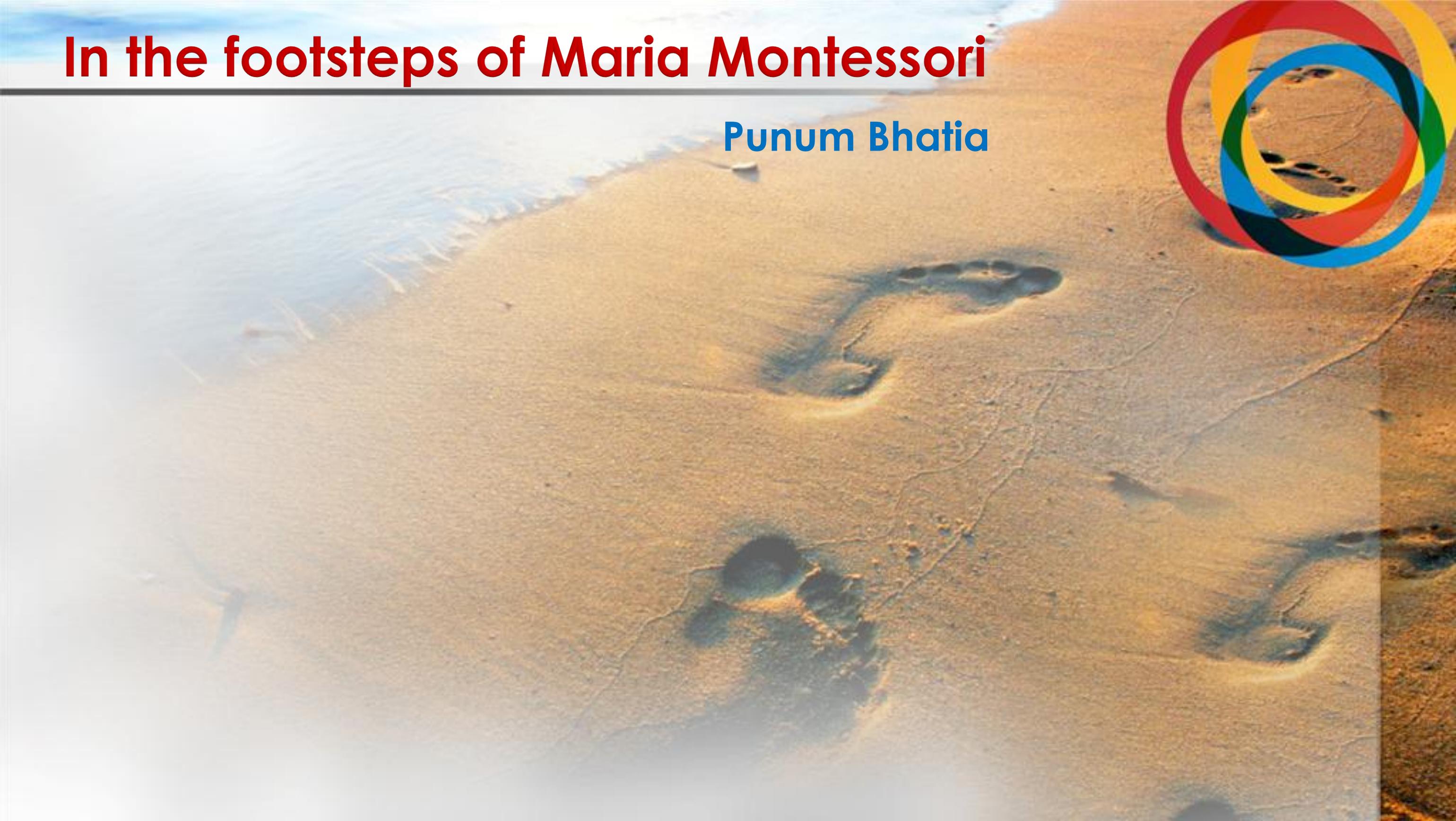


# In the footsteps of *Maria Montessori*

Punum Bhatia

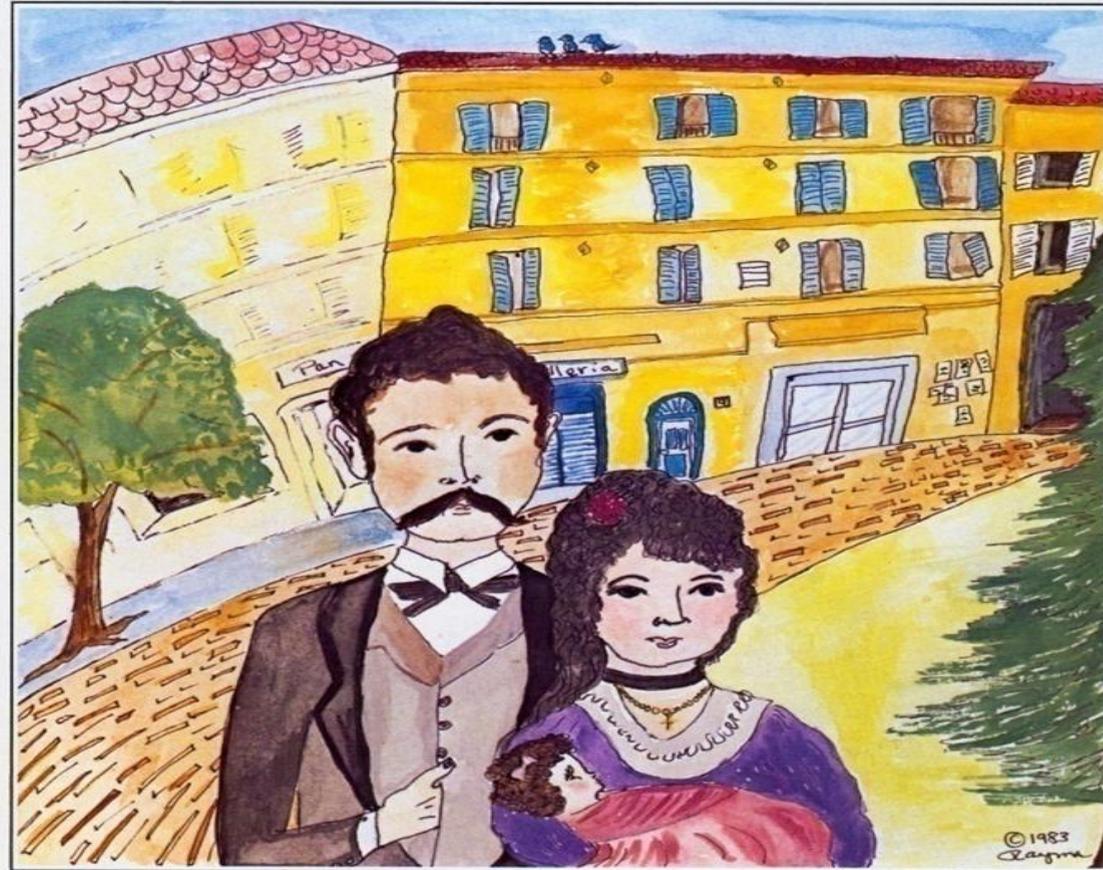


# Maria Montessori 1870 - 1952



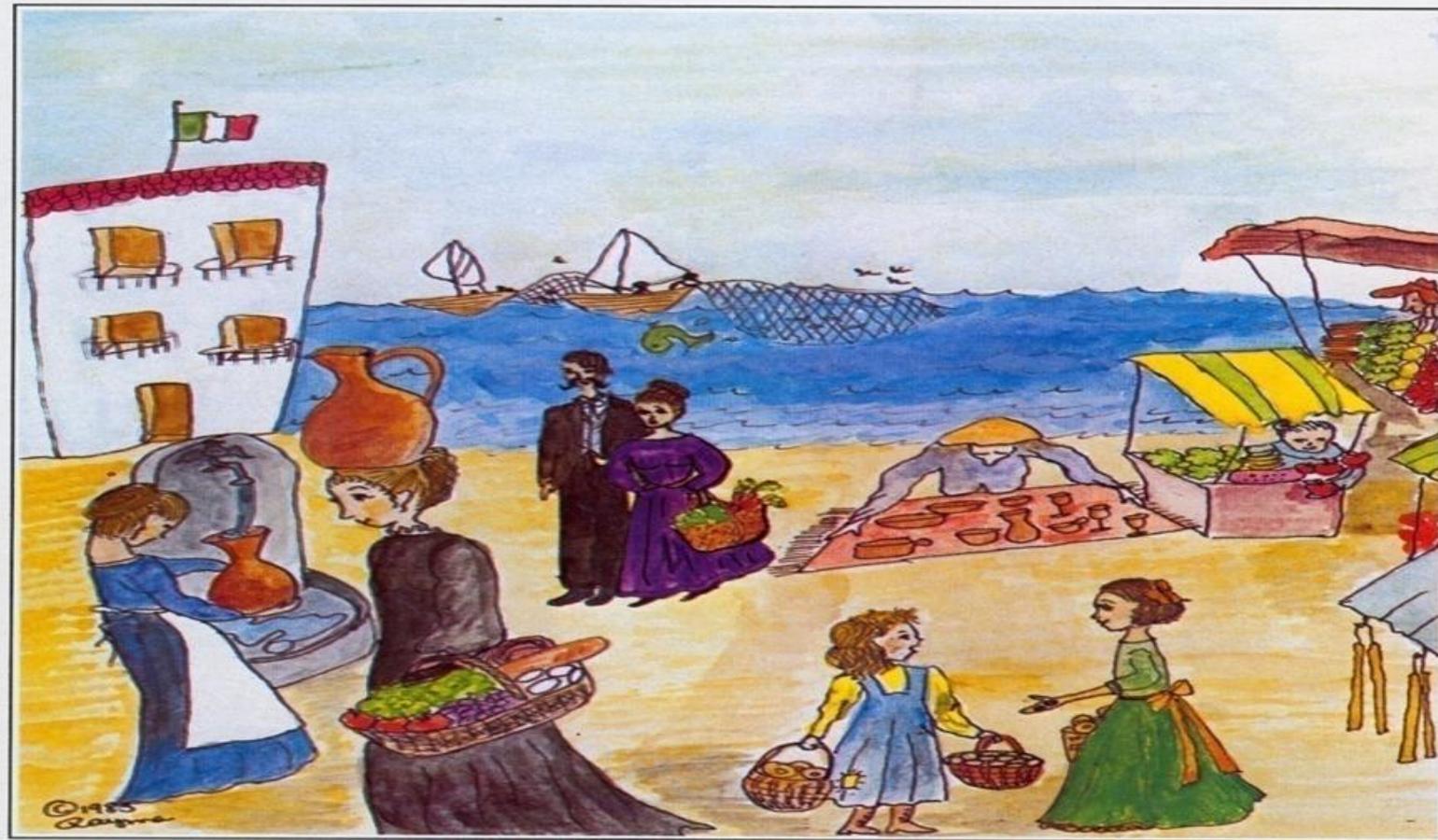
*Maria's birth and introduction to her parents*

*Nascita di Maria e presentazione dei suoi parenti*



**Maria Montessori was born on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, 1870 in the town of Chiaravalle in the province of Ancona, Italy.**

*The village of Chiaravalle and life in the 1870's*  
*Il villaggio di Chiaravalle e la vita nel 1870*

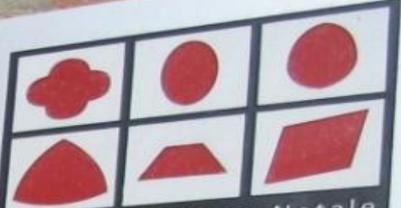


# Montessori's home in Chiaravalle



# Outside her home....



  
Centro Studi Casa Natale  
