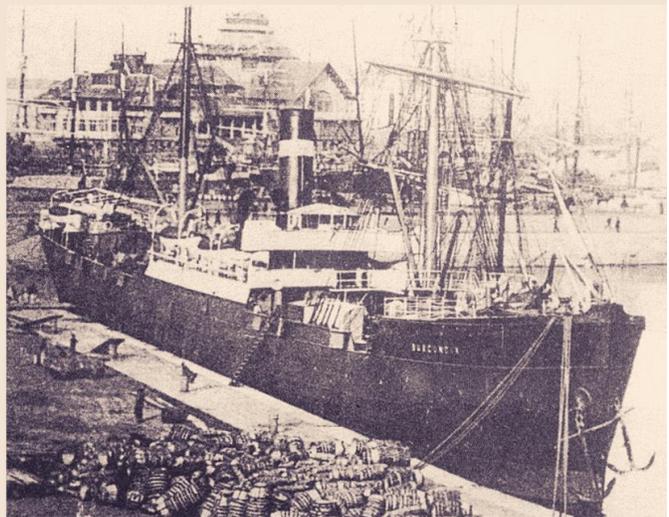




**A Journey of
Three Tusa
Brothers
of Poggioreale,
Trapani, Sicily**



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Second Edition

PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One of the most exciting parts of being part of Poggioreale in America (PIA) is the ability to fuse together families who immigrated with those who remained in Poggioreale. New family connections through sharing stories and photos, finding, meeting and discovering new cousins, both in this country, Australia, and Poggioreale occur on a regular basis. Thanks to Ross Todaro and Tina Tondola Anderson (both co-founders of PIA) this group was formally established.

Many of these new associations are the product of the PIA Facebook Group, whose membership has grown to more than 1,400 in less than three years. The Poggioreale in America website also continues to grow, both in content and visitors. This has been a banner year for PIA.

2022 has been a year of immense growth and involvement! We held the second PIA Reunion on September 23 & 24, published the first English translation book in a series of Poggioreale historical writers, and formed Poggioreale in America Junior to inspire our younger family members to keep the spirit of our ancestors alive. Proceeds from the sale of the 2021 PIA Calendar (2021) funded scholarships that were awarded to seven recipients. So much has been made possible in the four years since this group formed.

With the desire to learn more about our families, this booklet was researched and developed for a special friend of Poggioreale in America. Tina learned of the Tusa family name during a 2018 trip to the Central Grocery in New Orleans, Louisiana. Upon returning home, she located a number for Anthony Joseph Tusa, Jr., better known as A. J. Tusa, Jr. After a telephone chat and an introduction to Ross and to PIA, a new friend was made.

A.J. Tusa, Jr. is a restaurateur in New Orleans and Florida. His grandfather, Vito Tusa, immigrated to New Orleans in 1898. His two brothers and a sister followed in 1900. A. J. expressed a desire to learn more about his grandfather and great-uncles.

Ross and Tina asked me to research A. J.'s family and fill in whatever details I could find. This booklet is by no means a complete family genealogy; rather it presents information gleaned through online records searches for Poggioreale and Louisiana records, among other sources.

This work is a collaboration with my daughters, Shelly Henley Kelly and Lisa Henley Jones. Shelly assisted with the research and writing, while Lisa provided the cover design.

A work like this always includes additional help. Rosario Sanfilippo of Partanna, Sicily provided details of the family line in Poggioreale prior to 1898, organizing from the earliest known names to those who eventually left for America.

Catherine Candela assisted in researching records. Thank you to Ross and Tina for their continued support and faith in my ability to handle this project. And a big thank you for my greatest supporter and cheerleader – my husband, Arthur.

Marilyn Maniscalco Henley
September 23, 2022

POGGIOREALE

In the early 1700s, Francesco Tusa and his wife, Filippa Incardona, lived in Poggioreale, Trapani, Sicily. One of their four children, a son Antonino, married Caterina Voce in 1777. Following traditional naming patterns, Antonino & Caterina named their eldest son Francesco after his paternal grandfather. This Francesco married Leonarda Mancuso in 1804 and they also named a son, born in 1809, Francesco.

