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Italian Farmers and Winemakers on the Northern Border

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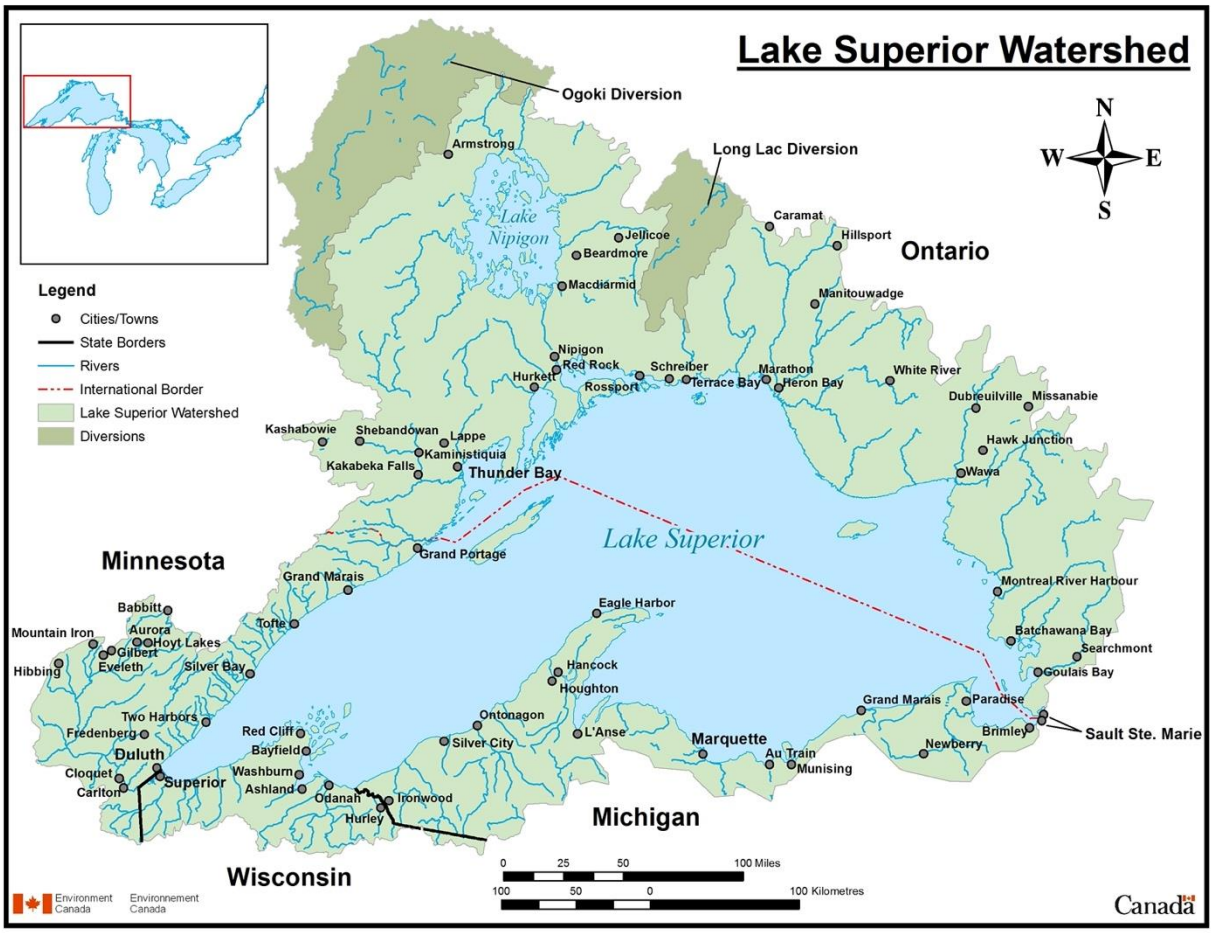
The story of Italian immigration from the 1870s through the 1920s has generally concentrated on the urban experience when Italians were attracted to cities of the Midwest – Minneapolis-St. Paul, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland – and eastern Canada – Montréal and Toronto. In these settings they found plentiful jobs in factories, steel mills, urban construction, and service businesses and were able to create new lives for themselves in the Midwest and Canada.[1] As a result their lives have been thoroughly studied. However, examination of Italian ethnic life beyond these confines as railroad laborers, miners or farmers has been neglected, because of the difficulty finding useful documentation of their experiences and a general lack of interest in rural life in the wilds of American and Canada with limited and scattered populations. More recently, a few historians have broken through the difficulty finding source material and have presented their findings.[2]

It is the objective of this narrative to focus on the little studied Lake Superior Basin and to see how some Italian immigrants farmed and gardened under arduous and formidable conditions, far removed from successful experiences in the eastern and southern United States. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century there were over forty active Italian agricultural communities in these areas. The closest to the Basin flourished at Cumberland, Wisconsin approximately one hundred miles to the south of Lake Superior. So what are the sources for this study? The documentary evidence is based on numerous interviews conducted with Italians and Italian-Americans across the region, newspaper articles, and the *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione.* The first task to begin this study is to look at the environment of the region. The vast Lake Superior Basin is a rugged forest region encompassing 31,700 square miles with a shoreline of 2,726 miles. Within the Basin there are five urban centers – Duluth-Superior-St. Louis County, Thunder Bay (formerly Fort William and Port Arthur), Marquette County and the American and Canadian Sault Ste. Maries with a total population of 504,168.[3] In 1910-1911 the total population of the region was 661,935 and there were 16,862 Italian-born residents not counting their offspring with 13,546 on the American side of the border and another 3,316 in Canada.[4]

Into this vast region – cut by the Canadian-United States border and numerous state borders came the first Italian pioneer immigrants. The copper region of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan opened by the late 1840s and attracted the first Piemontese immigrants by the late 1850s. This was followed by Italians arriving on the Marquette iron range at the same time. To the south the Menominee iron range (Norway-Iron River, Michigan) opened in the late 1870s while to the farther west the Gogebic iron range (Wakefield, Michigan through Hurley, Wisconsin) opened in the late 1880s. At the same time the Minnesota Iron Range was opening and the same was happening at Thunder Bay and in the two Saults to the east. By 1900 the Italian communities in the region had been established and were flourishing.

