

Hi Dad,

I found Salvatore Ciavarella/Chiavarelli's citizenship papers and the ship manifest of his arrival in the U.S. See attached. It appears that he left Naples on April 7, 1900. The title of the ship manifest document indicated an April 23rd arrival in New York (Natalie's and my favorite day of the year). By spring 1904, Salvatore was an American citizen. Note that all this happened before the [immigration legislation of 1924](#) that specifically limited the number of immigrants into the U.S. This law reduced the annual immigration from Southern Italy from more than 200,000 a year to a mere 6,000 a year. Note that it focused on Italians and Jews. It didn't affect, for example, Danes, Brits, or other Northern Europeans. This law was strongly opposed by many distinguished Italian-Americans and Italian immigrants. I found the following letter ([letter](#) part 1, [letter](#) part 2) from the Sons of Italy, a fraternal organization that our Salvatore joined. It reflects how most Italian-Americans viewed this law at the time. Keep in mind that granddad would have been about 21 when this law was passed. It is interesting to reflect that if Salvatore had tried to come the U.S. *after* the passage of that law, he likely wouldn't have gotten in--at least not legally, and Mom and Aunt Carolyn probably would not be here today -- nor any of us kids and grandkids. As it is, Salvatore was lucky enough to be part of the early wave of immigrants from Southern Italy.

Why would he have left Sicily? Hard to say. Salvatore's hometown, Mistretta, was a kind of hotbed for opposition to the various royals who took over Sicily over the centuries, but overall it did pretty well, particularly in the late 1700s and early 1800s. There were lots of churches built and lots of mansions. There also was a medieval castle on a high mountain where the occasional royal rebel could hide out. The town was founded by Phoenicians sometime before Christ. They worshipped a goddess, Astarte. The name of the town is kind of a bastardization of the goddess' name. Like all Sicilian towns, it went through a period being run by Arabs and then Normans. As I think I've mentioned to you all a few times, the family name sounds like the French word, *chèvre*, or goat. So, way back when, the family probably herded goats. Mistretta was right in the thick of the Crusades. Many centuries later, it was also an early supportive region for the revolts for independence from the various Germanic, French, and Spanish royal administrations of Sicily in the 1840s and 1860s. Think American Revolution 1776. Same idea. As a practical matter, many of these revolts functioned like the ones fought by the British nobles from 1200 onward, protesting the arbitrary power of royal families. In a similar manner, Sicily's landed gentry class, which owned the vineyards, olive and citrus groves, logging interests, etc. and paid big taxes to the royals, encouraged revolts in the small agro-towns that they ran in a feudal manner. Alas, some say the Mafia got started with these wealthy families. Mistretta's modern city has faced some corruption problems with the Mafia. Very sad.

Anyway, it is likely that Salvatore left because he looked at his prospects for business and realized they were slim. With all the workers without jobs, the demand for his shoes was likely to be low. In an ironic twist, America was actually a key source of Sicily's economic problems. In the 1890s, American exports of cheap wheat destroyed the Sicilian wheat industry and an American aphid (phylloxera) brought by ship to Europe destroyed the Sicilian wine and olive industries (as well as France's and Northern Italy's). The European wines we drink today were specifically bred to fight off phylloxera. Also, Sicilians didn't benefit from the great Italian unification of the 1860s; the Northern Italians basically kept the government money and resources for themselves, exploiting the fertile South for their own gain. Further, the northern Italians mainly used Sicilians for military service. Many young Sicilian men left for America specifically to avoid conscription and to make about three times the hourly wage that they could make in Sicily. They actually left reluctantly since Sicily is quite beautiful with an amazing history. In fact, in some Sicilian towns, about half of the men who left for America ultimately returned after years sending money home. We sometimes see that same pattern with the Mexican and Central American immigrants today.

