

OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS

by Joe DiPietro

directed by Shaun Carroll

Jewel Theatre Company

May 24 through June 18, 2023

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GLOSSARY

Key: IA=Italian American; NJ=New Jersey; NY=New York; NYC=New York City; OTR=*Over the River and Through the Woods*; TGD=The Great Depression; US=United States; WWI=World War I; WWII=World War II

Notes

*This glossary contains **spoilers**, so you might want to read it after you've seen the play.*

*When directly quoting a source, I don't change the original spelling, grammar, or punctuation. For example, in the excerpt from *Vanishing Hoboken* on pp. 2-3 of this glossary, the source material doesn't hyphenate "working-class", so I left it as written.*

Because of its relevance to the play, I have referenced my family history throughout this document and illustrated it with family photos. For my first nine years, our daily lives were enmeshed in the distinct and unique Italian Catholic culture of NJ. Until my father was promoted and transferred to his company's executive headquarters in NYC, we lived a block from my maternal grandparents, Anthony and Theresa Marinari (nee Casino), in South Jersey. "Toe" and "Theda" were the same age as the grandparents in the play: Frank Gianelli was born in 1908 and my grandfather in 1905. When we moved to a suburb in North Jersey, my father was 34 – around Nick's age when he moved to Seattle. (See Addendum 1: Timeline.) My grandparents were first-generation Italian Catholics who had lived in South Jersey their entire lives, as my mother had, along with the rest of my Italian relatives. The distance from their home to our new one was 105 miles – a two-hour car ride – but it could have been Siberia. Our grandparents were part of our daily lives, so the move was wrenching for us, but especially for my mother. She was three months shy of her twentieth birthday when she married my father (he was 22) and had never ventured more than 30 miles from home. My parents already had six children when we moved and would have two more after we settled in North Jersey. My siblings and I were born in the same time frame as Nick.

CHARACTERS

Nick Cristano (Wallace Bruce)

Frank Gianelli (Rolf Saxon) Nick's maternal grandfather

Aida Gianelli (Anne Buelteman) Nick's maternal grandmother

Nunzio Cristano (Marcus Cato) Nick's paternal grandfather

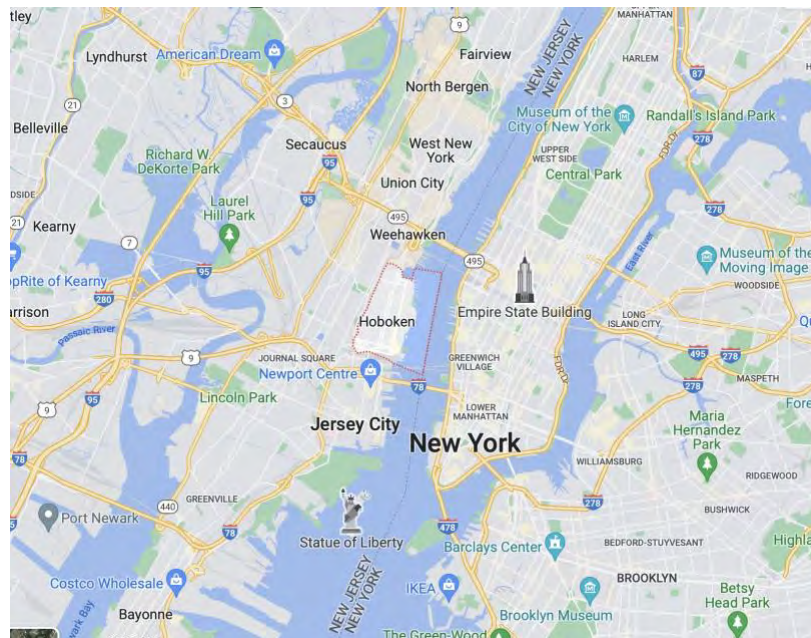
Emma Cristano (Monica Cappuccini) Nick's paternal grandmother

Caitlin O'Hare (Sarah K. Michael) niece of Emma's canasta partner

SETTING

The script places all the action of the play in the **Gianelli home** in **Hoboken, New Jersey**.

Hoboken is a city in NJ in the [NY metropolitan area](#). Traced in red in the center of the map below, it is situated on the banks of the Hudson River across from lower Manhattan, NW of Brooklyn. Known as the Mile Square City – it is actually 1.25 square miles, but who’s counting – Hoboken’s proximity to NY has historically made it a major port and transportation hub. It is the site of Hoboken Terminal, which serves 50,000 commuters daily from the tri-state region: NY, NJ and Connecticut, boasting “nine NJ Transit (NJT) commuter rail lines, one Metro-North Railroad line, various NJT buses and private bus lines, the Hudson–Bergen Light Rail, the Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH) rapid transit system, and NY Waterway-operated ferries” (“[Hoboken Terminal](#)”, *Wikipedia*). My dad was one of them – he passed through the terminal two times a day, Monday through Friday, on his way to and from Columbus Circle in NYC to Ridgewood, NJ.



Hoboken is traced with a red dotted line. The river is the Hudson.



Aerial views of Hoboken in 1881 (left) and 2014 (right)

According to the article, "[Italians in Hoboken: A Little Italy on the other side of the Hudson](#)", written by Prairie Broughton and published on December 16, 2019, because of Hoboken's proximity to Ellis Island and NYC, an influx of European immigrants began settling in Hoboken in the 1840s. Forty years later, the first major wave of Italians would land:

Several transatlantic shipping companies had already established ports in Hoboken, and it was the final stop for many routes that brought over immigrants from Europe. Located opposite Lower Manhattan across the Hudson River, Hoboken became not only a port of entry for immigrants traveling further into the United States, it became a destination as well. Initially, many Germans and Irish settled here in the mid-nineteenth century, establishing Hoboken as an immigrant community that Italians later integrated into.

The first major wave of Italian immigrants came within the two decades between 1880 and 1900, when the Italian-born population in Hoboken jumped from 280 to 2,360. Within the next ten years, Italians became the second-largest ethnic group in Hoboken, behind the Germans, with a population of 6,555 Italian-born in 1910. These Italian immigrants forewent settling in Manhattan's Little Italy, and decided to settle where they landed on the other side of the Hudson.

Most of the Italian immigrants that settled in Hoboken came from very little. They worked as unskilled laborers, taking over the jobs that the Irish would have held a few decades prior. In the years between 1880 and 1920, Italians remained as lower-class citizens (compared to the German and the Irish), until second-generation Italian-Americans started finding work as skilled laborers.

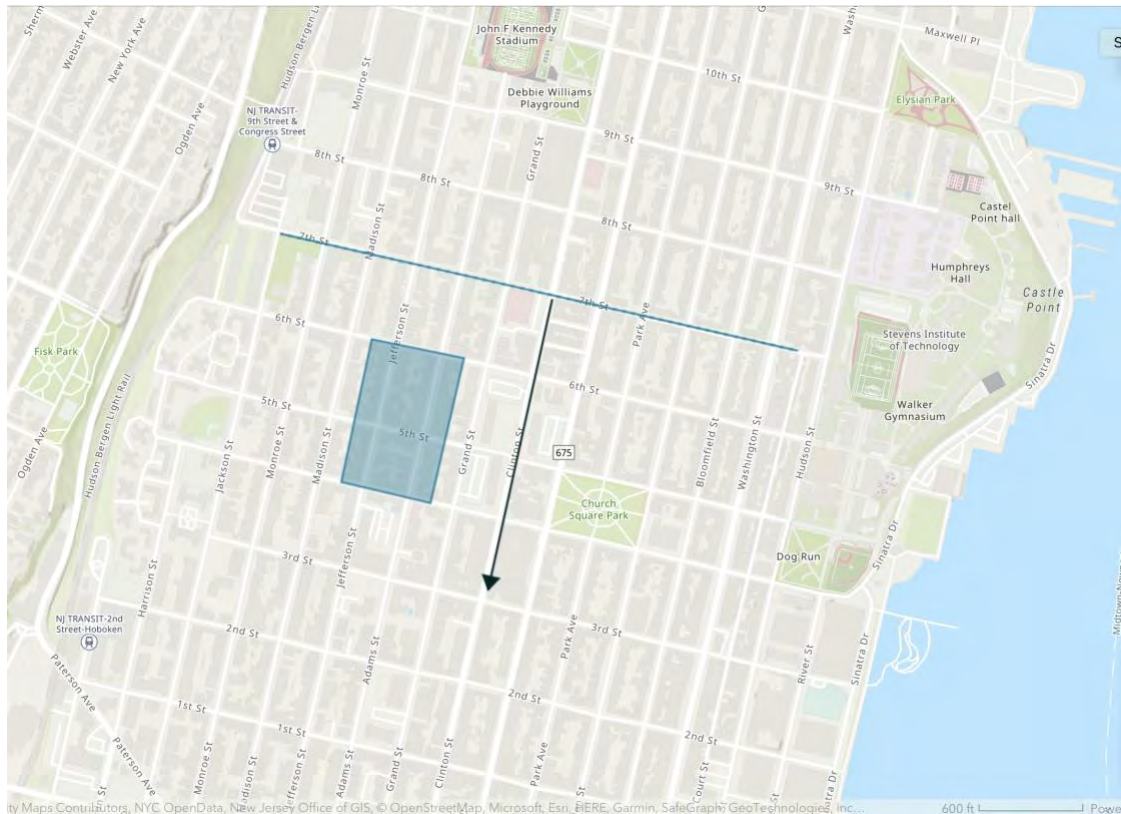
Initially, the few Italians that settled in Hoboken before the influx in the 1890s came from middle-class backgrounds and arrived as families. These demographic indicators quickly changed by the turn of the century, when most of the Italian immigrants coming to Hoboken were males of lower-class backgrounds, who came to the United States in order to find temporary work so they could send money back home to their families.

Immigrants mainly came from Southern Italy, often peasants who were looking to escape the discrimination and economic hardships that they faced at home. The highest number of immigrants that came to Hoboken at the turn of the nineteenth century were from the regions of Puglia (cities of Molfetta, Bari and Foggia), Campania (cities of Salerno, Avellino and Naples) and Molise.

Many of the Italian immigrants settled in "downtown" Hoboken (meaning south of 7th Street here) [see map on next page], which was already densely populated with immigrants who resided in tenement housing.

Italian immigrants that came towards the end of the nineteenth century were considered unskilled and found work as laborers, grocers, carpenters and selling produce from pushcarts. Within a few decades, they were able to move into more

skilled positions, mainly working in construction or as barbers, bakers, tailors, and grocers, often owning their own shops.



A document from the 1980's entitled "[Memories of the Old Neighborhood, Little Italy from 1910-1980](#)", denotes the two blocks in Hoboken that are highlighted in blue above as an area where many Italian families and businesses could be found during those years, with many still existing today.

The [Hoboken Historical Museum's website](#) has an [Explore Hoboken](#) section with historic highlights from the city's founding to the present time. The grandparents in OVER THE RIVER would have been children during [WWI in Hoboken](#), danced while courting to the music of [Hoboken's famous son, Frank Sinatra](#), welcomed grandchildren at the time when the 1954 film, *On the Waterfront*, [was being filmed there](#), and lived through the [arson fires in the 1970s and 1980s](#). The arson wave has been the subject of a documentary film and books, as well as mentioned in chapbooks from the [Oral History Project](#) (more about this to follow), and [a recent play reading](#) where an audience member, a developer who was depicted in the play as one of the arsonists, stormed the stage in anger yelling, "This is all lies!"

A capsule summary of Hoboken's development can be found at the end of each chapbook in "[Vanishing Hoboken](#)", an oral history project of the Hoboken Historical Museum. It describes the Hoboken that the Cristanos and Gianellis would have known:

For much of the last century, Hoboken was a working-class town, home to many waves of immigrant families, and to families who journeyed from the southern regions of the U.S. and from Puerto Rico – all looking for work. Hoboken, close to ports of entry in New Jersey and New York, offered a working waterfront and many factories, as well as inexpensive housing. Each new wave of arrivals – from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Cuba, and Puerto Rico – found work on the waterfront, at the Bethlehem Steel Shipyards, Lipton Tea, Tootsie Roll, Maxwell House, or in numerous, smaller garment factories. Then the docks closed in the 1960s; and factory jobs dwindled as Hoboken's industrial base relocated over the 1970s and '80s. Maxwell House, once the largest coffee roasting plant in the world, was the last to leave, in 1992. In the go-go economy of the 1980s, Hoboken's row houses, just across the river from Manhattan, were targeted by developers to young professionals seeking an easy commute to New York City. Historically home to ever-changing waves of struggling families – who often left when they became prosperous – Hoboken began in the mid-1980s to experience a kind of reverse migration, where affluent condominium-buyers replaced poor and working class tenants, many of whom had been forced out by fire, through condo-conversion buy-outs, or through rising rents. More recently, building construction has further altered the face of Hoboken, as modern towers are rising up alongside the late-19th century row houses that once spatially defined our densely populated, mile-square city and provided its human scale.

