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**Poggioreale in America**  
**2023 Scholarship Program**  
**Essay**

Around the same time that the Wright Brothers risked their lives and took their first flight in 1903, my great-great grandfather, Antonino Zinnanti, took the risk of his life and stowed away on a cargo ship for three weeks that was headed for the port city of New Orleans. Antonino was only around 17 to 18 when this event occurred, but making the decision to leave his family of nine back in Europe was necessary if he wanted to gain the opportunity for a better life here in America.

Furthermore, as Antonino arrived in America, he heard rumors of another Italian family that was making their own way to a small community which is known today as Bryan, Texas. Back at the time, the town was referred to as "Mudville". Mudville is where Antonino and his brother began doing the only thing that they knew how to do, farming. This farming style was a very different type of farming than they were used to doing. The two began to grow cotton, which was unknown to them, but with the spirit of adaptation and determination, the two persevered and made a life for themselves that was able to sustain future generations.

All in all, I was obviously never able to meet or know much about the life of my great-great-grandfather other than his story. He has definitely shaped my life and how I do many tasks today. If it wasn't for him and his brother, I would not be in the position that I am in today. Antonino and my Italian relatives shaped my work ethic and the integrity that I possess. He endured many hardships which I could never imagine doing now, and I am glad that his qualities have been passed down to me and my family today. All during my childhood I was expected to work hard and do my best. I accomplished many goals through my years in school and extracurricular activities. I have also worked in the summer to pay for many expenses. My accomplishments in life are due to the path my Italian Ancestors started for me. And as my grandmother told me, work ethic and integrity are the best things to have in life, because without them, you are nothing and will not be able to get anywhere in life.

As Antonino Zinnanti made his journey to a new place, looking for new beginnings, I hope to do the same for myself when I head to college in a few short months. I will be starting a new chapter in my life, where I will be able to

use the qualities of integrity and strong work ethic, which have been instilled in me by my Italian heritage.