The Dillingham investigation that took place in 1909 provides useful statistics. In the Copper Country 514 North Italians reported that 63.8 percent of them came from farming backgrounds while on the Minnesota iron range of the 129 North Italians reporting 62.8 percent had been farmers or farm laborers. In the UP iron ranges of the 435 reporting only 49 percent came from farming traditions. So as will be illustrated a small number of Italians focused on their agrarian dream to return to the land. The vast majority had families, were single trying to establish themselves or were planning to make money to return to the Old Country and settle on their own land. In any case they were employed making steady wages between $13.00 and $14.06 weekly. Why would they venture onto the land with its harsh climate with an unknown income?



Map 1: Lake Superior Border Region

DON'T COME TO FARM!!

The Italians who came to the North Country were given warnings about the problems facing them if they turned to farming. The Italian government in 1902 inaugurated issuance of *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione* which told prospective settlers of the New World existing condition. Pietro Cardiello, consular official at Detroit reported that there were no Italian farmers in the Lower Peninsula but some owned investment land with a farmhouse that they rented, which is a unique concept. Up north, Attilio Castigliano, consul at Duluth wrote in 1913 that in his area the climate is very harsh and "the vine does not grow to ripen its fruit, but agriculture, which until a few years ago was completely neglected is gradually expanding; the breeding of cattle is constantly increasing and many of our compatriots who raise them generally do a good business." Professor Bernardo Attolico, inspector of immigration, reporting at the same time on the construction of the Canadian transcontinental railroad wrote having visited the prosperous prairies of the west and as he approached Thunder Bay "I was struck by the evident poverty of the soil, not cultivated even along the [rail] line and in parts here and there cleared." He also stressed the long and "frightening" winters running into half a year. However, reporting from a

Farming in the Border area began with clearing the land.

rail brochure that the land in the vicinity of Lake Nipigon north of Thunder Bay was composed of clay and sandy loam and suitable for agriculture and on the north shore of the lake the land was heavily wooded. There is no indication that Italian immigrants ever thought of settling this area. Two years later, Girolamo Moroni, immigration clerk at Montréal noted that in Northern

Ontario land grants were relatively free or the land could be purchased from private companies costing $5 to $50 an acre depending on the quality of the soil and its relationship to the railway. An additional $25 per acre was needed to hire men to clear the land of trees, burn tree limbs, get rid of roots and clear rocks from the soil. The result of this purchase and land clearing allowed numerous immigrants to prosper as truck gardeners.[5]

ITALIAN GARDENS

Most of the Italians who settled in the Basin came from farming traditions and brought that experience with them. They first developed productive gardens around their homes where they experimented with seeds they brought with them and accepted American crops as well. As a result families kept garden plots around their homes and in backyards. They grew the usual variety of vegetables, but they also brought with them seeds from the Old Country planting vegetables they were familiar to them. This was especially true of tomatoes. The zucchini was a New World squash, further developed in Italy in the latter half of the 19th century and brought to the United States and Canada in the 1920s. Although, Italian pole beans prefer Mediterranean climate, they require warmer temperate climate/indoor planting when they are sprouting, once established they are drought, heat, cold and pest tolerant. Furthermore, pole beans are known to yield larger harvests per season than bush beans. Radichetta, a variety of chicory used for salads can be harvested in 52 days, special cucumbers, broccoli and an assortment of vegetables that they were familiar with came with them. Also imported were seeds for medicinal herbs such as *malva sylvestris* and chamomile. Every garden had its Italian herbs and plants - parsley, basil, sage, rosemary, fennel, oregano and the ever-present garlic plant.[6]These Italian crops allowed the

Typical Farm in Laurium, Michigan.

immigrants to stay connected with vegetables and herbs from the Old Country and imported seeds were prized possessions shared with friends and neighbors.[7]

Concerned about maintaining their labor force the mining companies rent acres of land adjacent to town at $1.00 annually per acre. Here potatoes were grown and harvested by the bushel and hay was grown to be used by the cattle. In Laurium, there were several pastures around the outskirts of town. A kid on the block would collect 7-8 cows that he drove to the pastures during the week and then another kid took over the following week.

In addition they kept chickens for their eggs, rabbits for their meat and it was common to keep a cow or two and several hogs. The eggs and excess milk were sold in the neighborhood. Milk was never touched by the adults, whose favorite beverage was wine, but the second generation were the milk drinkers. The Piedmontese made *toma*, a fresh soft cheese and cottage cheese that was sold as well. In November a familial-neighborly event took place. People gathered to dispatch and process the hog, which was bought by two families without a hog. The larger pieces were processed and smaller pieces made into sausage and salami. Meat was layered in lard in thirty-gallon crocks and pieces collected as needed. Some Italians dried their salami in dirt cellars or basements. The abundant harvest of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beets and other root crops were kept in a cool root cellar or basement. These home farms were an important part of the finances and lives of these families. With a basement filled with crocked meat, salami, cheese and wine the only reason to shop in a grocery was for coffee, sugar, flour and corn meal to make polenta. These home farms played an important role in augmenting salaries.[8]

Some Italian miners developed land as far as three miles from the mines and developed larger farms worked by the wife and children and the male head of the family after work. When poor economic times hit and the men were laid off they could rely on the farm to keep them in food. Fruit growing was commonly practiced in Italy and in the Basin they could rely on apples, cherries and plums but then an early frost could interfere with the harvest.

