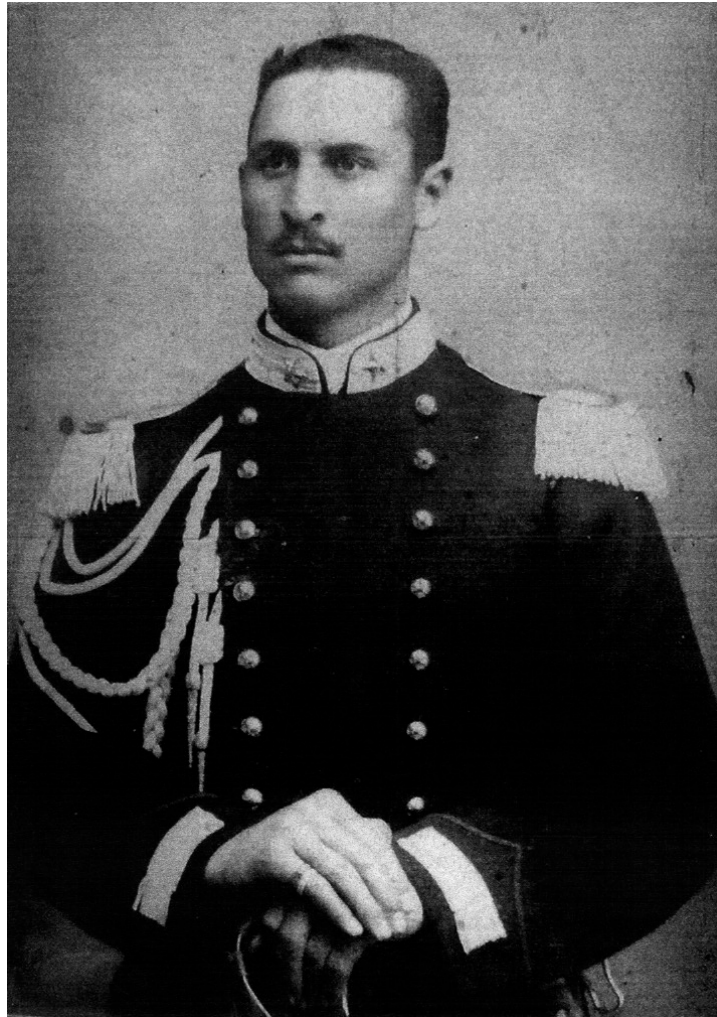


The Carmelo Greco Story

As told by his Granddaughter Scotti Greco Rodgers and
his Daughter-in-law, Marcia Dudley Greco, Scotti's mother



Carmelo Greco was born in Poggioreale, Sicily on September 21, 1884 to Calogero Greco and Leonarda Falco Todaro. His father, Calogero Greco, was born in Marineo, Palermo, Sicily on February 1, 1863 and died in Poggioreale on October 21, 1949. His mother, Leonarda Falco Todaro, was born in Poggioreale on January 8, 1856 and died there on July 30, 1942.

Carmelo Greco married Domenica Loiacono on December 21, 1910 in Poggioreale. Domenica was born in Poggioreale on December 23, 1884 to Epifanio Loiacono who was born in Contessa Entellina on April 8, 1859 and Giuseppa Tusa who was born in Poggioreale on February 18, 1859.

Calogero's father, Carmelo Greco, was born in Marineo and died in Poggioreale on January 16, 1901. His wife, Rosa Ragusa, was also born in Marineo on July 22, 1839 and died in Poggioreale on February 17, 1925.

Both Leonarda's parents were born in Poggioreale and died there. Her father, Bernardo Todaro, was born on May 23, 1826 and died there on September 3, 1874. Her mother, Antonia Falco, was born on February 11, 1834 and died there on April 11, 1902.

Our family is rich with descendants of Poggioreale but unfortunately we only have a few stories of their lives there and even fewer photos that were taken there.

My mother, Marcia Dudley Greco, wrote what she learned about Carmelo when she began dating Calogero (Edward Carl Greco) in 1936. I, along with other family members, am adding a few other stories that were told by our parents.

Carmelo Greco was known as "Papa" to the family and "Mr. Charley" to everyone else in Natchitoches. Domenica, his wife, was also known as Mamie and we find this on census records after they immigrated to Natchitoches, Louisiana. Also Papa changed the spelling of his name from Carmelo to "Camelo" sometime soon after he arrived in Louisiana.

Time for the stories!

Carmelo followed in his father's footsteps by joining the army in Sicily. His father, Calogero, had fought under Giuseppe Garibaldi who helped unite southern and northern Italy in 1860.

Carmelo spoke about serving in Africa and laughed about the monkeys chattering during roll call. He later served in the Royal Guard in Milan under Victor Emmanuel III who was King of Italy at the time.

He loved the opera and admired Caruso. Papa said that when Caruso sang at the "Teatro alla Scala" in Milan, the windows vibrated because his voice was so powerful. According to Papa those who had royal blood could ride to the opera and sit in the boxes while others walked and sat on the lower floor. He always said while holding his forefinger and thumb together, "I have a little bit of royal blood so I could ride in a carriage and sit in a box."

As a young man, Papa loved to ride horses and he had a black horse named "Diablo". He also said he participated in dressage, an equestrian sport.

After retiring from the army and getting married, he became a government inspector at the Florio and Sons winery. Carmelo and his wife, Domenica, lived on the compound of the winery. Their first son, Calogero Santo Epifanio Greco, (Edward Carl Greco), was born on

November 2, 1911. Papa loved to tell us that when Calogero was born he was bathed in Cognac. His second son, Epifanio, (Frank) was born in Trapani on December 30, 1913.

