

THE FAMILY OF LUCY INGRASSIA DOMINO

AND ANTHONY DOMINO



"Times change and with change, very frequently the history of the past can be lost." Lucy I. Domino.

Antonio (Anthony) Domina was born on May 25, 1896 in Roccamena, Palermo Province, Sicily. He was the second son of Giuseppe Domina (Joseph Domino) and Maria (Mary) Roppolo Domina and one of twelve children. Sometime after sailing aboard the SS. California en route to New Orleans from Sicily, his last name was written as "Domino". That spelling remained.

Lucy Frances Ingrassia was born on January 3, 1906 in Rockford, IL. Her Father, Salvatore, was born in Camporeale, Palermo Province, Sicily in 1857. His first wife died in Sicily. On January 19, 1889, Salvatore Ingrassia married Carmela Musso in Reserve, Louisiana. Carmela was actually born in 1872 in Roccamena, Palermo Province, Sicily. Grandma Lucy Domino always referred to her eldest stepbrother, Joseph, as her biological brother. Lucy Frances Ingrassia was a gallant woman who was the eighth out of thirteen children, two of whom died in infancy.

Lucy was known as the "Matriarch of the family" and was indeed a woman ahead of her time. She introduced seven (7) Bishops of Rockford -- starting as a teenager while attending St. Thomas High School when it was coed and, too, during the time when she worked with the National Catholic Society of Foresters. She was dedicated to helping her family and worked at one of the first Italian grocery stores in Rockford, IL owned by her Father, Salvatore. The original tile work can still be seen with the black tiles silhouetted against the white tiles on the angular entranceway to the family business at 1130 So. Main Street, it reads "S. Ingrassia". This was a "staple and fancy" grocery store.

Lucy was awarded a college scholarship following graduation from St. Thomas. She declined to take care of her ailing mother, to assist her brothers who remained at home and to continue to watch over her highly intelligent niece, Lillian Corpora. When Lucy was to marry Anthony Domino our Grandfather, she explained "We will raise Lillian as our own, but she will keep her given last name." Lillian's mother, Lillian Ingrassia Corpora, died while giving birth.

Anthony Domino immigrated from Roccamena, Sicily to Louisiana where his family grew sugar cane and cotton. Ultimately, his family picked strawberries toward the end of their many endured hardships. It has been told that Anthony Domino and his older brother, Frank, came to Rockford via their work on the Illinois Central Railroad. This prompted the Domino family to leave Louisiana and move to Rockford. Anthony learned how to craft furniture in Rockford.

His son, Anthony Jr. was willed a "one-armed" sturdy, leather chair and his grandson, Anthony Pritz, was given a carved wooden rocking chair designed by Anthony Domino.

Anthony Domino and Lucy Ingrassia were wed at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Rockford, IL on April 7, 1926. They had two children: Maryjo D. Pritz and Anthony Domino, Jr. Too, they raised their niece, Lillian Corpora, as their own.

Lucy and Anthony opened the Ace Liquor Store at 505 W. State Street in Rockford. In 1954 their store offered free delivery by calling 4-1643. Anthony Domino, Sr. and his brother, Peter Domino, opened Central Park Tap in 1950. They were partners for twenty-three (23) years. Too, Anthony Domino, Sr. assisted his son, Anthony and son-in-law, John E. Pritz, Sr. with the opening of Domino Liquors at Rockton Avenue Center and another store at Alpine Village in Rockford. Ultimately, Anthony, Jr. and John E. Pritz, Sr. also had stores in Freeport and Dixon, IL, for a period of time. Anthony Domino, Sr. also opened another bar called the "West End Social Club." In addition, Anthony Domino, Sr. and his brother-in-law, Theodore Ingrassia, Sr., opened the Capitol Theatre on South Main Street in Rockford, IL. in the late 1920's. The architect, Frederic Klein, also designed the Coronado Theatre in Rockford. The Capitol Theatre was lost during the depression; however, the "cloud machine" that once graced the Capitol is now in use at the Coronado Theatre. Therefore, when you attend events at the Coronado Performing Arts Center (as the theatre is known today), the "clouds" that cross that ceiling -- and that give the illusion of an evening in a courtyard -- are generated by Grandpa Domino's "cloud machine".

Lucy Domino joined the Women's Catholic Order of Foresters in 1925. By 1963 she was elected by the Board of Directors as "High Chief Ranger" in charge of the Women's Catholic Order of Foresters, a Fraternal Insurance Organization. On June 11, 1966 Lucy was elected National President of the National Catholic Society of Foresters, a Fraternal Insurance Corporation then located on 59 East Van Buren Street in downtown Chicago, IL. The Diamond Jubilee banquet was held in Denver, Colorado on August 9, 1966 at the Continental Plaza Hotel. Lucy Domino was instrumental in keeping with the times and promoting through the Foresters the change in their name to the "National Catholic Society of Foresters". By invitation Lucy Domino met twice with President Lyndon Baines Johnson. She was elected President of this President's Section of the National Congress of America in 1969. In this position Lucy Domino was in charge of all Fraternal Organizations meeting in Washington, D.C. spreading the ideals of "benevolence, religion, patriotism and education."

In 1961 Lucy Domino was Chairman of Saint Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee in Rockford, IL. She was Chairman of this same Social Center Advisory Board. She was a member of the Catholic Women's League locally. She was recognized as Catholic Woman of the Year in the Diocese of Rockford by Bishop Arthur J. O'Neil. Lucy Domino promoted projects that have been beneficial to the young as well as the elderly,

on the local, the diocesan and national levels. In 1979 Lucy I. Domino received the Italian American Hall of Fame Award.

I once asked my Grandmother how her marriage to Grandpa Domino worked so well. She replied that during another time it may not have worked. Grandma was articulate and wrote well in more than one language. Grandpa could neither read nor write in English, but he had the tremendous capability to memorize names and prices of items. Grandma replied that "We always wanted you (our Grandchildren) to give the very best of yourself in every way. Your Grandpa always gave to me." I remarked that there was not a prouder man than Grandpa Domino when he drove to Chicago on a Friday night to pick up Grandma Domino who was waiting outside of the former Conrad Hilton Hotel where she resided Monday through Friday during the years that she was President of the National Catholic Society of Foresters. He beamed from ear to ear!

The wedding photograph is of Anthony Domino and Lucy Ingrassia taken on April 7, 1926.

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* with some historical information documented by Anthony Domino III for the Genealogy Project for the Culture and Education Committee of GRIAA "Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families."