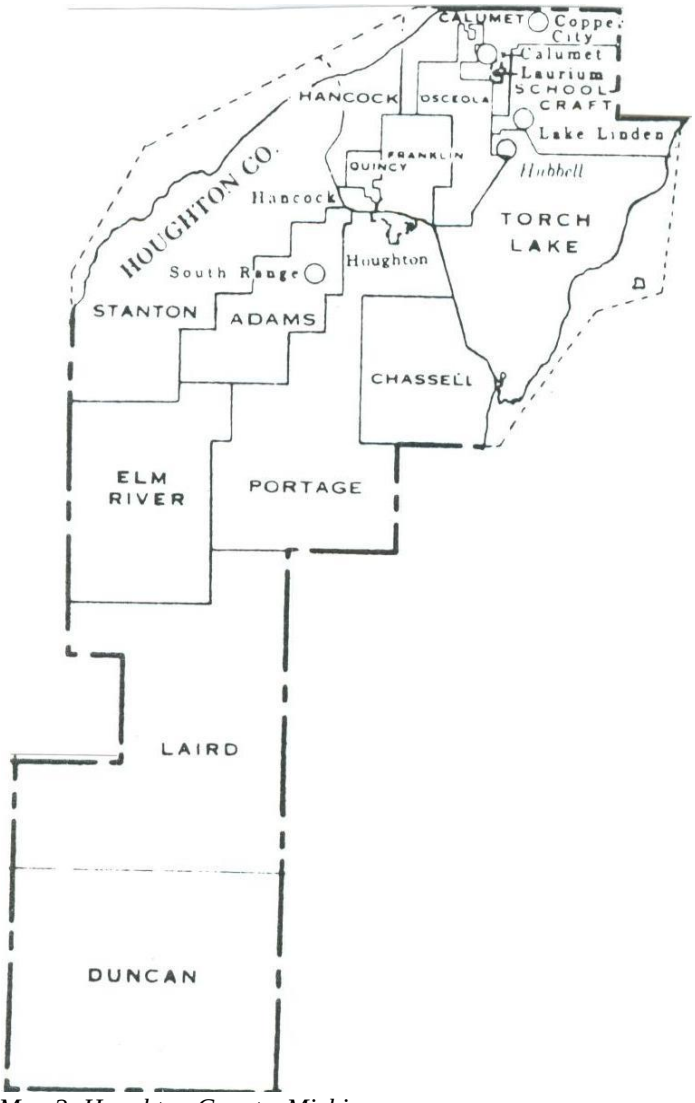
WINERY

When the Italian immigrants arrived in the region they brought with them the tradition of drinking wine with their meals and recreation and as a result the first Italians sought to develop vineyards with no real success. As a result some of them made fruit and berry wines to satisfy the demand. Although wine making can be seen as an individual or family activity that never reached commercial production, when you think about the number of people/families involved in wine making in the fall it can be considered a major agricultural-type activity.

Grapes were imported from California, New York and Ohio and the Italians in Canada imported their grapes from the Niagara Peninsula to the east. Wine tasting became an important event in the lives of immigrants. We are lucky to have a number of interviews that go into detail about wine making and tasting. One of these was that of Elio Argentati of Iron County, Michigan. The group of Italians had Camp Italy, their hunting camp in the Gibbs area of Iron County. Grapes arrived from California ordered to make up a box car on the railroad. Each household took 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of grapes. From a thousand pounds 45-50 gallons of wine

were produced. If the grapes were large they were usually not too sweet and made a light wine. If they were small they usually were very sweet and you got a stronger wine.

All of the men were proud of their wine and would have a wine tasting at camp or home as the wine was ready to drink by late November during deer hunting season. They brought small samples and would sit around a table sampling the wine and commenting on it. One would accuse the other of making his wine better by adding sugar or cutting the wine with water. This was a ritual conducted year after year. One "oddball" fellow came with white wine but no body made it and thus he could not be judged.[9] Given the number of Italians making wine you could say that it reached industrial production of tens of thousands of gallons. Canadians in Sault Ste. Marie continued to process grapes into wine well into the 1980s because of the high tax on wine.



Map 2: Houghton County, Michigan

Another food item used by Italians were all types of songbirds. The Italians were aided by state law of Michigan which had township clerks pay 2 cents per sparrow head since the bird were considered "vermin." The birds were shot with sling shots, air guns and traps. In January 1911 several thousand sparrows were presented to the clerks: Calumet- nearly 4,000, Red Jacket 2,148 birds and in Laurium 559.[10] This was sizeable among of food "produced" from the streets of Copper Country towns.

COPPER COUNTRY FARMERS

The first Italian immigrants to arrive in Houghton came in the late 1850s from the Kingdom of Sardinia, which comprised the island of Sardinia and Piedmont under the house of Savoy. Italy would not be unified until 1870. They included Joseph Gaitan (23) married to Penny, a Canadian, Joseph Coppo (30), Vital Coppo (16) and John Quello (22) all of whom were copper miners. Once established they had funds to develop various enterprises.[11]

Once established in the Copper Country Italian farmers were concentrated in the region from Calumet-Laurium south to the northern city limits of Hancock on the Portage Canal, or

Hancock Township, Franklin Township and Calumet-Laurium; an area of some 100 square miles. Many of the farmers and dairymen were Piemontese and in many cases were related through marriage. By 1910 there were thirty-two Italians farming and they comprised 60 percent of Italian farmers in the Upper Peninsula. Many of them were later joined by their sons and their daughters who married other farmers.

The first Italian farmer was Bartholomew "Bart" Quello (1837-1919) from the evidence available. He was born in Piedmont and married to Katie and the family was living in Franklin Location prior to 1864, where Bart was a laborer, he had a home worth $150 and personal estate of $150. Now the entrepreneur was in a position to purchase timber land to the southwest of Calumet along Bear Lake adjacent to modern F.J. McLain State Park. As a timber contractor, he provided timber for the Calumet & Hecla mines and on the cleared land he developed a farm and as a result in 1880 he was listed as a "farmer & contractor."[12] Quello and later his family, operated a meat market in Calumet in 1897. He probably used his farm at Bear Lake to send beef to market. In the summer of 1910 a road was being improved through the area of the lake and it was reported in the *Calumet News* that "the Quello, Coppo, Weldon, Smith and other farms are within the belt the roadway will serve." The Goodfellows' Club House was located on the Quello farm in 1911.[13] Another early farmer was Paul Coppo (1845-1896) who in 1866 had a dairy farm by Portage Lake. By 1915 his farm covered 160 acres and was valued at $1,450.

Meats and produce provided by local farms.

