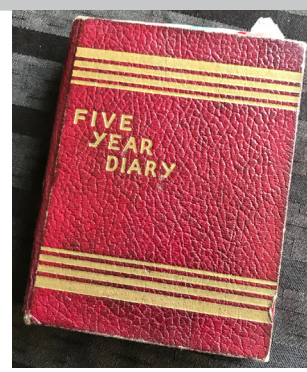


SIX NAPLES, POMPEII, CAPRI, FLORENCE & ROME; FINALLY, MEETING CESCO



May 31 – June 7, 1953

[A summary: Irene, Louise and Erna leave the SS Saturnia for the last time, landing in Naples. They explore Naples with Aprile, the waiter from the ship. They travel by bus to Pompeii, Capri, including a drive on the Amalfi autostrada — “The most picturesque drive in the world,” she writes — and then on to Rome after “reluctantly” saying goodbye to a young man named Paul. They are blessed, along with 6,000 others, by Pope Pious XII, explore the Eternal City and then make their way to Assisi and Florence. Their next stop is to be Milan and then, for Irene, San Martino al Tagliamento, where her brother Francesco — Cesco for short — lives. “Am so excited & scared, I don’t know what to say to him.”]

June 8, 1953

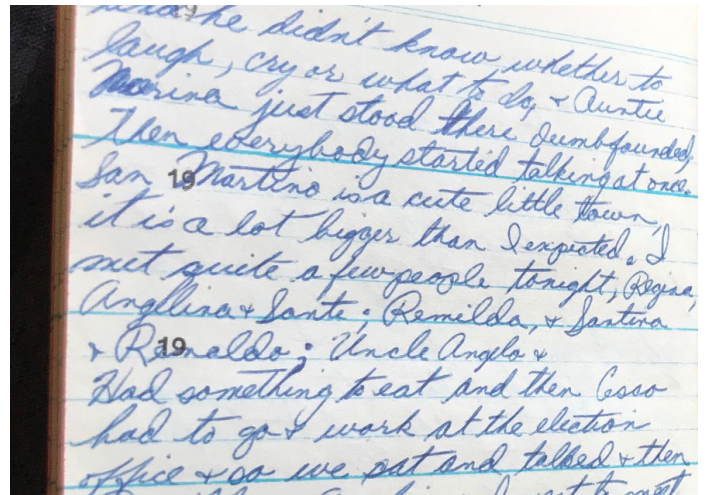
I went to change my train ticket so I wouldn’t have to go to Milan... Arrived in Casarsa at 7:30 and took a taxi to San Martino. I wasn’t expected until June 9 so they didn’t come to meet me. Cesco was very surprised, he was eating when I walked in and he didn’t know whether laugh, cry or what to do & Auntie Marina just stood there dumbfounded. Then everybody started talking at once... I met quite a few people tonight, Regina, Angelina & Sante; Remilda & Santina & Rinaldo; Uncle Angelo.

June 9, 1953

Rose at 9 this morning & had coffee brought to my bedroom. After breakfast of polenta & cafe-lat, Cesco & I started the rounds. First we went to my Nonno’s, who is 92 & blind. It really hurt inside to see him like that, but he was so happy to hear my voice that he just cried.

June 10, 1953

Got up at 8 A.M. and had breakfast and then we



went to Volusone to sell the silkworm. We went by donkey & cart, my first ride and it was fun. Cesco took me thru the silkworm factory & I saw where they roast the casing so the silkworm will die after producing. Went back & had lunch & then we went to visit Peter’s mother & brother. Came home in pouring rain and had supper & got ready to leave for Milan. Left at 9:13.

That’s it. Twenty-two years Irene has lived without one of her brothers*, she travels thousands of kilometres by bus, boat and train, and they have just two and a half days (or do they?), which are — typical of an Italian family vacation — spent visiting relatives, eating, drinking and talking at the same time. She expands on this in a long letter home. More on that in the next installment...

(* Background: Cesco was sick as a child — polio or something like it, nobody who knows is alive to ask — and his family was not immediately allowed to take him when they emigrated, so they left him with relatives to possibly join them later in Canada. He never did.)