The Hoboken Oral History Project originated in 2000, when members of the Hoboken Historical Museum and the Friends of the Hoboken Public Library saw the need to address the “vanishing” of certain aspects of public life because of dramatic physical, social, and economic changes in Hoboken over the preceding twenty years. More about “Vanishing Hoboken” and the chapbooks that record the stories of the residents who were part of the city's past, can be found on pp. 4, 5, 16 and 34 of this document.

As for the **Gianelli home** itself, Aida tells the audience early in the play:

[Frank] was making a dollar a day as a carpenter's apprentice, and I thought that was a fortune. He promised that if I married him, he'd become a fine carpenter and he'd build for me - me! - an entire house. And he did. He became a wonderful carpenter, and he built, for me, this beautiful home.

DiPietro describes the home as having a porch. I kept that in mind when I started looking online at houses in Hoboken that were built around the 1930s, and soon learned that free-standing, single-family homes in Hoboken that were built of wood don't exist, and not just at that time, but even now. With rare exception, brownstones and masonry row houses, which require a specific skill set to build, dominate the city's architectural landscape. A carpenter would help construct the interior, but wouldn't build the whole house, as Frank did for Aida. The photo on the following page of typical row houses on Hudson Street in Hoboken shows carpentry for the wooden doors and door jambs, iron gates and railings, and masonry for all other exterior features.



With that in mind, I searched for single family freestanding carpentry homes in other communities in Hudson County, where Hoboken is located. Below is a house in Kearny, NJ, northwest of Hoboken. It was built sometime in the first third of the 20th century. It has a big porch, it would fall within the budget Frank had for its construction, and it's the type of house and neighborhood that working people would live in.



I sent this information, including the photo of the Kearny house, to Shaun, but I still kept going back to the porch at the Gianelli home. It occurred to me that my maternal grandparents' home in Audubon, NJ – the one that was a block away from ours – could also be a model for the house that Frank built for Aida. The Marinari home had a big wrap-around porch that was a place for the Italian relatives to congregate. We'd also gather in the back yard, which had a cherry tree and a scraggly grapevine. My grandfather harvested its paltry yield every year to make the world's most horrible-tasting wine in his basement.

Hoboken is much larger and more urban than Audubon. There is more space separating the houses in Audubon, and the homes have front and back yards – just not big ones. Audubon is 90 miles southwest of Hoboken, in what's known as South Jersey. Hoboken is in North Jersey. Audubon is a satellite of Philadelphia. Its residents root for the sports teams of Philadelphia; Hoboken's fans follow the NY teams. People in South Jersey sound like Philadelphians (think the TV series [Mare of Easttown](#)). And although there's no one NY accent, native Hobokenites' [North Jersey sound](#) falls in that genre. At the time of the play, Audubon was, like Hoboken, largely a blue-collar community. Audubon hasn't changed, but Hoboken has become more gentrified.



A recent photo of my grandparents' former home in Audubon, NJ. The porch wraps around the right side of the house, and the driveway on the right leads back to their garage. The lattice, as well as the planter boxes on the front lawn, weren't there when I was growing up.

My mother was 17 when her parents were able to move out of their row house in the Italian section of Camden NJ. It was a step up to bring their family out of the grittiness of that rather wretched city. My mother's younger sister and brother would be raised in the suburbs, where it was less crowded, the air was fresh, and there were lawns and trees. On warm summer weekends, the family who had been left behind would escape the city and congregate at my grandparents' home, gathering on the porch and in the backyard to eat and drink, talk and laugh.

The photos on the following pages were taken in and around my grandparents' home and porch, before and during my childhood.



My grandparents in the backyard of their new home in 1946,
just after they had moved from their Italian neighborhood in Camden, NJ



My grandmother and mother in her bedroom,
pre-nuptials, April 23, 1949



My father and mother, surprised by the camera
flash, departing my grandparents' home
for their honeymoon



From left, my older brother Ray and me on my grandparents' porch steps, ca 1954



My Aunt Gloria (my mother's sister, left), my cousin Chris, and his mother, my Aunt Martha Jane, wife of my mother's older brother, on my grandparents' porch steps around 1955.
On the far left is my grandmother. She is mostly out of the frame, but you can see her left foot, her dress, and her ever-present apron.

TIME

Joe Di Pietro writes that “Most of the action of the play takes place several years ago”. Shaun Carroll sets 1994 as the year the play opens, with the “several years ago” in 1988. (Please see the timeline addendum to this glossary).

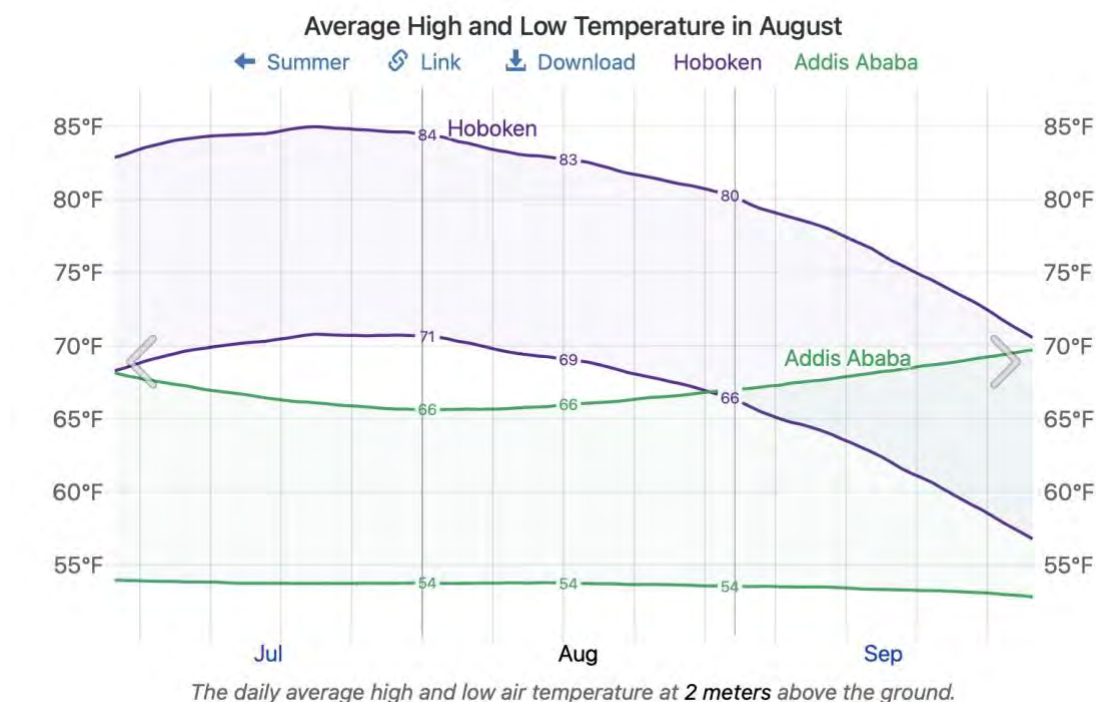
ACT I

Play Title:

According to the November 7, 2022 article, [“Over the River Lyrics & Story”](#) in the *Good and Beautiful* blog, the phrase “over the river and through the woods” originally comes from a poem written by Lydia Maria Child, “The New-England Boy’s Song about Thanksgiving Day”. The poem was first published in 1844 in an anthology of poetry for children, *Flowers for Children, Volume 2*. It was subsequently set to music by an unknown composer. The article goes on to say that “Lydia Maria Child wrote the twelve-stanza poem to celebrate family gatherings for Thanksgiving at her grandfather’s house in Medford, Massachusetts. Medford was known for its sleigh races at Thanksgiving time”.

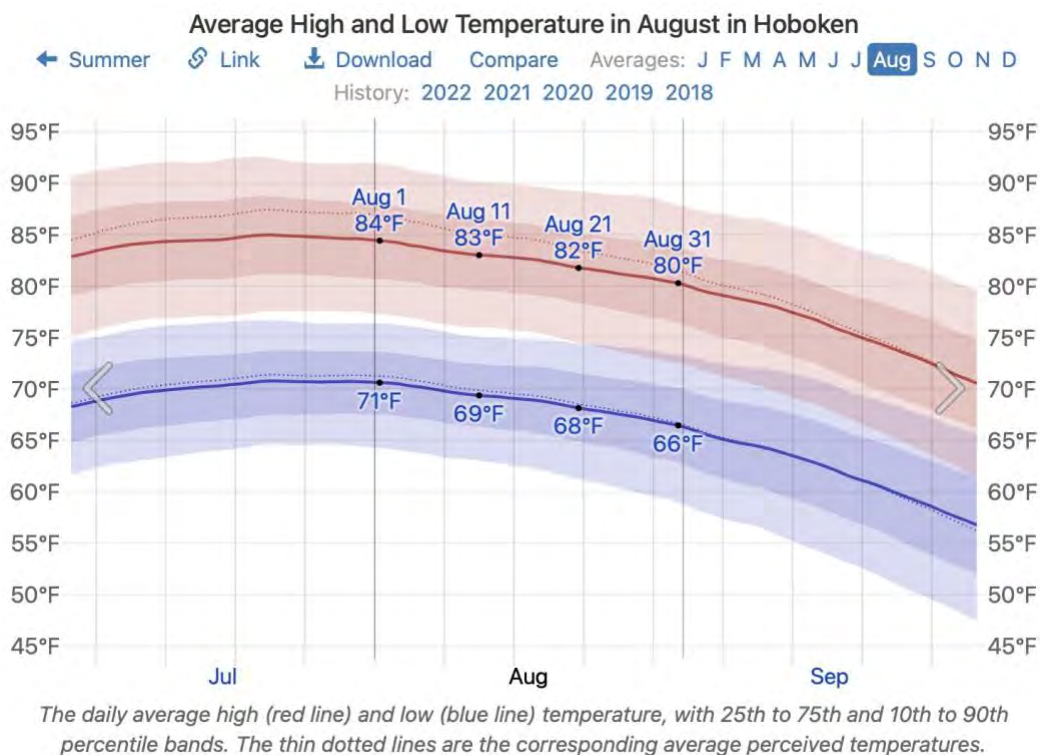
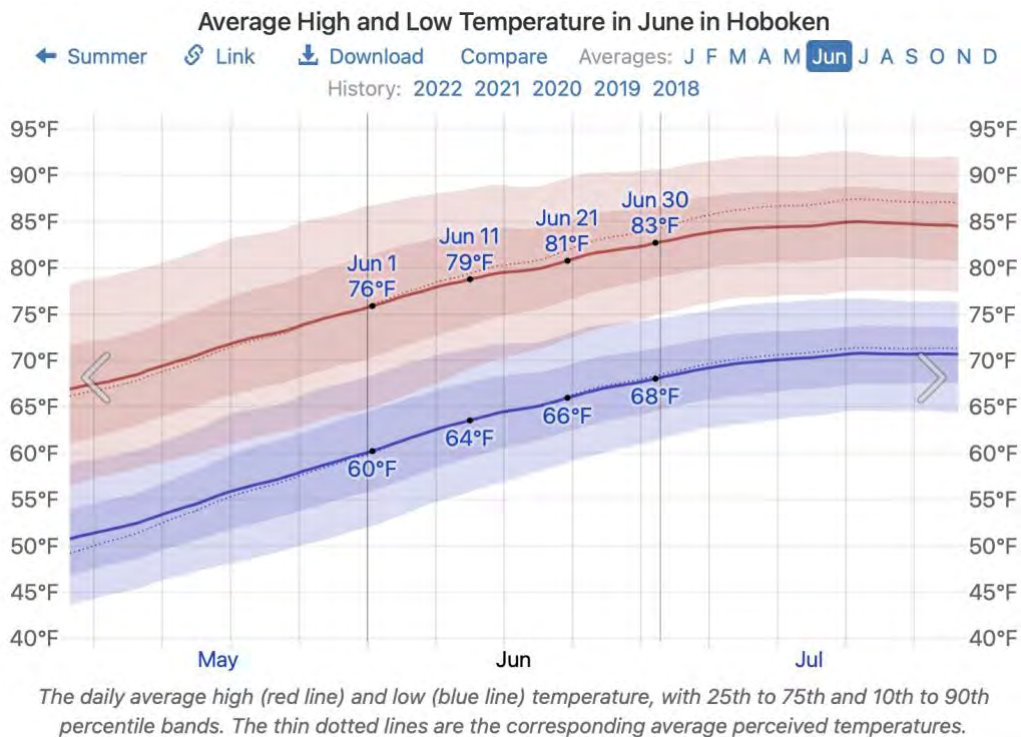
The article, which describes how the song has changed over the years, has a link to a recording of the song. Shaun will open the play with a version of the song.