Italian Farmers in Houghton County[14]				
Type of Farming	1900	1910	1920	1930
Dairy Farming	0	3	4	4
Farmer	0	11	23	15
Farm Laborer	2	14	7	19
Fruit Farmer	0	0	0	1
Laborer Dairy Farm	0	0	1	0
Manager Home Dairy	0	0	1	0
Milk Peddler	0	1	0	0
Total	2	29	38	39

Another original Italian settler was Vital Coppo. He also got into farming and by 1915 he owned 840 acres of land in this district. Battista Gaspardo (1879-?) was from Pont Canavese, Piedmont province, who came to the United States in 1902. He developed his farm at Torch Lake east of Lake Linden, where his 63-year-old father Sarafino was working at odd jobs. His farming operation was successful since in 1930 four of his Michigan-born sons were working as laborers on the family farm.[15]

Peter Coppo operated a farm in Section 30 which included a magnificent club house for the Prosit Club, a large barn filled with hay and a hennery with incubators and other poultry equipment. He successfully raised chickens on a large scale and possibly sold them at Quello's

market, who advertised that each bird was specially fed on selected grains producing firm, plump, tender chickens. He did well with this operation, but he had to deal with arsonists. The second time disaster struck in October 1911, Coppo was digging potatoes when he noticed smoke coming from the hennery. He called for help, but the farm was too isolated and the hennery was lost and this ended Coppo's chicken farm.[16]

In the Calumet area Battista Perona (1883-1956) started out as a miner and lived in Laurium, but he had his heart set on dairy farming and he loved flowers. When they lived in Laurium they had a cow and his daughter Victoria delivered milk by the pail in town to Italian customers. Then Battista moved the family to a farm site located four miles from Calumet-Laurium in Kearsarge-Wolverine. He paid $1,100 down for the land and $400 annually. Here he had a pasture where he kept 10-12 cows. He thoroughly enjoyed farm life and the cows that he kept. Victoria took a wagon and delivered milk to customers along with butter and cottage cheese made by her mother Maria. There was a great demand for cottage cheese which they never had enough of. The customers enjoyed the personal service that they gave them. Battista never made a great deal of money from his farming activity but it was a type of work that he enjoyed.

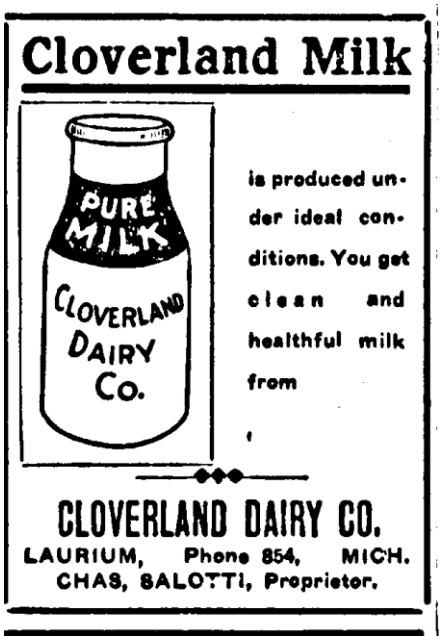
At some point he started growing flowers beginning with pansies and moved onto peonies and other flowers. This was a love that he had for a long time. He eventually became a commercial flower grower and was the only one growing flowers in the area and as a result his flowers were in great demand. He grew pansies so that they were available to be placed in graves for Memorial Day. The community was saddened when he left farming to work for Kennecott away from the Copper Country.[17] He continued farming into 1940. None of his children took over the farm although his son helped him.

At Franklin Location Italian farms were surrounded by copper mines. Library of Congress.

Peter Coppo farm site, Franklin, Michigan

Italian farmers were also concentrated in Franklin Township and developed large dairy farms and hired Italians as farm laborers and milkers, which were essential to a dairy.[18] One of the interesting Italian farmers was Battista Vitton[19] (1871-1964) who was born in Ivrea and lived in Locana, Piedmont province and was a teamster and never farmed in the Old Country. He arrived at Ellis Island in May 1892 and found his way north. He worked underground in a copper mine for five or six months and not liking the situation he went to work in the rock house splitting rock. He found property that he rented for ten years and then bought it.[20] His farm was on Pontiac Road in Franklin Township above Hancock and was surrounded by many Finnish farmers and copper miners. The Vitton family originally lived in a rude log cabin and eventually constructed a larger home through whose basement ran a cool spring where they stored dairy products. By 1910 Vitton was a large dairy farmer with seventy cows and employed six Italian boarders who were milkers.[21] He established and operated the Vitton Dairy that served the greater Houghton County area. In 1920 Vitton's 17 year old son John and 14 year old Battista worked on the farm alongside Italian immigrants: Charles Birocco, Battista Bonello, James Mantino, and Emilio Monto whose average age was 36 and who decided to turn to the farm rather than the copper mines.[22] In 1930 Battista's dairy was in full-operation with his son helping him along with four hired hands: Stefano Galletto, George Micheletti, Nando Micheletti, and Angelo Simonetti. This pattern continued into the 1940s.

Members of the Vitton family continued as farmers. Peter with his brother Paul in 1939 developed a small potato farm. President Roosevelt's New Deal programs transformed Houghton County into one of the nation's most productive potato areas and they were taking advantage of this development. Once Peter returned from duty in World War II he and his brother operated a large potato farm and his wife, Florence was his bookkeeper and innovator for the farm. The potato farm successfully continued for the next forty years passing in 1998.[23] One son, Baptiste Vitton (1905-1989) did not become a farmer but a Metropolitan Life Insurance agent with an office and family in Hancock.[24]



In the neighborhood was John Gaspardo who in the spring of 1920 was operating his dairy farm at Boston Location and was assisted by his 16-year-old son Giacomo and a hired hand Peter Dino also 16.[25] This continued through the decade when he was joined by his two sons: James and John and a hired hand, Antonio Burati. He serviced the Hancock area and in 1940 the farm laborers included his son and grandson along with an Italian hired hand Guilio Rucola.[26] Close by was a Tuscano from Lucca, Egidio Ricci who for most of his life he worked as a laborer in the copper mine. However by 1940 when he was sixty-seven, he owned his own farm working in 1939 fifty-two weeks straight without having to deal with lay-offs at the mine.[27]