**Maria Montessori**  
Casa Natale  
Museo Montessoriano  
Biblioteca Montessoriana  
Biblioteca Pedagogica  
Studi sulla Pedagogia  
Ricerche sulla Pedagogia

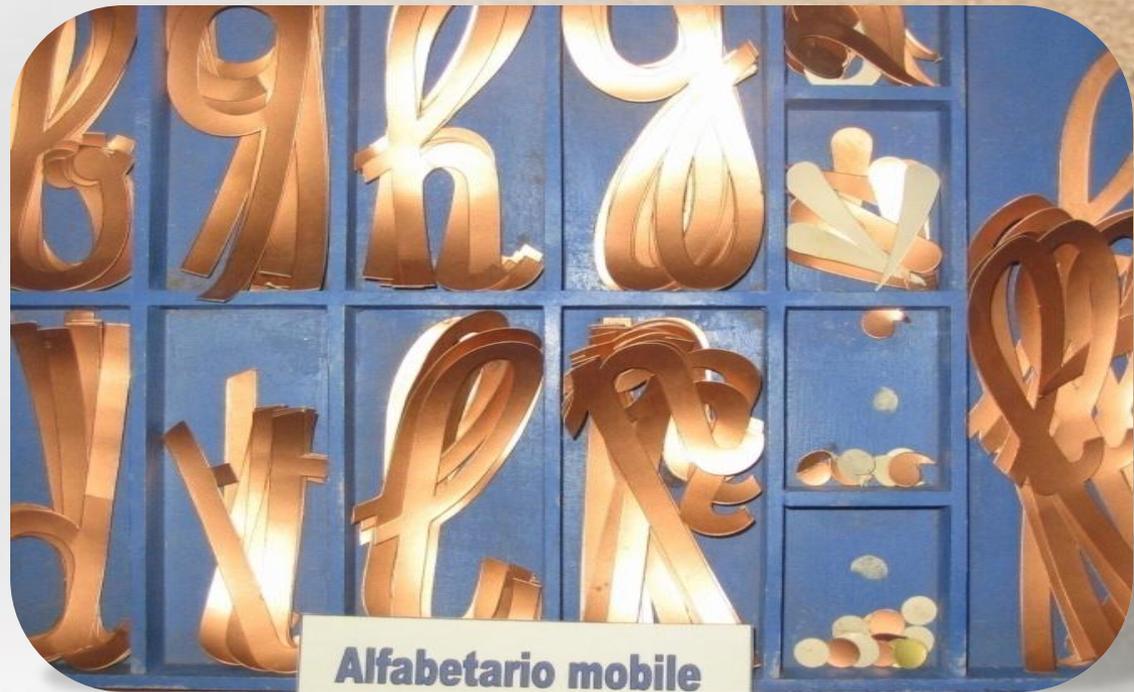
COMUNE DI CHIARAVALLE  
IL POPOLO CHIARAVALLESE  
VOLLE  
CON QUESTA LAPIDE  
RICORDARE  
LA SUA CONCITTADINA  
**MARIA MONTESSORI**  
NATA IN QUESTA CASA IL 31 AGOSTO 1870  
INSIGNE PEDAGOGISTA  
IDEATRICE DI SACCI METODI EDUCATIVI  
A MEZZO DEI QUALI  
TANTA INFANZIA DI TUTTO IL MONDO  
HA  
CELERMENTE SCHIUSO LA MENTE AL SAPERE  
CHIARAVALLE 16 SETTEMBRE 1965

**It was so exciting to be in  
Montessori's bedroom!**



Montessori's home is now a museum with photographs, original texts and materials.