“August in Ethiopia”: The Gianellis don’t turn on their air conditioner before July, regardless of how hot it can get before then. Believe it or not, when Nick remarks that it’s as hot as “August in Ethiopia” in their house, he’s factually incorrect. The outdoor temperature and humidity in Hoboken in August are hotter than in Ethiopia per the diagram below.



Average High and Low Temperature in August in Hoboken, NJ and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Temperatures in Hoboken in June, which is the month when Nick begs Aida to turn on the A/C, are only minimally cooler than in August except in the evening, as seen in the charts below. Aida responds to Nick's request with, "I'll open a window".



the three “f’s” of life: family, faith and food: **Faith** would be the Roman Catholic Church. There are five Roman Catholic parishes in Hoboken, all of which were there during the time that the play’s characters would have been part of their congregations. They are: Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church, 400 Willow Avenue; Saints Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church, 404 Hudson Street; St Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church, 61 Monroe Street; St Ann Roman Catholic Church, 704 Jefferson Street; and St Francis Roman Catholic Church, 308 Jefferson Street.

Food: Mangiamo! Let’s eat! Food appears so often in the script that it could be called an offstage character in the play. Nearly every scene revolves around a meal, usually a Sunday dinner, which consists of several courses. Emma and Aida tell Nick they’ve prepared Nick’s favorites: “gnocchi, veal parmesan, tiramisu, biscotti” for a special Sunday dinner later in the show. The courses are described below and pictured on the following page.

The **gnocchi** that Aida makes for Nick before he leaves for Seattle is likely Gnocchi di Palate, described by [chef Byron Talbott in his blog](#):

This type of Gnocchi is the most prevalent around the world and my method of choice. It’s made by combining egg, potato, and flour into a paste-like dough. The dough is then rolled into ropes, sliced into pillow-like-cubes, boiled until they float to the surface of the water, and finished off with a pan sear in which ever sauce you desire.

Like pasta, you could top off Gnocchi with a rich cream sauce, an extravagant marinara, or even a simple olive oil and herb concoction. The possibilities are endless. Being the sauce man that I am, I always make my gnocchi with little grooves that help hold the sauce and maximize the sauce-to-gnocchi ratio.

Veal Parmesan, aka veal parm, is made with veal, pounded thin, breaded, and pan-fried, then baked in a tomato “gravy” – what “Amerigans” know as tomato or marinara sauce – covered in mozzarella and/or provolone, an Italian soft smoked cow’s milk cheese, and sprinkled with Parmesan, an Italian hard sheep’s milk cheese. It’s usually served atop spaghetti tossed in tomato gravy.

Tiramisu is a dessert traditionally made by Italians in a bowl. It consists of layers of sponge cake or lady fingers soaked in strong, sweetened espresso and rum (or brandy or cognac), alternating with a layer of mascarpone (Italian cream cheese) and heavy cream, and finished with a generous sprinkling of grated dark chocolate and/or fine cocoa powder.

Molly O’Neill describes **biscotti** for her [recipe in the NY Times](#):

These classic Italian cookies get their signature crispness from being twice-baked: First, the dough is cooked in logs, cut into slices, then baked again. Because they travel and keep well, a pile of them makes an excellent gift wrapped in a cellophane bag and tied with a ribbon. Feel free to experiment with add-ins: Sub in hazelnuts or pistachios for the almonds. Add mini chocolate chips or dried cranberries, or a

teaspoon of citrus zest. Or take the cookies over the top by drizzling with melted chocolate, glazing with icing or dusting with sprinkles.

Food is always plentiful – Nick tells Aida at the top of the second act, “Nan, you've been feeding me nonstop for two days now” – and lovingly prepared. Aida and Emma, like their fellow Italian home cooks, are extremely proud of their cooking. Their recipes have been passed down through the generations, and they stay true to the originals. Food levels the playing field: no matter their station in life, IAs eat like royalty.



Clockwise, from top left: gnocchi, Veal Parmesan, biscotti, and tiramisu



Pasta Fagioli



Cannoli

Pasta is a staple of most Italian dishes, from soup courses like pasta fagioli, through to desserts like cannoli, as seen in the photos on the previous page.

IA cuisine uses fresh, seasonal produce like tomatoes, garlic, onions, basil, eggplant, peppers, and zucchini, either grown in backyard gardens – often by the men – or purchased at the supermarkets that they’ve determined are the best sources for each vegetable. (See pp. 15 and 17 of this glossary.) Aida prepares dinner when Caitlin joins them, which she describes as “A beautiful meal”. (“Beautiful” is an adjective often applied to food in IA households.) “We enjoyed the veal”, Aida says, “then a fresh tomato garden salad, then ravioli with eggplant on the side, then we had coffee with ricotta cheesecake and fresh-baked anisette cookies”.

A fresh tomato garden salad in the Italian tradition is minimal, allowing the ripe summer tomatoes to shine. Aida likely tossed her garden tomatoes in a marinade of red onion, fresh basil, garlic, and parsley, then refrigerated the salad for an hour or so and served it chilled.

Ravioli with eggplant on the side: to give the meal balance, Aida probably made a simple cheese ravioli, filled with ricotta and Parmesan, dressed with tomato gravy, and sprinkled lightly with shredded Parmesan. The eggplant was likely just sauteed in olive oil.



Fresh tomato garden salad



Cheese Ravioli



Sauteed eggplant



Ricotta Cheesecake



Anginetti knot cookies - Italian Anisette Cookies

Italian ricotta cheesecake is not to be confused with NY cheesecake, mentioned again in this glossary on p. 17. Though crustless, ricotta cheesecake is also known as ricotta pie because its round shape and more shallow height resemble those of a pie. NY cheesecake is made with cream cheese and is rich, very dense, wider, and taller than a ricotta cheesecake, and has a crust on the bottom and sides, consisting of either graham crackers, pastry, or a thin coating of flour. Italian cheesecake uses five simple ingredients, including strained ricotta cheese. The ingredients are whipped for 10 minutes to achieve a light, airy cake. Olive oil coats the springform pan before baking so that the cheesecake doesn't stick.

Although different regions and families have their own recipes, authentic **Italian anisette cookies**, aka Anginetti knot or Italian Wedding cookies, are made with Anisette liqueur, also called Sambuca. They are traditionally served at weddings as well as holidays like Easter and Christmas, where they are sprinkled with colorful nonpareils.

Food in IA households doesn't always have to be Italian in origin, though they consider Italian cuisine the best in the world (rightfully so). When Nick admits to having Chinese food for dinner, Aida is horrified. "You're telling me that's food? ... Thirty years ago, I had dinner at a Chinese restaurant. To this day, I have no idea what I ate". She tells Nunzio, "Nicholas ate Chinese food tonight" and he replies, "That's like eating cancer". During the dinner described above, when Nunzio mentions "a big fight" he had at Pathmark "with the manager about the zucchini", Caitlin tells him, "Actually, the A&P has the freshest zucchini. What I do when I'm working a lot and I don't have time to cook - I saute a little yellow squash from the A&P, then I melt a very thin slice of provolone over it, and I top it with just a dash of parmesan. You have it with some rye or Italian bread - preferably fresh from Marzoni's Bakery - and it makes the best late night snack".

The grandparents are dazzled: just as they do, Caitlin vets supermarkets for the best fresh produce, cooks with Italian staples like yellow squash, provolone and Parmesan cheese, and goes to Marzoni's for freshly baked Italian bread. Although there's no Marzoni's in Hoboken, Dom Castellitto and his Hoboken bread bakery were in full operation during the grandparents' time in Hoboken, as shown in the photos below and on the next page.



Dom in his bakery, August 2019: a flour-dusted picture of Jesus on the wall in the back of the bakery



A framed collage of family photos (left) and another flour-dusted photo of Dom and his children, both undated

Although there's a Marzoni's brick oven and brewing company with four locations in Pennsylvania, there are several Italian bakeries in Hoboken. One, the aforementioned Dom's Bakery, which [closed its doors in January 2023 after 43 years in business](#), was the only brick oven bread bakery in Hoboken for most of its years of operation. On August 21, 2019, the owner, Dom Castellitto, was interviewed by two historians from the Hoboken Historical Museum for the "Vanishing Hoboken" series of the Hoboken Oral History Project. The transcript, as well as photos of the baking process, were made into a chapbook that is in the archives of the museum. As seen in the photos on the previous page, Dom and his bakery exemplify the three "f's" of life: family, faith, and food.

An upload of Dom's chapbook can be accessed [here](#).

Other chapbooks record the oral histories of IA food purveyors in Hoboken, whose shops the Gianellis and Cristanos would have frequented. For decades, [Joe and Steve Truglio](#) have operated the family butcher shop, Truglio's Meat Market, at 1000 Park Avenue in Hoboken. It was passed down from their father, Al, whose motto the brothers still follow: "My father used to say, 'Whatever goes on my table, goes on your table'. We never changed that".

Dominick Amato immigrated from Italy at the age of ten. Starting his first summer there in 1958 and for the next ten years, he worked a fruit and vegetable truck on the streets of Hoboken. [His chapbook](#) not only tells his story, but "describes the street-based fruit business that was once common in Hoboken. Dominick recalls at least a dozen trucks on the streets in the late 50s and throughout the 60s".

When my father changed trains at the Hoboken terminal, he would often bring home fruits and vegetables from stands that had been set up there.

With the rise of supermarkets after WWII, housewives like Emma and Aida could buy their families' food in one place. They no longer had to go from one smaller grocery store to the other to find what they needed. Shops that exclusively sold meat, pastry, bread, or produce thinned out, replaced by big chain stores, especially after the mid-sixties, when the pill freed women from housewifery to pursue higher education and enter the job force.

One of the supermarkets where the grandparents shop is the A&P, short for The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, which was one of the largest grocery chains in the US during the mid-20th century. A&P had several stores in Hoboken during the 1950s, including one at 324 Washington Street.

They also go to Pathmark. Another major supermarket chain, Pathmark had several stores in Hoboken during the 1950s. One location was at 14th and Clinton Streets. Pathmark, which may or may not “have the big fish in the window”, is where Emma runs into Caitlin. Aida warns her dinner guests, “Never buy red peppers at Pathmark”.

The grandparents talk about Foodtown, which “has the buy two, get one free specials. Shop Rite has the double coupon days”. In the 1980s and 1990s, Foodtown was a major grocer on Long Island and in New Jersey. Shoprite is another national chain that had multiple stores in Hoboken during the 1950s, including one at 900 Madison Street.

Another large chain supermarket, Grand Union, is mentioned once in OTR. In the parking lot, thinking he was in reverse, Frank put the car in second and, according to Aida, plowed “right into a Japanese car”. Grand Union Supermarkets, which used to do business throughout most of the northeastern US, went bankrupt in 2001, was sold, and kept only a few stores in upstate New York and New England open.

IAs have welcomed some NJ/NY foods into their culinary culture. For example, as they gather for Nick’s big announcement, Aida offers her guests “new crumb cake”. Nunzio asks if it’s the kind “with the big crumbs”, and Aida answers definitively, “From the A&P”. They know then that it’s the *good* crumb cake, the best that can be had locally. They’ve determined this after trying them all. Crumb cake is not Italian, but people in the NY Metropolitan area know there is one, and only one, crumb cake – a NY Crumb Cake “with the big crumbs” – just as there is one and only one cheesecake: a NY Cheesecake crowned with sour cream. (See p. 15 of this glossary.).



NY “big crumb” **crumb cake**, the best in the world

The “big crumbs” of the NY **crumb cake** are a thick, high, streusel topping made with

melted butter, flour, brown sugar, and cinnamon that has been mixed carefully to prevent the crumbs from, well, crumbling too much. The streusel is then set aside to cool and solidify while the rest of the cake is prepared, thus ensuring that the flour binds the crumbs in perfectly large clumps. The cake underneath the crumbs must be dense and moist to stand up to the crumbs and keep them from sinking to the bottom during baking. When out of the oven and cooled down, the cake is dusted with confectioners' sugar.



Ground coffee in cans and instant coffee, ca 1950s

Crumb cake is always served with **coffee**, just as Aida is doing. Coffee in IA families of this era was not espresso, cappuccino, or latte, but ground Maxwell House in a can, processed in Hoboken in the largest coffee roasting plant in the world. Other coffees included Folgers, Chase & Sanborn, Hills Brothers and Nescafé, purchased at the grocery store on sale.