A unique story was that of Charles Salotti (1887-1962) whose father was an immigrant and worked as a watchman for Calumet & Hecla. He was born in Laurium and became a successful grocer there. In the spring of 1914 he joined with a relative John Gaspardo for create a modern dairy. The latter traveled to St. Paul and selected a herd of twenty or more of Jersey cows that were inspected by a veterinarian, passed his inspection, and were shipped to the Copper Country. The two partners purchased an excellent site for their dairy along the county road connecting Hancock and Calumet about 1 ½ miles north of Boston Location. The farm site included fine pasture land and an excellent location for dairy buildings. Concerned about sanitation, their delivery wagon consisted of ice tanks on the side to keep the milk cool and fresh. The Cloverland Dairy Company was in full operation and by July 1914 you could purchase their milk by delivery and in Salotti's grocery.[28]

This dairy allowed Salotti to delve into farming as when he registered for the draft in 1918 he listed his occupation as "merchant & farmer." He continued with his main focus on groceries and did well so that in 1930 he owned a home valued at $3,000, a handsome sum for the time. A decade later at 52-years of age he was in a new career as a full-time farmer in the vicinity of Laurium. However in 1942 he was working for the E.P. Murphy Granite Company out of Green Bay.[29] He passed from the scene in 1962.

At Hancock Township in 1900 there were no Italians farming. During the decade that followed, Italians had made money to purchase land and developed few farms. In 1910 Silvester Sandretta had developed a dairy and his wife Angelica and daughter Minnie were dairywomen while he hired three Italian men. There were other farmers like widow Mary Coppo, who operated a farm while her son moved away from the fields and was a salesman for a general store; located close-by were Paul Casfardo and Orestes Vergo. There were some 49 Finnish farmers and farm laborers surrounding them many of whose Michigan-born sons continued farming. By the 1930s life in the Copper Country was hit by the Great Depression and only James Sandretto and Paul Gaspardo remained but were gone by 1940.[30]

Battista Vitton had 70 cows on his dairy farm in 1912.

Dominic Sandretto (1872-1925) who arrived in the United States in 1885 and in 1900 was working as a copper miner for Calumet & Hecla. He and his wife took in six Italian boarders whose room and board easily equaled his mining pay. Thus within the decade he had enough money to purchase a farm in Schoolcraft Township by Lake Linden. He was a dairy farmer and a milk peddler who in the spring of 1910 was assisted by his 14-year-old son, Peter and hired man Frank Balagna. He continued to successfully farm until his premature death in 1915 of bronchial pneumonia.[31]

Tony Richetta was an old timer who provides us with some important insights. He was born in 1889 in San Martino Canavese, Piedmont, Italy and came to the United States in 1906. All his life he worked for Calumet & Hecla Mining Company in the rock house.[32] Although he worked in the mine he had a secondary career as a gardener. During the labor strike of 1913-1914 he found work on a local farm in Dollar Bay as did other unemployed miners. Wine making was a constant and as he said he made it "thousands of times" and distilled grappa, which he concluded was "pretty good." He made sausage using nutmeg and other spices and wine in the mix and he made salami which was dried in the basement. The local Piedmontese made toma, a soft cheese which was made for home use although some people sold it. He hunted rabbits which were canned along with fish. He and his wife Theresa maintained a large garden whose major crop was potatoes. The uncanned produce was kept in the dirt basement, where there were large bins of potatoes which kept firm into late March. Carrots were placed in boxes and covered with sand and due to the humidity stayed moist and fresh into the spring. Cabbage were kept in bins or bags and kept as well as celery.[33]

A unique settlement of Italians was located in Trimountain south of Houghton. In 1930 its total population composed of Croatians and Finns was 274 with 25 Italians. We are fortunate to have memories recounted by Louis Lombardi about his father Vincenzio (1887-1967) who with other Italians lived in an enclave called Sunny Italy. He was from San Ginese di Compito, Lucca, Italy located eleven miles from Pisa. When he came to the United States in 1907 he loved farming and the soil. If he had a choice he would not have settled in the northern Copper Country but in southern Wisconsin or the Iron Range of Minnesota with its better soil. However given the circumstances, he did not have much of a choice and settled in Trimountain working his whole life for the Copper Range Mining Company.[34]

The Italians settled along the valley called Sunny Italy where he found good soil eroded from the surrounding hills and the temperature was ten to twelve degrees warmer than on the hills. Vincenzio's "farm" was located along the main road of Sunny Valley in some six good-sized patches and watered by Pilgrim Creek. The copper company told them to "plant all you want." He made terraces on the hillside and planted apple trees. It was necessary for Vincenzio to develop his "farm" since in 1920 the family lodged seven Italian boarders who had recently arrived and were trammers in the mine and it provided the extended family with a constant food supply.

When he returned from work he loved to work in the fields and at vacation time in the summer his boys joined him. When they wanted to play baseball or go swimming, he said "*niente da fare/*nothing doing." They cut firewood and hay for the winter.