The Francesco born in 1809 married Filippa Salvato in 1833 and continued the tradition of naming their eldest son, born in 1839, Francesco. Their other known children include Leonarda Tusa Salvato (1842-?) and Vincenzo Tusa (1846-1915).

But our story begins with the 1839 Francesco Tusa, a “borgese” or tenant farmer in this rural Sicilian community.¹ On February 22, 1873, at the age of 34, he married twenty-year old Antonina Caronna, the daughter of Vito Caronna and Grazia Cascio. Over the next 17 years, the couple welcomed eleven known children. Sadly only four sons and four daughters reached adulthood.²

Of these eight children, four emigrated to the United States between 1898-1900.



Poggioreale, Sicily

¹ Marriage Record. 22 Feb 1873_Tusa, Francesco Antonia Caronna, Poggioreale Marriage Record # 5, Family Search Image #262

² On 20 Sept 2022, Marilyn found a birth record for Antonino b. 14 Aug 1891 showing he had a twin sister, Antonina. At the time of this writing, it is unknown whether she survived to adulthood.

COMING TO AMERICA

In November 1898, twenty-three year old Vito Tusa said goodbye to his parents, fifty-nine year old Francesco and forty-six year old Antonina, an older brother, four younger sisters, and three younger brothers.

From Poggioreale, Vito traveled to Naples, Italy where he joined 635 Sicilian immigrants on the *s/s Burgundia*, a 328-foot long steamship originating from Marseilles, France and destined for New York. He is recorded on the ship's manifest as a 23-year old single laborer in good health and in possession of seven dollars. In addition to Vito, the manifest documents six men and three women also from Poggioreale.³

FABRE LINE

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN IMMIGRANTS FOR THE COMMISSIONER

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, under Act of Congress approved March 3, 1893, to be delivered to the Commissioner of Immigration by the Commanding officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States.

158

s.s. Burgundia sailing from **NAPLES, Italy** November 24, 1898, arriving at Port of **NEW-YORK** December 18, 1898

No. on List	NAME IN FULL	Age	Sex	Married or single	Calling or Occupation	Abilities Read, Write	Nationality	Last Residence at	Reason for leaving the United States	Final destination in the United States (State, City or Town)	Whether having more than one passport	By whom was passage paid	Whether in possession of money if so, how much more than \$5 and how much of \$5 or less	Whether ever before in the United States, and if so, when and where	Whether going to join a relative and if so, what relative, their name and address	Ever in Prison or Arrested or reported by enemy, if so, when and where	Whether a Polygamist	Whether subject to Military or Naval Service	Condition of Health, Mental and Physical	Deformed or Crippled, Nature and Cause
1	Vito Tusa	23	M	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	7	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
2	Luigi Brancato	47	M	Married	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	5.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
3	Carolina Guiseppe	16	F	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	1.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
4	Annarella Guiseppe	13	F	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	1.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
5	Luigi Brancato	23	M	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	5.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
6	M. Bologna	27	M	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	5.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
7	Luigi Brancato	16	M	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	5.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
8	Carlo Guiseppe	23	M	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	7.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
9	Vito Brancato	23	M	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	7.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	
10	Antonio Brancato	24	M	Single	Laborer		Italian	Poggioreale	Self	Italy	Self	Self	2.00	No	No	No	No	Good	No	

s/s Burgundia ship manifest showing Vito Tusa, line 1

The ship sailed on November 24, 1898. Two weeks into the voyage, the Treaty of Paris was signed, bringing an end to the Spanish-American War. When the *s/s Burgundia* arrived on the U.S. coast in mid-December, thick fog prevented the steamship from entering New York Harbor, causing it to remain anchored outside the bar.⁴ Its passengers waited until Sunday morning, December 18, 1898, for their first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty as they approached Ellis Island.

³ New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957 Year: 1898; Arrival: New York, New York, USA; Microfilm Serial: T715, 1897-1957; Line: 1; Page Number: 158.

⁴ "Fog in the Lower Bay." *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Brooklyn, New York. December 18, 1898, Page 36.



