

Foreword



The following is a copy of the original genealogy and the words that my father used to describe his feelings about our Italian heritage. He did this project in 1978, during his retirement years at Leisure Village in Lakewood, New Jersey. He approached it from a personal point of view and from a sincere dedication to his Italian heritage and our families.

I think he used his own phone directory and personal contacts to get names and addresses of any known relatives and he mailed them a form he prepared for them to complete as much information as they felt comfortable offering. When the returns came back he prepared a format which, with the help of my wife, Augustina (Augie), they both worked together to construct the report. With the exception of a few minor corrections, the text is in its original format and words.

Six months ago, my mother passed away, at the age of 88, and my father, who is now 94 years old, still talks about "getting together".

SFR January 06, 1996

THE RUNFOLA GENEALOGY

NINETEEN- HUNDRED-SEVENTY-EIGHT

By:

Salvatore Runfola
262C Kingston Ct.
Lakewood, New Jersey
08701

Introduction

Since I had no experience in writing any story, and much less on genealogy, and since I was unable to find anyone experienced in this field from whom I could get expert advice, I was obligated to follow my own instinct in hope that it will survive the test of eventual readers.

This story is divided into three parts:

Part One - deals with the background of the story and the causes that motivated me to write it.

Part Two - deals with our genealogy story which begins in 1832 with the birth of my grandparents, Giuseppe Runfola and Cosima Andolina; and

Part Three - the conclusion thereof.

I am very grateful to everyone who helped me with the necessary information; if not for them there could not have been this story, as modest as it is. Some gave me more information than I needed, while others did not have enough that they could give me. So, if in some cases the details are not complete, this is the reason.

But the majority of the credit for the bringing of this project to a happy conclusion is due to my dear son Sal and his dear wife Augustina, my dear daughter-in-law, a real daughter indeed. Without their help there could not have been a satisfactory job as it is.

Salvatore Runfola



Mom and Dad's passport picture taken sometime in the 1950's, just before they left for the first trip back to Italy.

THE RUNFOLA GENEALOGY

By Salvatore Runfola

PART ONE THE BACKGROUND

My name is Salvatore Runfola, son of Benedetto [Runfola] and Salvatrice Panepinto. In January of 1913, in Sicily, at the age of eleven, I was advised by my beloved mother to learn a trade rather than follow in the footsteps of my father and my brother's, 3 years my senior, hard country life.

I chose the barber trade under the tutuorship of Master Filippo, a first class barber with Italian and five years experience in Chicago, Illinois. Master Filippo was like a father to me. In the morning I attended the grammar school and in the afternoon at the barber shop. In less than one year I surpassed the skill of the other boys my senior of one and three years, respectfully.

In May, 1915, Italy entered the World War on the side of the Allies. In 1916, Filippo was drafted into the army. Because he was pleased with my performance and at 14 years old, I was too young to be drafted, he entrusted me with his barber shop confident - he said - of finding the shop still operating when he would come back.

The war ended on November 11, 1918. Because Filippo had been taken prisoner by the Germans, his discharge was delayed. Finally when he came back home he was happy to find the shop, as he had predicted - still operating as when he left. For a while I worked for him, but the wages he could afford to pay was not enough for me

In October of 1919, while I was in the process of buying a barber shop, one of the customers I met there was a travel agent, Signor DeMarco.

When DeMarco heard I was buying the barber shop, he looked at me pointedly and said: "How old are you?"

"Three months before my eighteenth birthday", I replied.

Then he said, "Do you know what you are doing?"

I said, " I think so."

Then his reply was, "Well, let's see, you are 18, right? Two years from now you will have to serve in the Army, for two years, right? When you come back, you will be very lucky if you find the shop still operating."

The I said, "What do you suggest?"

"If I were you, I would go to America and start a new life.", was his reply.

Several months earlier, when I announced my engagement to a beautiful girl of my home town, my brother Joe and my sister Cosima, both of New York City, answered me with an affable but firm reproach, reminding me that our father had died only a short while ago and marrying so soon after his death is not in keeping with our family tradition, and , besides, you are too young to talk about getting married anyway.

Instead, we advise you to come to America. As a young and foolish man that I was, I felt so embarrassed, to say the least, that I even neglected to honor them with a reply. The same reproach I got - only stronger - from my sister Ignazia, then Sister Antonietta.