Domenica, aka Mamie, was a petite woman barely 5 feet tall. When my mother first met her she had auburn colored hair. She described her as a gentle woman devoted to her family and flowers. She enjoyed attending the Immaculate Catholic Church in Natchitoches, Louisiana. As a young girl, she sang in the opera, Lucia di Lammermoor, in the theatre in Poggioreale. She was educated at the Convent by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart there where she also learned to crochet and to do Cut-work.

Domenica Loiacono had two uncles who were priests of the Greek Orthodox Catholic Church in Contessa Entellina, Sicily.

As a boy Carmelo and his Father, Calogero, had been guests of a friend, a Sea Captain, to visit the Tensas Swamps in Louisiana on a hunting and fishing trip. It is possible that this trip occurred in 1906 based on a date Papa wrote on a voter registration form in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Since Carmelo loved to hunt and fish, it is little wonder that he chose to settle in Louisiana when he left Sicily.

In 1914 the war clouds were gathering in Europe and Carmelo was concerned that he would be reactivated into service so on April 23, 1914 Carmelo set sail on the S. S. Palermo from Palermo, Sicily and he arrived at the port of New Orleans on May 19, 1914. Traveling with him was his sister-in-law, Rosalia Loiacono. The family is not sure why Carmelo and Rosalia left before the rest of the family but speculation is that Carmelo felt the need to leave in a hurry. Domenica had given birth to their second son, Epifanio (Frank) on January

On January 28, 1915 Domenica Loiacono Greco, their two children, Colagero Greco age 3 and Epifanio Greco age 1, Domenico's father and mother, Epifanio Loiacono and Guiseppa Tusa Loiacono and two of Dominica's sisters, Francesca and Guiseppa left on the S.S. America and arrived at Ellis Island New York on February 10, 1915. Once through customs they traveled by train to Natchitoches, Louisiana.

This is one of Carmelo's favorite stories that he told many times. "One Sunday afternoon dressed in my summer white suit sitting on a bench on the banks of Cane River I became a person of some curiosity to the locals." After all he was foreigner in small country town, misunderstood by people who had seldom left the confines of Natchitoches Parish. So as the story goes, some busy body reported to the Sheriff that the foreigner was sitting on a bench in public in his pajamas. He loved to tell that story and he laughed every time he told it to us.

Mr. Charley was loved by many, having a warm heart he helped many people. Even today, children of his friends speak kindly of Mr. Charley. According to my mother he was very gallant, having the charming manners of a European gentleman.

Papa's love of opera continued his entire life and he liked to say he had one of the first Victrola Record Players in Natchitoches. He purchased records from New York and many were of Enrico Caruso, one of the most famous tenors in history.

Carmelo was so proud when his oldest son, Calogero Santo Epifanio Greco, also known as Edward Carl Greco, had a son. He loved to say that my brother Carl was the oldest son, of the oldest son, of the oldest son, of the oldest son.



Photo Taken in Marsala Circa 1913

Calogero Greco, Born 1 FEB 1863, Marineo, Palermo, Sicilia, Italy

Died 21 OCT 1949 Poggioreale, Trapani, Sicilia, Italy

Pictured with his grandson, Calogero Epifanio Greco aka Edward Carl Greco

Born 2 NOV 1911, Marsala, Trapani, Sicilia, Italy

Died 22 FEB 2011, Natchitoches, Louisiana

Another story that my brother and I remember being told was that at the end of World War II our Dad's brother Frank, (Epifanio) a Colonel in the U.S. Army, traveled to Poggioreale to visit his grandfather, Calogero Greco. When he got there Calogero had his bags packed and thought Frank was taking him to America. Unfortunately Frank was only on leave for a visit so that could not happen.

When Calogero died in Poggioreale on October 21, 1949 he was found in his small olive grove leaning against an olive tree.

Steve Greco, grandson of Carmelo, told one story he remembered about him. He said he would call him over to show Steve his wallet and to see the money inside. Then he would smile and show Steve where he hid a \$20 bill. Then he would say to Steve, "I think you would make a good priest." Steve says he hopes Papa is okay with him marrying into a family with a priest, an archbishop and two nuns.



Photo taken in Natchitoches, Louisiana Circa 1919
Carmelo Luigi Greco, aka Mr. Charley
Calogero aka Edward Carl Greco
Epifanio aka Frank Greco



Natchitoches, Louisiana
Seated

Giuseppa Tusa Loiacono and Domenica Loiacono wife of Carmelo Greco
Standing, Domenica's sisters

Our grandmother, Domenica aka Mamie, died on July 9, 1954 when I was 6 1/2 years old and my brother was almost nine years old and he is the oldest grandchild. Therefore we do not have many recorded stories about our grandmother. My brother remembers grandmother taking him to the chicken coop to ring a chicken's neck and pluck the feathers for our dinner one time when we were visiting. I might add that he declined to help.



Mary, Lenora aka Lula, Josephine and Frances
Daughters of Carmelo Greco and Domenica Loiacono

Carmelo Greco and Domenica Loiacono had six children. My father, Calogero aka Edward Carl, and his brother, Epifanio aka Frank, were born in Sicily. The four daughters were born in and around Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Some of the grandchildren of Carmelo Greco and Domenica Loiacono visited Poggioreale, Sicily in 2014. Some have attended a Poggioreale in America reunion in Bryan, Texas and many more have gathered since then yearly to do what Italians are best known for which is telling stories, eating great food and having fun. We each grew up visiting Papa and Grandmother when we were children and later just Papa. Our lives are richer for having these times together and for continuing to spend time with family!