He had two big barns where he kept rabbits, chickens, hog and stored hay. The rabbits were kept for food as were the chickens, but eggs were an important outcome as well. They grew corn, beans, potatoes, cabbage, strawberries, tomatoes. They sold surplus cabbage and corn locally.[35]

MARQUETTE IRON RANGE

The Marquette iron range attracted Italians but they did not develop the number of farms as experienced in the Copper Country nor as will see along the Michigan-Wisconsin line. The first known Italian/Corsican to settle in Marquette County was Philip Marchetti /Marketty and family who was described as "farmer." However, Marchetti was a quarryman and stone mason by trade and in 1865 he was a retail liquor dealer. On his arrival he purchased property east of Negaunee and constructed a rude structure as his first home. He planted a large garden along with an apple orchard, that is still producing apples on the property of the Michigan Iron Industry Museum. He also grew fields of potatoes and made wine, sausage and cheese. This "farm" was more of a camp, where he and his family and friends went to relax. One of his sons in the 1890s farmed in the area of Negaunee, but this was not permanent.[36]

By 1910 there were some 1,157 Italians on the Marquette iron range. One of the elements found in other areas was the fact that Italians entered farming when they were close to iron mining. John Chiri (1867-1958) lived in Patch Location in Negaunee for 76 years and worked as an iron miner. Despite his demanding job, he found time to maintain three large gardens, which provided food for his growing family.[37] By the 1970s and 1980, his son Forsyth Township, home

to Gwinn and its iron mines, really did not develop Italian farms, although the area was home to Finnish farmers. In 1930 Bortolo "Bert" Colombo, a former miner returned to the soil and operated a sheep ranch but this ended within the decade. Felix (1923-1983) and Laura (1929-2019) Dozzi related the development of extensive gardens around their home and those of other Italians who did the same in the area. Into the 1980s they continued to make potent grappa from grape skins.[38]

In the city of Ishpeming, Joe Vallela (1920-2005), a retired iron miner kept his family well-supplied with vegetables throughout the year well into the 1990s. Joseph Bertucci (1893-1979) was an immigrant who had a variety of jobs over the years - iron miner, laborer for the Chicago & North Western Railway, tavern owner and wholesale man for Cohodas Produce. Despite these jobs he kept his farming spirit and created a large garden at his hunting camp in the woods in West Ishpeming for family use.[39]

IN THE MENOMINEE RIVER VALLEY AND ALONG THE WISCONSIN STATE LINE.

If the Marquette iron range did not see the development of large Italian farms, we move directly to the south and the Menominee River Valley where a different story unfolded. As it has been shown, the land and climate in the North Country were not conducive to farming, some Italians like those from Trentino in northeastern Italy, were familiar with farming in a difficult environment, turned to farming on both sides of the river.[40]

GOGEBIC AND BESSEMER

Back to our journey across the Upper Peninsula with individual farmers in Gogebic County and beyond. The story of Antonia "Nina" Benetti (1887-1959) used gardening to raise her eight children. She was born in Adalio, Province of Vicenzio, Veneto. She and her husband, Anton (1880-1937), an iron miner settled in Bonnie Location, Gogebic County in 1913. Life went well for them until he developed pulmonary tuberculosis and passed leaving her with eight children to raise. Without employment, she was faced with a major problem and turned to gardening in order to raise her family. She developed the land immediately around her house into a large vegetable garden and had a sizeable barn for livestock.

The typical extended Italian garden provided food for large families. She raised large quantities of potatoes on nearby rented land, where she also cultivated hay and was helped by Italian neighbors to gather the hay which was fed to her cattle and sold. In the fall the hogs were butchered and provided sausage and salami. She made asiago cheese and sold the milk on her regular milk route. Eggs were sold to the neighborhood and chickens provided the family with food as well. With this dairy and egg business she was able to provide her family with cash. For her family she canned and preserved hundreds of quarts of meats, vegetables and wild berries gathered by her children. In the 1950 census she was listed as a "farmer." Finally, her youngest son, Arthur graduated with a medical degree in 1957, proving that a woman could be a successful farmer raising a family.[41]

Life for the Italian farmer in the North was somewhat precarious as seen by the Contratto family who in 1900 settled in Bessemer. The sons of Andrew, Paul and Peter started as farm laborers in 1910. Life for these farmers was difficult and every spring they had to go through their fields picking out rocks that had surfaced during the winter weather and at times constructed walls around their lands from the rocks gathered. By 1920 Peter continued farming but his brother found more satisfying work as a foreman at the city gravel pit. In the years that followed Peter left the farm as well and the Contrattos ended up as teamsters having long abandoned the difficulties of farming in a rather inhospitable environment.[42]

Typical Italian garden.

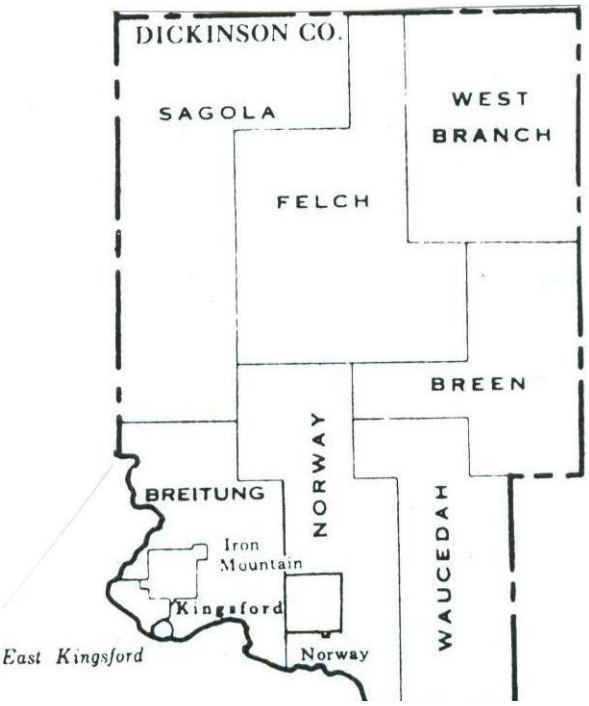
DICKINSON COUNTY

The Italian farmers who developed property in Dickinson County were located in the southeastern corner of the county. Several dozen farmers and dairymen established themselves along a 20 mile stretch of the Menominee River Valley between Waucedah on the east to Iron Mountain on the west in the townships of Waucedah, Norway and Breitung, dominated by the iron mining towns of Vulcan and Norway, along modern US 2 and the old Chicago & North Western Railway.

The majority of these farmers were from the former Austrian Tyrol which was ceded to Italy after 1918. The area was in the vicinity of the Dolomite alps with rough land and high meadows. As historian Simon Winder has written: “When the Italians took over the South Tyrol in 1918 they imagined they could restock the region with Italian-speaking hill farmers and

remove all the Germans, but even the most hard-scrabble, hollow-eyed *contadino* considered it insane to spend his brief existence wrestling with mouflon in ten-foot snowdrifts and the project foundered. This was a life that could only be endured if you were born to it."[43] However this location in the southern Upper Peninsula was in the "banana belt" with milder winters and a land that the Italians found better than the hills of the Dolomite alps.