So when DeMarco mentioned America, all of the above came to mind and all of a sudden I felt such a sense of affirmity and intimacy toward my sister and my brother, such as I never experienced before.

At this point, I asked DeMarco how long it would take before I leave. He said in two weeks, but, in any event he guaranteed I would leave on the first ship that leaves from Palermo.

At that age I was very impulsive. Had he said a month, I probably would have hesitated, but two weeks was soon enough, even for me. So I asked him what he requested I do now. He said for me to meet him at 12 o'clock at the Municipal Building. it was 10:30 a.m. I went straight home, a short distance from the barber shop. All of a sudden the thought of how I am going to break the news to my mother hit me very hard. I walked the short distance from the barber shop, which took three times the normal time and the following came to mind: My brother Nino and another year to serve in the army. My sister Ignazia, in answer to a calling, had become a nun with the Daughters of Charity of the Order of St. Vincent DePaul. My father had died on November 20, 1918.

In 1912, at the age of 16, my sister Concetta emigrated to America. Several years later, in New York City, she married Antonio Razziano, a paesano. Succumbing to American and Italian war propaganda and under the compulsion that not-naturalized citizens had to fight in the war either with the American Army or in the Army of their native allied country, and the inducement of free round trip transportation for the men and their families: and the inducement to see their loved ones at no cost to them. Razziano, as many others did, took his wife, a sixteen month old baby and another one on the way, in the month of May, 1915, embarked on the steamship Patria, Fabre Line, on his way to Italy. While crossing the Atlantic Ocean, a beautiful girl was born to the Razzianos

whose principal name given was Rose, together with half dozen other names, including Patria, the name of the ship.

Antonio spent over three years in the war of which about two years he spent as war prisoner in Germany. At the time of my decision to come to America, the Razzianos were expecting momentarily, the notice of embarkation on a ship reserved exclusively for the returning war veterans and their families. So it was understandable how badly my mother would take the news.

While orchestrating these thoughts in my mind, I reached home. I found my mother mending sox. As she raised her eyes, she said,

"What's the matter, something wrong?"

Lord knows how depressed I must have looked! When I told her of my decision, the expression of her face changed so much, I became scared. Then with tears coming down, she said:

"Everybody is leaving me - leaving me all alone!"

At the same instant, another thought entered my mind.

At this period of history, rumors were circulating about the probability of imminent war between Italy and Yugoslavia. The great Soldier-Poet, Gabriele D'Annunzio and his army was threatening to capture the City of Fiume, which in the terms of the Armistice of the Allies, wrongfully, had assigned it to Yugoslavia.

So I said to my mother, "Mamma, I don't want to leave you, but what is better, that I go to America or to war?"

She answered, "No figlio mio, va in America." (No my son, go to America.). My mother soon remembered the tragedies of war, although reluctantly, did not hesitate to make her choice. Later, D'Annunzio did invade Fiume which to this day remains part of the Italian mainland. Telling the same to my fiancée wasn't easy, but not as difficult as with my mother. I told Giuseppina, I will go to America to make some money. in two years I will come back and we will get married. She tried to change my mind, but it was too late.



Dad's passport picture

Because in the United States, the Stevedores were on strike, the departure of the ships were delayed. After the end of the strike, as soon as I found out the date of the departure, I immediately informed my sister Cosima and my brother Peppino.

Finally, on the 27 of November, 1919, the Razzianos left from Naples on the ship Europa. On December 5th, I left from Palermo on the ship Patria. There was no time for me to receive reply from America before I left.

More than 90% of the two thousand passengers on

board were emigrants. I, being a minor was under the guardianship of an old man, a neighbor of mine. To facilitate the allotment of daily food rationing in the third class, the passengers were organized in groups. In my group were 15, all known to each other. The food was terrible. The macaroni, with un-cleaned lentils as it came from the farm, was not edible. We were supposed to get an egg every other day. We got one a week. Macaroni with sauce was edible, but was not enough. In those days, the quality of service and accommodation for the 3rd class passengers only better than that of slaves.

No one was complaining too loudly. People were used to hard life home, anyway, and if now it was even worse, it was going to be for only a short while. Among the passengers there were some who had been in America before. On the 23rd of December, we were approaching the New York Harbor. It was at sunrise, when somebody yelled out, loud, "Hey, there is the Statue of Liberty!"

