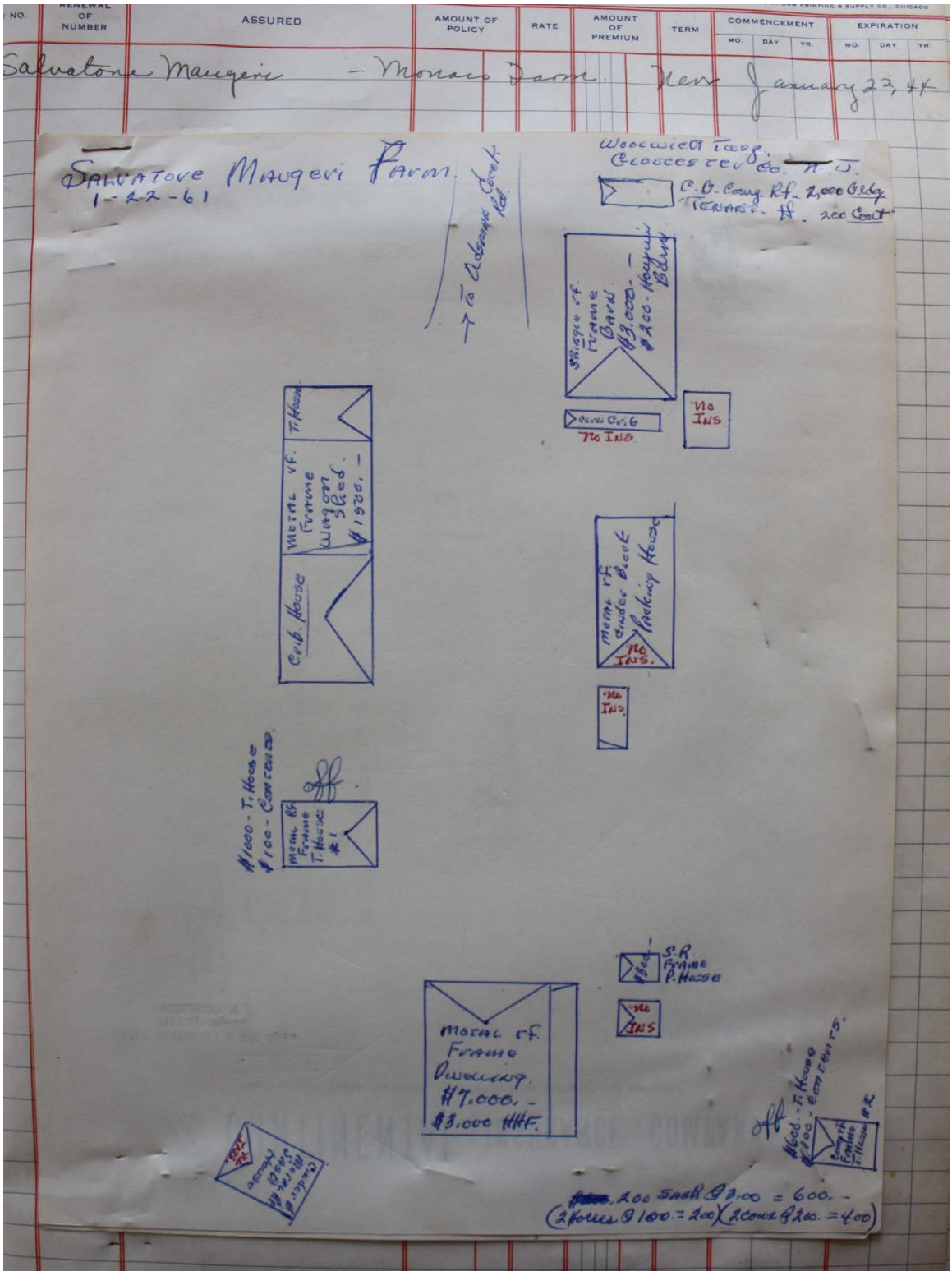
The Standard Fire Insurance Company of Trenton, New Jersey
Giovanni Caltabiano Farm, 30 acres
April 5, 1940