Most of the time, coffee was brewed in an electric percolator or a percolator on the stove. People at that time drank caffeinated coffee at any hour of the day or night, seemingly unconcerned about it keeping them awake. Some households kept instant coffee as a back-up, but its taste was considered inferior, as was Sanka, the only available decaf, usually instant since it was seldom served. Consumed only under doctor's orders, one would request it in a sheepish whisper while everyone else took pity on them.

Food is not only a source of pride for IAs, but feeding people is also a social convention of the culture. Sharing the bounty of food brings connection and closeness. It demonstrates love. The pot of tomato gravy bubbling on the back burner of my grandmother's stove not only filled the home with its mouth-watering aroma, it also provided a sense of comfort and security; an assurance that you would be cared for, that your needs would be met.

In the Italian culture, food also designates hospitality. It is urged upon everyone who enters the home. Aida tells Nick “You look hungry”, offering him a sandwich of provolone and ham and ravioli. Nunzio offers him nuts. At my grandparents’, as in other Italian homes, walnuts, filberts (hazelnuts), almonds, Brazil nuts, and pecans sat unshelled in a basket, often with dried figs alongside, as well as a nutcracker and a couple of picks for prying out the meat. When Caitlin arrives at the Gianelli’s the first time we meet her, Aida tells her that she looks hungry and leads her to the dining room for dinner. When she visits to check on Nick’s health, Aida again tells Caitlin that she looks hungry, and exits to fix her a “little something”. In minutes, she re-enters “carrying a huge antipasto”, which the hospitable Aida would make vegetarian.



A vegan antipasto with garden vegetables and tomato-topped Bruschetta

When the relatives gathered at my grandparents’ home for Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day, cloth-covered tables in the backyard would groan under huge platters of spaghetti with ripe tomatoes, lemon and capers, cod piccata, green bean and potato salad, bowls of olives and roasted red peppers, crusty Italian bread slathered with juicy, marinated tomatoes, and round, sweating pitchers of fresh lemonade. The grown-ups reached into big buckets of meaty clams and oysters, noisily slurping them out of their shells, teasing us “Amerigan” children to try them as we watched in horror. Our uncles grilled hot dogs and hamburgers for us and tried to give us wine in jelly jars before our aunts slapped their hands away.

Basil Russo, president of the Italian Sons and daughters of America (ISDA) wrote an essay on April 18, 2023 for the ISDA website, “[What Was Special About Growing Up in an Italian American Home](#)”. The subheading reads “Coming up in mid-20th century America as an Italian was a beautiful thing”. His words echo the themes of OTR: Italian food culture, backyard gardens, traditional Sunday dinners, and, especially, *Tengo famiglia*. Excerpts below are illustrated with a photo from the article, followed by a Marinari family photo:

Most of us grew up in neighborhoods that were either Italian American, or at least had a strong Italian-American influence. Our homes were simple and modest, but

well cared for. The most important room in the home was the kitchen because of the significance the preparation and enjoyment of food had in our lives. The least used room in the house was the living room. The couch always had a plastic cover on it, and the room was only used when special guests visited.

The woman of the home, whether it was our nonna [grandmother] or our mother, spent nearly every hour of the day cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing. Their job was so much more difficult than any 40-hour-a-week job today. But they performed their work with love and a great sense of pride.



A special occasion in a church hall, with family cooks in aprons beneath the left chandelier.

Sunday dinners were the most important event of the week in our home. The three to four hours needed to prepare the sauce (or gravy, or sugo, as different families chose to call it) began early in the morning to accommodate an early afternoon dinnertime. Meatballs and sausage were often cooked in the sauce, and often neck bones and pigs feet were used to add even more flavor to the sauce. If we were famished and pleaded our case, we often got a chunk of crusty Italian bread dipped in the sauce to hold us over until dinner. And dinners were the time to eat well and talk freely. Good conversation and good food were inseparable at the Sunday dinner table.

To feed her family well was a nonna's or mother's way of expressing her love for her family. That is why so many of our wonderful childhood memories revolve around food. Italian-American mothers showered their families with love.

Our nonnos and fathers worked hard as well. Aside from family, nothing was more

important to Italian-American men than adhering to a strong work ethic. They well knew of their responsibility to be good providers to their families, and they would take whatever jobs were available, no matter how difficult the work or how meager the pay, to fulfill their responsibility to their wife and children.

...

Our backyard gardens were an essential part of every Italian-American home. My nonna would prune our rose bushes and flowers, while my nonno tended to the tomatoes, zucchini, grapevines and fig tree. I always enjoyed helping them look for the ripe tomatoes and figs that we would pick each week.



On the steps of the Knights of Columbus Hall
for my grandparents' (standing, forefront, far right) 40th wedding anniversary celebration

Hospitality, love, and the sharing of bounty. Connection, closeness, comfort, and security.
Family, faith, and food.

talk fresh: In this context, from the [Urban Dictionary](#), it means to get "smart" with another person. To have an attitude. To be a smartass.

1941 DeSoto ... Cost fifty-three dollars more than I could possibly spend ... I worked three months, nights, shoveling coal into some restaurant furnace, so I could get that fifty-three. The timeline of the play would put Frank at 33 years of age – maybe even 32, depending on when his birthday is/when he bought his 1941 DeSoto – given that the new year's models often come out the latter half of the prior year.

ClassicCarCatalog.Com has collected images of the 1941 DeSoto, made by Chrysler, on this [page](#).

J. Wiss and Sons Company, a metal tools manufacturer that was based in Newark, NJ from 1848-1976, has a [website detailing the history of the company](#). It includes pages about their family. One entry, entitled “[1941 DeSoto Custom Series S8C Convertible Club Coupe](#)”, notes that the model cost \$1,195 at the time, the equivalent of \$25,154 today. The Wiss’s car is pictured below.

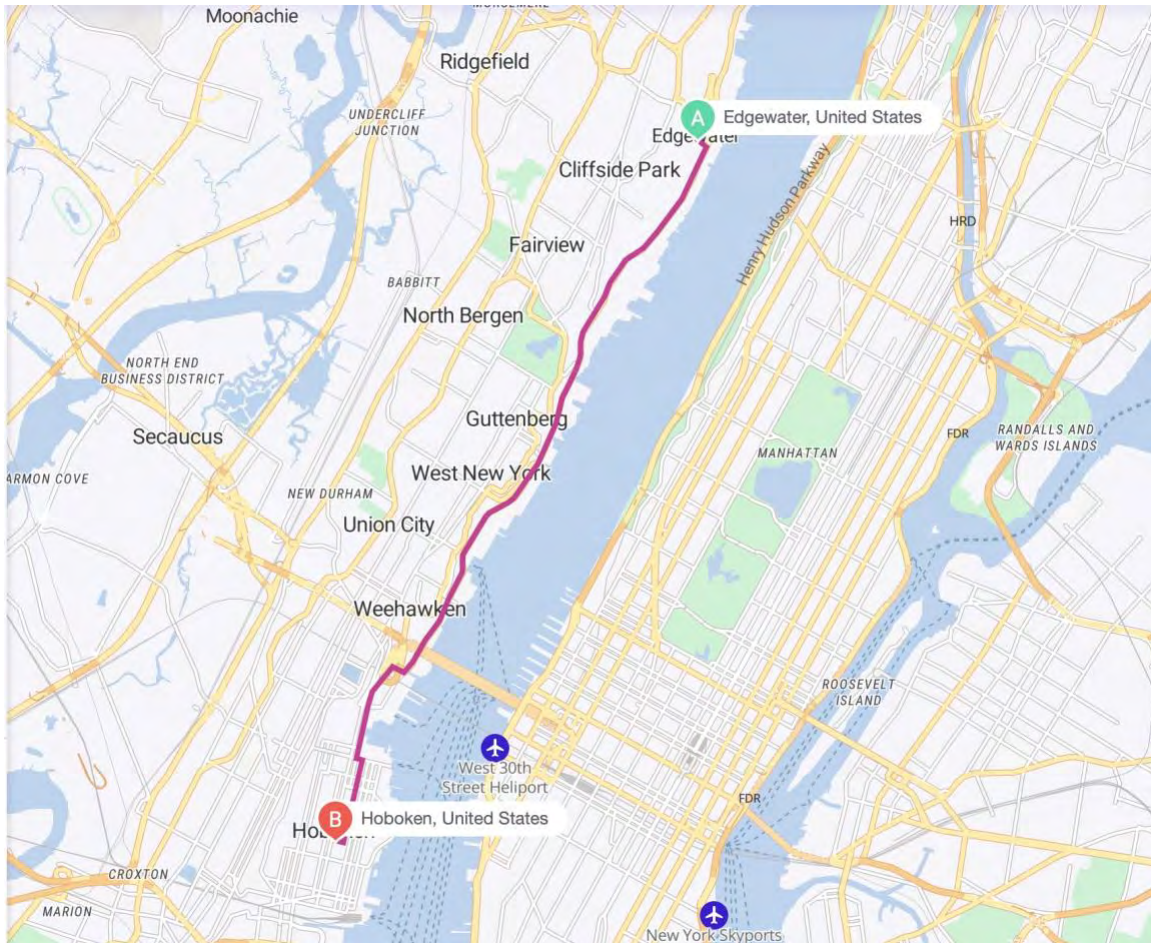


1941 DeSoto Custom Series S8C Convertible Club Coupe. Its owner, Norm Wiss, Jr., is at the wheel

Frank’s three months of coal shoveling at night for the \$53 he needed to complete his purchase of the car earned him the equivalent of \$1,116 today.

I was the first in my family to get a good job with a union - in a Ford's automobile factory. Nunzio is talking about the Ford Edgewater Assembly Plant, which is profiled on [FordMotorHistory.Com](#). Located at 309 River Road in Edgewater, NJ, the plant was constructed between 1929 and 1931.

The property is bordered by the Hudson River to the east, the site of the former Corn Products Refining Company to the south, River Road to the west, and the tracks of the New York, Susquehanna, and Western Railroad to the west and north. To go from Hoboken to Edgewater, a distance of 6.9 miles, Nunzio would have made a straight shot north along River Road.



The Ford Motor Company built the Edgewater Assembly Plant as the largest of six such plants in the US, from 1928-31. The intention was to expand production of the Model A automobile line that had been introduced in late 1927. Albert Kahn, perhaps the most important industrial architect working in the US from 1903-42, designed all six assembly plants.

The Assembly Building at Edgewater was the most architecturally successful of the major structures built during this program, characterized by a unified exterior wrapped around numerous internal assembly, storage, and distribution functions. The Edgewater plant, which operated until 1955, was the longest used of the 1928-31 Ford assembly complexes. It typified the methods which characterized Ford from 1928 to 1950: heavily conveyORIZED, densely packed, horizontally arranged assembly operations. (FordMotorHistory.Com)

The Assembly Building was also the largest above-ground structure ever erected on the waterfront in the Port of New York, with a massive, partial pier substructure probably unique within this region. (FordMotorHistory.Com)



Ford Motor Company Edgewater Assembly Plant with Manhattan in background, undated

When the Ford Motor Company purchased the Edgewater site in 1929, they acquired 38 acres of open unimproved land and water. (FordMotorHistory.Com). In order to have access to the site across the railroad tracks, Albert Kahn designed an overpass for both motor vehicles and pedestrians connecting River Road to the assembly plant ("[Ford Edgewater Assembly Plant - Site Description](#)"). Because of that, Nunzio would not have had much difficulty getting to and from work to home. The difficulty for most workers in Ford assembly plants was that many skilled workers found the work monotonous and exhausting. Henry Ford had introduced the assembly line in 1913 to help reduce the cost of the already popular Model T. "Instead of working on a variety of tasks to build one car, each worker remained in the same spot and performed one task for his entire shift ... Turnover was so high, company managers had to hire 10 men for every one they wanted to add to the work force" ("[Working at Ford's Factory](#)", *American Experience: Henry Ford*). Nunzio remained until retirement: "I stood on an assembly line and put this nut in that bolt for twenty-seven years to give my wife and my sons the life they deserve! *Tengo famiglia!*" (p. 9 of the script).



Workers in the tool and die department in the pressed-steel building at the plant

And way I got the job, see, was I told them I was Irish. I had to! 'Cause those days, the most famous Italians in America were the Pope, and Sacco and Vanzetti! And did they look at us and think Pope? No! Sacco and Vanzetti!

The Pope in 1988 was John Paul II.



Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were, respectively, a shoemaker and a fish peddler who were executed on August 23, 1927, by electric chair.

On the afternoon of April 15, 1920, in South Braintree, Massachusetts, a payroll clerk and a security guard were robbed of \$15,577 in cash, the Slater and Morrill shoe factory's payroll, worth \$238,075 today. The thieves shot them to death and took off in a getaway car with two or three other men. Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested several weeks later and were charged with the robbery and murder. Both were carrying guns, and Sacco was carrying a flyer announcing an upcoming anarchist rally where Vanzetti would speak. No other arrests were ever made; none of the stolen money was ever linked to them or recovered.