It was indeed, and everyone ran on deck to enjoy the sight. And then appeared the tops of tall buildings and gradually into the harbor at 36th Street dock in Brooklyn. Because the water at the dock was shallow, the ship dropped anchors some 150 feet away from the dock. Rowboats loaded with relatives of the passengers were rowing alongside the ship. There were eight or ten passengers on each boat. Screaming and yelling coming from the people on the rowboats and the passengers on deck, and the noise from loading and unloading boats made it impossible to understand anyone. During this confusion, we almost saw an accident. The front of one rowboat hit another rowboat on the side almost forcing it or turn over. The only one I would have expected to recognize on the boats would have been my brother - in - law, Razziano, but he was not there. I was looking for my brother Joe with a waxed mustache, but I did not see him.

The next day I found out that he was among the people in the boat that almost turned over. The first day went by and I had not seen any of my people. Only the first class passengers got out of the ship that day.

The next morning, rowboats loaded with passengers again, were approaching the ship. The din was less than the day before, people from the boats could understand the people from the deck. One man from the boats was asking if anyone on deck knew Mrs. Anna Giglio. When I heard him, I said, "Yes, I know her, and her three children are here. Who are you?"

He said, "I am her husband."

Then I asked him if he knew my brother and he said, "Yes, he is afraid to come on the boat, he is waiting for you in front of the dock."

His wife was crying because her husband had not come yet. (She and her children belonged to my group.) As soon as I called her, she dashed to the railing and they saw each other and yelled outwards to hear each other. The din was again getting loud. At this point, a customs official started to direct passengers to a door leading to another compartment. I told one of my group near me, I was going to find out what was going on. I got on the line and as the line was moving, we were told we are getting processed and disembarked. After being cleared, I went back to my group to pick up my luggage and I dashed out of the ship and into the dock where the customs man was checking luggage,

and then out into the street I went. There, were several people asked me if so and so was on the ship. One of them asked me if Salvatore Runfola was on the ship. As I looked at him I saw the profile of my father, but no mustache.

I asked, "Who are you?"

He said, "I am his brother."

"I am your brother", I replied.



As we were walking to the Elevated Train Station and then onto the train, we exchanged news about our folks on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. At 14th Street and First Avenue Station (Manhattan), we got off and after walking a short distance we entered a building at 421 East 13th Street. We walked about 30 feet into a corridor, and into a small yard, then into the corridor of another building, 5 stories high.

This building of about 15 families, was occupied by my sister Cosima and her family; my brother Joe and his wife; an apartment was vacant but reserved for my sister Concetta and family; my cousin Marietta Orlando and her family; my cousin Jennie Marchese Giglio and her family; my cousin Josephine Yandolina Traina and family; and my dear Aunt Anna Runfola, who was occupying the first apartment on the ground floor. The other apartments were occupied by very close friends of the family.

Upon entering the building, the first person we met was my Aunt Anna Runfola, widow of my Uncle Rosolino. As we walked up the first flight, we came to two doors which were wide open with three ladies in front of them. The one in front outstretched her arms

and embraced me affectionately. It was my dear sister Cosima. In Italy, everyone, especially my mother and father often said what a beautiful and lovable person my sister Cosima was. One glance at her and I was convinced that they were right. The lady at her left was my dear sister - in - law, Joe's wife, Gaetana, and the lady at my sister's right was my dear cousin Mary Runfola Orlando. Into the apartment, I met my handsome nephews and beautiful nieces. I asked where my sister Concetta was, and I was told that because on the ship, some passengers became sick, all passengers were quarantined at Ellis Island, and my brother - in - law Santo Sardegna was out to see them. When he came back, he brought the news that the Razzianos had yet to stay another seven days. They were permitted to go home on New Year's Eve. Among the relatives that came to see me the evening of my arrival were: my Uncle and Aunt Frank Marchese, Uncle and Aunt Philip Orobello, my cousins Joe and Josephine Runfola, cousins Frank and Mary Orlando, cousins Paul and Jennie Giglio, cousins Tony and Josie Traina and many friends of the family, residents of the same building. On New Year's Eve, the Razzianos and all the passengers at the quarantine were released. When they got home, everyone was happy to see them back. With the exception of my mother, my brother Nino and my sister Ignazia, we all got together. Also missing, was my Aunt Mary, my mother's sister, a spinster and fine person who remained in Italy.

After I was in America about six months, I suggested to my fiancée to come to America, to her Godmother's home and so on after necessary arrangement, we would get married. She was the only daughter and her parents would not allow her to leave the house before marriage. Our relationship cooled off and since I had no intention of going back to Italy, we broke off.

