

Fata Family Tree

COVERING 10 GENERATIONS FROM THE EARLY 1700'S
INCLUDING A BRIEF HISTORY OF IPPOLITO AND MARRIETTA FATA AND FAMILY



Indexed For Easier Reference

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THE FATAS:

The name Fata has been very common for centuries in the town of Carolei, a short distance south of Cosenza in southern Italy.

From there they branched out to other towns in the area but a large number emigrated to South America first and then to North America, following the trend of the general emigration of the times.

In this Country they settled originally in the north-east, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, spreading later to the rest of the Country, many are also in Canada.

It seems there were three branches of Fatas in Carolei as far back as the 1700s, which were likely connected in prior generations but no records are available for that period. The three branches were headed by Vincenzo, Lorenzo and Fortunato Fata.

The Fatas currently living in the Lansing area, in Toronto Canada, also some in New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and surely elsewhere, are descendants of Vincenzo Fata.

Vincenzo's great-grandson Giacinto moved from Carolei to S.Ippolito, a town nearby, in the mid 1800s where he married Teresa Coscarella, their son Pietro married Enrichetta Belsito, also from S.Ippolito, they had several children but only three of them survived, Angelo, Ippolito and Giovanni.

Eventually Pietro moved from S.Ippolito to Montalto Uffugo another nearby town, while there his wife Enrichetta died and he married Angelina Montemurro from Montalto, they had four more children, Marietta, Teresina, Carmine and Rita. Their descendants are for the most part in Toronto Canada, a few in Montalto Uffugo.

The descendants of Angelo, Ippolito and Giovanni are all in the Lansing Mich. Area.

At about the same time that Giacinto Fata moved to S.Ippolito, one of the descendants of Lorenzo Fata also moved, first to Pietrafitta, another town in the area, where he married Carmena De Rose and then to S.Ippolito. Their descendants are in Canada, mostly Toronto, some in Windsor and others in California.

Ippolito and Marietta



Fata Family

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Ippolito Fata



Paul Fata frequently spoke at Sunday dinners about his fondness for Italy but he was also quick to add that his decision to leave his homeland was the right one. Reminiscing about the beauty of Italy he would say without hesitancy that life in Italy is nice but if you want to make a good living, “you must come to l’America”. And so the journey began.....

Paul Fata was born on August 12, 1896, just one day prior to the feast of the patron saint of his birthplace, Sant’Ippolito. For this reason he was named Ippolito which was anglicized to Paul when he arrived at Ellis Island in 1921. The surname “Fata” does not begin in Sant’Ippolito. In centuries past the name was very common in the

Calabrian town of Carolei, which is south of Cosenza. From there the family branched out to other towns in the area. A large number emigrated to South America first and then to North America following the trend of the general emigration of the times.

It appears that there were three branches of Fatas in Carolei as far back as the 1700s, which were likely connected in the prior generation but no records are available for that period. The three branches were headed by Vincenzo, Lorenzo, and Fortunato Fata. The Fatas currently living in the Lansing area and some living in Toronto, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio are descendants of Vincenzo Fata.

In the mid 1800s Vincenzo's great grandson, Giacinto moved from Carolei to Sant'Ippolito where he married Teresa Coscarella. Their son Pietro married Enrichetta Belsito, also from Sant'Ippolito. They had several children but only three survived, Angelo, Ippolito, and Giovanni.

Struggling to survive, Pietro moved his family to Montalto Uffugo where they lived in a small farmhouse called Santa Venera. Here too they struggled as the terrain is rocky, rolling and dry. At one point Pietro took his son Ippolito to Argentina in an attempt to help support the family. Ippolito remembered selling newspapers on the street corners of Buenos Aires. This journey was short lived and not as profitable as Pietro had hoped. Shortly after the birth of her youngest son, Giovanni, Enrichetta died of breast cancer. Pietro then married Angelina Montemurro and they had four children, Marietta, Teresina, Carmine and Rita. These descendants for the most part reside in Toronto, Canada.

As a young man, Ippolito was drafted and fought in World War I. He was wounded twice and received two medals of honor for his bravery. His son, Ernest, remembers Ippolito describing the brutality of the war and the horrific conditions for the wounded.