S.S. BURGUNIDA, 1882, Fabre Line
Courtesy The Peabody Museum of Salem

By the time the *s/s Burgundia* sailed to return to Marseilles a week later, Vito was likely processed out of Ellis Island and on board one of five steamers bound for New Orleans, Louisiana. Arriving on a cloudy mild Christmas Eve, the young man surely anticipated celebrating Christmas with his Uncle Benedetto Caronna in the Crescent City.

Benedetto Caronna, a younger brother to Vito's mother Antonina, arrived in New Orleans fifteen years earlier on October 30, 1883.⁵ In addition to 635 Sicilian immigrants, the British steamship *Egbert* sailed from Palermo, Sicily with a cargo of oranges and lemons⁶. A baby girl died during the passage and malarial fever took the lives of two more children upon arrival in New Orleans.⁷

By the time Vito arrived in 1898, Uncle Benedetto—also recorded as Benjamin or Benedict—was married to fellow Italian immigrant Antonina Nastasi and they had four children ranging from 15 months to 6 ½ years old.

⁵ The National Archives at Washington, D.C.; Washington, D.C.; Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving At New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820-1902; NAI Number: 2824927; Record Group Title: Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service; Record Group Number: 85. New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Passenger Lists, 1813-1963. Ancestry.com

⁶ "Nautical Notes." *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana. Oct 30, 1883, Page 2.

⁷ "Malarial Fever." *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana. Nov. 2, 1883, Page 1.

TUSA SIBLINGS ARRIVE

There is no concrete information about Vito's early time in Louisiana. The first eighteen months were likely focused on the necessity of finding work, learning English, and sending reassuring letters to his family.

Whatever he wrote about his prospects in New Orleans, in Spring 1900 three of Vito's younger siblings made arrangements to join him. They purchased passage on another French steamship, the *s/s Olbia*, departing from Palermo on June 13, 1900.

Three weeks later, on a warm and rainy July evening, the *s/s Olbia* arrived at the southern tip of the Mississippi river to begin its 100-mile journey towards the Port of New Orleans. After a brief stop at the Quarantine Station, where authorities gave the ship a clean bill of health, it continued upriver and anchored midstream between Algiers Point and the [Old] Ursuline Convent.

At 10 a.m. Sunday morning, July 8, 1900, the U.S. Immigration Commissioner with a team of two translators, two doctors, and multiple customs surveyors and inspectors, boarded the vessel to begin a full day of examining the 525 immigrants.

Waiting in line on the top deck, under a full July sun without shade, were Vito's brothers and sister: Vincenzo (24), Leonarda (15) and Giuseppe (11).⁸ Although a detailed manifest is not available at this time, newspaper accounts capture their experience.

As the weary travelers admired the bright sun, the sweep of the Mississippi, and their first view of the city, a flotilla of small boats circled the anchored ship, carrying many anxious families seeking friends and relatives onboard the *s/s Olbia*. This generated considerable excitement as parties waved wildly and called out to one another. In the middle of the ship, officials raised a large canvas tent, or awning, to shelter the commissioner from the sun as his team began the arduous task of examining each individual.

⁸ "Louisiana, New Orleans Index to Passenger Lists, 1853-1952", database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:4QLC-9C2M> : 19 August 2020), Giuseppe Tusa, 1900.

First, two Marine Hospital surgeons conducted a rigid medical examination, which included a careful check of the eyes, ears, heart, and any malformation of the limbs. "As each man, woman or child comes before the doctors they hand to the interpreter who checks their names a slip, known as the consular card. On this slip is the name, age, sex and nationality of the immigrant. It also certifies that the party has been vaccinated and was in good health at the time of embarkation."⁹

"One by one from one side of the deck the men, and from the other side the women and children, the stream of human beings passed in review, each individual being examined and interrogated (through the interpreter), and if the physical condition of the person was satisfactory, he or she passed on."¹⁰



*Times-Democrat, New Orleans, LA.
9 June 1900, pg. 3*

Following the health inspection, the commissioner began questioning the immigrants in alphabetical order from the ship's list, a slow and tedious process. Aided by an interpreter, he followed a set form of questions, such as age and marital status, before moving onto more informative questions such as, "Have you relatives here? To what place are you going? Have you money enough to carry you there? Were you ever in this country before, and did your father, mother or husband or any relative write to you to come and did they agree to pay you so much per day to work for them or declare they could secure any specified amount of salary for you?"¹¹

If Vincenzo or Leonarda had answered the last question affirmatively – if they said that Vito or Uncle Benedetto promised them work for a specific compensation,

⁹ "From Sicily's Shores: Five Hundred Emigrants Leave Their Homes." *The Times-Democrat*, New Orleans, Louisiana. July 9, 1900, page 3.