My mother, who had refused to risk crossing the ocean, back in 1905, at my father's request, now at my insistence and the fact that my brother Nino, too, was coming to America she consented to take the risk. She arrived in New York City in the month of May, 1921. My brother and his wife of several months, Caterina, arrived one month later. Now the entire family was reunited, of course, with the exception of my sister Ignazia who said that her place was where God wanted her to be.

The era of togetherness not alone with the immediate family, but even including the relatives, which I mentioned above, and some I forgot to mention, lasted for sometime.

But as the youngsters were growing educated and with new outlooks on life, with improved standards of living and already able to afford a better home, in a suburban area, and succumbing to the evolution of the times, did not hesitate to leave Little Italy behind. This was the beginning of families disintegration.

Then as if this was not enough, the youngsters who distinguished themselves in scholastic achievements were offered high [paying], good positions from large corporations which impelled them to accept assignments not alone throughout this country, but even throughout the world.

I am very proud of the progress that the Italians have made in America, especially those of second, third and more generations; in every field of the American life. But, everything has a price and the price we are paying now is the price of togetherness.

This sacrifice of togetherness got us to the point where people of my age, to whom the All Mighty has been compassionate and charitable in extending our lives, do not know most of our third and fourth generation descendants. If we meet anyone, anywhere, we would not know each other. This brings to my mind the possibility, perhaps, not too distant, when some of our descendants will be asking themselves: "Who am I?", "Who were my ancestors?", "Where did they come from?".

With these thoughts in mind now, I am resolved to embark onto a project which requires knowledge, determination, consistence and perseverance. The last three qualifications I think I have, but the first one, "knowledge", I do not. However, with my Italian grammar education and with most of my self taught American education, I shall do my level best to succeed.

When I first arrived in America, I came to know that my late cousin Joseph Runfola, had obtained from Rome, Italy, a genealogical history of the Runfola's. With pride, my cousin displayed it in his shoe store he had on East 13th Street in New York City. I saw it but did not read it in it's entirety. Because it is long time since my cousin's demise, now no one seems to know where it is. But a member of his family has volunteered to trace it and, in any event, I will be very obligated to him. However, recently, I was given the privilege to read one of those genealogical histories from Rome and I was disappointed in what I found. I found there was no continuity of direct lineage, but a conglomeration of names of high nobility that did not look reliable to me. If, when completed, this project doesn't show any account of the genealogy history of the Runfolas, which presumably began in South Italy in the Fourteenth Century, it is either because my cousin's parchment could not be found or because it was not as reliable as the one above indicated.



PART TWO

THE GENEALOGY

In the absence of authenticated information, ante-dating 1832, I am obligated to begin the story of the Runfola Family Tree with my grandfather, Guiseppe Runfola and my grandmother, Cosima Andolina. The following is the way time calculation were made. My father, Benedetto, was born on July 11, 1857, in Alia, Province of Palermo, Sicily. Many times I heard my father say that when his father died, he was five years old and his brother Rosolino was one year old. Rosolino was born in 1861. This meant that my grandfather died in 1862. Now assuming that he married three years before my father was born, and assuming that he got married at the age of 22, this would place his birth in the year 1832. And now that we have established, as best we can, the year grandpa was born, let's proceed chronologically, with the ramification of the Runfola genealogical tree.

Giuseppe and Cosima Andolina had two children, Benedetto Maria, born July 11, 1857 and Rosolino born in 1861, both born in the town of Alia, Province of Palermo, Sicily, Italy. Since the economy of the town was exclusively agriculture, and all information indicates he was not an artisan, we must conclude that he was a farmer. In 1862, grandpa died, leaving his bereaved wife Cosima and their two sons, Benedetto Maria and Rosolino, of five and one year respectfully.

In order to develop the story and keep it in proper perspective, the ramification of Benedetto and Rosolino and their respective descendants will be treated separately; and separately will be treated all the subsequent descendants, uninterrupted, from the beginning to present. In all cases, the elder will precede to younger.

Two years after the death of grandpa, grandma remarried and since her husband was not of a compassionate nature, her brother Filippo Andolina and his wife, Tufania, volunteered to take Benedetto with them to Lecara Friddi, only seven miles away from Alia. Uncle Filippo, like his brother - in - law, was a farmer, poor, and like most of the common people of those days, illiterate. Despite the fact that young Benedetto was a bright boy, he received no help from anyone; thus, like everyone around him he remained illiterate. At the age of 18 he left his uncle and after awhile he found employment in Palermo, one of the most beautiful cities in Italy. In Palermo, he worked as an errand boy for a distinguished nobleman, Count Palazzolo, Deputy (Congressman) to the Italian Parliament.

