

## The Maffioli Family



Although our grandfather was born in Rockford, Illinois, his father Luigi, as well as his brothers and sister came from Bolladello, Lombardy, Italy. It was April 3, 1877 when Luigi and Giacomo (Jack) came to America, as so many immigrants did looking for a better life. They arrived at Castle Garden immigration center in New York and began their journey to Rockford.

Being the first Italian family to settle in Rockford, the Maffioli brothers started a contracting and building business based on knowledge they gained in Italy. The brothers were quite successful in building many landmark structures in Rockford. One being the old post office, which was located on the corner of South Main and Green Street. It was torn down and replaced with the current building in 1931.

Luigi was a stone mason, as well as a fruit vendor living on South Water Street. He married Marietta Marelli on April 30, 1882. She was the daughter of Giuseppa Antonia Marelli and Annunciata Saporiti and was born September 15, 1862, also in Bolladello, Lombardy, Italy. Together they had three sons. Two died infancy leaving Boniface (Boni), our grandfather, as their only child. He was born April 12, 1883. Unfortunately, Luigi died very young between the ages of 24 and 27 years old. Marietta went onto marry John Sassali and had three more sons. She died April 3, 1943.

It is believed Boni met his future wife at the School for the Deaf in Jacksonville, Illinois. He married Ola May Hitchens on October 24, 1910. She was born on May 7, 1890 in Logansport, Indiana. With Boniface working at Nelson Knitting and Rockford Brewing Company, they raised four children, while residing at 417 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Lewis - born August 18, 1911 - died March 18, 1993  
Married - Mary Bocanelli - June 22, 1946

Paul - born December 16, 1916 - died March 21, 1965  
Married - Marie Cirone - May 16, 1942

Nora - born January 20, 1923 - died December 25, 1968  
Married - Ralph Clayton then Robert Whipple

Agnes - born January 20, 1927  
Married - Richard Wilson - May 20, 1950

Lewis Maffioli was our father. Once settle down with Mary they went on to have four children residing at 4554 Prairie Road.

Nancy - born August 2, 1948  
Married Bruce Hand - January 23, 1971

Lewis Jr. - born July 28, 1952  
Married Kathie Becker - October 20, 1973

Paul - born April 23, 1956  
Married Ann Vascellaro - November 28, 1981

Linda - born October 17, 1958  
Married John Edmunds - September 11, 1982

Pictured above is a wedding photograph of Boniface and Ola May. Also a photograph of Boniface, Ola May and son, Lewis Maffioli, taken in approximately 1913.

Our family still resides in the Rockford area and continues to grow and flourish with children and many grandchildren. We look forward to holidays and special occasions when our family is all together.

Submitted on November 23, 2015 Nancy Hand for the Genealogy Project -- Culture and Education Committee of GRIAA- "Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families"