By 1920 there were fifteen Italo-Austrians farming the area and they were living near each other on Morosini Road. They operated general farms and dairies and were joined by a few Italians. In a typical twist for some miners, certainly among the Finns, the husband was a miner while the family had a small truck garden within three miles of the mine. This was true of Giacomo Orler, whose wife was listed as a Trentinesa home farmer.[44] A decade later there were nineteen Italians farmers situated in the Menominee River Valley. They had moved out of iron mining or were working at the Ford Motor Company plant in Kingsford. The majority were general farmers although two were dairymen. In an unusual situation, 47 years old Adeline Roslogno operated a dairy as her husband was not on site and she had several children to raise. Their average age was 53 years and many were in their late 60s, giving evidence that they entered the market as iron miners and having created the necessary funds bought a farm. In an unusual development there were a number of their sons who either worked as farm laborers on the farm, worked for others and one owed his own farm having dismissed working in the auto factory.[45] Two stock ranches were operated in 1920 by James Varda and Joseph Valerio. The one dominant family - Pellegrini - had farms across the area and it is notable that sons and grandsons turned to farming. Names like Morosini, Gerardi, Bubloni, Varda, Sartori, Carozolla, Servia dotted the landscape. By 1950 there were some 23 Italian and Italian-American farmers in Norway Township.[46]



Map 3: Dickinson County

In Iron Mountain Italian immigrants were primarily focused on iron mining but they maintained gardens on the hills in the northern part of the city. The typical tool used by Italian gardeners was the *zappa* or gardening tool. Alfred Gasbarro of Iron Mountains recalled looking toward the hill above the North Side and seeing dozens of Italian gardeners hoeing their gardens, which glittered in the evening sunlight.

To the west in adjacent Iron County, home to more Trentino Italians consisted of 39 heads of households of which 32 were connected to iron mining and the remainder were farming.

By 1930 the Italian farmers had been successfully living in homes valued at $2500. Victor Ganin and J. Fauri were successful dairymen by the 1920s.[47]

Of these Trentino farmers was the Casagranda family, whose members have been engaged in farming and ranching for decades. The patriarch of the family, Peter Casagranda (1862-1926) spent a short time during 1900 in Blackhawk, Colorado as a gold miner, but quickly returned to his home and in 1904 brought his large family to Crystal Falls where they first lived in a log cabin and farmed.[48]

By 1919 his son, Gustavo (1892-1981) was considered one of the best farmers in Iron County. His dairy farm was home to prized registered Holstein cows and advertised his "Casagranda Diary" as providing "Milk . . . the Cheapest Digestible Food." By the late 1920s his Holsteins were regarded a quality milk and butterfat producers.[49] Over the years he served on the board of the State Fair in Escanaba and played a role in community affairs.

A Casagranda ranch was located in the vicinity of Amasa north of Crystal Falls, where there was a racetrack where horse races were held when members of the family did not race at the state fair in Escanaba and other locations in the Upper Peninsula and on the 4th of July. Members of the family continue in the agrarian field.[50]

Another grocer-rancher was Alfred Angeli (1891-1950) from Perugia based in Iron River. When first arrived in Iron Mountain and then Iron River he knew that he did not want to go into iron mining. Then he met a Mr. Valetti who invited Angeli to join him in a cattle buying trip to St. Paul and they shipped their cattle north by rail. While Valetti sold his cattle to Chicago buyers, Angeli decided it was more profitable to keep the cattle on a ranch that he developed called Iron Lake Ranch. As he put it they soon became "the original Italian cowboys." He learned the butcher trade and provided the locals with fresh beef. The 1,000 acre ranch supported cattle, pigs, 300 sheep, a variety of chickens and he raised corn, wheat and "cattle grain." This proved to be a successful operation.

Cory Saigh of Angeli Foods & a 1924 Ford Model T truck used for making deliveries.

Despite his endeavors with ranching, his main occupation was the grocery business, which he started as well. He sold fresh meat processed in the

woods on the ranch and sold it in his grocery and to local grocers and butcher shops. He was one of a number of Italian immigrants who got into ranching. Later the large Angeli family opened groceries in numerous UP communities.[51]

COMMERCIAL CHEESE PRODUCTION

Italians who settled abroad brought with them their foods and the means of reproducing them in America. This is probably best seen in the development of Italian cheese in northern Wisconsin and Michigan. The Italian government had been interested in promoting emigration to the countryside allowing immigrants to utilize their agrarian skills.

Two officials – Giulio Bolognesi, Italian consul-general in Chicago and his business partner, Attilio Castigliano, consul in Duluth, Minnesota in 1917 inaugurated a cheese enterprise that would eventually develop into the Stella Cheese Company. Bolognesi had purchased a 1,700-acre estate on Lake Nebagamon in Douglas County, Wisconsin. Their broader plan saw at least one skilled Italian cheese maker, fifty-six-year-old Frank Tescari brought from the Old Country in 1917 to make parmesan cheese, which was unknown to the American public. A relative, Emilio Bolognesi who had come to the United States in 1914 was the manager of the Nebagamon Produce Company in 1920. They used local Italian immigrants in Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota to test their products - Romano, Parmesan, Reggiano and improve on them.

These Italian cheesemakers worked with hundreds of Finnish dairymen who provided the necessary milk and butter fat to keep the cheese factories efficiently operating 24-hours a day and a profitable enterprise resulted. This operation was at the heart of the idea of spreading "immigrant colonization."

Originally, they were going to call their product "Nebagamon Cheese" but it quickly became apparent that the name was not conducive to sales. In Italian "Stella Rosa" referred to high quality and the new name was adopted.