Their trial and executions sparked international debate, protest, and even rioting. Experts continue to question whether one or both men committed the crimes. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that Sacco and Vanzetti did not receive fair treatment. Their arrest and subsequent trial came at a time of great tension and unrest in the US. WWI, which the US entered in 1917 and the Bolshevik/Communist Revolution in Russia of 1917 inflamed strong anti-immigrant sentiment, especially against those who advocated anarchism, communism, and socialism.

Sacco and Vanzetti were among the many immigrants living in poverty who, fed up with what they saw as the exploitation of workers in the US capitalist system, were drawn to meetings of anarchists who thought that the solution was to overthrow the government and start from scratch. (["Sacco and Vanzetti Were Executed 90 Years Ago. Their Deaths Made History"](#))

The years 1919-20 became known as the "Red Scare", characterized by many labor strikes, widespread fear of radicals, and bomb attacks against government officials. The government responded with the Palmer Raids, named after Attorney General Mitchell Palmer, who had narrowly escaped several bombing/assassination attempts. Thousands of suspected radicals were arrested in over twenty states, and many of them were deported.

Although Sacco and Vanzetti were never implicated in acts of violence, they were Italian immigrants and avowed anarchists. Their trials for armed robbery and murder occurred in this atmosphere of social tension and turmoil. The trial judge permitted the prosecution to present extensive evidence about their anarchist ideology, immigrant background, and refusal to register for the military draft during World War I. On July 14, 1921, the jury convicted both men. ([Sacco & Vanzetti: Justice on Trial](#))

The rules that governed review of trial proceedings contributed to the unfairness of the proceedings. The trial judge had sole authority to decide the defendants' repeated and compelling motions for a new trial. Known for openly hating anarchists, he denied them all. (["Sacco and Vanzetti Were Executed 90 Years Ago. Their Deaths Made History"](#)) Appellate rules in effect at the time denied the Supreme Judicial Court the authority to review the strength of the evidence presented at trial. ([Sacco & Vanzetti: Justice on Trial](#))

Protests took place worldwide—from Latin America to Morocco to China, and especially in western Europe, which had just ceded its dominance on the world stage to the US after World War I. Spurred by resentment, Europeans became a lot more sensitive to what happens inside the US. They had reason – while Sacco and Vanzetti were in prison, quotas restricting Italian immigration became law in 1924, partly because many Southern and Eastern Europeans weren't considered "white" enough. (["Sacco and Vanzetti Were Executed 90 Years Ago. Their Deaths Made History"](#))

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts executed Sacco and Vanzetti on August 23, 1927.

During their six years on death row, their letters from prison further endeared the two to the public and persuaded many people of their innocence. Sacco, a father of two who had once enjoyed gardening in his spare time, attempted to remain optimistic, noting in a letter that "between these turbulent clouds, a luminous path runs always toward the truth." In May 1927, after the judge rejected their last appeal, Vanzetti told the *New York World* what would become his most famous words:

If it had not been for these thing[s], I might have live[d] out my life, talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have die[d], unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as we now do by dying. Our words, our lives, our pains — nothing! The taking of our lives — lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler — all! That last moment belongs to us — that agony is our triumph. (["Sacco and Vanzetti Were Executed 90 Years Ago. Their Deaths Made History"](#))



"Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco" by Ben Shahn, 1931–32

Information about Sacco and Vanzetti was compiled from these sources: "[The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti](#)", an *Atlantic Monthly* article, written in March 1927 by Felix Frankfurter; "[BRIA 23 2 a Sacco and Vanzetti: Were Two Innocent Men Executed](#)", *Constitutional Rights Foundation: Bill of Rights in Action*, Summer 2007 (Volume 23, No. 2); "[The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti](#)" by Ben Shahn, *Sacco-Vanzetti series, 1931-1932*, *Whitney Museum of Art*; "[Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco](#)" by Ben Shahn, 1931-32, *MoMA*; "[Sacco and Vanzetti Were Executed 90 Years Ago. Their Deaths Made History](#)" by Olivia B. Waxman, *Time Magazine*, August 27, 2017; [The Case of Sacco & Vanzetti](#), an Exhibit at the at the John Adams Courthouse, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, Massachusetts Court System, April 30, 2018; and [The Ballads of Sacco and Vanzetti](#), an album by Woodie Guthrie, 1946-47.

So I told Ford's my name was Ian Sean O'Malley O'Brien O'Sullivan - and they gave me the job!: The Irish were the first immigrant group to assimilate because of how "white" their features and skin color looked. As mentioned on p. 26 of this document, quotas restricting Italian immigration became law in 1924, partly because many Southern and Eastern Europeans weren't considered "white" enough.

Korea: From [Brittania.com](#), "Korean War: 1950-53":

Korean War, conflict between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in which at least 2.5 million persons lost their lives. The war reached international proportions in June 1950 when North Korea, supplied and advised by the Soviet Union, invaded the South. The United Nations, with the United States as the principal participant, joined the war on the side of the South Koreans, and the People's Republic of China came to North Korea's aid. After more than a million combat casualties had been suffered on both sides, the fighting ended in July 1953 with Korea still divided into two hostile states. Negotiations in 1954 produced no further agreement, and the front line has been accepted ever since as the de facto boundary between North and South Korea.

CPU: Central Processing Unit. CPUs reside in almost all devices you own, whether it's a smartwatch, a computer, or a thermostat. They are responsible for processing and executing instructions and act as the brains of your devices. ("[What is a CPU?](#)" by Jon Martindale for *DigitalTrends Media Group*, October 18, 2021)

Emma is no more familiar with CPUs than Aida is with dim sum.

VCR: A videocassette recorder: an electronic apparatus capable of recording television programs or other signals onto videocassettes and playing them back through a television receiver. ([Dictionary.Com](#)) Remember?

BCP: *Book of Common Prayer*: from [Dictionary.Com](#), the service book of the Church of England. Nunzio might know what it is, but like Emma, he's just tossing acronyms about.

Atlantic City: The gambling bus trips arranged by the church for seniors are real. There is

even a St. Ann's (no "e") Roman Catholic Church on 704 Jefferson Street in Hoboken.

In an effort at revitalizing the city, New Jersey voters in 1976 passed a referendum, approving casino gambling for Atlantic City; this came after a 1974 referendum on legalized gambling failed to pass. Immediately after the legislation passed, the owners of the Chalfonte-Haddon Hall Hotel began converting it into the Resorts International. It was the first legal casino in the eastern United States when it opened on May 26, 1978. Other casinos were soon constructed along the Boardwalk and, later, in the marina district for a total of nine today. The introduction of gambling did not, however, quickly eliminate many of the urban problems that plagued Atlantic City. Many people have suggested that it only served to exacerbate those problems, as attested to by the stark contrast between tourism intensive areas and the adjacent impoverished working-class neighborhoods. In addition, Atlantic City has been less popular than Las Vegas as a gambling city in the United States. Donald Trump helped bring big name boxing bouts to the city to attract customers to his casinos. The boxer Mike Tyson had most of his fights in Atlantic City in the 1980s, which helped Atlantic City achieve nationwide attention as a gambling resort. Numerous highrise condominiums were built for use as permanent residences or second homes. By end of the decade it was one of the most popular tourist destinations in the United States. ([Wikipedia](#))



Newlyweds Toe and Theda Marinari, my grandparents, on their honeymoon in Atlantic City, 1923

Atlantic City was and still is a popular destination for IAs. My grandparents honeymooned there in 1923. They used to take my sister and me there as a special treat on summer Sundays after Mass. We'd promenade on the wide, wide Boardwalk, all dressed up in our hats, white gloves, patent leather shoes and puffy dresses. Many others walking the promenade were dressed nicely too, as evidenced by the photo below from 1967.



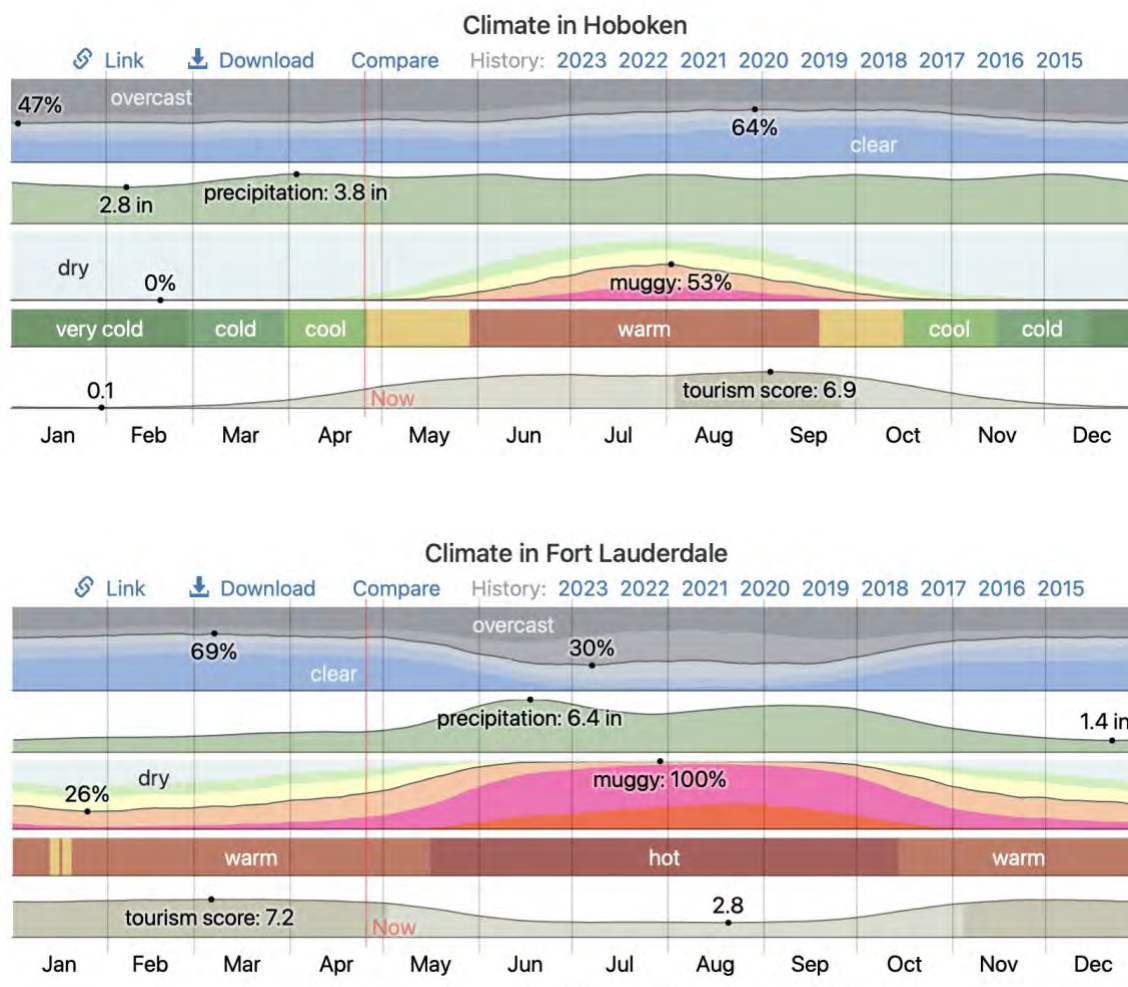
The Atlantic City Boardwalk in 1967

move to Fort Lauderdale ... to live with a bunch of old people who love humidity: Fort Lauderdale is a popular vacation destination, known as a mecca for college students on Spring Break. Below is a photo of the hotels along its beaches.