¹⁰ "With Five Hundred New Immigrants." *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana. July 9, 1900, page 3.

¹¹ "From Sicily's Shores: Five Hundred Emigrants Leave Their Homes." *The Times-Democrat*, New Orleans, Louisiana. July 9, 1900, page 3

then both would have received the mark "C.L." meaning contract labor and been returned to Sicily. "The immigration laws of the United States strictly prohibit any foreigner coming here to fill a contract made in any country."¹²

Only 120 of 525 immigrants were questioned that first day, requiring the Tusa siblings to remain onboard another night, where they had slept the past 27 nights. Monday, under another day of broiling sun, two hundred more were inspected.¹³ But it wasn't until Tuesday, July 10, that the remaining two hundred were processed and the immigrants began disembarking into the city at the Thalia Street Wharf.¹⁴ After a month on the *s/s Olbia*, Vincenzo, Leonarda, and Giuseppe were finally reunited with their older brother, Vito.

Arriving in July 1900, the siblings narrowly missed being recorded in the 1900 Census. Like Vito, the new arrivals must have spent their time finding work, making a home, and socializing with others who emigrated from Poggioreale or its surrounding villages.

One wonders how often they were able to send or receive word from the family back in Sicily. How long before they received news that on June 11, 1903, their twenty-year old sister, Grazia, became the first of the siblings to marry.¹⁵ Two years later, they grieved together with the news that their youngest brother, Antonino, only fourteen years old, died in Poggioreale on June 24, 1905.¹⁶ And their sorrow deepened two months later, on August 21, when their father, Francesco, also passed away. At the age of sixty-six years old, he had been married for thirty-two years. The cause of his death is not recorded.¹⁷ His widow, Antonia, likely continued living at their home with her unmarried eldest son, Francesco, and daughters, Filippa and Antonina.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Italian Immigrants." *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana. July 10, 1900, page 3.

¹⁴ "Still Hard at Work." *The Times-Democrat*, New Orleans, Louisiana. July 11, 1900, page 3.

¹⁵ Marriage Record. 11 June 1903_Pace, Antonino Grazia Tusa, Poggioreale Marriage Record # 7,

¹⁶ Poggioreale death record # 24 on via Umberto # 15

¹⁷"Italia, Trapani, Poggioreale, Stato Civile (Comune), 1836-1929,"

images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-8974-2HRD?cc=2185166&wc=SC5G-T38%3A1338624603%2C1338624602%2C1338641626> : 23 September 2014), Trapani > Poggioreale > Morti 1901-1915 > image 132 of 400; Ufficio di Comune di Poggioreale (Poggioreale City Offices, Poggioreale). Record # 41

Before long, letters containing *good* news crossed the Atlantic. In Poggioreale, twenty-seven year old Filippa married Antonino Di Benedetto on April 11, 1906¹⁸. Two months later, in New Orleans, younger sister Leonarda married John Scardino on June 13th.¹⁹ Her new husband had emigrated from Sicily in 1898 with a younger brother and their father.²⁰



Vito Tusa marries Josephine Cortese, 1906.

Six weeks after his sister's nuptials, Vito Tusa married Giuseppina "Josephine" Cortese in New Orleans on July 25, 1906.²¹ His new bride was a first-generation American; her parents Carlo (Charles) Cortese and Giuseppina arrived from Poggioreale about 1883 with their first child, Martin.²² The Cortese family flourished in America with the birth of additional children: Frank, Josephine, Maria, and Joseph.