1° - 3° scatola: spolet

# The town square in Chiaravalle.



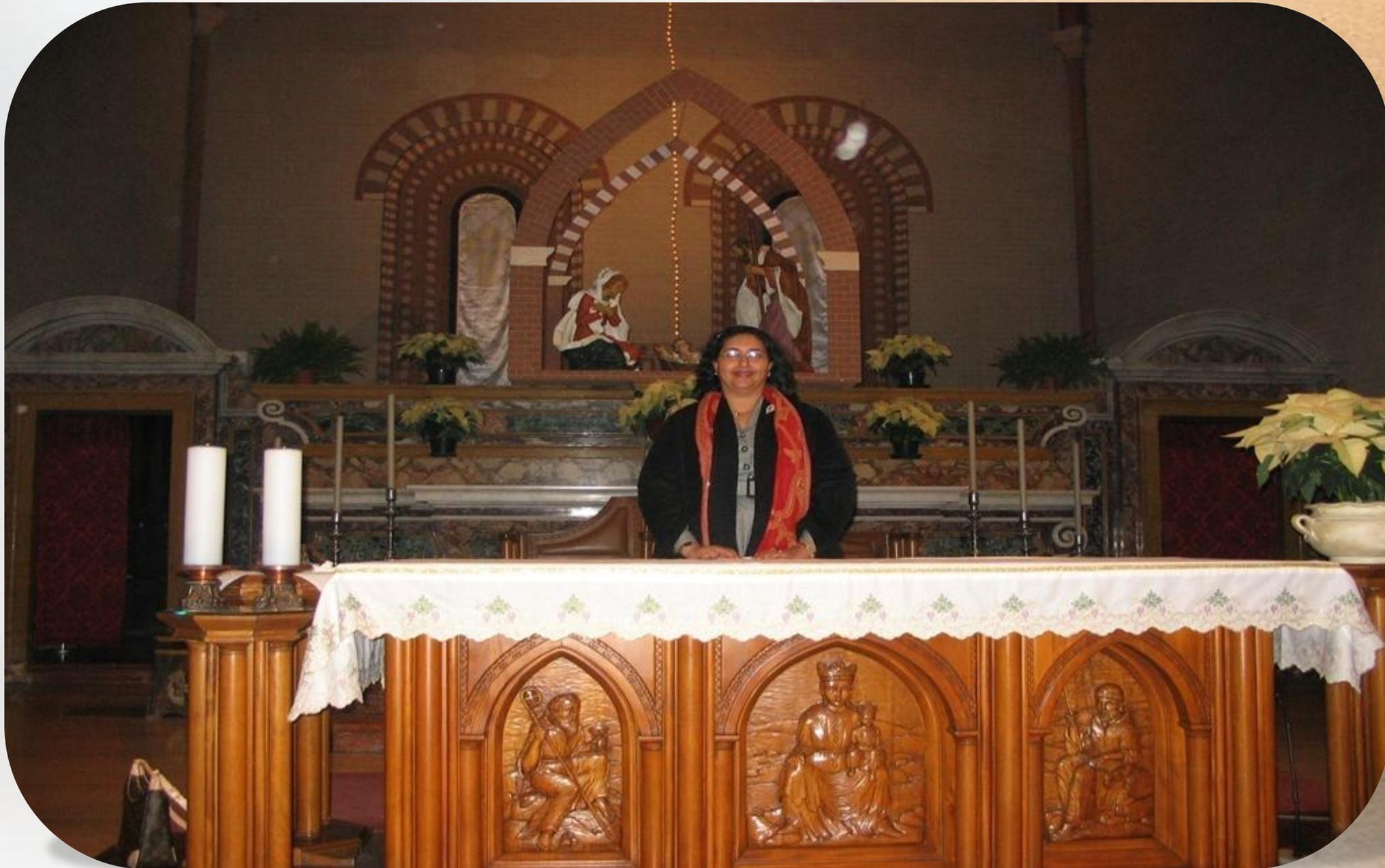




**The church where Montessori was christened.**



# Inside the church....



**And outside.....**



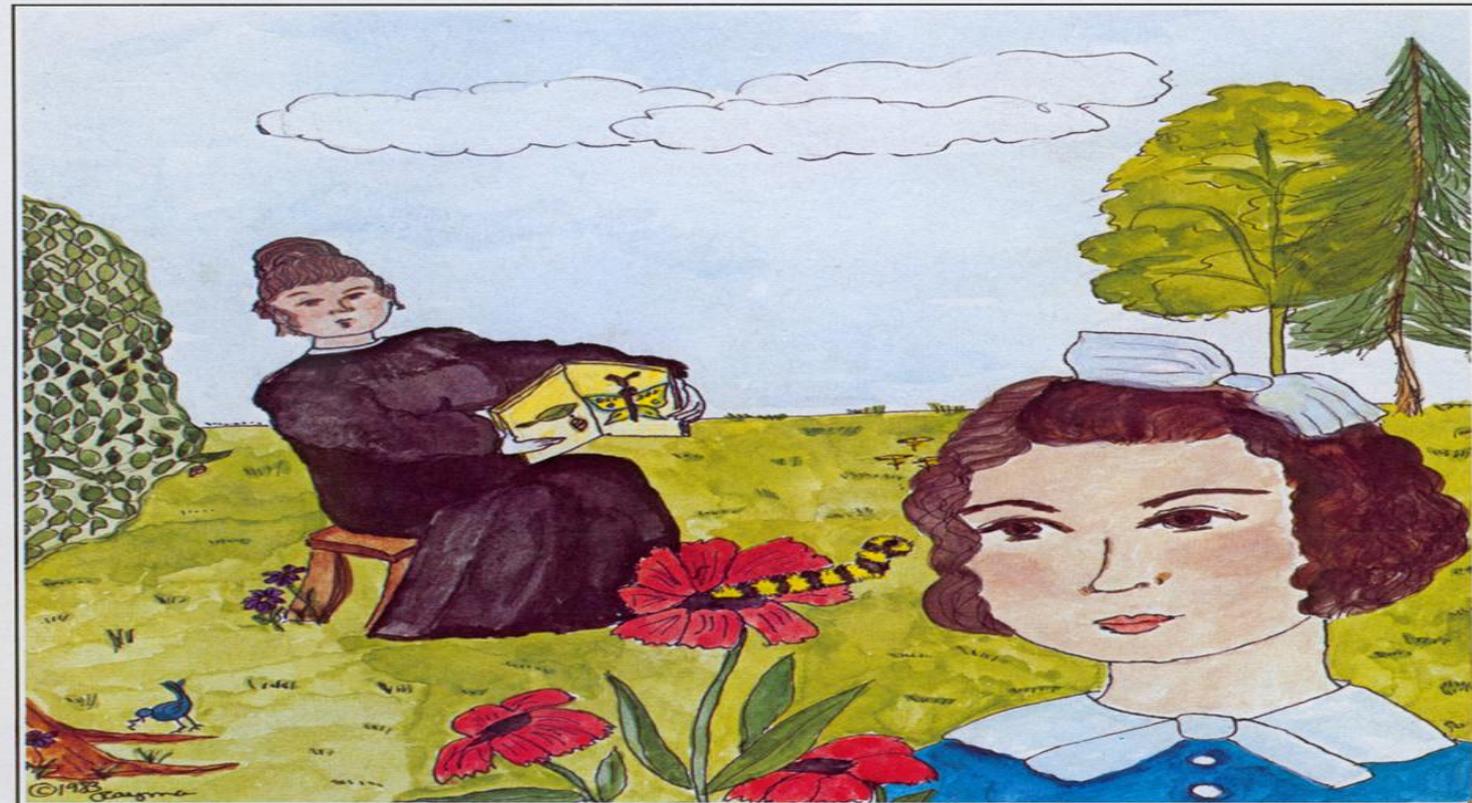
# Maria Montessori's childhood:

Maria Montessori spent her childhood in Chiaravalle. Her father, Alessandro Montessori was a “typical conservative of the old school, a military man” and her mother, Renilde Stoppani “was a lady of singular piety and charm, and between the daughter and the mother...there grew up an affection and understanding which remained unchanged through all the vicissitudes of Maria's life....”

(Standing, 1957, p. 21)

*Maria as a young girl*

*L'infanzia di Maria*



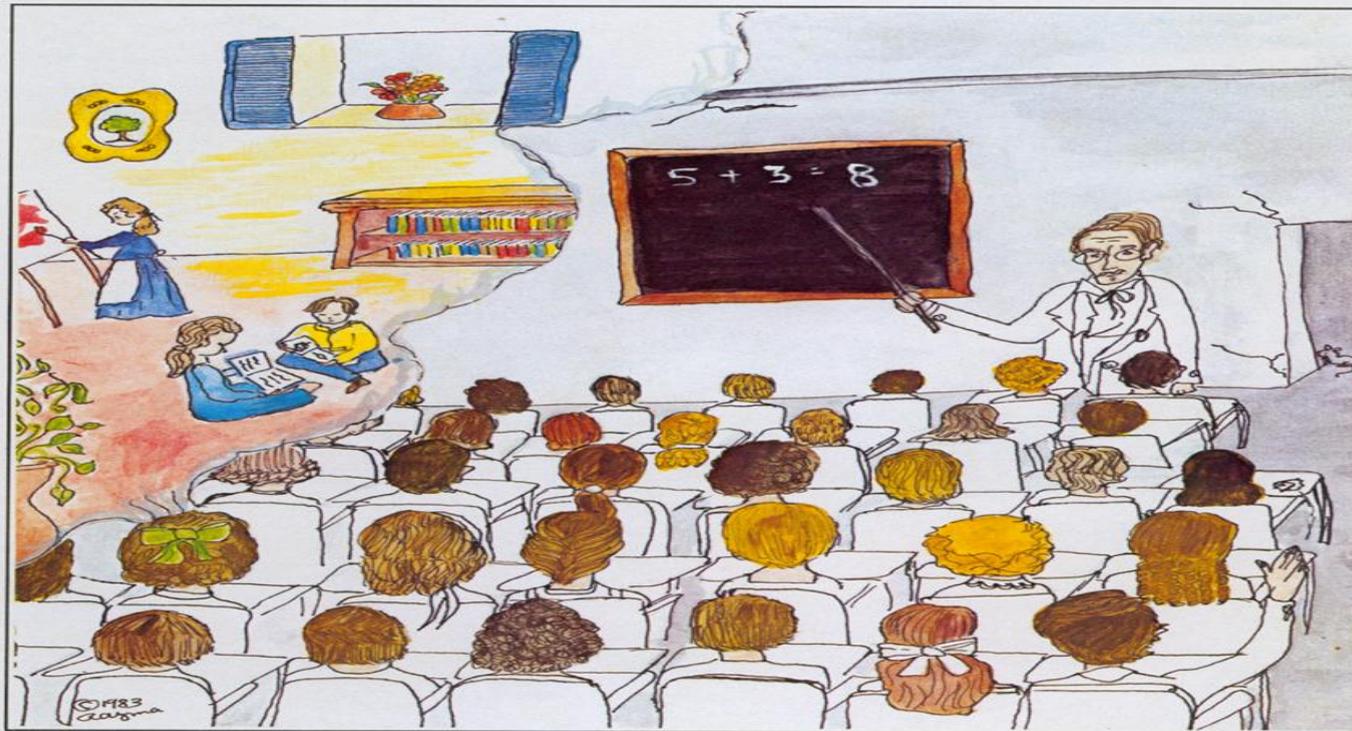


**When Maria was twelve years old the family moved to Rome so as to be able to give their only child a better education.**

# School

This is the type of education Montessori had in Rome and from which she broke away when she opened her first school. We like to call this the “boxed type of school” and Montessori believed that this was totally against the nature of children. It was like pinning butterflies onto a board, she remarked.

