

Buon Pomeriggio,

So nice to meet you, I am Teresa DiGiorgio Danieri. My husband Francisco and I were married in Palermo, Sicily. We immigrated to the United States in 1906 with our oldest daughter Carmela. Opportunities were greater here than in the old country.

Seventeen Sicilian families settled in Corona around that time including Francisco's brother Tommoso and my family; the DiGiorgios. Tommoso was married to my sister Carmela so our children were double cousins.

Since Sicily was known for exporting lemons and our families had worked in the packing houses or groves there.

The first arrival, Nicolo Corselli was asked by Mr. Jameson to come to Casa Blanca to teach unskilled laborers the fine art of packing lemons and making boxes. When the rest of us arrived we took work as pruners, pickers, graders and packers.

My Francisco was a packing house pressman..he fastened the tops to the boxes of fruit and secured a metal band around them.

We had nine little ones when the Spanish Influenza visited our home on Sheridan Street. Carmela was now thirteen and the youngest Josephine, was just seven months old.

Our house was quarantined so my husband, a laborer at that time, could not leave the house to work.

On December 11, 1918; I passed away. I was 35.

Because it was the glad Christmas time, the Daily Independent newspaper asked for donations for my children. The big-hearted people of Corona gave, most in one-dollar increments. Clothes, Christmas sweets and food arrived. People were very generous after a newspaper article explained that the children deserved help because they were still humans even if they were Italians. It added, "Those little children loved their mother the same as your own child loves you."

(Shrug sadly and shake head softly.)

Life went on without me, Francisco raised the children. He hunted, trapped, worked in the vegetable garden and sold goats. In 1923, he built an addition to our home.

Carmela left school to care for her brothers and sisters.

The Italian families all lived north of Sixth Street. They got together for feeds and played bocci. And because of our tradition of making and drinking wine some of the men were arrested time and time again. Corona went dry in 1917.

When our daughter Carmela was sixteen, she married an Italian immigrant, Sam Lunetta; a veteran of the Great War.

She would no longer had to look after her brothers and sisters or so she believed..

Francisco worked in the Jameson packing house making \$1.80 a day. Much more than he had earned in Sicily.

On June 16, 1926, he got in an argument with his brother-in-law Nicholo Corselli while on the job. Some whispered that it was over a woman. Corselli's son Antonio was there too, as he was the foreman. There had been bitter feelings between our families since an incident in 1910.

That night, carrying a revolver, my husband went to the Corselli home over on Merrill to finish the argument.

The police were told there had been a duel but it was unclear at first which Corselli killed my husband. Both were arrested until Nicholo admitted he did it and Antonio admitted dumping his body near the Corona Citrus Association Packing House. (point to old packing crate stamped with CCA.) Nicholo Corselli was acquitted of murder two months later.

Our six younger children moved in with Carmela and her husband; she raised them along with her own two.

Keeping them with her even after her husband died three years later in 1929.

Many of our fellow countrymen proudly obtained American citizenship. Our children were good students. Some of the old traditions such as arranged marriages were discarded. Some of our descendants owned local businesses and participated in civic government.

Remember Pete's Liquor in Norco or Carmel and Nancy's restaurant in Corona?

Ross Blandi and Tony Bolero both served as councilmen and mayors of Corona. (in 1950s and 1960s)

Thank you for listening to my family's story.

Chi Vidiamu e Dio Vi Benedica — Ciao!

(We'll see you later and may God Bless You—So long!)

Teresa Danieri