Established in 1911, Fort Lauderdale is a city on Florida's southeastern coast, with a population in 2021 of 181,668 (2021). It is known for its beaches and boating canals. The Strip is a promenade running along oceanside highway A1A. It's lined with upscale outdoor restaurants, bars, boutiques, and luxury hotels. Other attractions include the International Swimming Hall of Fame, with pools and a museum of memorabilia, and Hugh Taylor Birch State Park, featuring trails and a lagoon. ([Google](#))

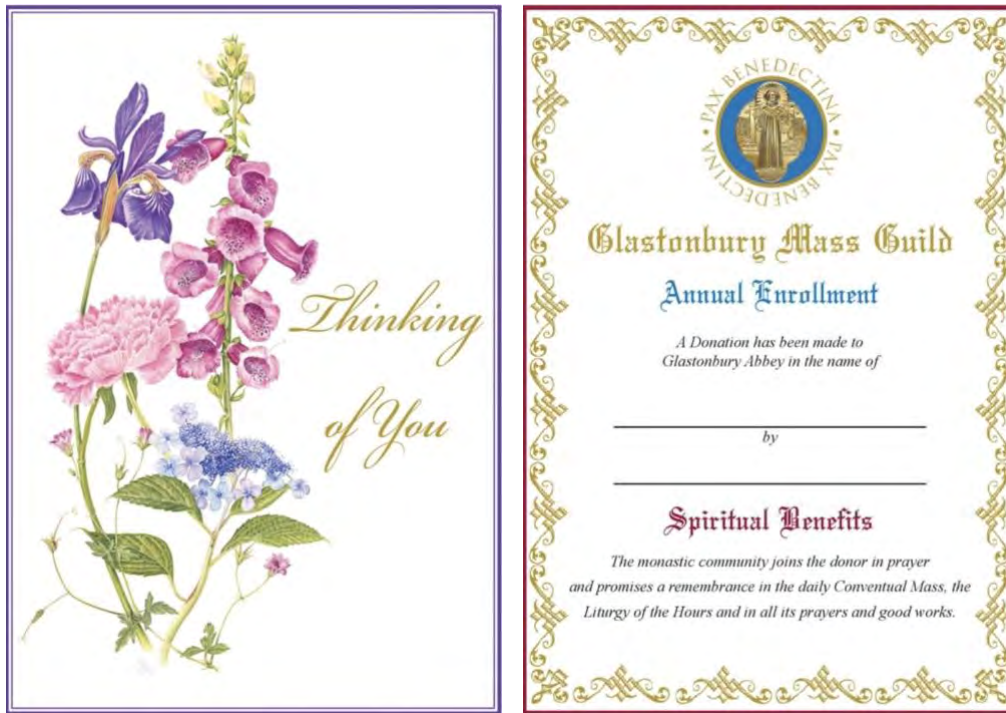
Emma and Frank are right. Hoboken, which is plenty humid in the summer, as evidenced by the chart below, is nevertheless nothing like Fort Lauderdale, as seen in the chart that sits below the one for Hoboken:



new crumb cake ... from the A&P: see pp. 17-18 of this glossary.

Mass card: Per [4LPI](#):

A Mass card, also known as a Mass offering card, memorial card or a remembrance card, is a greeting card given to someone to let them know that they, or a deceased loved-one, will be remembered and prayed for in the intentions at a Mass. The card-giver can obtain a Mass offering card from the parish office. If the card-giver goes directly to the parish office, they may obtain a card there, give his or her offering (a donation), and the Mass will be offered for his or her intention. He or she will then give the card to the recipient, which lets the recipient know that he or she or a deceased family member, or some other intention, will be prayed for at the Mass.



The front and back of a generic Mass card

Exit 94 on the Parkway: The Parkway is the Garden State Parkway (GSP), designated by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) as Route 444, although there are no signs anywhere that indicate that. A controlled-access tollway, the GSP sweeps north to



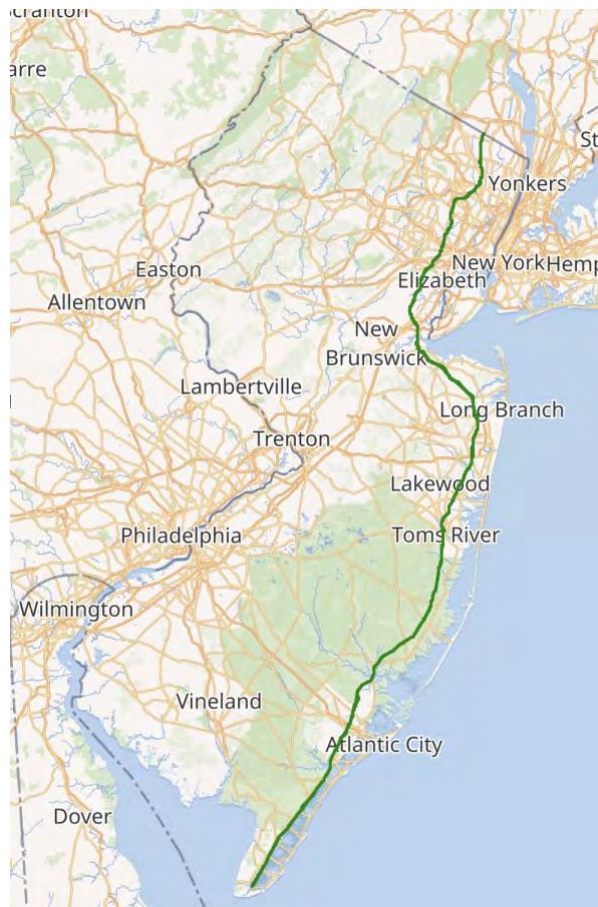
The GSP north entrance in the early sixties

south across the length of eastern NJ from its southernmost tip near Cape May north (exit 0) to the New York state line at Montvale (exit 172), where my sister Theresa lives. At its north end, the road becomes the Garden State Parkway Connector, a component of the NY State Thruway system that connects to the Thruway mainline in Ramapo, NY. At 172.4 miles in length, it is the longest highway in NJ.

The Garden State Parkway was the first road in the nation to use exit numbers based on the mile marker where the exit is located, which is now standard across the country. (“[17 Things You Likely Don't Know About NJ's Garden State Parkway](#)”)

The GSP gets its name from “Garden State”, the moniker given to NJ that is found on its license plates. It refers to the truck farms that once proliferated in South Jersey and are now found in what is known as the Down Jersey region, NJ's southern eight counties.

The parkway was constructed between 1946 and 1957 to connect suburban northern NJ with the Jersey Shore resort areas along the Atlantic coast and to alleviate traffic on commonly used north-south routes running through each town center. The highway has a posted speed limit of 65 miles per hour for most of its length and is primarily for passenger vehicle use; trucks weighing over 10,000 pounds are prohibited north of exit 105 in Tinton Falls, one of the busier summer exits on the parkway. (Compiled from [Wikipedia](#), the Cat Country article and my deep, deep, *deep* knowledge of the parkway.)



The GSP is highlighted in green on this map of NJ

Aida identifies where her friend lives by its exit on the Parkway, which is what people in NJ do. In fact, in his autobiographical bio on BroadwayWorld.Com, Joe DiPietro writes, “Joe was born and raised off Exit 166 in New Jersey” which happens to be the exit for my high school, Immaculate Heart Academy, in Washington Township, NJ.

Regardless, there is no exit 94 on the Parkway. There are three exits in the 90s: exit 98, which take you to I-195 West/Route 34/Route 138 East; exit 91 at Route 549 Lakewood/Brick Township; and exit 90, which takes you to Route 549 Brick Township/Lakewood/Point Pleasant. Of these, exit 98 takes you closest to a beach – the town of Point Pleasant Beach, which is right on the Jersey shoreline – and only 5.9 miles from exit 98. Point Pleasant Beach is the northernmost of the exits and had a Foodtown, which is now closed. However, there’s a Super Foodtown in Sea Girt, accessible from exit 98.

Her house is further down, by the big Foodtown: The Super Foodtowns near the Jersey Shore are in Atlantic Highlands, NJ, accessible from exit 117 of the GSP, in Port Monmouth, also accessible from exit 117, and in Red Bank, accessible from exit 109. Because the GSP’s exit numbers are based on ascending distances from the starting point in Cape May, all are not “further down”, but further north of the exits in the 90s. So, either there’s a Super Foodtown that went out of business, for which I was unable to find a record, or Frank or Aida are a bit “hazy” (Joe DiPietro’s words).

Grace: A prayer of thanksgiving said before meals over the food, with the head down and the hands clasped in prayer, but never with hands joined around the table in a Catholic home. Frank’s version is “Bless us, oh Lord, for these thy gifts, that we are about to receive. And bless our lovely dinner guest and our lonely grandson and may they find eternal happiness together.” In the actual prayer, after “receive”, it continues, “from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen”. At “Christ”, the head is bowed, and usually stays in that position through the “Amen”. ([“Grace Before and After Meals”](#), *Catholic.Org*)



The cast of JTC’s *Over the River and Through the Woods* saying grace towards the end of Act I

the Irish used to hate the Italians: [“The special love-hate relationship between Irish and Italian Americans”](#), by Frances Mulraney for *Irish Central*, Oct 14, 2019, explains how the animosity came about:

Italians began to arrive in the US in large numbers in the 1880s. They disembarked in a country that already had an established Irish immigrant community who had faced, and were still facing, the discrimination of “No Irish Need Apply” and the struggle to find employment and money.

As rivals, two of the poorest immigrant communities battled it out for jobs and a means of survival, and the Irish and Italians clashed everywhere from the streets to the political system. Mixing between the communities was rare, as were Irish-Italian marriages. A 1920s study showed that the Irish in New York were more likely to marry a German Jew than an Italian.

This conflict did not last forever, however, and as both groups made their way up the social ladder, the tensions evaporated, resulting in many happy unions.

In an excerpt from his [chapbook](#) – seen below – which is my favorite of the lot, Patsy Freda describes the animosity between the Irish and the Italians, which worried him when his Irish fiancée’s family and his Italian one met for the first time:

But... She Was Irish and I Was Italian

[The Italian kids and the Irish kids didn’t get along for a time. As an Italian kid,] you couldn’t get past Willow Avenue. You had to stay west of Willow Avenue. The Irish kids [were] east of Willow Avenue. They’d have fights.

[Where did the animosity come from?] The parents. My own parents. The Irish. When [Edna and I] were getting married, my father was the only one I thought I’d have problems with. Because my wife came in as the only Irish one in the family.

[My parents and I] had to go visit her parents. She lived down at number 1 [Willow Terrace.] I said [to Edna], “If my father throws a cold towel on us, expect it. You’re an Irishman.” So we went in, and it turned out, my father seeing her father—they were drinking buddies! “Hey, John!” “Hey, Mac.” That’s over.

[And that’s what happened in the city, too—eventually.] After a while, you got along. You had to get along.

My Grandpa Marinari, whose parents were Italian immigrants, would talk about how the Irish and Italians fought openly in the street, and that he was beaten by Irish gangs in

Camden, NJ when he was a child and a teenager. He and his friends in turn beat up on African Americans. My mother explained it to us as “trickle-down” prejudice. Like Mulraney writes in the excerpt on the previous page, the Italians encroached on Irish “territory”, competing for jobs and housing. The Italians perceived African Americans doing the same to them. My mother also said that humans seem to have a need to feel superior and will find another ethnic group to consider as “beneath” them.

The prejudice against my mother’s family may have waned in her generation, but it didn’t disappear. Patsy Freda was my mother’s contemporary, born July 13, 1929, five days after she was born. Throughout her marriage, my mother’s in-laws disapproved of her because she was Italian. My paternal grandfather was a third-generation Austrian, and my grandmother was a third-generation Irishwoman. In the hierarchy of immigrant prejudice, Austrians felt superior to the Irish, and the Irish felt superior to the Italians. I didn’t observe animosity between my paternal grandparents, but I felt the passive and active cruelty that they demonstrated towards my mother. I wanted to love them, but it was hard to see how much pain they caused my mother.

Also see p. 3, p. 26 and p. 27 of this document.

ACT II

cannolis: A sweet dessert dish, roughly translated from the Italian “cannolo” for “little tube”. There are many recipes for cannoli that hail from different parts of Italy, but it is basically a circle of dough that is wrapped around a cannoli tube to form a cylinder, which is then fried and cooled. Right before serving, it is stuffed with sweetened ricotta cheese with various flavors added. The most popular variations have chocolate chips or pistachios mixed into the ricotta filling. The filling can also be flavored with chocolate. Another variation is a simple filling of whipped cream sweetened with a little powdered sugar. The filling determines how each end of the cannoli is decorated: either with chopped pistachios, candied fruit like citrus peels, maraschino cherries, or chocolate callets. After arranging on a serving dish, the cannolis are sprinkled with confectioners’ sugar and served.

(SeriousEats.Com)



Cannoli Siciliani

Mario Perillo tours ... Mr. Italy: From his bio on [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario_Perillo):

Mario Perillo (August 15, 1926 – February 28, 2003) was an American businessman and Chairman of Perillo Tours, Inc. He expanded his father's business into the largest US operator of tours to Italy. He was perhaps best known to the public for his television commercials during the 1980s and 1990s, earning him the nickname ‘Mr. Italy’.