*Maria's first experience with school*  
*La prima esperienza di Maria con la scuola*





**At the age of 14 Montessori became very interested in mathematics and told her parents that she would like to be an engineer. The only two professions open to women at that time were teaching and nursing!**

*Life at Technical School*

*La vita nella Scuola Professionale*



**Showing an independence of spirit that characterized her throughout her life, Montessori attended a boy's technical School. There were only two girls in the school and biology became her passion.**



Out of this came a determination to become a doctor! “Unfortunately this was a case of jumping out of the frying pan into the fire.” (Standing, 1957, p. 24)

Montessori came home from school one day and told her parents she no longer wanted to be an engineer. Her parents had no time to even heave a sigh of relief when she told them she would like to be a doctor!

*Maria's decision to attend Medical School*

*La decisione di Maria di frequentare la Scuola di Medicina*



# Choosing a career – “Anything but a teacher”.

Montessori applied for a place in a medical school and was denied admission because she was a woman. “The thing was unheard of, preposterous, impossible. All the Italian Mrs. Grundys raised their hands in pious horror.” (Standing, 1957, p. 23) Montessori pursued and obtained an interview with the head of the Board of Education who told her in quite definite terms that it would be impossible for her to carry out her project. Thanking him, she remarked, “I know I shall become a Doctor of Medicine.” Battling against the racial prejudices of her time, she persisted....and was admitted to Medical School.

*Her application to Medical School and appeal to the Pope*

*La sua domanda d'iscrizione alla Scuola di Medicina e l'Appello al Papa*





**Montessori's days in *Medical school* were by no means an end to her difficulties.**

*Maria working in the laboratory at Medical School*

*Maria lavora nel laboratorio della Scuola di Medicina*



# Trials of student days



- “The men students, jealous of this intrusion into a sphere hitherto exclusively their own, subjected her to a series of petty persecutions for many months. They soon discovered, however, that she was not to be frightened away. She confronted her tormentors with such pluck that in time persecution was changed to a sort of grudging admiration.” ( Standing, 1957,p. 24)
- She confronted her difficulties with good humor, telling her fellow students who would “Pooh!” her in the corridor , “Blow away, my friends, the harder you blow, the higher up I shall go.”



- **Other difficulties included the fact that she was not allowed to dissect dead bodies in the presence of men students. This meant that she had to be in the dissecting room all by herself and often in the evening.**
- **Her determination was obvious too when during a blizzard of exceptional severity, no other students showed up to class but Montessori herself. The professor was so impressed and decided that “this zeal should not go unrewarded. So the lecture was given as usual – to an audience of one!” (Standing, 1957,p. 25)**
- **Her father strongly disapproved of her career choice but her mother continued to be her friend and supporter.**

# Maria Montessori became the first woman in Italy to take the degree of Doctor of Medicine (1896).



*Her graduation from Medical School*

*La laurea in Medicina*





IN NOME DI S. M. UMBERTO I  
PER GRAZIA DI DIO E PER VOLONTÀ DELLA NAZIONE  
**RE D'ITALIA**

*Per* Professore Commendatore Giuseppe Eugroni  
Pro-RETTORE DELLA REGIA UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI ROMA

*veduti gli studi percorsi e gli esami sostenuti dalla signora Maria Montessori,  
figlia di Alessandro, nata a Chiaravalle, provincia di Ancona.  
L'abbiamo proclamata Dottore in Medicina e Chirurgia il dì 10 luglio 1896.  
Dato in questa Regia Università degli Studi di Roma addì 29 luglio 1896.*

per IL RETTORE  
*Giuseppe Eugroni*

P. IL PRESIDE DELLA FACOLTÀ  
*Prof. Francesco Toderici*

IL DIRETTORE DELLA SEGRETERIA  
*Giuseppe...*

*N. di part. 1664 vol. 8:  
di part. 2824*

# Young doctor

Montessori was appointed Assistant Doctor at the Psychiatric Clinic in the University of Rome. Here she worked with mentally retarded children and became deeply interested in their education. She observed the children play with bread crumbs in a room devoid of anything else and came to realize that the path to intellectual development is through the hands. It became evident to her that given special educational training and methods the condition of these children could be improved. That the "hands are in direct connection with an individual's mind" (Montessori) became a major theme in her method.

*Maria as a young doctor working with retarded children in an Insane Asylum*

*Maria una giovane dottoressa che lavora con fanciulli ritardati in una casa di cura mentale*



# Major influences

Montessori was so convinced that these mentally deficient children could be helped that she travelled to London and Paris to study the work of two pioneers in this area, Jean Itard and Eduoard Seguin. She was greatly influenced by their ideas and methods.

*Maria studying Seguin and Itard*

*Maria studia Seguin ed Itard*



# 1899 - 1901

From 1899 to 1901 Montessori worked at the State Orthophrenic School and this was a period of intense activity. She trained teachers, taught the retarded children and developed and tested a variety of teaching materials. This is when most of her Sensorial Materials were developed.

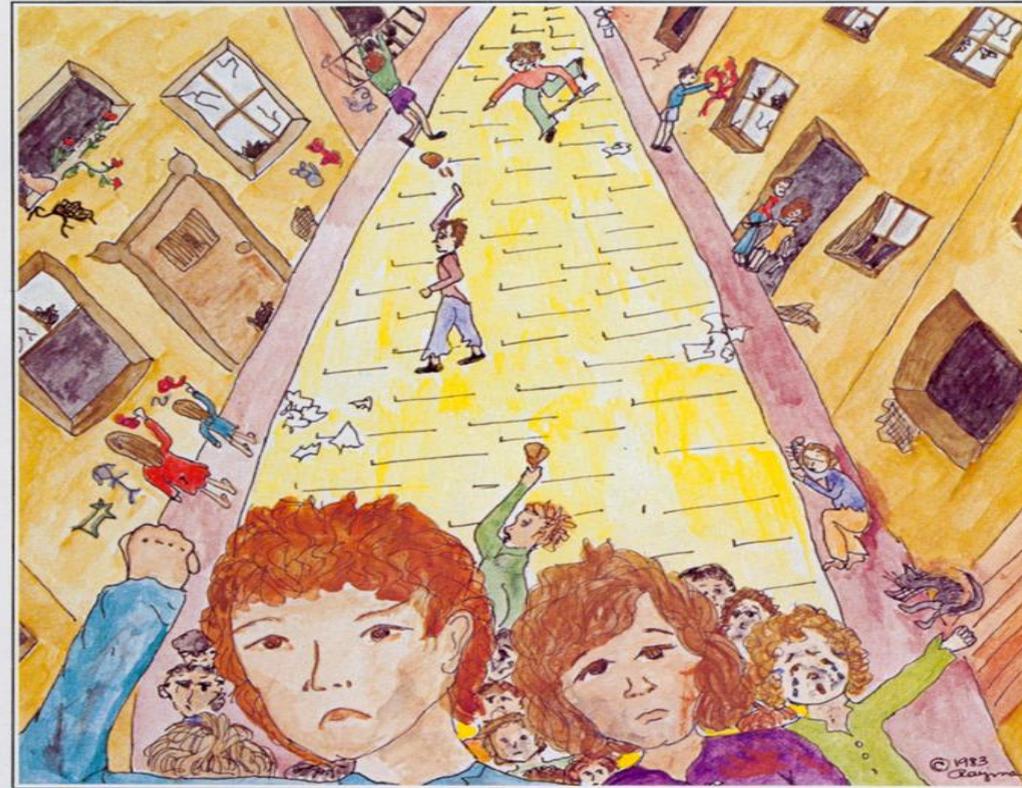
*Her introduction of sensorial materials to retarded children with striking effects  
Presentazione ai bambini ritardati dei materiali sensoriali, con effetti straordinari*





- Under her methods, a number of retarded children were successfully taught to read. Montessori wrote of her work: *“I succeeded in teaching a number of idiots from the asylums both to read and write so well that I was able to present them at a public school for examination together with the normal children. And they passed the examinations successfully.”*
- At this time Montessori became involved with a man named Dr. Montesano. She became pregnant and had a son who was called Mario. He was sent to live with a foster family in the country and although Montessori visited him she did not acknowledge him as her son until much later.