Three years later, the Tusa family celebrated again on November 11, 1909, when Vincenzo Tusa married Maria Badali.²³

¹⁸Marriage Record. 11 April 1906_DiBenedetto, Antonino Filippa Tusa, Poggioreale Marriage Record # 6,

¹⁹ Louisiana Vital Records; Volume: 28; Page: 167. New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Marriage Records Index, 1831-1964. Ancestry.com

²⁰ The National Archives at Washington, D.C.; Washington, D.C.; Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820-1902; NAI Number: 2824927; Record Group Title: Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service; Record Group Number: 85. New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Passenger Lists, 1813-1963. Ancestry.com

²¹ Louisiana Vital Records; Volume: 28; Page: 241. New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Marriage Records Index, 1831-1964. Ancestry.com

²² The National Archives At Washington, D.C.; Washington, D.C.; Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving At New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820-1902; NAI Number: 2824927; Record Group Title: Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service; Record Group Number: 85. New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Passenger Lists, 1813-1963. Ancestry.com

²³ Louisiana Vital Records; Volume: 31; Page: 666. New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Marriage Records Index, 1831-1964. Ancestry.com

LIVING IN NEW ORLEANS

Although their early residences are unknown, Vito and Vincent apparently spent time in New Orleans where they met and married their wives.

They also found work with other farmers in St. Charles Parish, about twenty-five miles up the Mississippi river. In December 1909, Vito Tusa owned a residence and shoe repair shop in Luling, Louisiana. Joe Pace, a butcher, rented the other side of the building where he lived with his family and operated a butcher's shop.

Three days after Christmas 1909, a kitchen fire consumed the building between 2 and 3 A.M. Although located only 150 feet from the Luling fire station, the building was totally destroyed. The "bucket brigade" kept the fire from spreading and saved some furniture.²⁴



*939 Burgundy Street.
Home of Vito Tusa and family 1908-1910*

However, Vito might not have lived there at the time of the fire. On July 20, 1908, he purchased a two-story Creole townhome built about 1836 at 939 Burgundy Street.²⁵ Located in the (now) historic Vieux Carré 2nd District, it was a short six block walk from his in-laws rental. Vito and Josephine were recorded here in the 1910 Census with two young children, Lena (almost 4) and Frank (16 months).²⁶ Vincent and his new bride, Maria, lived with them and a married couple rented rooms at the property. Like his father-in-law, Vito made and repaired shoes from the home, while Vincent tended bar in a saloon.

²⁴ "Luling, Business Building Burns." *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana. 20 December 1909, Page 16.

²⁵ "The Collins C. Diboll Vieux Carré Survey: Property Info." *The Collins C. Diboll Vieux Carré Survey - a Project of The Historic New Orleans Collection*, https://www.hnoc.org/vcs/property_info.php?lot=19104.

²⁶ Year: 1910; Census Place: New Orleans Ward 5, Orleans, Louisiana; Roll: T624_521; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0075; FHL microfilm: 1374534. 1910 United States Federal Census. Ancestry.com

Although not recorded by the census taker, Giuseppe, now twenty-one and working as a barber for Morris Dominici on Exchange place, also stayed here.²⁷

Vito Tusa must not have been happy with the aging Creole townhome. He sold it on November 12, 1910, to a carpenter, Vincenzo Moceo, and moved his family to a more recently built home at 1228 Magazine Street, where he continued running his shoe repair shop.²⁸ Over the next eighteen years, he and Josephine welcomed six more children at this home: Josephine (1912), Charles (1913), Anthony Joseph (1915), Lulu Rosemary (1919), Vincent (1925), and Rita Mae (1928). Vito lived at this address for the rest of his life.



Children of Vito Tusa, c. 1916. Lena, Charles, Anthony, Josephine, and Frank.

²⁷ New Orleans City Directory, 1911 (printed with information collected in 1910)

²⁸ "The Collins C. Diboll Vieux Carré Survey: Property Info." *The Collins C. Diboll Vieux Carré Survey - a Project of The Historic New Orleans Collection*, https://www.hnoc.org/vcs/property_info.php?lot=19104.

