

I guess this story begins in the year 1886 on a small farm in Mussomeli, Sicily where my grandfather Vincenzo Murano was born. As Vincenzo grew older he grew restless longing for adventure and escape from the mundane life on the farm. So at age 19 he left his brother Peter and his parents and sailed for America (where the streets were paved with gold) to seek his fortune. Unfortunately for him the streets were mostly mud. Young, with a strong back and a pick and shovel he worked tirelessly but without much reward. After two years and saving every cent he could he returned to Sicily. To his delight he discovered his neighbor Angela Coffaro who was now 15 and grown into a lovely, mature women. After a two year courtship they married.



Vincenzo Murano

Naturally Angela was curious to know all about Vincenzo's experience in America. Vincenzo told her of the abundances of America and left out the hardships that he endured.

The young couple yearned for a family, but Angela knew that children and a family would tie them to Sicily forever, and their dream of coming to America. Vincenzo sailed alone for America and made his way to Buffalo, New York where there was a family he could live with until he could establish himself and save enough money to send for Angela. Finally in 1912 he was joined by his young wife in Buffalo. They lived

in a small house on Busti Ave in a neighborhood that was almost 100% Sicilian.



Angela Murano

In 1914 their first child, Rosaria (Rose), was born. In 1916 Salvatrice (Sarah) came along. By 1920 two more girls were born, Vincenza (Jean) and Giuseppina (Joesphine), and this is where the real story begins.

The year was 1927, by this time the girls were getting older and the house at 134 Busti Ave was getting smaller. it was time for a move, but to move away from the familiar Sicilian neighborhood to an area that was basically "Americano" was not only daring but unheard of. In 1927 the economy was flourishing and Grandma Murano who was the decision maker and top sergeant found a house on Gelston St. Gelston was basically a non-Italian neighborhood, except for the Coniglios next door and the Broncatos next to them.

At that time Gelston St. was upscale compared to the lower west side or the hooks. Across the street was the Francis family and next to them the Sawyers. The neighbors on the right were the Diones and next to them the Van Gezens. So you see it was an all American neighborhood.

The house was a large double with

a smaller house in the rear. My grandparents and my four aunts lived in the rear house and the front flats were rented. My three brothers and I were raised in this house.

The house was purchased for \$2,950.00 . Life was sweet. No one saw the storm brewing. It came so fast. Grandpa Vincenzo lost his job; the tenants couldn't pay the rent. There was panic. People were losing their homes. Banks were foreclosing. The house on Gelston St. was in jeopardy. That's when the top sergeant (grandma Angela) made her move.

She had the answer. They were farmers in Italy and area farmers needed people to pick berries, tomatoes, beans, and other crops. They needed workers for canning factories, and field bosses. People had to eat. While the pay was meager, Grandma and the four girls made enough in the picking season to pay the taxes on the Gelston St house.

In the spring of 1930 she and her girls headed for the Catalano farm where they lived in shacks until September. If things got slow they would move



Vincenza Rosaria Salvatrice
Giuseppina

to the Mecca farm for the tomato season. After the picking season ended they worked in the canning factory on the Mecca property. They did this until 1935.

In 1931 they mortgaged the house for money to live on and by November of 1946 grandma discharged the mortgage and the house was free and clear again. The important years were the seven years (1928 to 1935) when grandma and her four daughters saved the house on Gelston St. They were my heroes.

Eventually everyone had a taste of Gelston street. In 1946 grandma moved to the front house with Aunt Josephine who was still single and nicknamed Tiny because she was less than 5 ft. tall. We moved from Seventh St. to the cottage in the back. My Aunt Sarah was already living above grandma when we moved in, but soon her family grew too large

and she and Uncle Joe bought their own house in Riverside. When she moved my aunt Vincenza (Jean) moved in. So you see we all had a taste, and while times were sometimes difficult, no one ever realized it.

They are all gone now, but memories survive and somehow they're all good, like my grandfathers recollection of his first trip to America, somehow the hard times are forgotten.

I have written this as a tribute to my grandma, Angela Murano and her daughters, Rose, Sarah, Jean and Tiny . My heros!!!!!!

Sam Arena

May No. 30270 Nov.

Vincenzo Murano and Angela Murano, his wife,

TO
Buffalo Savings Bank

Bond

AMOUNT \$ 3500.00

DATED June 9, 1931

LOCATION 149 Gelston St.

CLASS OF PROPERTY Dwelling

ADDRESS OF APPLICANT 134 Busti Ave.

PAID
NOV 18 1946
BUFFALO SAVINGS BANK

3500.- Nov-10-1931 - 73.40
JUN 9 1931

3500.- 4375.