I did some research, and I think Salvatore and a few other shoemakers from Mistretta went to Williamsport, PA, because they might have been brought in as part of an effort to reinvent the town. A wealthy logging center of the 1800s, Williamsport--a key stop on the Underground Railroad--had fallen on hard times in the 1880s after the logging industry essentially deforested and depleted the local supply of trees. As it happens, Mistretta, Salvatore's hometown, was also known for its logging industry and stonemasonry. In the 1890s, Williamsport's leaders invested to reinvent the town as an industrial center. One of the main new businesses was a shoemaking factory. I read that Williamsport's investors typically brought in immigrant artisans to support the foundation of the various new industries that they were establishing. So it is likely that our Salvatore, the shoemaker, came to the U.S. to help support the founding of Williamsport's shoemaking factory. While most Southern Italian immigrants were out-of-work sharecroppers, Salvatore was part of the 15% or so that were skilled artisans. His sisters were artisans too: Lucia and Pietrina were seamstresses. Unfortunately, like most women in patriarchal Sicily, they were illiterate because their families didn't have enough money to send them to school. I think like 90% or more of Sicilian women were illiterate. Actually, once so many of the men left for America, the Sicilian women who stayed behind started running a few things, getting an education, etc. In any case, Salvatore brought his father into the U.S. a few years later to help raise granddad, and then his father subsequently sponsored the immigration of the sisters. It is likely that his mother had died in Sicily, but I have still not been able to find her paperwork. Her name was Lobia Logano or something like that. Grandmom would say, somewhat mysteriously, that "no one ever talked about her." Whatever happened, one of the pieces of Vincenzo's paperwork that I have found describes him as a "widower." So I suspect she died when Salvatore and his sisters were still young.

There was a big Italian community in Williamsport in 1900s. Grandmom used to say Salvatore worked as an "indentured servant." I doubt this is accurate. Based on what I have found, indentured servitude appeared to have declined as an immigration strategy by the 1900s. In the early 1800s, many Germans and Irish became Americans after working as indentured servants. By contrast, Sicilians and other Southern Italians were brought in the manner of that Mexicans and Central Americans today: as cheap labor, often as strikebreakers. It sounds like the immigration of our ancestor was sponsored by the globe-trotting Gilded Age millionaire class who knew Italy had good artisans and who also saw another way to maximize their profits.

There still are some Italian restaurants in Williamsport today. I saw that in 1900, many Italians arrived specifically in Williamsport to support the construction of a stone entrance (see attached) to a new fancy part of town planned for the town's millionaires (Grampian Hills). Fun fact: Williamsport boasted more millionaires per capita than any place in the world at the time. In a way, Salvatore had come to the Silicon Valley of America in 1900!

In addition, Williamsport was the home of the nation's most illustrious marching band, The [Rapas Band](#). Founded in 1831, its first leader was an Italian immigrant, Jacob Mussina. Contrary to the various anti-Italian stereotypes popularized in 20th-century Hollywood movies and American government propaganda of the 1920s, the Mussina family was prominent and industrious. They opened a jewelry store, kept the town clock in good repair, and even operated the town's first telegraph office. Yankee Mike Mussina descends from this family. And I'm assuming you all know that Little League was founded in Williamsport. Anyway, the band wasn't too shabby: It performed at Robert E. Lee's surrender ceremony at Appomattox, a couple presidential inaugural parades (Teddy Roosevelt, William Taft), and the dedication of Grant's tomb. Salvatore very likely either listened to this band or even performed in it. At any rate, he later would perform with a band very much like it in a gazebo in Willow Grove, PA. As you know, he played clarinet. I suspect that any natural musical talent that any of us has been fortunate enough to have descended from him. You can hear two songs written around 1900 by the famed Henry Lincoln, a Williamsport native who wrote music for this very band, including [The Rapasz Band March](#) and the [Midnight Fire Alarm](#).

When we can travel again, Tom and I would very much like to visit Williamsport. It sounds charming. Here is a [walking tour](#) and here is a city report on its [historic buildings](#). You can see a big building that one of the Mussina sons built. Still stands today

Love,  
Louise

Louise also sent me Sal's petition for citizenship.

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I, *Salvatore Chiarivelli*, do swear that the contents of my Petition are true, that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and I now renounce and relinquish any title or order of nobility to which I am now, or hereafter may be entitled; and I do absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, and particularly to the King of Italy.