Upon his release from the military, Paul made the decision to immigrate to North America. In late April 1921 Ippolito and his brother Giovanni left their home for the unknown aboard the ship Mitsugu. They arrived on Ellis Island on May 13, 1921 and boarded a train to meet their brother Angelo who was already with his family in Howell, Michigan.



After living briefly in Howell and being employed by the railroad, Ippolito made the move to Lansing Michigan. With \$300, he purchased a small grocery store on the corner of Grand Avenue and Shiawassee Street. Limited by his minimal education in Italy (third grade) but strengthened by his innate entrepreneurial skills, he quickly began to realize that his hope of the American dream was becoming a reality. He began the business as a fruit and vegetable market but soon expanded it into a delicatessen and grocery store, also selling crockery, beer and wine. He also created a soda fountain area where he sold malts, sodas, and other ice cream dishes.

Marietta Fata

Marietta Coscarelli Fata was born in Sant'Ippolito, Italy on November 15, 1905. Her parents, George and Thomasina (Spagnuolo) Coscarelli were already living in the United States, but were on one of their frequent visits back to Italy when Mary was born. Upon their return to the United States they lived in Mason, Michigan where George was approached by the owner of Dart Bank. He was interested in adopting his daughter, Mary! Mary so proudly explained that even

though the family was very poor, her father without hesitation, refused.

With the family struggling to pay the bills in Mason, her father George decided to pack up the family and move to Tecumseh, Michigan, where he purchased a fruit market. At this point her brother Santo took a more active role in the business. With his help the business grew and their money

problems decreased. Santo was so successful that he was featured in a Life magazine article on the entrepreneurial success of this hard working young man. Tragically it was short-lived. In the Spring of 1918, Santo suddenly became ill and within days he died from the pandemic flu.

Thomasina was devastated by their loss and quickly dyed all the family clothing black. She dressed completely in black from head to toe and dressed her young children also in black. Although Mary was very sad at the loss of her brother, she was embarrassed to wear the mourning clothes to school. As she viewed it, the black mourning

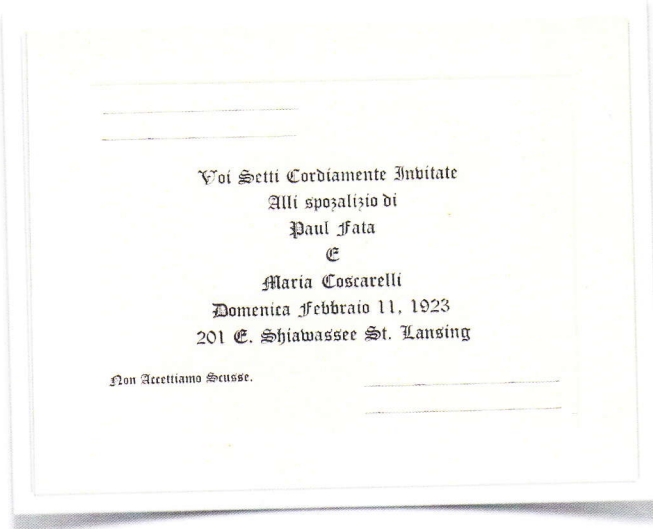


dress was an Italian peasant tradition, not understood by her American school friends.

Mary did very well in school but like many Italian-American young women of the era she dropped out of school prior to entering high school. It was time to assist in the store and prepare for her future role as wife and mother.

Paul and Mary Fata: Marriage and Family

Paul Fata made his way to Tecumseh in 1922 to court Mary and they were married on February 11, 1923 at Saint Mary Cathedral. Officiating was Msgr. John W. O'Rafferty. Saint Mary Cathedral parish continued to be an integral part of their family life.



