

The Negusanti Family
by Daughter Maura
Negusanti Palma
Italian Immigrants
Vulcania
February 19, 1951



Pier 21 - THE NEGUSANTI FAMILY

I have always known the story of my parents' journey to Halifax but just recently I have found some new details.

I arrived in Halifax on February 19, 1952, along with my father Anselmo



Negusanti and my mother Giuseppina Di Sante, I was 2 ½ years old.

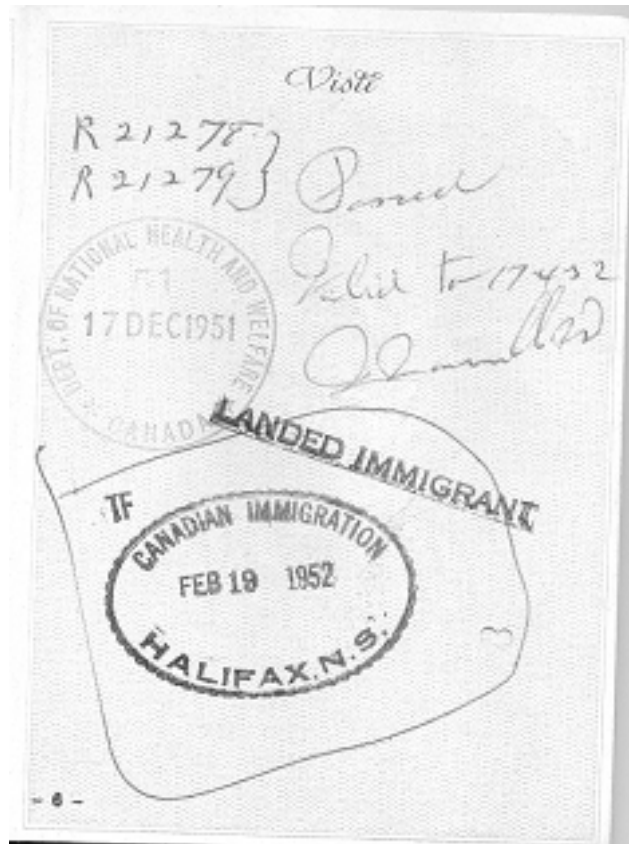
My parents came from a small village in Italy, called San Andrea in Villis, in the province of Pesaro (Marche). My father worked on his father's land and my mother was a seamstress. They were living together

with my grandparents, siblings and other relatives. They soon realized that their situation would never improve, so when my uncle Valerio returned to Italy to marry, after spending a few years in Montreal, they decided to join him.

We left from the port of Genoa on February 8, 1952 aboard the ship Vulcania. My aunt Clara and my grandfather Achille accompanied us at Genoa, the last goodbyes were heartbreaking and it seemed as even the ship was grieving with us as it was leaving the port by sending out the cry of its siren.

The ship stopped at several ports, Cannes, Napoli, Palermo, and somewhere in Portugal, where we disembarked and my father bought some “castagne” chestnuts, and from there, the long crossing of the Atlantic. The atmosphere onboard the ship was pleasant, there was music, the sea was calm and only on one day was it rough and scary.

Both my parents were seasick, but I was not. I ran all over the place and my parents could not keep up with me, but thanks there was our steward, Bevilacqua, who would look after me and report to my parents of my whereabouts. I boarded the ship with a doll that a relative had given me and I threw that doll overboard and I wanted to go and get it, my mother saw it floating on the sea with her arms wide spread. My mother spent the entire trip worrying sick that I would jump overboard and for many and many years after she kept having the same nightmare of the doll floating on the ocean.



We arrived in Halifax and were very discouraged by the dirty snow and the cold weather but my mother had a very positive first impression as we were very well taken care off, and given much attention since she was travelling with a child. We took the train to Montreal and again on board the train they gave her a couch to sleep on and pillows, attention that she never received in her own country while travelling with me and this first impression made her confident that they had taken the right decision. On the train ride, what amazed them was seeing all those “little” houses with white smoke coming out of them.

My father is almost 86 years old and my mother 83, and thank God that are still in good health. My father has always made his garden, his own wine, prosciuto and sausages. My mother is an excellent cook, still makes her homemade pasta and all her food is simply delicious. Like with all Italian immigrants, they found it hard to adapt to the snow, the long and cold winters, the big city, the language, the little odd jobs, but with hard work, sacrifices and perseverance they made a better life for

themselves and their three daughters. They have never wished to return to Italy, their home is here in Canada with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchild.

Maura Negusanti Palma