*The wild children of San Lorenzo*  
*I bambini selvaggi di San Lorenzo*



**In 1906, Montessori was asked to organize the infant schools being built in a slum clearance re-housing program in Rome.**

*The first Casa dei Bambini (Children's House)*

*La prima "Casa dei Bambini"*





**“On this opening day – it was 6<sup>th</sup> January 1906 – there came to her suddenly a mysterious intuition of the immense significance of the enterprise which was about to begin under those humble circumstances. “I had,” she says, “a strange feeling which made me announce emphatically that here was the opening of an undertaking of which the whole world would one day speak.” (Standing, p. 28)**



**The *Casa dei Bambini* continues to operate today as a school for children between the ages of 3 to 7 years old.**



Inside the classroom, the walls are adorned with children's work.









# The current teachers in the school.

















**The outdoor environment includes this little pond with gold fish!**



**Across from the building that houses the school is this building where the children eat.**







*The change in the children of San Lorenzo*

*Il cambiamento nei bambini di San Lorenzo*



# Spontaneous activity and independent learning.

In the following years, other Children's Houses were founded. In these schools Montessori was now able to apply her methods to normal children. It was soon evident that all children were capable of achieving spontaneous and independent learning.





































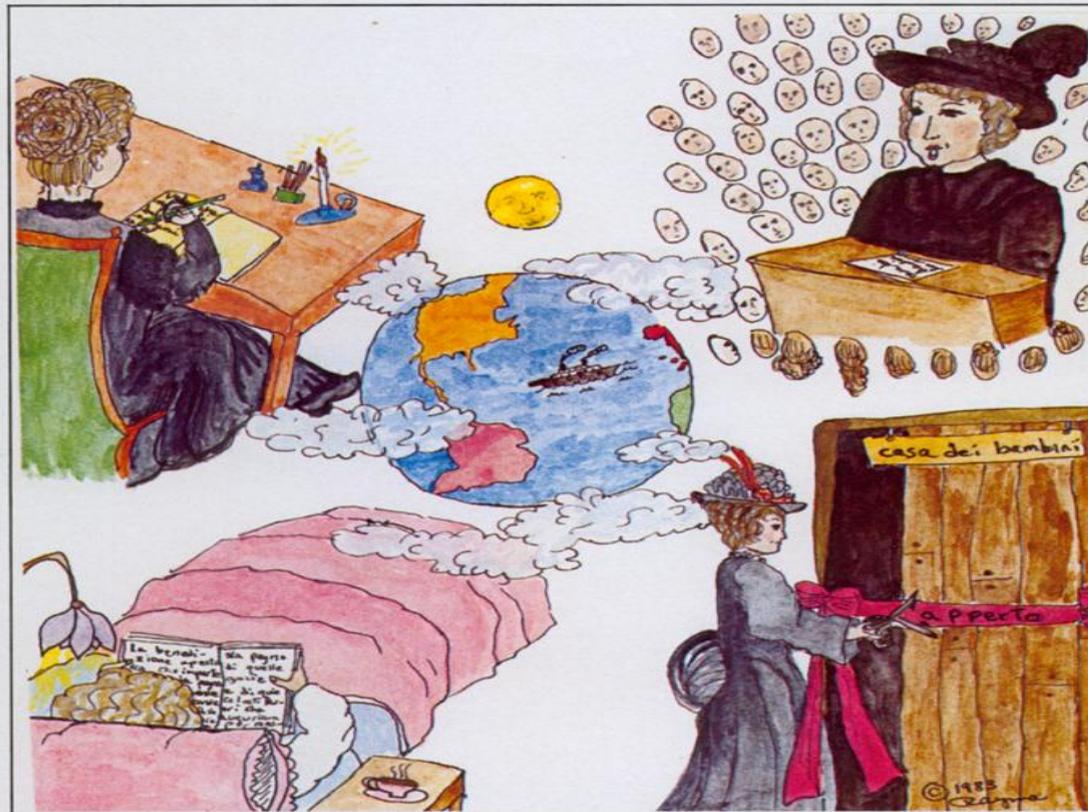






*Maria travels the world writing, lecturing, opening new Montessori Schools and studying*

*Maria viaggia per il mondo scrivendo, dando discorsi, aprendo nuove Scuole Montessori e studiando*



**Fame and recognition now came quickly to Montessori. The world's press was recording stories of how successful her methods were. In a few years she was internationally renowned.**

# Montessori's office in Amsterdam



# 1920's

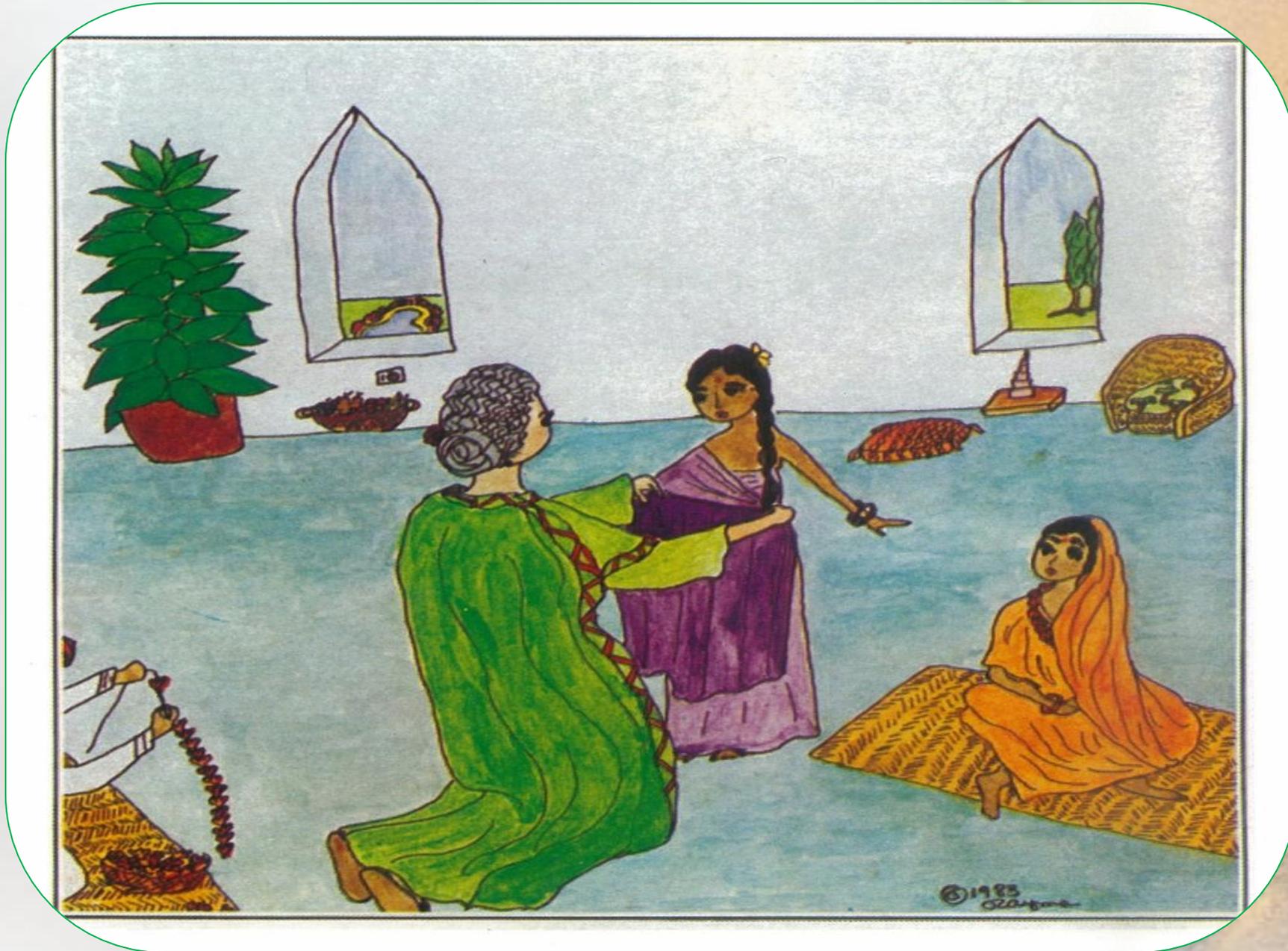
In the early 1920's, Montessori was appointed Government Inspector of Schools for Italy. She did not hold the post for long because of her disagreement with the Fascist government. She was publicly humiliated and left Italy, first for Spain and Holland and was then invited by the Theosophical Society in India. She arrived there in 1939 along with her son, Mario. The outbreak of the war prevented her return to Holland and she spent the war years in activity building up the movement. Much of the spiritual aspect of her method and the training of teachers was developed during her six years in India.