Two years later, due to proven ability, good memory and a likable personality, he was appointed "Palafreniere E Uomo Di Fiducia" (Horse Coachman and Man of Trust), a prestigious position, indeed, as many men with education wished they had.

In 1877, at the age of twenty, Benedetto married a cousin, Concetta Andolina. A son was born to the couple who was named Guiseppe, like Benedetto's father. He was born in 1878. On December 24th, a daughter was born to them. She was named Cosima, like Benedetto's mother. In 1888, after a short illness Concetta Andolina Runfola was called to God, to the Heavens, leaving behind her bereaved husband and two wonderful children. In 1889, Benedetto asked for the hand of Salvatrice Panepinto, of Lecara Friddi. But Salvatrice's declination left Benedetto looking for someone else. A short while after, he married a girl from Palermo. (This writer was unable to obtain information about her.) However, in 1891, she also passed away. At this time, Count Palazzolo, Benedetto's employer, tried to interject himself into Benedetto's personal life by strongly suggesting Benedetto marry one of his trusted servants. But that servant did not appeal to Benedetto, A refusal would be considered and affront by the Count with the possible consequence of the loss of his job. Benedetto was strong minded; his mind went back to the girl who had declined his offer three years earlier. But now with his chivalrous enticements - of which he was very capable - and the compassion Salvatrice had developed for his two children, especially for Cosima who was nine years of age and whom she had met and fell in love with, Salvatrice consented to marry him.

The marriage license was obtained at the marriage license office at the Municipal Building in Palermo. The next morning their names would appear in the local newspaper list of new couples and the Count would surly read or be told about it. So to avoid the embarrassment, the same day Benedetto submitted his resignation to his employer. The Count was shocked, and after a pause he said:

"Benedetto, se cosi vuoi cosi sara" (If this is the way you want it, so it will be).

And so, in 1892, took place Benedetto's third marriage, and the last one.

At this time Guiseppe was fourteen years of age and Cosima, was nine. Guiseppe was a domestic worker for one of the elite families in Palermo. Somehow, due to his eagerness to learn and to the goodness of someone around him, he was able to learn and write a little; and remained at his employment for sometime. Cosima, unfortunately remained illiterate, but she was very welcomed by her new step-mother, Salvatrice. In a short time, the relationship between step-mother and step-daughter, due to both of their fine characteristics, developed as good as a real mother and daughter could be. The excellent relationship lasted until death parted them. Salvatrice passed away on December 15, 1937.

In 1893, a daughter was born to Benedetto and Salvatrice. She was named Ignazia, like her mother's mother. In 1896, another daughter was born, she was named Concetta, in respect for Guiseppe and Cosima's mother. In 1899, a son was born who was named Antonio, after his mother's father.

In 1902, another son was born, this writer, who was named Salvatore, after our Savior; if it would have been a girl, her name who have been Maria, in honor of the Mother of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

In 1910, another boy was born who was named Giovannino. He died in 1918, during the plague of the Spanish Influenza, at the age of almost nine.

During the last part of the Nineteenth Century and the first part of the Twentieth Century, there was an unlimited influx of European immigrants coming to the United States. In 1903, a large group of my family and relatives, looking for better opportunities, migrated to America. Some of them were; my father Benedetto, my brother Guiseppe and his wife Gaetana, Uncle Rosolino Runfola and family, Uncle Francesco Marchese and family, Uncle Filippo Orobello and family, and Uncle Nicola Andolina and family. Probably unintentionally, the name of Andolina became to be known as Yandolina. Most of the men came alone, but within a short while later everyone succeeded in having his family in America. From our family circle, these were the first ones to settle in the United States, and I am all the sure, all their descendants, including myself, owe them immense gratitude.

Life was not easy for the poor immigrants. Due to their ignorance of the English language, illiteracy for most of them, and lack of travel experience, most of them went through years of hardship at the hands of ruthless employers and their heartless foreman in the construction industry.