Mr. Italy pitches his tours in this [commercial](#) that began airing on January 28, 1988. Note his subtle accent. Perillo Tours is headquartered at 577 Chestnut Ridge Road, Woodcliff Lake, NJ, 5 miles from where I grew up. Many of the Perillo extended family live in nearby Saddle River. Judging from the [home of Steve Perillo](#), which is pictured on the following page, the tours are a lucrative business. Steve Perillo is the current CEO of Perillo Tours; his

home is in the center of the photo with a red tile roof. All homes in Saddle River sit on lots that are no smaller than two acres. They have an average value of \$2,500,000. The homes in the Northern Highlands region on Chestnut Ridge Road, where Steve Perillo's home is located, are topping at \$14.9 million. Unlike real estate in our area now, which is showing some reduction in value, Saddle River homes are trending up 21.8% year-over-year. ([Realtor.Com](#))



It's hard to find a description of Perillo Tours that isn't marketing hype, but in a nutshell, the company was founded in 1945 and has always been headquartered in NJ. It was a pioneering company in the guided travel industry, claiming to be the first company to offer the concept of tours. Italy remains their major focus, although they have added Hawaii, Greece, and Costa Rica as destinations. ([TravelStride.Com](#))

From [ItalyVacations.Com](#):

Perillo Tours was founded by Joseph Perillo in 1945. It was a time when well-heeled Americans set aside a month to visit Italy, and Joseph would arrange for his client's trans-Atlantic crossing, a private guide to greet them in Naples, hotel reservations, museum tours and letters of introduction. With all arrangements done by telex and mail, a trip could take six months to prepare!

In 1975, Joseph's son Mario Perillo streamlined the operations and made arranging trips easier by combining chartered aircraft and motor coach sightseeing. By the summer of 1978, he was filling three 747s a week with first-time visitors to Italy. The price, including airfare, hotels, meals and sightseeing for 2 weeks, was \$699 per person! [\$699 in 1975 is equivalent in purchasing power to about \$3,921.62 today.] Perillo Tours quickly became a household name and Mario was dubbed 'Mr. Italy.'

Trivial Pursuit: a board game launched in Canada in November 1981. By 1984, Trivial Pursuit "was selling 20 million copies in the US. and Canada alone. That year, *Time*

magazine dubbed Trivial Pursuit "the biggest phenomenon in game history." (["Trivial Pursuit Co-Inventor Chris Haney Dies"](#), by Courtney Rubin, June 3, 2010, *Inc.Com*)

Actual gameplay, which in no way resembles what the grandparents are doing, is described in the article ["Trivial Pursuit"](#) in *DBpedia.Org*.

... winning is determined by a player's ability to answer trivia and popular culture questions. Players move their pieces around a board, the squares they land on determining the subject of a question they are asked from a card (from six categories including "history" and "science and nature"). Each correct answer allows the player's turn to continue; a correct answer on one of the six "category headquarters" spaces earns a plastic wedge which is slotted into the answerer's playing piece. The object of the game is to collect all six wedges from each "category headquarters" space, and then return to the center "hub" space to answer a question in a category selected by the other players.



Board and playing pieces of the original Trivial Pursuit, known as the Genus edition (or Genus I)

Canasta: From "Canasta" in [Brittanica.Com](#):

Canasta, card game of the rummy family, was developed in Buenos Aires, Arg., and Montevideo, Uruguay, in the 1940s and became popular in the United States and Great Britain from the 1950s on. The name canasta, from the Spanish word for "basket," probably derives from the tray placed in the centre of the table to hold undealt cards and discards. Variations include samba and Bolivia.

The object of the game is to score points by making as many melds as possible, especially canastas. A meld is three or more cards of the same rank, regardless of suit. A canasta is a meld of seven or more cards. Melds can be increased by the addition of natural cards of the same rank or of wild cards (jokers and 2s). Melds made by both partners are kept together in front of one of them. The first side to

reach 5,000 points wins. The meld values of cards are: red 3, 100 points; joker, 50 points; ace or 2, 20 points; king, queen, jack, 10, 9, or 8, 10 points; 7, 6, 5, or 4, 5 points; and black 3, 5 points.



A typical game of Canasta in action

Who starred with Grace Kelly in *High Noon*? The answer to the question is Gary Cooper. From [IMDB.com](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0046250/), *High Noon* is a 1952 movie starring Grace Kelly and Gary Cooper. Cooper won the Oscar for Best Actor in a Leading Role.

In 1951, after 25 years in show business, Gary Cooper's professional reputation was in decline, and he was dropped from the "Motion Picture Herald's" list of the top-ten box-office performers. In the following year, at the age of 51, he made a big comeback with *High Noon*.

The plot summary by *IMDB*:

On the day he gets married and hangs up his badge, Marshal Will Kane [Cooper] is told that a man he sent to prison years before, Frank Miller, is returning on the noon train to exact his revenge. Having initially decided to leave with his new spouse [Grace Kelly], Will decides he must go back and face Miller. However, when he seeks the help of the townspeople he has protected for so long, they turn their backs on him. It seems Kane may have to face Miller alone, as well as the rest of Miller's gang, who are waiting for him at the station.



The poster for *High Noon*, 1952

It was one of Grace Kelly's first films. As you can see from the poster above, she is neither named nor pictured. *IMBD* notes that Stanley Kramer, the film's producer, cast Kelly after seeing her in an off-Broadway play. He met with her and signed her on the spot.

Kelly was not happy with her performance: she felt that she was "too stiff and wooden as Amy Kane". On the other hand, Fred Zinnemann, the director, considered her inexperience ideal for the role, which wasn't very substantial to begin with. Zinnemann was quoted as saying: "[Kelly] at the time wasn't equipped to do very much. She was very wooden, which fit perfectly, and her lack of experience and sort of gauche behavior was to me very touching, to see this prim Easterner in the wilds of the Burbank Columbia back lot. It worked very well."

What is the process by which plants form – carbohydrates? – when they are exposed to light? The article, "[Overview of Photosynthesis](#)" from BCcampus OpenEd, provides this answer to the question: "Through photosynthesis, certain organisms convert solar energy (sunlight) into chemical energy, which is then used to build carbohydrate molecules".

The one with the ears: Frank, Nunzio, Emma and Aida all know exactly who they are talking about then they say, "the one with the ears", but the path to actually giving him a name takes almost two pages of dialogue. Eventually, they arrive at Clark Gable, a feat of collaborative brain architecture connectivity if there ever was one.

Early in his career and before PR agents got smart and stopped taking full-front publicity shots of Clark Gable like the one below, the very handsome actor was known for his prominent ears. By 1932, his ears took a backseat to his popularity on screen – he had become a cinematic legend. An A-lister and top moneymaker for the studios, he reigned as “The King of Hollywood” until his death in 1960. Known for many stellar films, including *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Gone with the Wind* (1939), and *Mogambo* (1953). He was not known, however, for *High Noon*. He didn’t star with Grace Kelly – Gary Cooper did.



Clark Gable in his early twenties

Clark Gable’s final film was *The Misfits*, released in 1961. It was written by playwright Arthur Miller for Marilyn Monroe, his wife at the time of filming. It would be Monroe’s last film as well. (Compiled from “[Clark Gable: Biography](#)”, *IMDB.com* and staying up as a teenager watching old B/W movies into the wee hours of the morning.)

Didn’t Humphrey Bogart have ears? Humphrey Bogart (1899-1957) was a beloved, iconic American film and stage actor. A century after his birth, his performances in classical Hollywood cinema earned him the #1 spot among the 25 male actors in the [American Film Institute’s \(AFI’s\) 50 Greatest American Screen Legends](#).

Bogie, as he was popularly called, did indeed have ears. The actor famously played the hard-nosed private eye, Philip Marlowe, the main character in *The Big Sleep*, which had its premiere on August 23, 1946. Marlowe’s habit of tugging his right earlobe while in deep thought – a gesture that prompts Aida’s question – was a nervous tic of Bogart’s that he incorporated into his performance (“[Bogart in The Big Sleep: Chalkstripe Flannel Double-Breasted Suit](#)”).



Bogie as Marlowe tugging his ear in *The Big Sleep*, 1946

– **he dated Lana Turner:** After the public made *Honky Tonk* its most financially successful film of 1941 ([Wikipedia](#)), MGM recognized that “Clark Gable is to Lana Turner as flint is to steel” (“[‘Somewhere I’ll Find You,’ With Clark Gable and Lana Turner](#)”, *NYTimes.com*, August 28, 1942). The studio set out to make several more films with the duo. It was reported in January 1942 that when Clark Gable and Lana Turner were making the movie, *Somewhere I’ll Find You*, they began an affair (“[Old Hollywood’s Worst Romances](#)”, *Factinate.Com*). At the time, Carole Lombard, Gable’s wife of three years, was in her home state of Indiana, touring in a bond drive to support the war effort. The US had just entered WWII, and Howard Dietz, the publicity director of the MGM film studio, recruited Lombard for the early January tour. Gable remained in Los Angeles to begin filming with Turner.

Considering it unsafe and unreliable, especially in the Midwest during the harsh winter, Dietz advised Lombard to avoid airplane travel. She did most of the trip by train, stopping at various locations on the way to Indianapolis and raising some \$2 million, equivalent to \$35,035,100 today. Lombard did not take Dietz’s advice for her trip home, however. Having read the rumors of her husband’s affair, she decided to take the faster route to Los Angeles and fly home. Shortly after takeoff, the plane veered off course. The article, “[This Day in History, January 16: Actress Carole Lombard Killed in Plane Crash](#)”, reports, “Warning beacons that might have helped guide the pilot had been blacked out because of fears about

Japanese bombers, and the plane smashed into a cliff near the top of Potosi Mountain [close to Las Vegas]”.



Movie Poster for *Somewhere I'll Find You*, August 1942

Lombard perished and Gable was inconsolable.

Shocked and grief-stricken, Gable flew to Vegas and demanded to see the wreckage himself. He turned to drink, lost nearly 30 pounds, and struggled to finish *Somewhere I'll Find You* [the movie he had been working on]. That summer, he enrolled in the Air Force, telling friends he didn't care if he died, and flew several missions, earning decorations.

Gable would appear in another 27 films and would go on to have famous affairs (with Joan Crawford and Grace Kelly, among others) and would remarry twice more, to Sylvia Ashley and Kay Williams. But after his death in 1960, Clark Gable was buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery, in Glendale, California, alongside the greatest love of his life: Carole Lombard Gable. (TheVintageNews.Com)

Jimmy Stewart didn't date Lana Turner: Oh yes he did, Nunzio, if you are willing to believe the record of his rather prodigious dating history compiled by Who's Dated Who. Another iconic actor from classic film, Jimmy (James) Stewart made one film with Lana Turner, *Ziegfeld Girl*, a musical that was released in 1941. He and Ms. Turner were sweethearts for only three months, from November 1940 to February 1941. *Who's Dated Who* provides the short biographies of Stewart and Turner on the following page. Oh, and FYI, *Who's Dated Who* is grammatically incorrect. It should be called "Who's Dated Whom", "whom" being the objective case of who, and an object of the verb "dated", i.e., receiving the

action. Just sayin’.

American Actress Lana Turner was born Julia Jean Mildred Frances Turner on 8th February, 1921 in Wallace, Idaho, USA and passed away on 29th Jun 1995 Century City, California, USA aged 74. She is most remembered for *The Bad and the Beautiful*, and *Imitation of Life*.

American Actor James Stewart was born James Maitland Stewart on 20th May, 1908 in Indiana, Pennsylvania, USA and passed away on 2nd Jul 1997 Beverly Hills, California, USA aged 89. He is most remembered for *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

The bios fail to mention Turner’s memorable performance in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* in 1946, which established her as a serious dramatic actress, or Stewart’s turn in *It’s a Wonderful Life*, which also opened in 1946.



Lana Turner and Jimmy Stewart on the set of *Ziegfeld Girls* in 1940-41

Turner is the stuff of legend; the renown “sweater girl,” so named in the mid-thirties. Anne Helen Petersen sheds some light on the origins of the sobriquet in her article “[Scandals of Classic Hollywood: Lana Turner, Sweater Girl Gone Bad](#)”, which was written for *The Hairpin* on June 24, 2011:

As her publicity team sold it, an agent spotted her sitting at Schwab’s Pharmacy in Los Angeles wearing a tight sweater, daintily licking an ice cream cone, and asked her if she’d like to be in pictures, to which she replied “I’ll have to ask my mother.” The story was a fiction—in actuality, Hollywood Reporter editor Willie Wilkerson spotted her at the downmarket Top Hat Cafe, where she was skipping school and probably eating a chicken fried steak.

The story, however fabricated, offered the promise of stardom, and precipitated a massive

descent upon Schwab's Pharmacy of young hopefuls, clad in tight sweaters.

Jimmy Stewart was married to the woman with the hair ... Jimmy Stewart was married to the woman with the hair with the face: Jimmy Stewart was a notorious Hollywood player, but he married only once. His wife, Gloria, preceded him in death by three years.



