

The Leonardo Maggio Family



Born August 25, 1877, in Sambuca, Sicily, Leonardo Maggio immigrated to Rockford, Illinois in April 1903. Over the years he made several trips back to Sambuca for various reasons, but his primary purpose for immigrating to America was for job opportunities in Rockford. Upon arrival, he worked as a laborer for five years. One of the jobs sites he worked on was the new city hall building on First and Walnut Street. After he earned enough money, he returned to Sambuca to marry my grandmother Rosalia Maggio. After promising his future father-in-law that he would not take his daughter Rosalia to America, they were allowed to marry in January 1919. Realizing that work opportunities were rare and Sicily's economic future was bleak, he reneged on his promise and brought his new bride back to Rockford in September 1909. Their first son Giuseppe (Joseph) was born in May 1910 where they lived on South Main Street next to St. Mary's club; their second son Jaspar was born in 1911. Life was good for Leonardo and his young family, but word arrived that his father-in-law had gone blind and needed help. He packed up his family and moved back to Sambuca in 1913. While living back in Sambuca, two more children were added to the Maggio family, a daughter Mary, and another son Anthony.

After his father-in-law passed away, and with yet little employment opportunities in Sambuca, Leonardo returned to Rockford by himself in February 1921. He found employment at Roper Corporation and worked there for 35 years. When his oldest son Joseph, who was, of course, an American citizen, became draft eligible into the Italian army, he decided to bring him back to Rockford. My father Joseph V. Maggio arrived August 1926. In April 1927, he sent for the rest of his family, and they moved to a home at 319 Wall St. in South Rockford. He and his family were dedicated parishioners at St. Anthony Catholic Church, and he was also a member of St. Mary's Society. My grandmother Rosalia, was a dedicated wife, mother and loving grandmother to her family; her perseverance and strength prevailed, especially during the 1920's when she cared for her family alone in Sambuca, allowing her husband to return to Rockford for better job opportunities. She passed away on August, 1970 at the age of 84.

Leonardo Maggio passed away on February 7, 1959, at the age of 81. His pioneer spirit and dedication to providing for his family made possible a bright future for many generations to come.

Submitted on July 30, 2013 by Leonard J. Maggio (Grandson) for the Genealogy Project-Culture and Education Committee of GRIAA-**"Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families"**