

My Nonno

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I grew up listening to stories told by my mom and Nonna about our Italian family. Unfortunately, I never met him my Nonno, Salvatore Puccio, since he died many years before I was born. My grandmother always spoke of him to keep his memory alive, and I have always enjoyed hearing about him.

My Nonno was born on October 20, 1929 in Caccamo, Palermo (Sicily). He was the youngest of three children born to Salvatore Puccio and Mari Cali. He was a handsome man, as evidenced by the photo on his *Carta d'Identità*, a personal identification document, issued by his hometown municipality.



Nonno first came to the United States at age twenty-nine as a single man and skilled artisan. He arrived at Ellis Island by boat on the S.S. *Vulcania* on May 8, 1958. While his first trip to the US was by boat, future voyages to Italy and back were by plane.

While his father was a farmer, Nonno did not follow in his father's footsteps, but became a tailor. Of all the stories related to me, my very favorite story of him is about how he became a tailor. After finishing high school, my Nonno went to work for the town tailor. One day, the tailor went to his mother and told her that her son was very talented and that he should pursue formal schooling at the "fancy" tailor school in Palermo. He was one of the first of his peer group to leave Caccamo to go to school. My mom still has his sketch book from that school. After earning his diploma, he went back to Caccamo and became a very sought-after tailor, making custom clothing, suits, and dresses. Eventually he outgrew the small town and set out for Brooklyn, New York. I admire my Nonno's spirit of adventure!

While my Nonno and his siblings are deceased, we keep in touch with our cousins in Italy through social media. I have traveled to Italy several times to visit our cousins. Once I was even stopped on the street by an elderly man who was thrilled to share that his wedding suit had been custom made for him by my Nonno.

When I learned that the Italian Genealogical Group was collecting personal family ancestry stories, I saw it as the perfect opportunity to preserve my Nonno's name in written form. There's an old Italian proverb that says, "The word is like a flame that disappears in the wind, but the written word is an eternal flame that burns forever."