Sworn in open Court, this MAY -9 1904 day of May, A. D. 1904

*Henry W. Craig*  
Clerk of District Court U. S.

(Name), *Salvatore Chiarivelli*

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No. 8890 —

United States District Court  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

PETITION  
OF

*Salvatore Chiarivelli*

to be admitted to become a citizen of  
the United States.

Presented and sworn to in open Court,  
and Petitioner admitted

MAY -9 1904 190

*Filed Mch. 22, 1904*

*Salvatore Chiarivelli  
#5806 Knox St. - Elm. Phila  
#22nd Ward*

United States of America,  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania, } ss.

Be it Remembered, That on the MAY -9 1904 day of May, one thousand nine hundred and four personally appeared before me, the Clerk of this Eastern District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania,

Salvatore Chiavirelli a native of Italy, and a subject of the King of Italy, now residing in the 22nd Ward, Council 5806, North 36th St. Phila. aged 25 years, who being duly sworn, according to law, declared and says, "That it is true and his intention to become a citizen of the United States, and to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, and particularly to King of Italy."

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name, and affixed the seal of this Court at Philadelphia, this 9th day of May 1904, day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred

and

John P. Craig  
Clerk Eastern District Court, U. S.

To the Honorable the Judge of the Eastern District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania:

The Petition of Salvatore Chiavirelli  
A NATIVE OF Italy.

Respectfully Sheweth:

That he has this day declared on oath before the Clerk of the Eastern District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, that it was true and his intention to become a citizen of the United States, and to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, and particularly to the King of Italy.

of whom he is now a subject; that he has resided in the United States of America three years next preceding his arriving at the age of twenty-one years, and has continued to reside therein to the time of making this application; that for two years next preceding this application it has been known to him his intention to become a citizen of the United States; that year past since he arrived one year and upwards, last past, in the State of Pennsylvania, and within the said United States two years and upwards, including the first years of his minority.

That he has never borne any fiduciary title, or been of any orders of nobility in his own or any other country; that he does not disbelieve in, nor is he opposed to, all organized governments; that he is not a member of, or affiliated with, any organization entertaining and teaching such disbelief or opposition; that he does not advocate, nor teach, the duty, necessity, or propriety of unlawfully assaulting or killing any specific individual, or officers generally of the Government of the United States or of any state or organized government; because of his or their official character, nor has he violated any of the provisions of an Act to regulate the immigration of aliens into the United States, approved March 3, 1903.

He therefore prays, that in making the oath, and taking the oath prescribed by law, he may be admitted to become a citizen of the United States of America.

And he will ever pray, &c.

(Name) Salvatore Chiavirelli  
(Residence) Knox St. 5806 5th W

John P. Craig

a citizen of the United States of America, being duly sworn according to law, with, that he knows and is well acquainted with Salvatore Chiavirelli the petitioner; that to his knowledge the petitioner has resided in the United States three years next preceding his arriving at the age of twenty-one years, and has continued to reside therein to the time of making this application; that for two years next preceding this application it has been known to him the intention of the petitioner, as he verily believes, to become a citizen of the United States; that the petitioner has resided one year and upwards, last past, in the State of Pennsylvania, and within the United States two years and upwards, including the three years of his minority; that during that time he has behaved as a man of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the same; that, in so far as he knows, is informed, or believes, the applicant does not disbelieve in, nor is he opposed to, all organized governments; nor is he a member of, or affiliated with, any organization entertaining and teaching such disbelief or opposition; nor does he advocate or teach the duty, necessity, or propriety of unlawfully assaulting or killing any specific individual, or officers generally of the Government of the United States or of any state or organized government; because of his or their official character; nor has he violated any of the provisions of an Act to regulate the immigration of aliens into the United States, approved March 3, 1903.

Sworn to upon Court File 1041 - 5 1004  
day of May A. D. 1904

John P. Craig  
Clerk Eastern District Court U. S.

(Name) John P. Craig  
(Residence) 451 Church Lane 3th  
W 22nd Ward