*Her return to Italy to open schools at Mussolini's invitation. World War II begins; Maria leaves Italy*

*Il suo ritorno in Italia per aprire delle scuole dopo l'invito di Mussolini. Comincia la Seconda Guerra Mondiale: Maria lascia l'Italia*



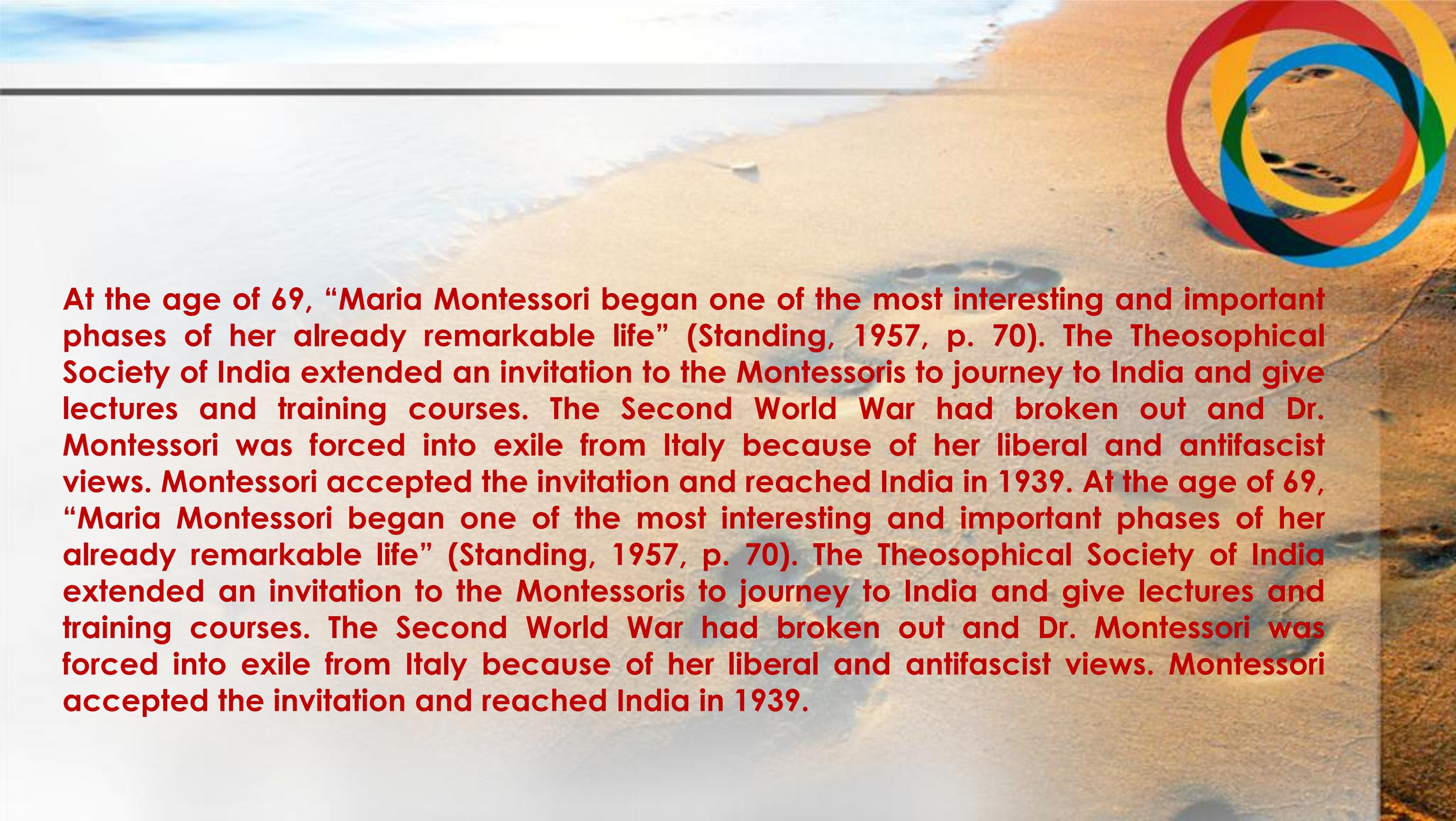
# India





Dr. George Sidney Arundale and Rukmini Devi with Dr. Montessori and Mario



The background of the slide is a photograph of a beach with waves breaking on the shore. In the top right corner, there is a colorful geometric logo consisting of several overlapping circles in red, yellow, blue, and green. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

**At the age of 69, “Maria Montessori began one of the most interesting and important phases of her already remarkable life” (Standing, 1957, p. 70). The Theosophical Society of India extended an invitation to the Montessoris to journey to India and give lectures and training courses. The Second World War had broken out and Dr. Montessori was forced into exile from Italy because of her liberal and antifascist views. Montessori accepted the invitation and reached India in 1939. At the age of 69, “Maria Montessori began one of the most interesting and important phases of her already remarkable life” (Standing, 1957, p. 70). The Theosophical Society of India extended an invitation to the Montessoris to journey to India and give lectures and training courses. The Second World War had broken out and Dr. Montessori was forced into exile from Italy because of her liberal and antifascist views. Montessori accepted the invitation and reached India in 1939.**

# Arundales

Dr. George Arundale and his wife Rukmini Devi were in fact responsible for inviting the Montessoris to India. Having heard of the great work of Dr. Montessori from Dr. Besant, the Arundales invited her to India to conduct a training course for teachers.