After my father spent three years in America, twice sick with pneumonia and going through tough times trying to make a living; and after my mother had refused to come to America with the family, in 1906 my father returned to Italy. But despite his adversities while he was in America, he saved little money, enough to buy himself a donkey and a piece of land planted with grape vines and fruit trees that produced barley enough for the family as a seasonal self employed merchant of retail fruit and vegetables and as a laborer.

In 1912, he contracted with the biggest winery operator in town to cultivate the owner's vineyards, consisting of 25,000 grape vines, for which in a heavy season he employed as much as ten men.

He did this until his demise, November 20, 1918. During this period of steady employment and with the growing help of my brother Antonio - a good worker -and then some help from this writer who was spending four days a week in the country and Friday, Saturday and Sunday, to 1:00 p.m., in the barber shop, the family's economy had commenced to improve considerably.

An now let's work on the ramification's of the family tree:

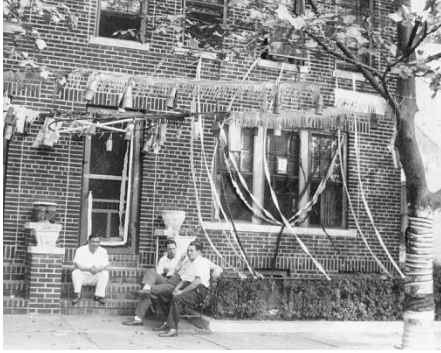
[Following this last paragraph began the entries that he created for each family member which have been transferred to the Family Tree Maker programs. Additionally all the pictures that I was able to load into FTM, including video have also been loaded into FTM]

PART THREE

THE CONCLUSION THEREOF

The thought of having been involved in the writing about the Runfola family tree, encompassing 146 years of history, three nations and six generations, has been educational and very gratifying to me. It took me through a long road of evolution which began in 1932, the year my grandparents Guiseppe Runfola and Cosima Andolina were born. It took me through the era when education was a luxury and therefore, unattainable for the poor; it took me to the times of my boyhood when most of the common people - probably 90% of them - were poor and illiterate; and it took me to the unforgettable times of when every Friday morning poor people used to stand in line in front of rich people's houses, sometime for more than one hour, in hope of getting one or two centisimi (a centisimi was 1/5 of a penny). Any one who gave one or two soldo (a penny) was considered a generous giver. Sunday morning was the best day for the poor who patiently awaited alongside the church doors. at the end of each mass on the hope of receiving a few cetisimi of alms from the prosperous but compassionate religious people. But despite their state of want, those people were endowed with a great sense of respect for one another and practiced a high sense of family togetherness.

And for these reasons and because of their humble behavior, up to the 1920's, the time of my arrival in America, most of the Italian emigrants reaching the New World were not understood, sneered at and were subject to mockery and abuse by other ethnic groups who had come to the states before the Italians did. Because these groups had had the chance to acquire some American education, they felt a sense of superiority, immoral superiority, if you please.



The house at 1867 West 5th Street, Brooklyn, decorated to celebrate the end of the War.

Now reading our own family tree history we find with delightful satisfaction that in almost every family there are college students. Students who graduated from colleges with high honors are offered good opportunities by the Federal, State and City governments and by American corporations.

The only ethnic group that had made more progress than the Italians in America is the Jewish and deservedly so. This is one group that, though in some aspects may be individualistic, however, when comes to problems that reflect them as a group they are very conscious and, indeed, very articulate. This is one important element, in my humble opinion, that is missing among the Italians. Despite this shortcoming, however, the Italians have made appreciable progress, though exclusively on personal-individual merits, in every field of American life.

In Politics: Our first most important Italian Pioneer was William Paca, a jurist from Maryland, one of the signer of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.

In Banking: Another Italian Pioneer was the late Amdeo Gianini, the founder of the Bank of Italy of San Francisco, California" who with his financial wisdom developed the Bank of San Francisco to become the Bank of American National Association, the biggest bank in America and in the world.

In Physics: Another Italian genius in America was the late Enrico Fermi, the inventor of the Nuclear Reactor and other incalculable inventions and discoveries and one of the most important principal scientist in the atomic development.

The telephone: Antonio Meucci of Staten Island was another but unfortunate genius. He was the legitimate inventor of the telephone. But because of his naiveté and shortness of capital he allowed himself to be lured by more wise and shrewd businessmen. For sometime now, the Italian Historical Society of America has started a movement to litigate with Bell System, regardless of the authenticity of the claim.

