

INGRASSIA



Salvatore and Carmella Ingrassia – 1914

Salvatore Ingrassia (8-12-1857, Camporeale, Palermo Province, Sicily - 9-4-1938, Rockford, IL) and his first wife, Francesca Sacco (11-30-1862, Camporeale - 12-20-1886, Camporeale) left Sicily in 1884 with their infant son Giuseppe (Joseph) for New Orleans, where they joined Salvatore's brother, Pasquale. At this time Salvatore worked on the New Orleans stock landing as a peddler of fruit and sandwiches. Suffering from poor health, Francesca returned to her native climate, where she died.

In 1889 Salvatore wed his second wife, Carmela Musso (1-16-1872, Roccamena, Palermo Province, Sicily - 8-13-1931, Rockford, IL). With her widowed father, Pasquale Musso, and younger brother, Vincenzo, Carmela departed Palermo aboard the S.S. Utopia arriving in New Orleans on 10-16-1888. The Mussos had been living only a few months on a sugar plantation in Reserve, LA when Salvatore met her and proposed marriage. Unhappy in her domestic life, Carmela agreed, but without the blessings of her father, who refused to give her a dowry. Pasquale and his son later returned to Roccamena.

In the 1890s Salvatore set up a grocery business while doing seasonal work in Kansas and Missouri for the Union Pacific Railroad as a section foreman. In 1898 after accumulating some savings, he brought his growing family back to Camporeale, where he had dreams of being a wheat dealer. His son Joseph did not like life there, and after he left for New York, Carmela persuaded her husband to follow him. The Ingrassia family first departed Palermo and then Naples aboard the S.S. Furst Bismarck arriving in New York City on 12-21-1900. Carmela's sister, Vincenza, Mrs. Mariano Musso, accompanied them on this voyage. In 1902 the Mussos were among the very first Sicilians to settle in Rockford, IL.

Family members to remain in Sicily were Salvatore's widowed mother, Calogera (DiCorte) Ingrassia, his brother Antonino Ingrassia and his half-brother Liborio Almerico. Also remaining were Carmela's father Pasquale Musso and her brother Vincenzo Musso.

After a few months in New York the Ingrassias returned to New Orleans, where Salvatore bought a grocery and residence at 4117 Magazine St. Here they remained until 1904 when, once again, Carmela urged her husband to move in order to join her sister Vincenza in Rockford. Salvatore's brother Pasquale Ingrassia also came at this time to Rockford, where all three families lived on Rock Street.

Having lived initially on Buchanan St., Salvatore in 1906 bought a frame house at 1209 Rock St., and built an adjacent store. In 1918 the Ingrassia Building was erected at 1128-30 South Main St., the grocery located in front and the family residence in the rear. The new store had its grand opening in 1919 and remained in business until 1931.

The Ingrassia offspring and spouses were as follows:

1. Joseph Ingrassia (1883-1963) wed Vincenza Donze.
2. Lillian Ingrassia (1890-1917) wed Joseph Corpora.
3. John Pasquale Ingrassia (1891-1918) wed Mary Palmeri.
4. Nunzio (Dell) Ingrassia (1893-1980) wed Rose St. Angel.
5. Anthony Ingrassia (1897-1985) wed Rose Marie Drago.
6. Theodore Ingrassia (1901-1974) wed Marie Ginestra.
7. Vincent Ingrassia (1903-1985) wed Mary Oddo.
8. Lucy Ingrassia (1906-1996) wed Anthony Domino.
9. Frank Ingrassia (1907-1981) wed Frances Sciortino.
10. Annette Ingrassia (Sister Mary Honorata) (1909-1946)
11. Paul Ingrassia (1912-2001) wed Vita Campisi.

The Ingrassias distinguished themselves in the commercial, civic, legal and religious spheres of Rockford. Ingrassia Cash Grocery was the second Italian grocery in town, a prominent business and a meeting point of the community. Salvatore and Carmela were hardworking people, and all of their offspring moved on to successful businesses of their own.

Joe and Dell Ingrassia opened a hardware/furniture store on South Main St. in 1922. They split off in 1948, with Joe and sons running Ingrassia Ace Hardware until 1962, and Dell, son and later granddaughter running Ingrassia Furniture until 2015. Dell Ingrassia represented the city's Fifth Ward (South Ward) as an Independent alderman serving 1935-49.

Tony Ingrassia had the distinction of being the first Italian-American attorney in Rockford to practice law 1929-79.

Ted, Vince, Frank and Paul Ingrassia founded Illinois Wholesale Liquor distributorship on South Main St. in operation 1933-88.

Ted went in real estate in 1953 as Ingrassia-McGuire, Inc., developing Rockton Avenue shopping center in 1958.

Lucy and husband Tony Domino owned and operated Ace Liquor Store, Central Park Tap and founded with their son Domino Liquors in 1964. Lucy was elected High Ranger of National Catholic Society of Foresters (1963-74), and as a fraternal leader was invited twice to the White House by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Annette Ingrassia, the first child to be baptized by Father Marchesano in St. Anthony of Padua church, became Sister Honorata, a Sinsinawa Dominican, teaching in Catholic schools in Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois.

Two Ingrassia siblings died at age 26. They were Lillian Corpora, who died in childbirth, and John P. Ingrassia, a South Main St. grocer, who died in the Spanish Influenza of 1918.

The family was further honored when in 1978 Nunzio (Dell) Ingrassia and in 1979 Lucy Domino were named to the Rockford Italian-American Hall of Fame. Both were recognized for their outstanding service to the community and for providing help to Italian immigrants seeking citizenship and other assistance.

Submitted on October 31, 2016 by Anthony Domino for the Genealogy Project for Culture and Education Committee of GRCAA "Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families."