

Lucia Luigia 'Gina'
Guglietti
as recounted to
Grandaughter Sandra
Italian Immigrant
Roma
May 14, 1953



I was born in a small hilltop community 'Cesarone' just outside Pescosolido, Frosinone, Italy to peasant farmers Antonio Guglietti and Filomena Sarracini. I married my husband Raffaele Valentini who was from a nearby settlement 'Utalito' approximately 6km outside Sora, Frosinone, Italy on February 27th, 1949.



Raffaele's uncle Sabatino was already in Toronto, Canada (and had been since 1912) when he sponsored him to come over. Raffaele wanted to provide a better life and opportunities for his family so he embarked on the 'S.S.

Scythia' from Le Havre, France and arrived in the port of Quebec on June 8, 1951. From there he boarded a train to Toronto, Ontario. He worked with his uncle in construction and saved enough money to send for me and our children two years later, I was living with his parents at the time. I was so excited to begin on this new adventure that I didn't think twice about going, although at the age of 27 years old I had never traveled very far from my hometown, I didn't know what to expect but hoped for the best.

I embarked in Naples with two children (Vincenza 3 and Mario 1) on La 'Roma', Lauro Lines, arriving at Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia on May 14th, 1953. My purse with my passport and all



pertinent documents almost fell in the water in the gap between the boat and dock luckily I caught it in the nick of time. I boarded with another young lady who was going over to Toronto. I was very careful not to mingle too much as I did not want to draw attention to my children who had whooping cough. I certainly did not want to be detained in Halifax.

I remember La 'Roma' as a beautiful impressive ship, the food was good and I enjoyed eating it, however I could not keep it down because I was sea sick. Other than my upset stomach the voyage was without incident.

Once in Halifax I had to board the train to Toronto, Ontario. The train waited for me while I changed my son's diaper in the restroom at Pier 21. On the train I had one seat and I balanced one child on each of my legs. To my astonishment they served us white soft bread on board the train, it was nothing like the crusty Italian bread I was accustomed to and I thought to myself this is awful what am I going to do if this is what the bread is like in Canada.

My husband and his uncle met me at Union Station in Toronto and this would be the first time Raffaele would see his son as he left Italy when I was pregnant with him. Shortly thereafter we had our third child a daughter, Lidia.

Once settled we sent for my parents. Coming over first through Halifax, NS was my father Antonio Guglietti on March 16, 1954; my mother Filomena Sarracini followed a few years later also arriving through Pier 21 on January 10, 1959.

Raffaele returned to Italy alone in 1960 for one month visiting his family. We later returned with my parents in 1977 for 5 weeks with an organized tour company.

Today we are proud grandparents of 8 (7 girls and 1 boy) and great grandparents of 2 (1 girl & 1 boy).

Raffaele and I continue to maintain an impressive vegetable garden, & backyard grape vineyard. Raffaele enjoys making wine and I continue to make tomato preserves, homemade pasta, cannelloni, gnocchi, polenta, lasagna, cookies and what my grandchildren tell me are my famous 'ciambelle'.

Raffaele and I have just celebrated our 80th birthdays and our 57th wedding anniversary is this year.

Though I feel tenderly for my place of birth I am pleased, delighted and thankful for the life we made in Canada. Even if summers seem too short and winters cold and long I happily claim Canada as home.