The Arundales with Dr. Montessori



# The Theosophical Society



# Diversity of nature and solitude...



**The 500 year old banyan tree under which Montessori held many a discourse with notable personalities.**



# Flowers for my teacher...



# Olcott Bungalow: where the Montessoris lived in Chennai.



# The grounds of the Olcott Bungalow



**This is where the first course was held.**

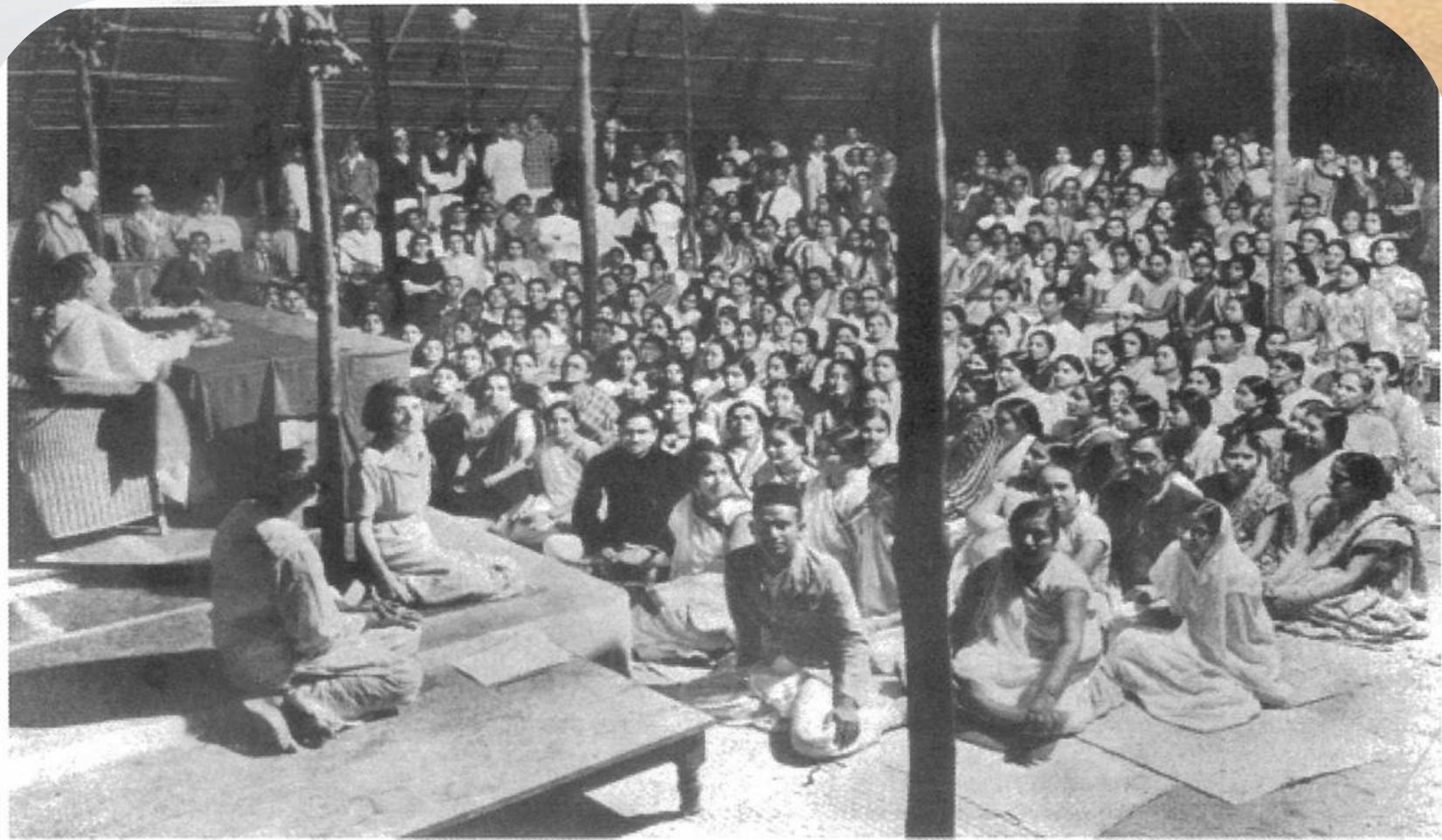




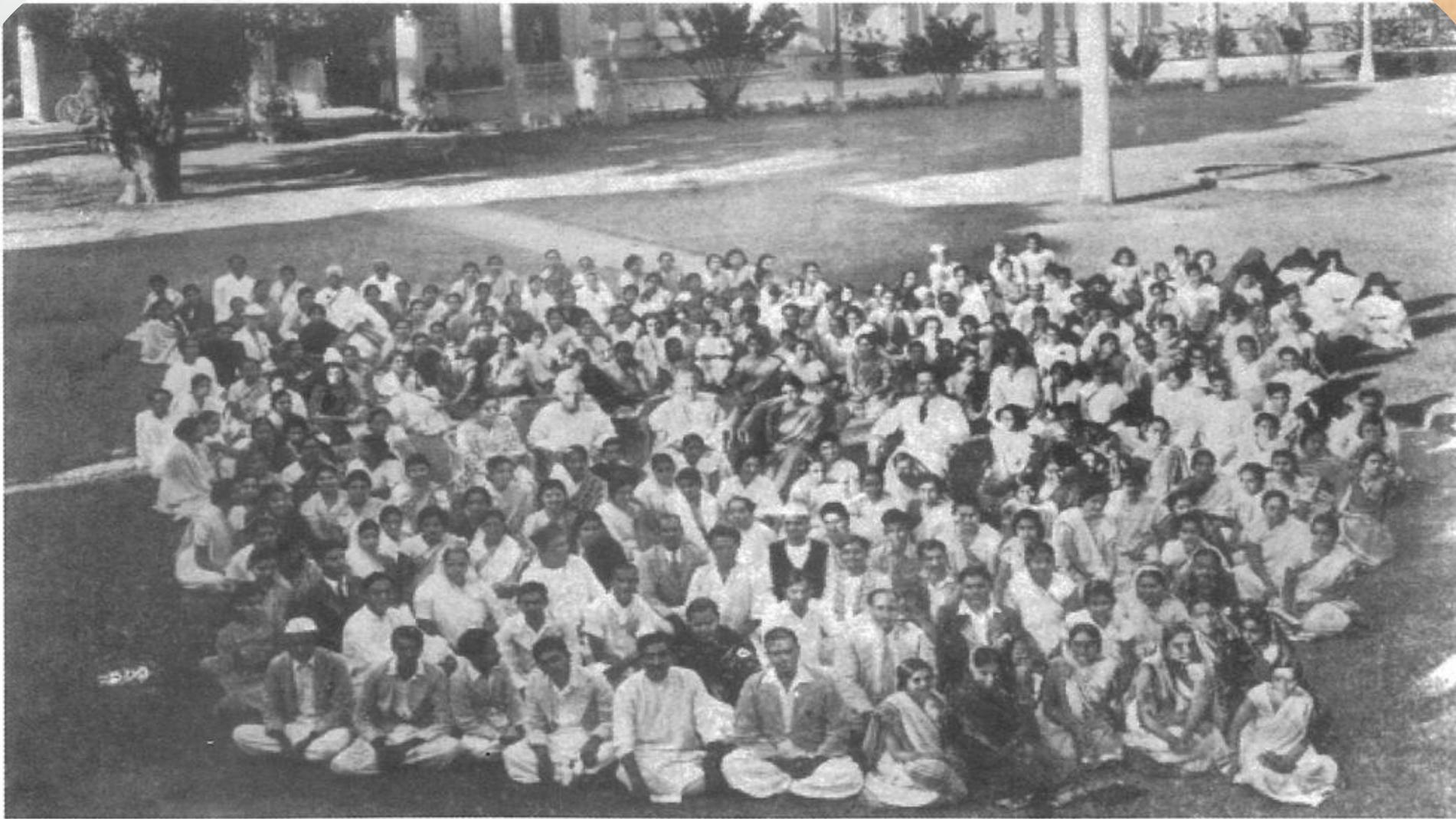
The thatched Shed were the course was held in 1939

**Since there was no building large enough to accommodate all the students, palm leaf huts were built and the largest of these served as the lecture hall.**





A view of the lecture hall where madam concluded her course



A view of the hall with all the students of the course





Maria Montessori, Senior with the course students during 1939 course

**On the ground floor of the Olcott Bungalow: this was the school and observatory for Montessori and her students.**





# Inside the Olcott Bungalow

A grand staircase leads to the first floor of the Olcott Bungalow.





# The Balcony

It is said that Maria Montessori, in a very loose-fitting full-length gown was often seen walking up and down in the open balcony of the Bungalow. What had she been thinking?



