

DOMINO



Joseph and Mary Domino with son (Sebastian) - 1934

Giuseppe Domina (original spelling) (1-17-1869, Roccamena, Palermo Province, Sicily - 7-12-1939, Rockford, IL) wed Maria Roppolo (12-29-1875, Poggioreale, Trapani Province, Sicily - 2-19-1942, Rockford, IL). As a young man, Giuseppe went off to serve in the Italian army, where he got a basic education. After discharge from the service, he returned home to work as a field overseer (guardiano campestre) and later in the town hall as a municipal guard and clerk. Grudgingly, Giuseppe decided to emigrate to America, as he and his wife were the only members of their immediate families left in Italy.

Giuseppe and Maria Domina and their three infant children departed Palermo aboard the S.S. California arriving in New York City on 10-28-1898 en route to New Orleans. Awaiting them in Louisiana were Giuseppe's step-father and mother, Giovanni and Francesca (Campisi) Vinci, as well as his half-siblings Pietro Vinci (Peter Vincer), Francesco Vinci (Frank Vincent), Anna Vinci (later Mrs. Frank Campisi), Caterina Vinci (later Mrs. Calogero Morreale) and Santo Vinci (Sam Vincent). The families of Peter Vincer and Sam Vincent later came to Rockford, IL.

Also awaiting them were Maria's parents, Antonino and Giovanna (Citta') Roppolo, as well as her half-brother Giovanni (John) Roppolo and Sebastiana (Bessie) Roppolo (later Mrs. Frank DiGerolamo).

Within a few years after emigration, Giuseppe Domina came to be known as Joseph Domino. In Louisiana he and his growing family farmed various crops, moving quite often. They grew sugar cane and cotton while residing at White Castle, LA (1898-99),

Bayou Current, LA (1900-09) and Plaquemine, LA (1910-14), while at Independence, LA (1914-17) they picked strawberries. In 1917 Joseph Domino and family moved to Rockford, IL following his sons, Frank and Tony, who had come north as laborers on the Illinois Central Railroad a year or so earlier. The family stayed as guests of Mary's cousin, Anthony Cascio, until they found a place of their own.

Joseph ran a small grocery (1918-20), located at his residence on the corner of River and Knowlton Streets in South Rockford. In 1921-22 he was a flagman for the Illinois Central Railroad, manning a crossing on Kishwaukee St. Suffering from diabetes and poor health, he retired in his early fifties. He subscribed to the Italian newspaper and listened to lyric opera on WGN. He was blond, blue-eyed and ruddy with a handlebar mustache, and was remembered as the handsomest man in Roccamena. In their younger days Joseph and Mary Domino were very graceful dancers. Mary never failed to offer something to eat to anyone who came into her home. She and her husband did not speak much English, and were also very devoted to St. Joseph, patron saint of their hometown.

The Dominos lived at the following Rockford addresses:

1117 Rock St. (1917), 1338 River St. (1917-22) and 415 Hall St. (1922-42).

Their offspring and spouses were as follows:

1. Frank Domino (1894-1930) wed Catherine Abene.
2. Anthony (Tony) Domino (1896-1978) wed Lucy Ingrassia.
3. John Domino (1899-1977) wed 1) Lillie Capriola. Wed 2) Dixie Buchanan.
4. Frances Domino (1901-1989) wed Joseph Cuccia.
5. Jennie Domino (1903-1997) wed 1) James Marinelli. Wed 2) Angelo Incelli.
6. Margaret Domino (1904-1964) wed Michael Pollare.
7. Mary Domino (1906-1999) wed Chester Zeppieri.
8. Anne Domino (1907-1967) wed Leo Ginestra.
9. Peter Domino (1908-1995) wed Mildred Wendt.
10. Catherine Domino (1910-2005) wed Peter Martignoni.
11. Sebastian (Buster) Domino (1918-1981) wed Helen Kordash.

The Domino brothers were prominent in the Rockford liquor industry. Tony Domino and wife Lucy owned and operated Ace Liquor Store (1937-56), Central Park Tap (1950-73) and founded with their son Domino Liquors (1964-84). Pete and Millie Domino owned and operated The Music Box (1939-50) and co-owned Central Park Tap with his brother Tony and later his children. John Domino co-owned with his brother Buster Rock River Distributing Co. 1945-57.

Submitted on October 31, 2016 by Anthony Domino for the Genealogy Project for Culture and Education Committee of GRIAA "Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families."