Now, very many are the Italians at the head of small and large corporations for example: Ford Motor Company and Chrysler Corporation. I could write a long history of names, but since this is not the intent of our story and for fear of becoming monotonous, I limit myself to only those already mentioned.

Careful reading of this little family story leaves us with the hope that the day is not too distant when some of our own children and grandchildren may become the leaders of our country. It is with joy that I see possible candidates among our descendants who may be destined to play a prominent role in the American business. I see the this even in my own family with my son Sal and my three grandsons, Russell, Robert, and Garry Salemi, who already have distinguished themselves each in his own field.

And we have several who head the list of prominence in our family story. One is Carl Poggi Sardegna, son of my dear late nephew Carl Runfola Sardegna; and Anthony Girgente Razziano, son my dear nephew Augie and Josie Razziano and their daughter Concetta and her husband James Conti, provost designate of Pratt Institute; and my dear nephew and godson Salvatore Runfola Sardegna and his highly promising children; and my dear nephew Joseph Runfola Sardegna and his highly promising children; and Sal Runfola Provenzano and Vincent F.P. Varsalona of California, son of my dear niece Rose Patria Runfola Varsalona and others. If one has not yet read the resumes of this story, please do so, it will make you feel proud of them as it does me and I hope that the achievements shown in this story will serve as an inspiration to our present students and to those future generations. Let us remember that the elevation to prominence of Italians anywhere enhances the prestige of Italians everywhere.

Up to several generations ago, many Italians in business or in profession, either born in this country or came very young and were American educated, either for business reasons or due to his lack of knowledge, he saw the necessity of changing his name,

The Italians that emigrate to America today, for many reasons, are more fortunate than the Italians of generations ago. Some of them put some of us to shame. They are educated, knowledgeable and proud of their heritage. Unlike their ancestors they speak the poetic, musical and romantic Italian language that makes me happy to listen to them talk.

I am glad I was born in Italy, the cradle of the World Civilization. And I am sorry I was not born in America, the Land of Opportunities.

AFTERWORD

In my humble way I tried to make a good job. It came out not as complete as I had hoped it to be.

Some gave me too much information, others not enough. In these cases, I had to rely on my personal limited knowledge of them.

Nevertheless, I feel this can serve as a foundation for anyone in our family tree who in the future, would be interested in adding to it as the years go by.

Salvatore Runfola

Corrections Page.

Some people who read this story came forth and offered some corrections. Rather than change the original writing, I added this section for corrections.

August 1996 from Sal Sardegna

"Benedetto married Salvatrice in 1892. That made my Mom (Cosima) 12 years old. She always said that she received love from Salvatrice the only step mother she felt treated her as a daughter. Her previous step mother worked her as one would a slave.

My brother Carmello died in 1972. He and his wife had one son, Carl. Carl is now retired from insurance business and works as a consultant. He and Kathleen had Kathleen in 1962 and is currently a pediatrician and is married to a surgeon. They have one child. Mark Sardegna born in 1964 is married and has one child. Mark is an architect with specialties in airport design

Santo Blaza Sardegna, known as Steven retired from the NYC PD, rank of LT. and lives in Texas with his wife Lynn.

They have one son Bobby Sardegna currently in service - a lawyer, expects to retire soon and go into law practice. Married and has one child

Carole Blaza Sardegna Sureau adopted two boys, Michael and Adam."

So, what about the genealogy? A thought from Sal F Runfola.

In reading Dad's words what struck me was the ambition and desire to leave his home, his mother and even his fiancée to go to a strange land and try to find opportunities for personal success. This seemed like what many Italians did during the period of 1880s to the 1920s. Italian immigration to America today is very insignificant and doesn't appear to be a goal of many Italians. So, why has it changed or rather, why did so many Italians leave during that period of immigration?

During the summer of 1996, my family, Augustina, Joanna and Gina visited Ellis Island and we discovered so much interesting human history, especially Italian history, and so much of it was said in my father's words, the same words that so many other immigrants wrote or said. The Ellis Island Society has a program to try to capture oral stories and historical dialogue from living immigrants and I just thought that would be a good idea to add some chronicles to the Runfola genealogy story, but to try to keep it within our family relationships or research that anyone of us could bring to this section.

So, the following are excerpts, quotes, stories or comments that I've picked up or have received from any source which I will always identify.

