

Alien Registration No. 3225477

Name Maria Jose Scottoline
(Last name) (First name) (Middle name)

Birth date May 4 1893
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Born in or near Aciccia, Sicily, Italy
(Country) (State) (County)

Citizen or subject of Italy
(Country)

Length of residence in United States 19 years
(Years)

Address of residence 4223 Thompson Street
(Street name) (Room) (City) (State)

PHILADELPHIA PA
(City) (State)

Height 5.0 in
(Feet) (Inches)

Weight 147 lb
(Pounds)

Color of hair Brown

Distinctive marks None

Maria Jose Scottoline
(Signature of holder)

Marie L. Walsh
(Signature of Representative Official)

Application filed in Alien Registration Division, Copy filed with Federal Bureau of Investigation office at PHILADELPHIA, PA.

PHILADELPHIA PA
 FEB 27 1942
 W.O.B.

A KNOCK AT MIDNIGHT

In the Seventh Ward During World War II

Alien Registration No. 2129 258

Name Giuseppe Jose Scottoline
(Last name) (First name) (Middle name)

Birth date Aug 31 1881
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Born in or near Aciccia, Sicily, Italy
(Country) (State) (County)

Citizen or subject of Italy
(Country)

Length of residence in United States 32 years
(Years)

Address of residence 4223 Thompson St
(Street name) (City) (State)

PHILADELPHIA PA
(City) (State)

Height 5.8 in
(Feet) (Inches)

Weight 145 lb
(Pounds)

Color of hair Brown

Distinctive marks None

Giuseppe Scottoline
(Signature of holder)

Sadie L. Walsh
(Signature of Representative Official)

Application filed in Alien Registration Division, Copy filed with Federal Bureau of Investigation office at PHILADELPHIA, PA.

PHILADELPHIA PA
 FEB 27 1942
 W.O.B.

In January 1942, enemy aliens were required to register at their local post office where they were fingerprinted and photographed for an "alien registration card," which they had to carry at all times. (Lisa Scottoline, from her novel *Killer Times*)

INTRODUCTION

BY MILES RYAN FISHER

By the time the United States entered World War II, foreign-born Italians were the nation's largest immigrant group. More than one million Italian-American soldiers were serving their country, representing a substantial portion of the United States military. In spite of this, the U.S. government classified Italian Americans as "enemy aliens," applying the federal statutes of the Alien and Sedition Acts originally enacted back in 1798 and amended in 1918.

Due to the large number of Italians in America, the U.S. applied this term mostly to the 600,000 Italian-born individuals who were not naturalized citizens, many of them having already raised American-born children after immigrating. This designation led police—and even the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover's direction—into homes, searching for prohibited possessions like guns, cameras, shortwave radios, and even flashlights. These searches focused on the homes of where enemy aliens resided, and sometimes the searches led into the homes of mothers whose sons were fighting overseas...



Belongings such as shortwave radios, cameras, and "signaling devices" (including flashlights) were considered as contraband and confiscated from enemy aliens. (Lawrence Di Stasi)

BY JOHN N. ROMANO

In 1942, the Federal Bureau of Investigation began a program to produce and augment fear, distrust and anxiety in Americans of Italian heritage. They searched Italian apartments at night. They arrested Italians without warrants in daytime. They kept Italians in custody for questioning, probing the parents of sons who were U.S. Army Air Corps officers.

I was 15 years old when I witnessed such things on a fall midnight at 52 Maple Street in Yonkers, New York. The incident occurred in a six-family cold water tenement, occupied by five Italian families and one "American" family. Two FBI agents knocked on our apartment door.

My mother, a naturalized citizen, answered. "What do you want?"

"We're looking for a transmitter," they answered.

"What is a transmitter?" my mother asked.

"It's a radio sending messages to an Italian submarine that was in the Hudson River. We have to search your apartment now."

Our denials had no meaning as they recklessly searched our apartment, room to room. They saw three unoccupied beds. "Who sleeps in those beds?" they asked.

I pointed to the first one.

"My brother Joe. He's in the Marine Corps."

I pointed to the second one.

“My brother Anthony. He’s serving in a U.S. submarine.”

I pointed to the third one.

“And my brother Pat. He’s serving on a U.S. Navy destroyer.”

They were all volunteers.

It had no impact on them. They looked directly in my eyes—unashamed, aggressive, belligerent, and arrogant. Then they left.

They went to the next apartment door and repeated the same abusive questioning with Mrs. Molly Paese, who had four sons in the service. Then they moved on to Mrs. Bove on the second floor. She also had four sons in the service.

They were effective. They scared the hell out of us all. They made us feel as if *we* were the enemy. And they walked right by the “American” family’s apartment.

There were other knocks on those doors from the United States government over the next three years.

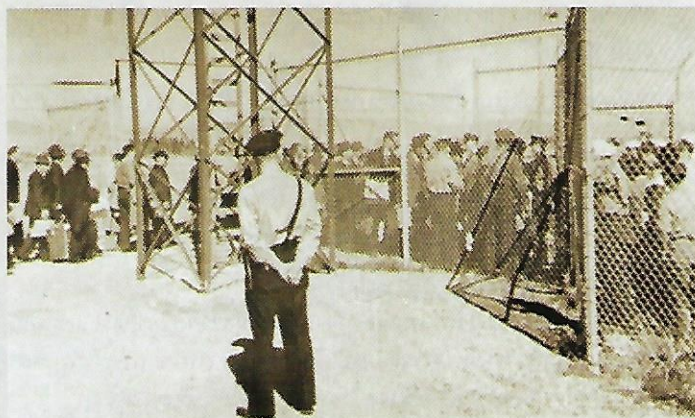
Mrs. Paese heard a second knock on her door, one that informed her that her son, tail-gunner Sergeant Curly Paese, was shot down and killed in Germany.

Mrs. Bove heard a second knock as well, one that informed her that her son, fighter pilot Lieutenant Daniel Bove, was killed in Africa.

My mother, Virginia Romano, heard three more knocks on her door.

The first informed her that her son, Corporal Joseph Romano, was killed in action.

The second informed her that her son, Electrician Mate Anthony Romano, was missing in action.



Individuals arriving at an internment camp Fort Missoula in Montana, where some Italian Americans were interned during the war. (Mike and Maureen Mansfield Library, University of Montana)



Corporal Joseph Romano

The third informed her that her son, Seaman Pat Romano, was wounded.

I can still hear each one of these knocks on my mother’s door.

Oh yes, there were other knocks on other doors of Maple Street. Mrs. DiResta’s door. Mrs. DiGiacomo’s door. Mrs. Dominick Romano’s door. And many others who were told that their sons were killed in action.

But after that first one, the FBI never returned and prohibited its public disclosure by anyone. The Herald Statesman, the Yonkers Record, and other newspapers would not publish the FBI’s “Secret War” against the Seventh Ward. The Yonkers Police Department quietly agreed to all these actions and assigned their toughest officers armed with billy clubs. The Seventh Ward was in total silence with all the other Americans. If exposed, it would have created a deep morale problem for the many, many Italian Americans in service of the country.

We survived this ordeal of persecution, prosecution, and punishment because of our belief in God, Country, and Family. And we owe that to our mothers and our fathers.

Author John N. Romano’s own World War II experience was as a member of the First Marine Division, C Company, 1BN, 7th Regiment that served from 1945-1946 on the front line in China during the Nationalists and Communist Civil War. Their mission was the disarmament and repatriation of Japanese armies while also guarding railroads and bridges at Chingwanto.