LEONARDA

Earlier in 1910, before Vito moved to Magazine Street, his sister, Leonarda Scardino, returned to Poggioreale for unknown reasons. She may have been home in time to celebrate the marriage of her oldest brother, Francesco to Giuseppa Corte on May 29th.²⁹

Leonarda returned to Louisiana on the *s/s Liguria* from Palermo on April 27, 1911. Unlike her initial voyage to New Orleans aboard the *s/s Olbia*, the customs and immigration officials met the ship many miles downriver to begin their inspections while the ship continued towards the port.³⁰ Leonarda, traveling with a Caterina and Antonia Scardino—no additional information available—were among 511 passengers from Sicily and Malta who disembarked that Friday evening at the Northeastern fruit wharf. The *Times-Democrat* noted that “three-quarters of the passengers on the steamship *Liguria* of the Royal Italian Mail Line...had gone back to Italy to settle up their affairs, and are now bringing back with them other members of their families...”³¹

Although no passenger manifest is available, an index card documents that she paid for the passage herself, had \$20 with her, and previously lived in the United States from 1900-1910. She is described as being five feet tall, with a rosy complexion and a scar on her forehead. Her mother, Antonina Caronna, remained in Poggioreale, Trapani, and her brother, Vito at 1228 Magazine Street, expects her.³²

²⁹ "Italia, Trapani, Poggioreale, Stato Civile (Comune), 1836-1929," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-9974-KJTL?cc=2185166&wc=SC5G-VZ9%3A1338624603%2C1338624602%2C1338662580> : 23 September 2014), Trapani > Poggioreale > Matrimoni 1897-1913 > image 262 of 342; Ufficio di Comune di Poggioreale (Poggioreale City Offices, Poggioreale). Record # 10

³⁰ "Liguria, Arriving To-Day, Has Many Immigrants." *The Times-Democrat*, New Orleans, Louisiana. 26 April 1911, page 1.

³¹ "Liguria has boatload of Italians returning to South with families." *The Times-Democrat*, New Orleans, Louisiana. 25 April 1911, Page 4.

³² "Louisiana, New Orleans Index to Passenger Lists, 1853-1952," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9BN-L4XB?cc=2443949> : 17 August 2020), > image 1 of 1; citing NARA microfilm publication T527; (College Park, Maryland: National Archives and Records Administration, 1958).

Leonarda's marital status is marked as "widow" and there is no mention of their son Gioacchino, born March 20, 1907.³³

Family name TUSA	Given name LEONARDA	Accompanied by Caterina and Antonia Scardino
Place of birth (town, county, etc.) Poggioreale, Trapani	Age 26	Sex F
Race South Italy	Nationality Italy	Occupation None
	Most permanent residence (town, county, etc.) Poggioreale, Trapani	Read Y
		Write Y
Name and address of nearest relative (if friend only, give name and address) Mother--Antonina Caronna		
Ever in U.S. From YES	When 1900	Where 1910 New Orleans
Destination, and name and address, if relative or friend to whom here brother, New Orleans, La.--Veto, 1228 Magazine St., N.O., La.		
Money shown \$20.00	Ever arrested and deported or excluded from admission No	Health status X-Cert. 4/30/11
Height 5	Complexion rosy	Eyes chest. chest.
		Distinguishing marks Sacr on forehead.
Seaport and date of landing and name of steamship New Orleans, La., April 27, 1911, S. S. LICURIA		
		171-1

New Orleans Index to Passenger Lists. Leonarda Tusa, 1911.

The young widow returned to New Orleans in time to attend her youngest brother's wedding. Giuseppe, now called Joseph, married Maria Cortese on October 11, 1911.³⁴ Brothers married sisters; the bride was the younger sister of Vito's wife, Josephine. The newlyweds made their home at 1307 Chartres and Joseph continued working as a barber on Exchange place.

In 1912, Josephine (Vito), Mary (Vincent) and Maria (Joseph) each welcomed a new baby; Mary and Maria both properly named their sons "Frank Tusa" after their father-in-law. Hopefully, the joyful arrival of children offset the sadness of Leonarda's death on September 8 that same year from unspecified causes.

³³ New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Birth Records Index, 1790-1915. State of Louisiana, Secretary of State, Division of Archives, Records Management, and History. iVital Records Indices/i. Baton Rouge, LA. Accessed: Ancestry.com.