The young couple worked side by side in the store from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week. When trucks came to the Lansing City Market located nearby, the store remained opened longer to accommodate the truckers arriving at the City Market at midnight. At this time, Paul and Mary lived above a store newly owned by her parents on South Cedar Street. After the birth of their first two children, Dorena and Ernest, Paul had built a larger store with living quarters above for the couples' growing family. The store's grand

opening was February 6, 1931. Interestingly, Paul easily managed the payments on the new building despite the ongoing depression of the 1930's. Mary stayed busy raising their children, and also preparing lunches for the few store employees. Their children, Gloria, Eleanor, Frank and Margaret, were born above the store on Grand and Shiawasse. Lawrence was born at Saint Lawrence Hospital and spent his early years growing up above the store also. Without the luxury of a yard or playground, the children played in the alley behind the store. All the children also worked in the store daily after the short walk home from their school, St. Mary Cathedral. Joanne was born after the family moved six blocks west to a home with a yard and room for a garden to grow tomato plants and other Italian produce.



Paul and Mary worked well together in marriage as they respected and trusted the attributes of each other, Mary raising their growing family and Paul pursuing various business activities. They eventually purchased a summer cottage at Lake Lansing to escape the heat of their

apartment above the grocery store. To supplement the income from the store, Paul also made various real estate purchases, including the "Dodge Building" in downtown Lansing. Another popular investment for Paul were land contracts that he would hold for individuals. In the mid 1940's Paul purchased farmland on West Willow Highway. Paul and Mary never farmed the land but they would go frequently in the summer foraging fieldgreens. Picking dandelion greens and other "weeds" was embarrassing then for the Fata children. Little

did they know that these greens would eventually become a popular item sold in supermarkets everywhere! Meanwhile the grocery store business was taking another turn. With the assistance of his sons the store grew and developed into a successful wholesale business selling foods and supplies to restaurants and

pizzerias in all of Michigan.

In June of 1990 the Paul Fata & Sons building was engulfed in flames and tragically destroyed. Within a week from the fire the business was sold to a restaurant wholesaler located in Grand Rapids Michigan.

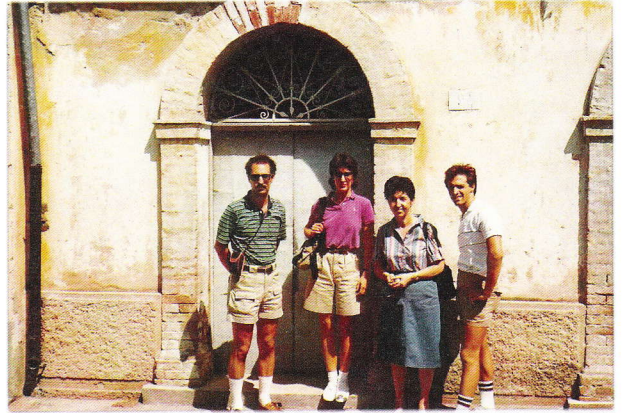


After establishing himself financially in his business pursuits, Paul began making occasional trips back to Italy with his wife and their children, and eventually with their grandchildren. Paul and Mary first returned to Italy in 1935 when they and their children Dorena, Ernest, and Gloria accompanied them on the ocean liner Rex. They visited Paul's father who was still living in Montalto at "the farm". Included in every trip back home was a mandatory visit to the Santuario di Sant'Ippolito. Both Paul and Mary had a deep reverence and devotion to Sant'Ippolito.

When Paul made the decision to leave his homeland, and when he eventually landed at Ellis Island, he had hopes and dreams for his new life in America. When he and his bride Mary settled in Lansing Michigan, he knew that with hard work and long hours he could make for himself and his family a better life. Paul died on July 7, 1979. Mary died on March 22, 1990.