# Sitting in the same spot of the Olcott Bungalow!

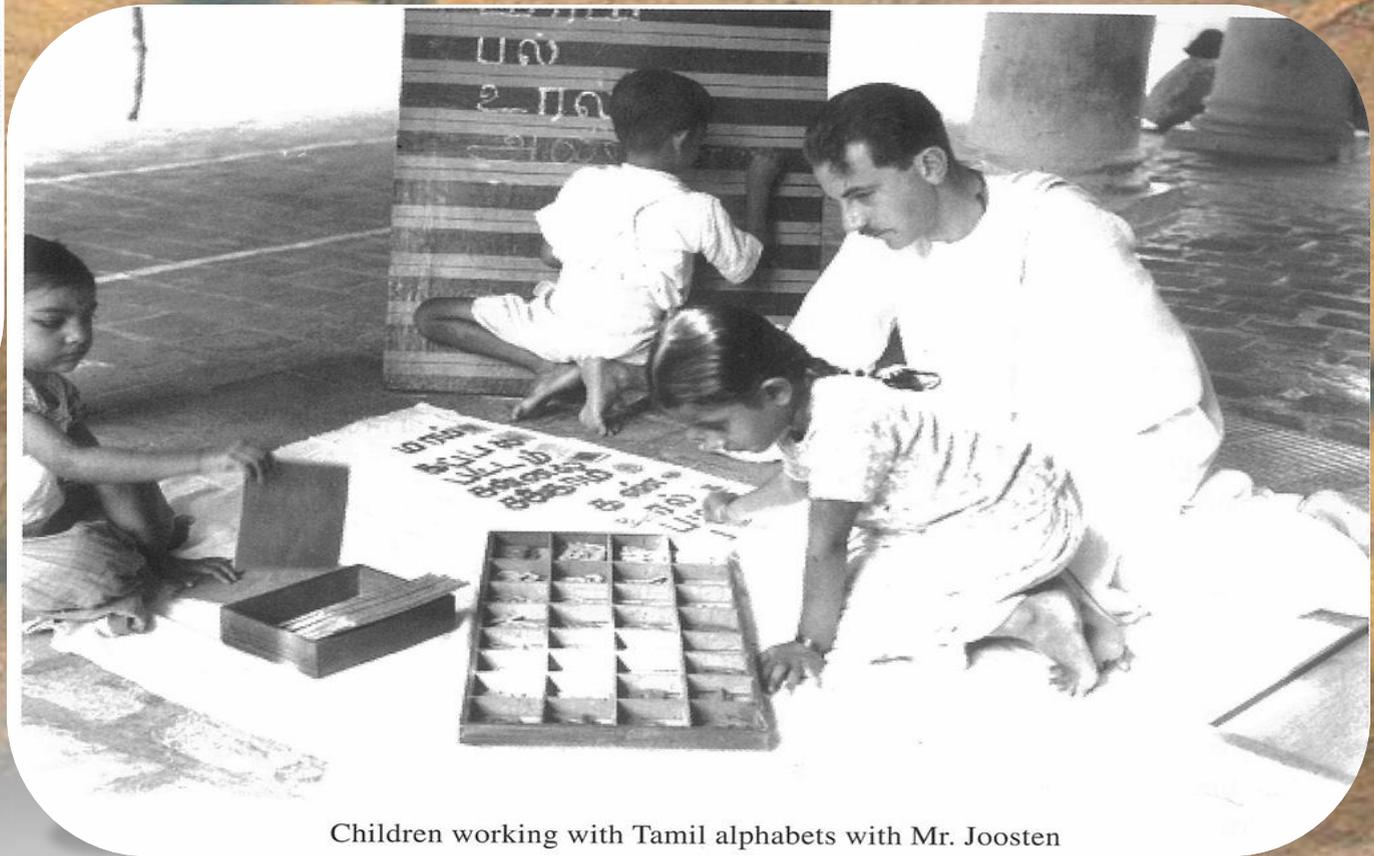


# In the observatory school at Olcott

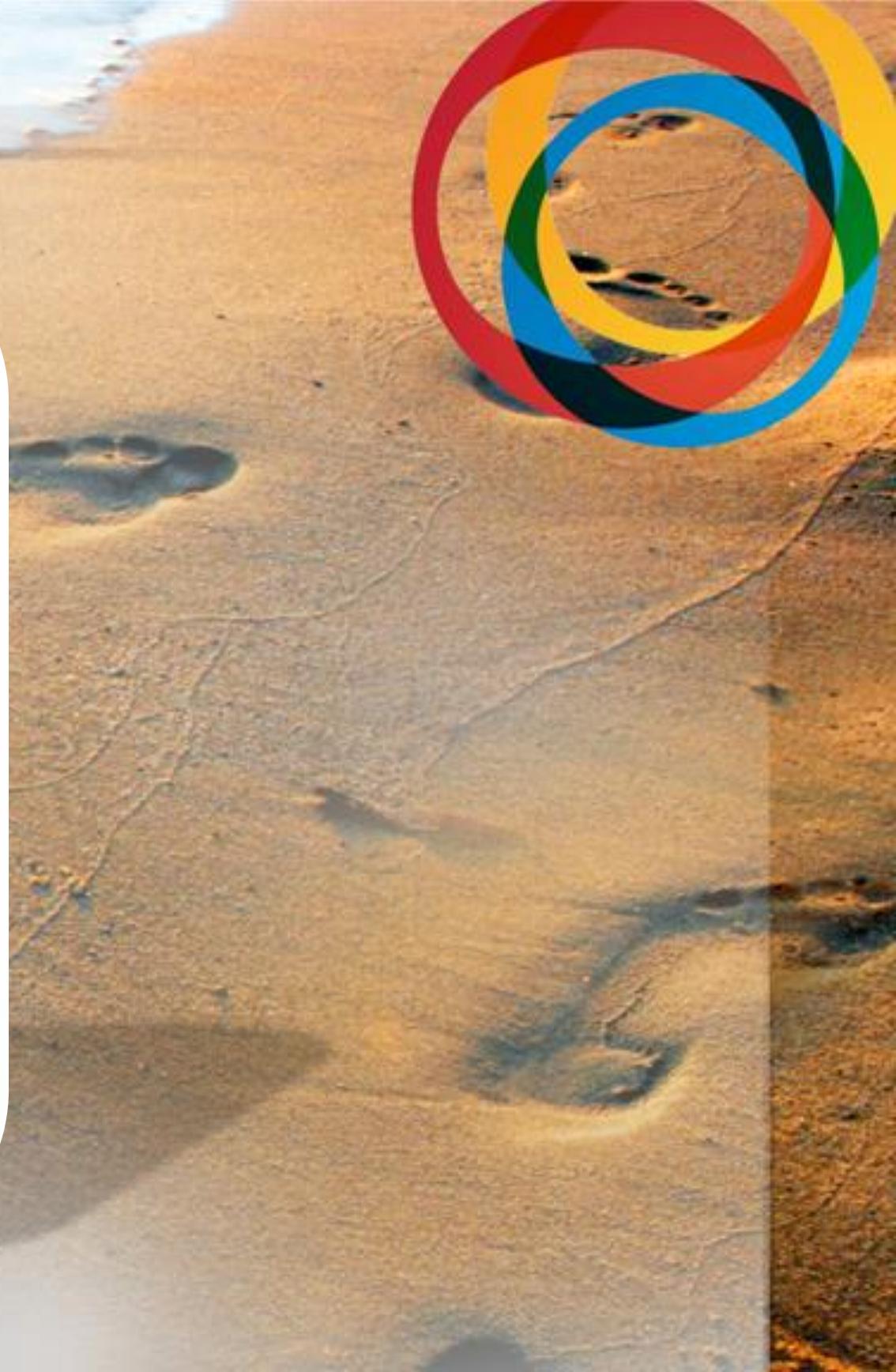


Childrens' Practical life exercise





Children working with Tamil alphabets with Mr. Joosten



# Kodaikanal Cosmic education



# 1942 - 1944

**Rose Bank : Mario Montessori had described the house they had lived in as: "We found a house which met our needs, with a minimum of stairs, a fireplace, a garden in the front, and a garden in back. The garden in the front was on the same level as the house."**



# Rose Bank, Kodaikanal where cosmic education was born.





**Mario Montessori described in an interview with David Kahn: “We had made a new discovery which was special and long-lasting, and it all came about in the hills at Kodaikanal, where practice and ideas met – and a better vision emerged.”**

**A view of the front and back of the house.**





*The war over, Maria returns to Europe and continues working until her death*

*Finita la guerra, Maria ritorna in Europa e continua a lavorare fino al giorno della sua morte*



**In 1946 Montessori returned to Europe and was honored by many countries with royal, civic and academic awards.**

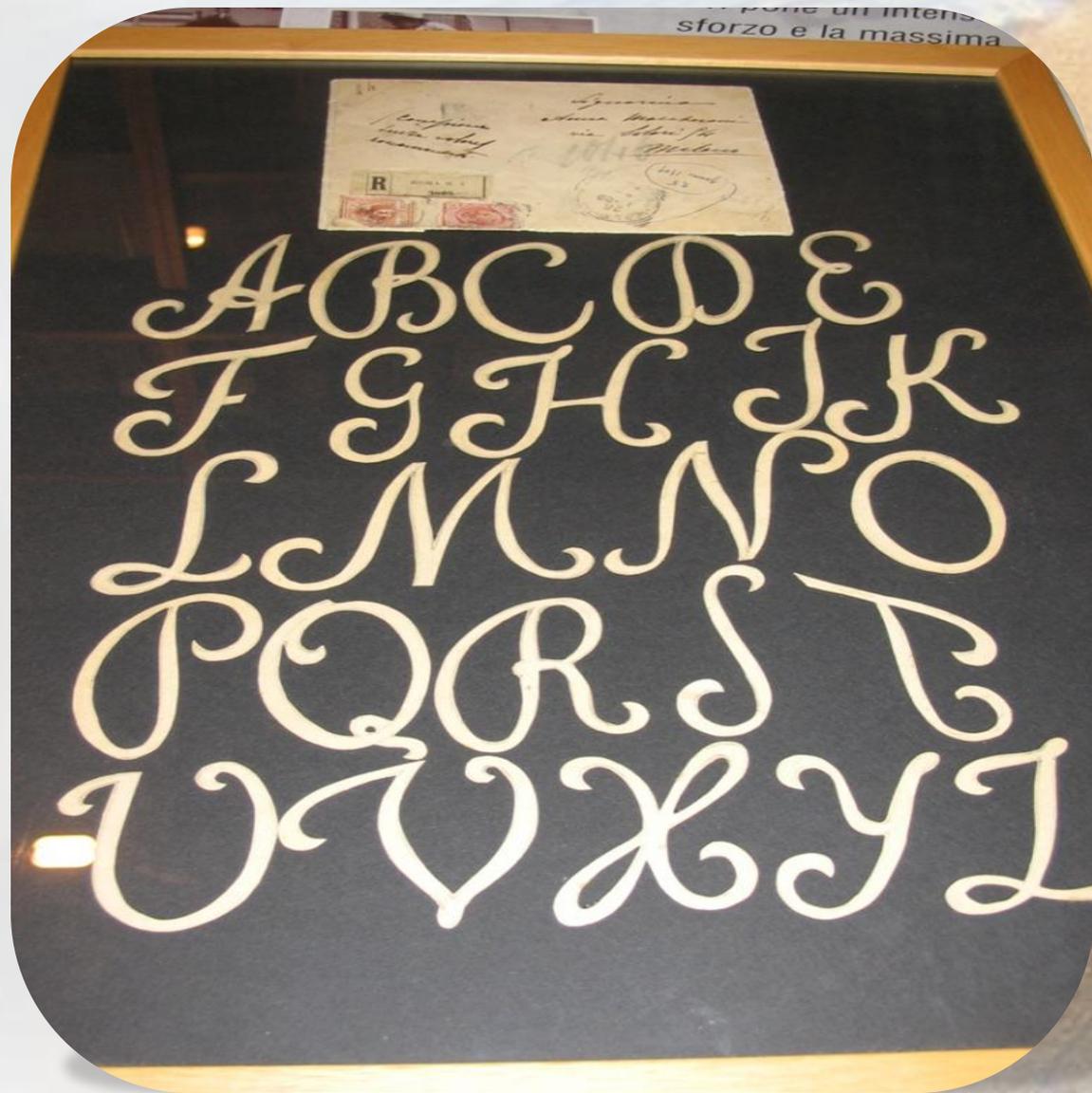
**She died in Holland in 1952 and is buried there.**



The Montessori office in Rome now has a library as well as original photographs and materials.



**These letters were cut out by Montessori herself and are the origin of the sandpaper letters!**



# With Renilde Montessori



**Meeting Renilde, grand daughter of Maria Montessori was very special to me and is a memory I will always cherish.**