³⁴ Louisiana Vital Records; Volume: 33; Page: 780. New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Marriage Records Index, 1831-1964. Ancestry.com



*Cortese Sisters: Maria and Josephine. C.1907
Lena, daughter of Josephine and Vito Tusa*

WORLD WAR I

When World War I began in June 1914, Italy declared its neutrality; however, it also entered into secret negotiations with Great Britain and France. On April 26, 1915, the Pact of London was signed, and a week later Italy resigned from the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, declaring war against Austria-Hungary on May 23, 1915. As Italian men between the ages of 18 and 40 mobilized across the country, eligible Italian citizens in the United States were *not* exempted from military duties and were given until August to return to Italy and report for duty.³⁵

Four days after Italy entered World War I, 26-year old Joseph Tusa filed his Declaration of Intention, “which recorded the applicant’s oath to the clerk of the court that it was his...bona fide intention to become a citizen of the United States, to reside permanently therein, and to renounce all allegiances to other nations.”³⁶ Vito, who would be 40 years old in August, and Vincent, about two years younger, did not make a Declaration.



Giuseppe "Joseph" Tusa

After the United States entered the War in April 1917, the Tusa brothers registered with the newly created U.S. Selective Service. Joseph registered first, on June 5, 1917, and was described as stout with medium height, brown eyes and black hair. A self-employed barber, he claimed exemption from service to support his wife and child.³⁷ Vito registered in Sept 1918, two months before the Armistice, and was described as short and stout with light blue eyes and black hair. A non-declared alien and self-employed shoemaker, he was physically disqualified because of a broken left arm.³⁸

³⁵ Daly, S. (2021). Emigrant Draft Evasion in the First World War: Decision-Making and Emotional Consequences in the Transatlantic Italian family. *European History Quarterly*, 51(2), 170–188.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/02656914211006298>

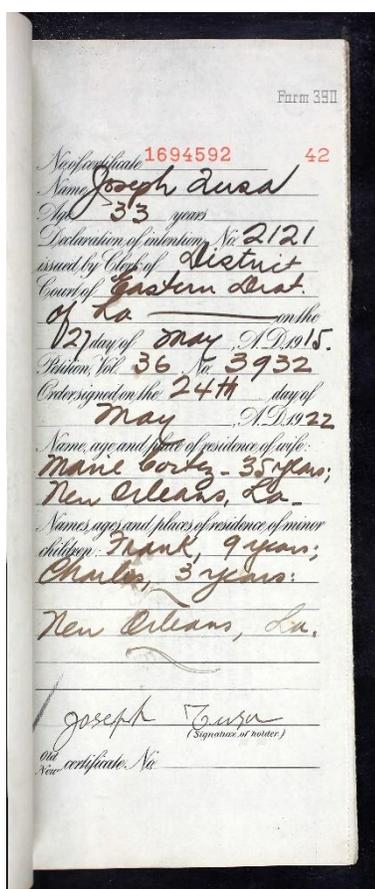
³⁶ Bolger, E. (2013). Background history of the United States naturalization process. Retrieved from <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/federal/naturalization-process-in-u-s-early-history/>

³⁷ Registration State: Louisiana; Registration County: Orleans. U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918.

³⁸ Registration State: Louisiana; Registration County: Orleans. U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918.

CITIZENSHIP

When the 1920 Census taker walked through the streets of New Orleans, he recorded Vincent and Mary Tusa with their two children at 1110 St. Philip Street, where the Tremé and French Quarter districts meet. Today, this is the southeast corner of Louis Armstrong Park. If the census taker walked fifteen minutes south and east, to 1304 Chartres Street, he'd find Joseph and Mary Tusa with their two sons. Mary's parents, Charles and Josephine Cortese, lived less than 300 feet away at 624 Barracks Street. Victor and Joseph's father-in-law, Carlo "Charles" Cortese, died a year later, in June 1921. His widow survived him another ten years.



Vito, now recorded as Victor, and Josephine Tusa were two miles upriver in the Lower Garden District on Magazine Street with their six children. Of the Tusa family, Vito was the only one who owned his residence.

Vincent worked as an oyster opener for a saloon, while Joseph was a barber and Victor was a shoemaker. All three men continued in this line of work until their death.

