

Jack DeCori (1922-1998) Helen Correnti (1921-1994)



Jack and Helen grew up next door to each other on Montague St. a few doors west of St. Ambrose Club. They married in January 1942 and raised four children in Rockford: Steve, Carol (Bartz), Jackie (Drotar) and Marilyn (Moore). Jack retired from Barber-Colman as a foreman in the Textile Division and Helen was a homemaker who never retired.

The story of their parents and how they became neighbors is a lot more adventurous. My mother's parents, Salvatore (Sam) Correnti and Anna Ardizzone, were both born in Linquaglossa, Sicily in the late 1800's. They immigrated to Argentina separately in the early 1900's, met there and married in a small town near Buenos Aires. They raised six children--three were born in Argentina: Gaetana (Maggio), Alfred and Rosa (Frisilla). Nonna was pregnant with my mother, Helen, while immigrating to Rockford in 1921. My mother was born in nonno Sam's parents' house where the grotto now stands at St. Anthony's Church on Corbin St. Simon and Kathryn (Whitney) were born after moving to Montague St. Nonno Sam worked in the foundry at Roper Stove. The reason for settling in Rockford was typical for most immigrants; there was family here.

My father's parents' immigration was quite different. Julio DeCori and Carolina Villani were both born in Cori, Italy in the late 1800's. Julio traveled to and from the USA and Cori three times, 1907, 1910 and finally in 1912. One of the times he worked in a coal mine in Pennsylvania. They married before his last trip to the USA, but she didn't immigrate until 1913. While she was visiting some relatives on Montague St., some workers happened to be moving a house up the street from Rock St. She stopped them and had the workers put the house down in a vacant lot next to her relatives. They raised seven children in that house. Josephine (Navarra) was born in Cori, Italy, but the others were born in Rockford: Mary (Ainsworth/White), Kathryn (Nuciforo), Viola (Correnti/Nuciforo), Dominic, Jack and John. Nonno Julio also worked in the foundry at Roper Stove.

The Correnti's eventually bought Nonna Carolina's relatives' house next door and that's how they became neighbors and how my parents met.

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