

The Vincenzo Cascio Family



Vincenzo Cascio, my maternal grandfather, came to the United States from Contessa Entellina, Sicily, in 1913, when he was thirty-three years old. Three of his brothers were already in Brooklyn, New York, but his wife, Concetta Migliori Cascio, had three brothers living in Rockford. One of Concetta's brothers sponsored Vincenzo for his trip to America and found him a job as a molder at Case Foundry in Rockford. Besides his wife, Vincenzo had left behind three children: my mother Anna, born on June 6, 1904, Michele (Michael), and Vincenza (Virginia).

It took eight years for Vincenzo to save enough money to send for his family, and they also had to wait until World War I was over. The first ship on which they could book passage was the San Rossore, a merchant ship. They first had to go to Palermo to obtain their required papers and then took a boat from Palermo to Naples, where they set sail for America. It took seventeen days to cross the ocean, and they arrived at Ellis Island on May 31, 1921. They were detained there for three days because my mom's sister, Virginia, was ill and was taken from them to the hospital ward in another building. My nana, mom, and uncle were frantic with worry because they did not understand what had happened to her, due to the language barrier.

After Virginia was returned to the family, they were all able to board a train to Rockford, where my grandfather was waiting for them. After eight years of separation, the family was finally together again. By this time, Anna was sixteen, Michael was

thirteen, and Virginia was eight. My mother started working at Nelson Knitting Co., while her brother and sister attended St. Anthony School. A year later, the entire family moved to Brooklyn to be near Vincenzo's brothers, but after ten months returned to Rockford because Vincenzo was ill. Two months later, and only two years after the family was reunited, my grandfather died of lung and heart disease on Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1923, when he was only forty-three years old.

My mother, Anna, married my father, Giuseppe (Joseph) Giammalva, on June 5, 1927, at St. Anthony Church. They lived on Winnebago Street, south of the viaduct, for a few years and then moved to 1701 Montague Street. Together they raised seven children: Aurelia (Rae) Ferro, Concetta (Connie) Cascio, Lodovico (Lou), Frances Marchese, Vincent, Joanne Wargo, and Joseph.

Submitted on August 3, 2012, by Jo Giammalva Wargo for the Genealogy Project – Culture and Education Committee of GRIAA-**“Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families”**