

Maria Disipio nee Stenta
Italian Immigrant
Roma
May 18, 1954



As recounted to my daughter
Grace - on my behalf.

I married my husband Frank, before we had even met. He was living in Ottawa, Canada, having arrived here in 1950. He befriended a gentleman named Alfredo, who had emigrated from my home town and who was also a friend of our family.

Frank told Alfredo that he wanted to marry, but it had to be a nice Italian girl from back home, so Alfredo gave my address to Frank.

I replied to Frank's first letter, and we subsequently exchanged photographs. After 3 months of correspondence, Frank proposed and I said yes. At almost 20 years of age and not yet married - I decided I had nothing to lose and embarked on this new adventure.



On October 11, 1953, I was married in our local church. With my father standing in for Frank, we became married by proxy. The

following May, escorted by a family who were friends of my parents and who were also leaving for Canada, I left Italy to start my new life (loaded down with two trunks containing my wedding trousseau and all my earthly possessions).

Our passage was on a ship named the 'Roma' of the Lauro flotilla, and I arrived in Halifax in May 1953. After being processed, the family I was traveling with and I boarded a coal train for Montreal. In my clean blue suit, I was nervous and anxious.

On the train, we were offered pasta, which to our shock and disillusionment, turned out to be canned Chef Boyardee. By the time I

arrived in Montreal, my nice suit had become a shade darker (thanks to the soot from the coal train).

Frank met me at the station with his sister Carmela and her husband Luigi. It was the first time I saw Frank. We drove back to Ottawa, to a home Frank shared with his parents and siblings. For the first 4 days, we slept in separate rooms and did not consummate our marriage. On the 5th day, we went to St. Anthony's church to receive a blessing from the parish priest. A small reception followed at the home where



Frank and I would co-habitate with his family.

We moved many times before purchasing our first starter home away from 'Little Italy', where we lived for several years.

After a series of odd jobs, Frank found a permanent position working as a Mason for the Department of Public Works. I worked for 10 years for the Public School Board as a Janitor, as well as being a full time homemaker and mother to our son and two daughters.

Frank and I returned many times to Italy to care for my aging parents, but sadly, My father passed away in 2001, and my mother in 2004 - both lived to the age of 96.



*Maria & Frank Disipio
October 11, 1953-2003*

*Thank-you for sharing with us in this Joyous Occasion
Grazie a Tutti*

I am proud 'Nonna' to a delightful 10 year old boy. I adore him, and he adores my 'gnocchi', which I gladly make for him whenever he's not away at a week-end hockey tournament.

I am fortunate to have my children living in Ottawa, we are a close and loving family and try to see each other regularly. In 2004 I celebrated 50 years in Canada, and this year, Frank and I celebrated our 52nd anniversary. While I still have warm feelings for my birthplace, I am also proud and grateful for the life we have made in Canada.