August 15, 1996

The following quotations says the same themes I heard my father tell me when I was a young boy. He was telling me this to instill an appreciation of hard work and why it was important to study and have strong goals and objectives in life. Of course, living in Brooklyn with all the great food, shelter, and clothes available, I couldn't relate to it at all until I got a little older (actually, a lot older). But I think about it now, and I think about the courage my family had to come here, the changing times, the values and the uniqueness of the Italians. I now find this all very interesting and of immense personal value, things I hope to pass on to other generations or anyone who shares the same interest.

From **La Storia, Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience**, by Jerre Mangione and Ben Morreale, 1992, HarperCollins Publishing, page 79.

Asked in 1972 if there were any archives that might explain why Sicilians left for America at the turn of the century, the Mayor of Racalmuto answered: "You want to know why people left? Hunger. That's why." If one insisted on archives, he answered again: "What archives? They fled here without any regrets and most of them clandestinely. What records." And he held up his fingers in a bunch as emphasis. "They were dying of hunger." Of course there was much truth in this. An old man who had left Sicily around 1898 recalled:

It was unbearable. My brother Luigi was 6 then and I was 7. Every morning we'd get up before sunrise and start walking about 4 or 5 miles to the farm of the patrunu- the boss. Many times we went without breakfast. For lunch we ate a piece of bread and plenty of water. If we were lucky, sometimes we would have a small piece of cheese or an onion. We worked in the hot sun until late afternoon, then we had to drag ourselves home. We got there exhausted, just before sunset, so tired we could barely eat and fell asleep with our clothes on. If we complained that the work was too hard our mother- God rest her soul- would say, "And who is going to give you something to eat?" And life went on this way day in and day out, until si vidiva surci viridi- "we began to see green mice."

And on page 97.

For those who did emigrate, parting was very painful. One old immigrant vividly remembered the night he left:

My father, bon arma, put my valises on the old mule, Old Titi, and we went up to the railroad station. It was pitch dark, early in the morning. From the cracks in the shutters over here and over there I could see the yellow light of the oil lamps. The streets were empty. I could smell the air like when the hay is damp. I could hear behind the doors the stamping of a mule, a horse breathing. At another door, somebody

snoring. My father did not speak all the way to the train. I don't know when he said it to me, my father, he said, "Make yourself courage." And that was the last time I saw my father.

In another book, **The Italian American Family Album** by Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler (with an introduction by Mario M. Cuomo), page 11 is the following:

"In 1878, when an Italian government official issued a decree urging the people not to leave their nation, a group of peasants sent him this reply:

'What do you mean by a nation, Mr. Minister? Is it the throng of the unhappy? Aye, then we are truly the nation... We plant and we reap wheat but never do we eat white bread. We cultivate the grape but we drink no wine. We raise animals for food but we eat no meat. We are clothed in rags... And in spite of all this, you counsel us, Mr. Minister, not to abandon our country. But is that land, where we cannot live by toil, one's country?'"

Also in **La Storia**, I found a description of Sicilian living styles that sounded a lot like the way my father described his home in Lercara Friddi. It's on page 37.

The houses most people lived in at the time were simply single story huts. The poor usually inhabited a loft above, a crude ladder leading to their beds. The ground level was left to the animals: a mule, chickens, and, for the more fortunate, a pig. The streets were narrow, cobblestoned, and in need of repair, the missing cabblestone usually filled with water and debris. In summer there was the fetid smell of clay, hot straw and pungent herbs in the air, at times filled with clouds of flies disturbed by passerby.

For both rich and poor, plumbing did not exist until well into the twentieth century. Children defecated and urinated in the streets. At night, urinals and pots were emptied into these same streets. In some villages an area was set aside as a public toilet for children and men. Women or servants brought the accumulation of their master's waste and dumped it there. In winter, one old miner remembered, the boys trapped canaries that flocked nearby, roasted them over straw and herb twigs, and ate them hungrily. "But that was the time we wiped our asses with a stone." he concluded.

In the closing epilogue of **La Storia**, Mangione and Morreale write:

At the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus's voyage, we can look back at those adventurers and explorers who came from Italy in the service of others - at the musicians, painters, and artisans in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and at the great wave of immigrants of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that followed, all of whom in the end were looking for a place as safe as home.

Italian-Americans as individuals "bound together by commonalities of language, environment and heredity" have found their American home, with all the conflicts inherent in most families.

As of today, August 20, 1997, this is what I've collected so far. I would appreciate any comments, suggestions, ideas and help, especially stories and pictures of life on West 13th Street.

Sal Runfola Jr.