

Michele MALTESE and Marianna CAPUANO from Forio to America

By Carole GENZANO – June 2016

I have been a member of La Grande Famille de Procida & Ischia for 6 years. My grandparents, Michele MALTESE and Marianna CAPUANO were born on the Island of Ischia and I would have never been able to learn about my family if Pascal SCOTTO DI VETTIMO was not so generous with his time to film all these records.



Michele MALTESE was born in Casamicciola on July 2, 1886 and Marianna was born on June 29, 1891 in Forio. They married on March 25, 1909 in Forio and left shortly after their marriage arriving in America on April 30, 1909. Having visited the beautiful Island of Ischia, I have no idea why they left.

I never knew my grandfather, he died after being hit by a car on December 27, 1936. I was unable to talk to my grandmother, she had a stroke and was bedridden. All I remember was visiting her every Sunday, and giving her a hug and kiss. She never spoke but would have tears in her eyes when we visited. She died when I was 9 years old. I think that is what made me want to find out about my family.

Marianna was the first to come to America. She and Michele had 11 children, one of them died shortly after birth. Michele's father lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania so when they arrived, they went to him. I don't know if he lived with them or they lived with him, but they stayed in Philadelphia until 1917. My aunt Concetta remembers Michele's father, Luigi MALTESE. She said he got very sick and wanted to die in Italy. I have not found his death record. Luigi's wife was Concetta PISANI and the last record I can find for her was 1906, when she came to America to see her husband. Michele's passport in 1909 says his mother is deceased. Again, no death record for Concetta.

Michele was an only child so there are no siblings. Marianna had 8 siblings of whom five came to America. The five CAPUANO sisters who came to America were Eloya and Candida who came in 1911, Maria in 1919 and Assunta and Lucia in 1921. I don't remember too much about my mother's aunts. I was told they visited my grandmother when my mother was a child. My mother did take me to visit them but I don't remember much about them. I recently found the granddaughter of Eloya but we haven't had time to meet in person. That will happen soon. I think the CAPUANO girls kept their ties to Forio. Maria and Assunta married two RUSSO brothers from Forio. Maria married in Forio and Assunta in America. Candida and Eloya married two VUOTTO brothers in America. The VUOTTO brothers were also from Forio. Carmina and Loreta CAPUANO also married two more RUSSO brothers. So we have four brothers marrying four sisters.



The two standing from left are Maria and Eloya and sitting from left are Candida, Marianna (my grandmother) and Lucia

My family lived a tragic life here in America. Michele MALTESE died young and left Marianna with five children under the age of 16. The older children worked to buy food and clothing. Then when Marianna had her stroke, they all took care of her. She died at the age of 54 and Michele died at the age of 50.

My mother told me that my grandmother said we weren't all Italian, that there was French in our background. With the help of La Grande Famille, I have traced both the MALTESE family and the CAPUANO family back to the 1600's and they are all Italian, born on the beautiful Island of Ischia.