On May 24, 1922, Joseph was granted Naturalization certificate #1694592.³⁹ Perhaps this inspired Vito—now Victor—to file his own Declaration on December 29, 1922. His Naturalization certificate #2164265 was granted on September 10, 1925.⁴⁰

By 1926, **Vincent** had moved a few blocks over to 1020 Governor Nicholls Street, back in the French Quarter and near the original Burgundy residence. He continued working as an oyster shucker until his death on June 9, 1936, at the French Hospital. Services were held at the St. Louis Cathedral and his body was interred at St. Vincent de Paul cemetery.

³⁹ National Archives and Records Administration - Southeast Region (Atlanta); Atlanta, Ga; Stubs of Naturalization Certificates, 1922 - 1924; Series Number: 4503228; Record Group Title: Records of District Courts of the United States; Record Group Number: 21. Louisiana, U.S., Naturalization Records, 1836-2001

⁴⁰ National Archives and Records Administration - Southeast Region (Atlanta); Atlanta, GA; Stubs of Naturalization Certificates, Compiled 06/1907-12/1926; Series Number: 4503228; Record Group Title: Records of District Courts of the United States; Record Group.

By 1926, **Vito/Victor** was an Inspector for the New Orleans Board of Trade and fruit dispatcher. He registered to vote for the first time the previous year, and continued to register, along with his wife and any eligible children, in 1927, 1931, and 1935 as a Democrat.



Vito "Victor" Tusa

When the U.S. entered World War II, Vito's oldest son, Frank, registered to vote and was sent to North Africa in March 1942. At the end of April, Vito signed up in the Fourth Registration or the "Old Man's Registration" for the purpose of identifying useful labor skills of men ages 45 to 64. On the extreme end of the age requirement, Vito was physically described as being 5' 4" tall, weighing 135 lbs. with blue eyes, gray hair, and a sallow complexion.⁴¹

Eight months later, Vito Tusa suffered a stroke and passed away on Sunday, January 17, 1943, at the Hotel Dieu [Hospital]. Religious services were held at St. Theresa's and he was also interred at St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery. Later that summer, his oldest daughter, Second Lieutenant Josephine Tusa, R.N. arrived in North Africa and reunited briefly with her brother, Corporal Frank Tusa.⁴²

⁴¹ The National Archives at St. Louis; St. Louis, Missouri; World War II Draft Cards (4th Registration) For the State of Louisiana; Record Group Title: Records of the Selective Service System; Record Group Number: 147. U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942.

⁴² "Sister, Brother Reunited in Africa." *The Times Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana. August 18, 1943, Page 11.

By 1926, **Joseph** and Mary Tusa moved into a rental at 621 Barracks, across the street from Mary's mother, although four years later they owned their home at 1230 North Broad Street.⁴³ He registered to vote in 1927, 1931, 1935 and 1936 as a Democrat and continued working as a barber in his own shop, Joe's Tonsorial Parlor, until retirement.

On January 9, 1962, Joseph suffered a heart attack and was taken to Southern Baptist Hospital where he died two days later. The last of these three Tusa brothers who immigrated to New Orleans, his religious services were held at St. Rose of Lima, two blocks from his house, and interred at St. Roch Cemetery.



Mary Cortese Tusa, wife of Joseph Tusa

⁴³ Year: 1930; Census Place: New Orleans, Orleans, Louisiana; Page: 6A; Enumeration District: 0088; FHL microfilm: 2340538

Epilogue

Tusa Family continues to thrive in the U.S. through the children and additional generations of these three brothers. Joseph and Mary Tusa raised two sons. Vincent and Mary raised five children, while Vito/Victor and Josephine raised eight children, including Anthony Joseph Tusa, Sr., the father of A.J. Tusa, Jr.

A Tusa branch in Australia is thought to be descended from the oldest brother Francesco (1873 – 1954) and his second wife Rosella Stefanina. Their son Mariano (b. Dec 20, 1919) may have emigrated to Australia.

Let's not forget the four generations of Poggioreale cousins, descended from those who remained in Sicily after the three Tusa brothers immigrated to New Orleans. They only have to be identified.

This is a story and a family with a lot of future.



A.J. Tusa, Jr. with Marilyn Maniscalco Henley and Arthur Henley. New Orleans, June 2022



Tusa Family Tree