Jimmy and Gloria Stewart, 1949

The article, "[Classic Hollywood: Classic Couples: James & Gloria Stewart](#)" has this to say about Jimmy Stewart's marriage to Gloria:

Jimmy Stewart was married for 44 years to his one and only wife Gloria – a woman with movie star looks, but without movie star ambitions, which was fine by her husband. After landing in Hollywood in 1934, Jimmy had spent the next 15 years dating puh-lenty of beauties: Ginger Rogers, Marlene Dietrich, Norma Shearer, Olivia de Havilland, Loretta Young, Lana Turner. Rumor has it he even proposed to a few of them, yet retained his title as "The Great American Bachelor" – a label pinned on him by the press – during the peak of his popularity.

... In a town where illicit affairs are an occupational hazard, there was never a whiff

of scandal about their relationship, which ended with Gloria's death in 1994, just after Valentine's Day.

By all accounts, Jimmy was lost without her. Retreating from public life, he secluded himself at home, and in December of 1996, reportedly opted not to replace the battery in his pacemaker, preferring to let nature take its course.

On July 2, 1997, with his children gathered around him, Jimmy said goodbye, telling them, "I'm going to be with Gloria now."

EMMA. No, that wacky guy with the nose was married to the woman with the hair.

NUNZIO. No, that was the other woman with the hair. Jimmy Stewart was married to the woman with the hair with the face.

EMMA. Didn't the woman with the face marry that guy with the face?

NUNZIO. No, that was the guy with the feet.



Jimmy Durante, left, and Danny Thomas compare schnozzes on *The Danny Thomas Show*, ca 1950s

Okay, I am utterly lost here. **That wacky guy with the nose** could be comedian and singer Jimmy Durante (1893-1980), nicknamed "The Schnozzola," an Italian take on the Yiddish word, schnoz, meaning "big nose". However, he was in two long-term marriages with women who were not in the industry. He never divorced: his first wife died of heart disease after they were married for 22 years, and he was married to his second wife for 20 years until his own death. (["Jimmy Durante"](#), IMDB.com)

The actor, producer and comedian Danny Thomas was also known during that time for his nose. He had a 55-year marriage that lasted his lifetime. Both men are pictured above in a scene from *The Danny Thomas Show*, which ran from 1953-1964. ([Wikipedia.Com](#))

The **woman with the hair** might be [Rita Hayworth](#) from *Gilda*, where she famously tosses back her hair in a scene replayed years later in the film *Shawshank Redemption*; or [Veronica Lake](#), known for her cascading blonde locks; or [Dorothy Lamour](#); or even [Lana Turner](#).



Veronica Lake



Rita Hayworth as Gilda



Dorothy Lamour



Lana Turner

However, none were married to men who remotely fit the description of a **wacky guy with a nose, that guy with the face, or the guy with the feet**. The latter was not possible to verify because, well, where would I find photos of celebrities' feet unless they belong to Michael Jordan?

EMMA. Then who dated Lana Turner?

NUNZIO. That gangster she killed- uh, somebody somebody.

EMMA. No, her daughter killed the gangster with the butcher knife.

NUNZIO. Yes, the daughter with the butcher knife!

Another "true Hollywood story", this one involves Lana Turner's affair with Johnny

Stompanato, whom she began seeing after her divorce from her fifth husband. She soon wanted him out of her life after he subjected her and her 14-year-old daughter, Cheryl Crane, to his violent rage and threats.



Turner, Stompanato and Crane on an airstrip in 1958

The following is excerpted from [“The Sensational Murder of Johnny Stompanato, The LA Mobster Stabbed to Death by Lana Turner’s Daughter”](#) by Morgan Dunn, edited by Leah Silverman, published June 22, 2020 and updated February 23, 2022:

According to court proceedings, Turner planned to cut Stompanato off for good on the night of April 4 and warned Crane that the evening would be a tough one. Stompanato came over to their house only to have Turner allegedly tell him: “Tonight, mister, I’m giving you your walking papers. I’m through with you. It’s over!”

At this, Stompanato flew into a rage, threatened to murder Turner along with her mother and Cheryl Crane, who overheard the fight from her upstairs bedroom. In the official courtroom account, a terrified Crane ran downstairs to the kitchen, grabbed a butcher’s knife, and crept to her mother’s bedroom door. Opening the door, she mistook a clothes hanger in Stompanato’s hand for a gun and impulsively stepped forward and plunged the knife between his ribs. Johnny Stompanato was dead within minutes.

The *Los Angeles Times* summarized the court proceedings 57 years later in the article, [“In a 1958 inquest, killing of Lana Turner’s boyfriend was detailed”](#). Doug Smith, the writer, reported, “After hearing [Lana] Turner’s testimony, a 12-member coroner’s jury quickly

reached a unanimous verdict of justifiable homicide”.

"What author was appointed U.S. ambassador to Spain in 1842?" ... When you and that Mario Perillo dragged me to Spain, they had this little statue about this guy:

Washington Irving (1783-1859) was an American writer who has been called the “first American man of letters.” He is best known for the short stories “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle.” (Britannica.Com)

Irving was made ambassador to Spain by President Tyler in 1842 after having endeared himself to the Spanish people. Tracy Hoffman, in her September 5, 2018 article “[Why Does Spain Love Washington Irving?](http://WashingtonIrvingSociety.Com)” for WashingtonIrvingSociety.Com, tells us how:

First of all, the apparent love for Irving, in part, can be traced back to his role as ambassador to Spain from 1842-1846. In fact, Madrid was under siege when Irving was living there.

Secondly, Irving was fluent in Spanish, and even did some translation work from Spanish to English. His writing has been readily translated into Spanish. I’m often reminded of Rip Van Winkle being called “Rip Rip” in the Spanish translation.

...

Thirdly, after publishing The Sketch Book, Irving spent some quality time in Spain in the 1830s. He published various texts based on his experiences there—The Alhambra, The Conquest of Granada, and a biography of Christopher Columbus. Years later, he would also publish the biography of the prophet Muhammad, from research he had gathered in Spain during the 1830s.

From [Alahambra Y General Life](#):

[Irving] is considered the first American Hispanist and ambassador of the romantic vision given to the Alhambra by the 19th century travellers. Irving managed to lodge in the palatine city for some time, and was fascinated by a decadent Alhambra dreamt about and with a glorious past impregnating every corner of the precincts. Here in this Nasrid palace his popular Tales of the Alhambra were born, formed thanks to the oral tradition of the local residents, a mixture of real and unreal, which made his writing enchant many travellers of different periods who came to Granada to live and experience his history during his stay in the palace of imagination.

There are two statues of Washington Irving in Spain. [One is in the Alhambra, in Granada](#). This can’t be the statue that Nunzio is referring to because it wasn’t inaugurated until 2009, the 150th anniversary of Irving’s death. The other statue, Monumento a Washington Irving, is a memorial in Palos de la Frontera, Huelva. Monumento a Washington Irving is pictured on the following page. It is located near the museum Museo Muelle de las Carabelas and Santa María (MapCarta.Com). I have not been able to find a date when it was installed, but since I can’t find another statue of Irving in Spain, I’m guessing it’s the right one.



Foodtown ... ShopRite ... Pathmark: see pp. 16-17 of this glossary.

Now what was that guy's name?

A Jewish name!

Henny Youngman ... Sid Caesar ... Milton Berle ... Shecky Green ...

Is Merv Griffin Jewish?

Merv - Mervin - Irving! That's it! That's the guy Irma was with -

The ambassador - Washington Irving.

That was the most amazing thing -

It *was* the most amazing thing. It was classic textbook team brainstorming, adhering faithfully, albeit inadvertently, to the four principles of brainstorming, which, per

MindManager.Com, are:

- Quantity over quality. Lots of ideas eventually breed quality ideas as they are refined, merged, and developed.
- Withhold criticism. Save feedback on ideas until the end of the session to avoid "blocking".
- Welcome the crazy ideas. Encourage team members to thinking outside of the box.
- Combine, refine, and improve ideas. Build on ideas and draw connections to find the right solution.

According to the article, the concept of brainstorming emerged from an advertising executive's frustration with his employees' inability to come up with new, creative ideas. Alex F. Osborne began thinking of the benefits of working as a team, which led to his development of new, group-centered methods for problem solving. In his group-thinking sessions, ideas were collected and recorded. This novel approach, which he dubbed "brainstorm sessions," led to "a significant boost in the quality and quantity of new ideas".

MindManager.Com concludes:

In summary, the core advantages of brainstorming are its ability to unlock creativity by collaboration. It's the perfect technique to use for coming together as a team and can help to generate exciting new ideas that can take your business to a new level.

Since 1939, when Osbourne first introduced the model, brainstorming has had many applications across business, education, and – as demonstrated by the grandparents – family and social life. In classrooms, desks are moved to form small circles so students can more easily exchange their ideas and solve problems cooperatively. Many theatre directors, including myself, "unlock creativity by collaboration" with designers and cast members. Nick's grandparents used a cooperative, collaborative approach to fire up one another's brain connectivity and arrive at answers. They did it naturally, based on their knowledge of one another and their interdependent relationships. Nick is smart – he probably integrated brainstorming techniques in his advertising team meetings after seeing how successfully his grandparents used it to help one another arrive at an answer. Who knows? He could owe his later promotion to vice-president to what he learned from his grandparents' interaction.

The guys with the Jewish names are:



Henny (Henry) Youngman (1906-1998) American comedian and violinist. Youngman was famous for his one-liners and his trademark catchphrase, "Take my wife...please!" ([NYTimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)) He'd draw his bow a few times over his violin, play a measure or two of melody, stop, deliver a zinger, and go back to his violin until the next one, which came up pretty quickly.



The many faces of **Sid Caesar** (1922-2014), American comedian, actor, and writer. Called the "Comedian of Comedians", he came to prominence in the early days of television. ([NYTimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com))



Milton Berle (1908 – 2002) was an American comedian and actor. As the manic host of NBC's Texaco Star Theater, in 1948 he was the first major star of US television and as such became known as Uncle Miltie and Mr. Television to millions during TV's golden age. ([Hollywood Walk of Fame](#))



Sheeky Greene, born 1926, is a US comedian-actor known as the top of Las Vegas' tuxedo-wearing, rim-shot comedians, often compared to Don Rickles and Buddy Hackett. ([JewishVirtualLibrary.org](#))

And the Irish Catholic:



Merv Griffin (1925-2007) was an American television host, singer, and media mogul. Although he began his career as a singer in the 1940s and 1950s, he is best known as a television personality and producer. He created and hosted several successful television shows, including "Jeopardy!" and "Wheel of Fortune" both of which remain popular today. Griffin also had a successful career as a media mogul, with interests in television production, real estate, and casinos. ([IMDB.com](#))

danish: On the East Coast, “danish” is used the same way “a slice” is used. Pretty much any yeast-leavened, open-faced, filled, multi-layered, buttery crust breakfast pastry is called a danish, just like a slice of cheese pizza is simply called “a slice”, as in “Gimme a slice and a Coke”. The dough of a danish is made in the same way that puff pastry is made, with slices of butter in-between the layers, which are folded and flattened at least 27 times over. The critical difference between puff pastry and danish is that the dough for a danish contains yeast. The layered butter gives the dough for both a high percentage of fat, with 30% or more fat on a weight basis for the puff pastry and a minimum of 40% for the danish. (TheCultureTrip.Com)

Danish are called wienerbrød in Denmark, as they were first made in that country in the 1840s by Austrian bakers. (VisitDenmark.Com) You won’t get a danish in Denmark if you ask for a danish. It’s like the famous Henny Youngman one-liner, “When God sneezed I didn’t know what to say”.

Danish in the US are typically topped with fruit or sweetened cream cheese prior to baking. They are often finished with drizzles of white icing as seen in the photo below.



When I was a little boy, every Christmas morning, on the cobblestones in town, there would appear this - this sea of vendors - their carts covered with toys - and what I remember most, is the colors - bright reds and blues and oranges - like a rainbow of toys.



A little boy looking at a Christmas shop window display in Rome, 1957

I was unable to find anything about Christmas markets/Christmas morning bazaars/pushcarts with toys in Italian fishing villages in the early to mid-twentieth century. However, I did find the photo above as your consolation prize.

Theresa: My guess is that Nick's new girlfriend, Theresa, is another Italian Catholic. Theresa is of Italian, Spanish, Greek, and Portuguese origin and means "to harvest" or "the delectable harvest". It was a popular name in the mid-20th century. (NameBerry.Com) It's spelled without the "h", but not in Italian families, where you will inevitably see it spelled "Theresa". My maternal grandmother was Theresa, as was my mother. My sister is also Theresa.