

The Bacinos and the Spinellos Start a Family In the New World



In the latter part of the 1800's, two families arrived in New Orleans from Sicily.

The Bacino family left their home in Lucca di Sicula, a small village up in the mountains of Sambuca in central Sicily; the Spinellos arrived from the metropolitan capital, Palermo.

Eventually, about a quarter of a century later, they would celebrate a marriage between Joseph, the oldest son of the Bacinos with Mary, the older daughter of the Spinellos..

Salvatore and Josephina (Inga) Bacino went first to Baton Rouge after arriving in America and -- a few years later -- settled in Rockford. They arrived in America with their three oldest children, though their family would eventually total ten: Joseph, George, Francis (who married Tony Guzzardo), Roy, John, Louie, Mary (wife of Frank D'Agostine), Charlie, Jimmy, and Carl. For years, the family owned a meat market at the corner of Montague and West Streets.

The Spinello family went initially to Kansas City, Missouri, where the two of the brothers, Matt and Tom, began a locksmith service. The descendents of Tom Spinello still run key shops in Kansas City.

In 1914 Matt and his wife Mary (Palmero) moved to Rockford to start the M. Spinello locksmith service here. The shop, which was originally located on the site of the present Metro Center and later moved a block farther west on Chestnut Street, has continually been run since founding by son Joe Spinello and later grandson, Matt Spinello and Jim White (husband of granddaughter Mary Lou Spinello).

The Spinellos had four children: Naze, Joe, Kay (Rizzo) and Mary, the older daughter who would marry into the Bacino family.

The wedding of Mary Spinello and Joe Bacino was a festive occasion for both families in 1925. The bride and groom rode in an open car as the bride's father, Matt Spinello, threw out hundreds of key blanks in celebration (and an eye toward marketing).

The couple had six children: Josephine or Jay (married to Augie Rizzo, now both deceased), Ted Bacino (divorced from Jan Marinelli Bacino), Matt Bacino (married to Pat Ritter), Tom Bacino (married to Sandy Fasula), Marilyn (now deceased was married

to Benny Frisella) and Joseph Bacino, Jr., (also deceased) who was married to Robin Michelson,

Ted Bacino, the oldest son of the oldest son, has three children. Geoff (married to Nathalie-Lemons Auer), was appointed by President Bill Clinton to the Board of the National Credit Union Administration and appointed by President George W. Bush to a seat on the Federal Housing Finance Board; Miki Bacino-Thiessen, who teaches at Rock Valley College; and Lara Bacino-Althaus, who teaches at Lakeland College in Central Illinois.

Ted Bacino taught and coached at St. Thomas High School and also was the assistant principal at Boylan Central Catholic High School, where he directed theater. He is the former Executive Assistant Secretary of State for Illinois.

Josephine (also known as Jo or Jay) and Augie Rizzo had three children: Augie Joe (married to Barb Virgili), the former coach and athletic director for Boylan Central Catholic High School; Carl (married to Jan Gucciardo); and Mary Jo (married to Steve Hull).

Matt and Pat Bacino have two sons: Gary (married to Melanie Smith) and Greg (married to Teresa Adair).

Tom and Sandy Bacino have three daughters, twins Pam (Leden) and Tammy (married to Timothy Fitzgerald) and third daughter Kimberly Campbell.

Marilyn and Benny Frisella had two daughters: Sherise (married to Craig Swain) and Alisa Jo (married to Anthony Laudacina) and a son (deceased) Benny Frisella, Jr..

Joseph Bacino, Jr. (deceased), and his wife, the former Robin Michelson, had one daughter, Rosemary Bacino.

The clan of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren from the marriage of Joe and Mary Bacino has now increased exponentially, scanning the country from California to Washington, DC.

Though none of the descendants have been able to find relatives of the Spinellos in Palermo, the Bacinos in Lucca di Sicula still remember the one family that left for the new world.

Ted Bacino, who has visited that small Sicilian village quite a few times, remembers his first visit there. Many of the houses have the last name of the husband and maiden name of the wife painted on either side of the front door. He wandered the streets looking for the names of his grandparents: Inga and Bacino.

One person he questioned as he walked was a woman who had lived in America for a while and spoke perfect English. Since he thought Chicago would be better known, Ted asked if she knew of a Bacino family who had moved to Chicago. "No," she replied, "but Salvatore and Josephina moved to a town called Rockford." The woman who was barely in her 40s said the small village remembered and occasionally spoke of one of the few families that left the small town. She took Ted Bacino to two different Bacino homes to meet the relatives. It was time for coffee in good China cups, homemade wine, and a gift of olive oil from their fields.

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