Castellani Family

In 1983 the Castellani family took a once in a lifetime tour of beautiful Italy! On the trip were Art, Dorena, Bill, Ed, Mark Castellani and Jeannie and Bill Mothersell. Along the way we toured Rome, Florence, Venice and Milan. We took a detour from the tour group, rented a big van and traveled south to the region of Calabria, and our ancestral village, Sant' Ippolito. There we visited the church of Sant' Ippolito in the center of town, as well as the town square where we visited with the locals and several relatives. We saw many of the homes where some of our relatives were born, including the house where our Dad, Art Castellani was born. We also went on to Montalto, with its beautiful mountains and fig trees. It was a fantastic trip filled with long lasting, lifetime memories. - Jeannie Castellani Mothersell



June of 1988 / First Trip to Sant Ippolito/ Mark Castellani & Lisa Hildorf

We flew into Rome and once the jet lag was over, sorta, we rented a car and drove to the south. Our car was a Fiat, Panda, and the engine was smaller than most motorcycles. Driving in Rome was a lot of fun. I drove while Mark read the signs for directions. Once on the highway we thought it would be easy. However, we ran into stopped traffic about an hour south of Rome. This was a huge traffic jam. All cars were stopped and parked on the highway. Families were all outside of their cars...talking, drinking wine and then suddenly everyone was running towards us, yelling and jumping into their cars. Everyone was honking their horns to get cars moving. The road was now open to drive! Avanti!!!

It took us most of the day to arrive in Cosenza and find our hotel named The Jolly. At dinner that night we asked our waiter what road to take to travel to Sant Ippolito in the morning. He shrugged. We asked the man at the hotel desk...he frowned and looked the other way. I asked the room service waiter in the morning and he shook his head and smiled. Even the man that parked our car did not know where Sant Ippolito was in relation to Cosenza. A miracle occurred the next morning when we drove away from our hotel. Mark saw one sign with an arrow pointing us to Sant Ippolito. It took us thirty minutes on a twisting road heading up a small mountain with very few guardrails! Why we were laughing is a mystery.

Once in the village, we parked our car and began walking. We had a large video camera and a man and two little boys said hello to us. We were sure the man was Frankie Pentangeli from The Godfather II. We had a hand-drawn map to follow that showed us where Art Castellani was born and where Louis Dionise's sister lived. We walked to Assunta's home and they welcomed us inside for refreshments. They showed us the church just outside their door and we met the priest who showed us the bell in the tower had the names of many families from Lansing including Paul Fata, who had sent money to pay for this church bell. We walked into the town square and met three boys around the age of ten. We asked them if they knew a person named "Finootz". No...they did not know this woman. We walked around and we bought the boys some ice cream at the small store near the center of the village. There we met a woman who was the little boy's mother and we explained we were looking for a woman named Finootz and these boys did not know her. The woman made a funny face and went over to one of the boys, who turned out to be her son, and she gave him a slap across his forehead. It turned out the woman we were looking for was her mother and the little boy's grandmother.

She took us to her home immediately and introduced us. On Finootz's mantel we saw pictures of Ernie and Theresa Fata. We knew we were in the right place.

The last names of the boys who showed us around were Spagnuolo (he had lived in Toronto and spoke English very well) DeRose (grandson of Finootz) and DeLuca.

That afternoon we drove to Montalto and met Giugino Fata and his family. We found the center of the city easily and parked our car next to many other cars in the middle of the square in front of Giugino's home. His daughter, Marrisa, was actually going into their building just as we were and she heard Mark and I talking as we looked at the list of the names on the door. Mark said "I don't see a Fata" and Marisa said "I am a Fata". Once we explained who we were she took us upstairs to meet her parents. One of the first questions Giugino asked us was, "When will Ernesto or Orlando come to visit us?" Guigino took us to the farm and showed us the olive trees and the barn where the olives are stored. We drove back to the town and had a nice walk to see two beautiful churches, some nice cafes and some small stores. We were treated to some strong coffee and some good wine. It was beginning to be dusk and we thought we should head back before it was too dark to find the one sign that would direct us safely back to Cosenza and our hotel. We looked down into the city center from the balcony of Giugino's home where we had parked and our car was the only car left in the square with all the residents of the town walking around it as part of the passagata. Giugino said if we had a ticket we should not pay it! We said goodbye and thanked them for their kind hospitality.

The next day we drove to Positano and the fun really began seeing the Amalfi drive followed by a few days on Capri and then back to Rome for a final few days of museums and shopping and the best haircut I ever had at a salon overlooking the Trevi Fountain. The food was fantastic everywhere and Mark loved having seven gelatos every day!