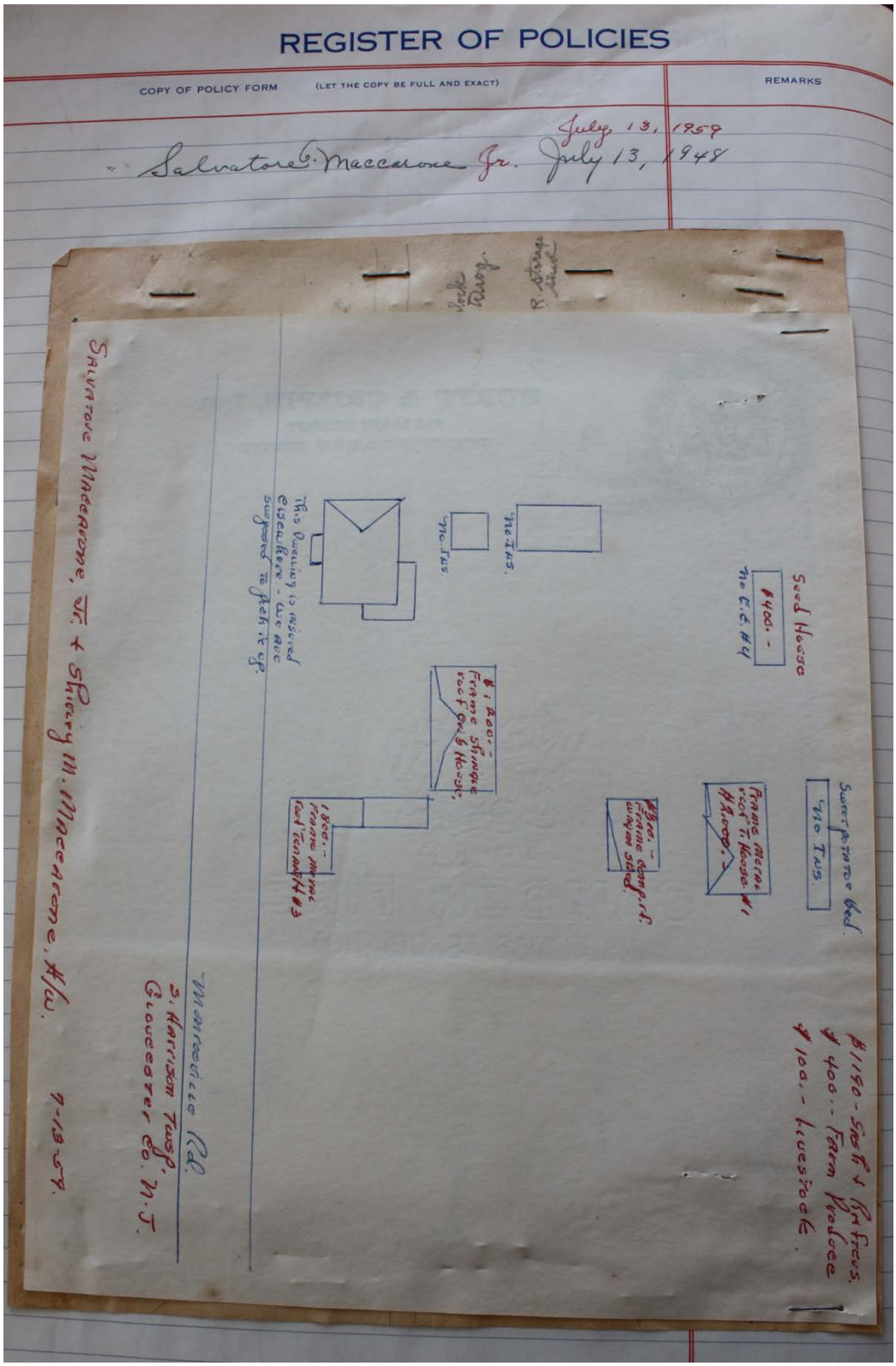
Russell J. Marino Farm
April 29, 1983



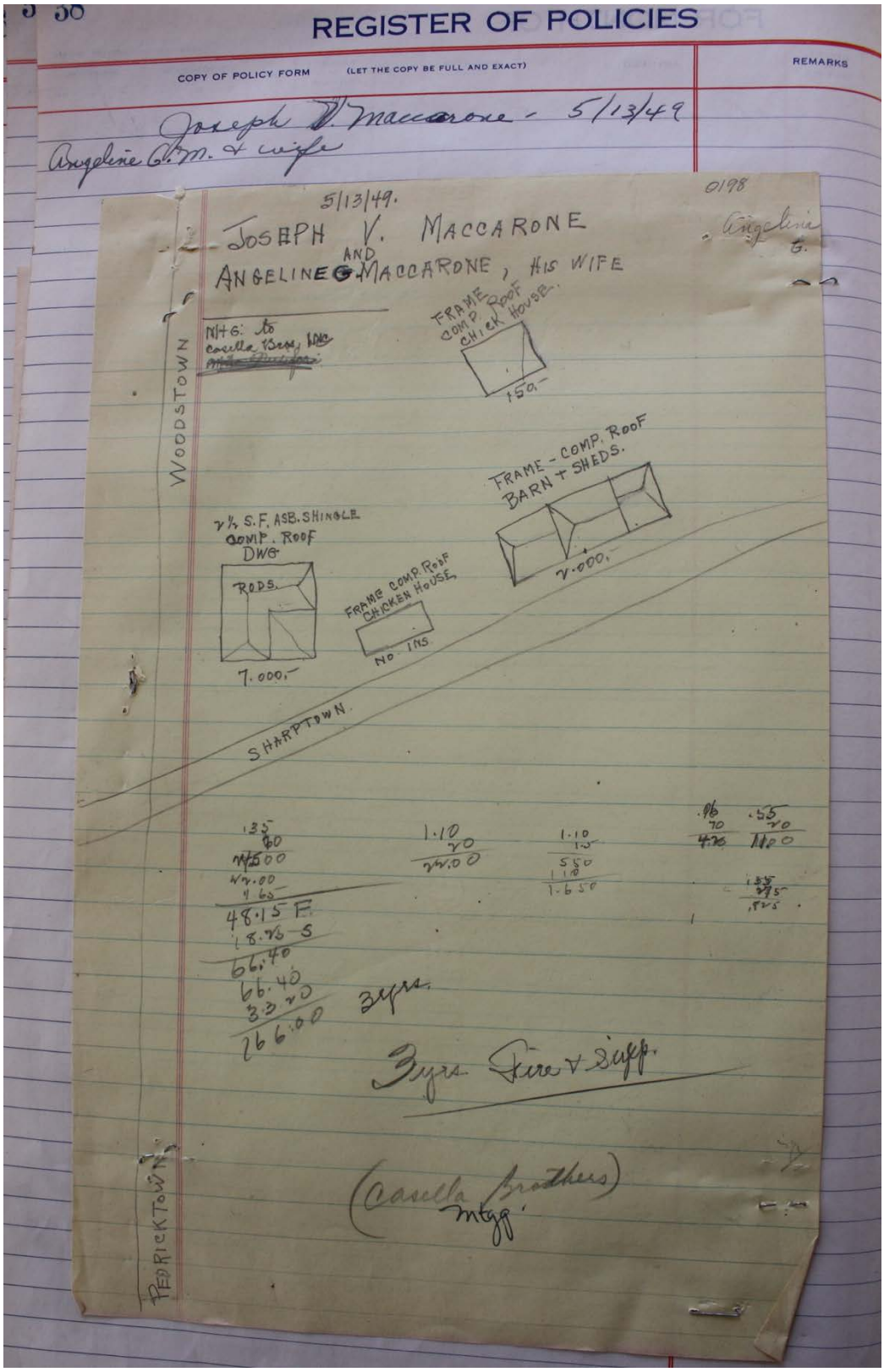
Unidentified farm, date unknown.



Salvatore Maugeri Farm
January 22, 1961



Salvatore Maccarone (and eventually Jr.), 1948 and updated 1959



Joseph V. and Angeline G. Maccarone Farm
May 13, 1949

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