

John Ullian and Linda Ferraro: Roots and Legacy of an Immigrant Family

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This work provides what we know about the family history and genealogy of our grandparents Giovanni Battista [*John*] Ullian (1890-1970) and Linda Ferraro (1895-1929) and the early lives of their children, told through family stories, photos, and documents.

John Ullian and Linda Ferraro immigrated to the U.S. midwest from the province of Vicenza, in the region of Veneto, Italy: John to Centerville IA in 1908, Linda to Rockford IL in 1920. John initially worked with his brother Romano as a coal miner in Centerville. As an infantryman in 129th Infantry U.S. Army in World War I, he was gassed in the Argonne Forest and bayoneted in combat. He and Linda married in 1920 and by mid-1928 had 6 children: Mary, John Anthony, Livia, Gino, Joseph, and Virginia. They lived, and he worked as a landscape gardener, in the northern Chicago suburbs (Glencoe, Highland Park, Northbrook, Northfield, Highwood, etc.), in Cook and Lake counties. Linda and their youngest daughter Virginia died in 1929. The Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression left John unable to care for his 5 children, who grew up first at the Angel Guardian Orphanage in Chicago, then at the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School (ISSCS) in Normal IL. They had infrequent contact with their father, who worked during the 1930s in Houston TX and elsewhere. His 3 sons served in World War II. In 1943 John moved to Joliet IL, where three of his children had been in foster care. In 1944 he married Mrs. Domenica (Velo) Salbego, known as Nina, who was divorced. The Ullian family re-united in Joliet, where John and Nina lived at 1604 Marcella Ave. – and at some point each of John's children lived there also. John's daughters and sons married and provided him with 15 grandchildren. Nina had left John about 1950 and joined her mother and daughter in California. John lived with the family of his oldest daughter, Mary Larson, for about the last 20 years of his life, until his death in 1970.

Basic information on the Ullian and Ferraro ancestors of John and Linda back to around 1760 is provided. Place names we find in their ancestry include Salcedo, Schiavon, Fara Vicentino, Mason Vicentino, Breganze, Lusiana, and Mure di Molvena. – all in the Italian province of Vicenza in the region of Veneto, in the foothills of the Dolomite Mountains and about 60 miles northwest of Venice. The churches of their ancestors in Italy include Santi Quirico e Giulitta, Santa Margherita, and Santa Maria Assunta. Surnames appearing in their ancestral lines include Mascarello, Villanova, Viero, Redin, Fabbris/Favilla, Guerra, Guata, Baron, Libero, and Favero. Variant spellings of the Ullian surname we have found in documents referring to our relatives include Ulian, Ulliani, Olyon, Ollin, and Uline. We are not related to a Ukrainian Jewish family originally named Ulansky who used the Ullian surname in the U.S. We may be related to a Ullian family that was in the U.S. before our grandfather arrived which can be traced back to an Italian sailor living in Switzerland.