We returned to Sant Ippolito again in 1991, unfortunately driving a car that was not much safer than the one in 1988, and ran into Frank and Teresa Castellani at our hotel in Cosenza. We had no idea they were in Italy. Visiting the village with them is another good story!

Mark Castellani with Louie Dionise's sister, Assunta. Assunta's son is next to her. Picture was taken on her porch overlooking her lovely garden in Sant Ippolito.



The three young boys who showed us around the village for the small fee of an ice-cream cone. DeLuca, Mark Castellani, tallest boy is Spagnuolo and the next boy is DeRose, the grandson of Finootz.

The Spagnuolo Family



During the summer of 1998, our family took a "trip of a lifetime". Dad and Mom were excited to share the celebration of their 50 years together with all of us. From the first turn of the wheels of the Dean bus that carried us to Detroit to the ride with the Italian bus driver on those hairpin turns near the Amalfi coast, it was a beautiful and memorable trip. The food, the fountains, the Vatican, Dad's laughter (after consuming a bottle of wine), Cosenza, the warm welcome of our relatives, all make up a myriad of memories that will last forever!!

-Roseann Spagnuolo Zumbrink

DIONISE/DIONISE

A trip of a lifetime, the few of many words that can describe our 2011 trip to Italy. Myself, my husband Michael, our 2 sons, Patrick and Sammy, our daughter Ellie along with our parents /tour guides Louis and Eleanor Dionise made the long flight to Italy in the summer of 2011.

Our first stop to Rome included customary visits to the Vatican, the Spanish steps, the chestnut guy, the Pantheon, and the Coliseum. Thanks to our guided tour by Louis (Pappas) and Eleanor (Mimi) we were able to navigate the streets of Rome with ease. We quickly realized one of our preferred evening stops, was Piazza Navona. With it's local style, mimes, painters, and restaurants we frequented the Piazza often. We also established that vino and gelato were a daily necessity. Leaving Rome, we toured Assisi, Orvieto, Venice, and Florence. The beauty of every village and town was remarkable. Our children even realized that walking the same streets, as St. Francis of Assisi was something very special and awe inspiring.

Our last stops were Sorrento, Capri, and our hometown village of St. Ippolito. We were able to eat on the rooftops in Sorrento overlooking a lemon grove. They even served free lemoncillo as you walked through the lemon grove to get to the city of Sorrento. Pappas and Michael loved this!!

Lastly, our stay in St. Ippolitio was what really made the trip, a trip of a lifetime. How many people can say they visited the houses of their father, father-in-law, and grandparents in the same little village. Patrick, our son, named after my father Patrick Dionise, was able to stand in front of the house his grandfather lived. Sammy, our other son, was able to see his Great-grandfathers house whom he was named after. We actually were welcomed into the house of Louis Dionise and walked through it's hallways and rooms as Pappas reminisced of his days in Italy. Our stroll through the small alleys and streets of St. Ippolitio continued. We suddenly heard someone yelling Gigi!! We finally realized that the little old ladies in the village knew Pappas as a child. They called him by his nickname "Gigi". They hugged and greeted each other like old friends. We were lucky enough to have many family meals with Pappas' sister Assunta Caruso, her husband, Mario and their family. We entered their home in St. Ippolito and the first thing Mario said to me was, " You look just like your grandmother Virginia, she was my Godmother. " That brought tears to my eyes. They served us many traditional Italian meals. The wine was served and Tonino, Michael's cousin, announced that it was wine made from the grapes of the vines Michael's grandfather planted. How amazing it was to walk the same cobblestone streets as my father, Michael's father, and our grandparents. To visit our family and share many meals with them. It was truly surreal. These words and pictures can't really convey the beauty and memories of our 2011 trip to Italy. How blessed we were to have shared this with our family!

Dinner at Mario & Assunta's house



Dionise old house in St. Ippolito



Sammy Dionise's Great grandpas house



Patrick, Sammy, & Ellie Dionise with their Grandparents Louis and Eleanor at Trevi Fountain



Dinner with Louis's sister Assunta



Michael/Lisa and family in Front of Pat Dionise house



Patrick, Sammy, Ellie in Florence.