As the years passed the Stella cheese company grew with equipment of special design imported from Italy and property acquired not only to make cheese but to hold it for curing for as long as two years. In November 1929 they dedicated a plant at Mass, Ontonagon County, directed by master cheese maker, S. Rossini. It had a capacity of 9,000 loaves weighing 20 pounds each. At the time it was considered the largest Italian cheese factory in the United States. Citing the Finnish connection ex-congressman Oscar J. Larson delivered a welcoming address in Finnish, thanking Bolognese for bringing prosperity to local Finnish farmers. Soon after, plants were opened in South Range, Baltic, Baraga, Crystal Falls, Pickford and Perkins, where they produced millions of pounds of Italian cheeses– Asiago, Caciocavallo, Manteca, Parmesan grated and whole, Parmigiano Reggiano, Provoleta, Provolone, Provolone Fiaschetti, Ricotta

fresh and dry, Romano, Scamorza, and Stracchino. Stella cheese helped many dairy farmers to survive the Depression of the 1930s.

Stella Cheese headquartered in Chicago had to pull out of the Upper Peninsula in the early 1950s. This was caused by new and stringent health laws, the need for new equipment, high taxes, transportation costs and diminishing profits and dairy farms. Their Wisconsin factories were bought by Universal Foods of Milwaukee and eventually in 1997 the cheese mega-giant Saputo Cheese USA bought them but still sells the Stella brand. It was Count Bolognese and his Stella factories that brought Italian cheeses to the Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin and to the American culinary public.

Once a flourishing Stella cheese storage facility, 2014.

The other cheese company is Frigo, which originated in Wisconsin along the UP border. Two brothers, Pasquale and Luigi Frigo arrived in America in 1913. They were from Trissino, Vicenza north of Venice, home to Asiago cheese.[52] Five generations of the Frigo family had made cheese. By 1920 they were manufacturing Asiago and other Italian cheeses out of Pound, Wisconsin and were joined by other brothers and developed a number of factories along the Wisconsin border with the UP. In 1939 they

A Surviving Contratto Barn west of Bessemer (1982).

incorporated Frigo Brothers Cheese Manufacturers of Iron Mountain. Later they had a factory in Carney in the UP as well. They eventually had the largest Asiago cheese factory in the United States. In the twenty-first century Frigo was purchased by Saputo Cheese USA and remains a vital part of the corporation.

CUMBERLAND, WISCONSIN

The sliver of Wisconsin touching the Basin was home to enterprising Italian farmers as well. So far we have seen Italians farms that developed, but not as agricultural communities as had developed in the eastern and southern United States.[53] By 1920 there were some seventeen Italian agricultural communities located on the Atlantic coast in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut into the Midwest in Missouri and especially in the South and far west into California where the vast majority were located.

Northern Wisconsin was home to Italian farmers, especially south of the iron mining community of Hurley, Wisconsin. Some 60-100 miles apart were two marginal communities developed beginning in the 1880s: the famous and purely Italian agricultural community – Cumberland. It was started in the early 1880s on cheap cut-over land that had to be cleared of stumps. The Italians were from Abruzzi, Molise, Catanzaro, Calabria and Sicily. They developed large 40+ acre farms that were in many cases worked by the women while many of the men in the summer had railroad jobs in construction and section work on the northern Great Plains. In the winter they returned home and worked in the woods as lumbermen. They developed a tight-knit community with their own Italian Catholic church and mutual beneficial society. With changes in the 1920s many people in this colony left for jobs in boom urban areas. However for nearly thirty years the Cumberland Italian agricultural community was an example of a large farming community in the North Country. A similar community would not develop further north.[54]

Some forty miles to the north a group of Calabrese working for the Chicago & North Western Railway established themselves at Spooner, a major service center for the railroad. Some members of the Donatelle now Donatell family, that helped found the Italian community at Cumberland went north as well. In 1910 there were fifty-seven Italians in Spooner and nineteen were employed by the railroad and others were saloon keepers and bartenders and merchants. A decade with an Italian population of sixty-nine the breakdown remained the same. In 1940 some of the old-timers remained. The Donatell family was represented by 63-year-old Joseph working as a watchman for the city power plant and Louis Isabella retired at 83 years of age. Eleven were working for the railroad. However by this time, one Italian, Gabriel Chiois at 77 was farming on Town Road with a home valued at $2,000 having done this with a third-grade education. Unfortunately, the previous censuses do not mention him. It is interesting to note that Bruno Elia living there was from Bianchi, Cosenza, Calabria. Although the Calabrese did not attempt to farm in this part of the state, they all managed extensive vegetable gardens around their homes.[55]

At Merrill to the southeast was home to one of the largest tanneries in the United States and home to a community of Italian laborers. This community was active between 1900 and 1922, when workers moved north and were employed at the Hurley iron mines. Piedmontese

immigrant, Pietro O'Dovero emigrated with his family in 1896 to the area, but logged and developed a large and successful cattle ranch, which grew to over 1,500 acres. The cattle were slaughtered on site and beef halves were sold to logging camps, while his butcher shop served local customers. The ranch still in the family is in operation and the winner of numerous environmental awards from the state of Wisconsin.

CUMBERLAND TO KIMBALL

Kimball, Wisconsin is nestled largely in a valley of considerable size, south of US-2 west of Hurley. The valley was not especially fertile, nor free of late spring or early fall frosts and was filled with brush and tangled foliage of cut-over timberlands. However, the area with its surrounding high hills and deep valley, caught the eye of some Italian immigrants and reminded them of home. In later years this valley has been commonly called "Dago Valley." The Italians who moved into this area had the first task of clearing the land of trees and then developing their farms. This population of farmers can be contrasted to the Finnish farmers who numbered nearly sixty and are an example of how Finns and Scandinavians tended to dominate farming in the North Country.

In 1907 a group of Italian immigrants – Charles Bonino, John Bilzi, David Cattoi, Victor De Podesta, Frank Marta, Joseph Vezzeti – in Hurley were the charter members who formed a corporation called the Agricultural National League of Iron County, commonly called the Agricola. From the articles of incorporation the purpose stated as to "buy, improve, cultivate and exchange real estate and other property and for that purpose shall have the power to buy, lease, own, use, improve, cultivate and sell lands and other property and erect buildings and employ the necessary labor to carry on such business." The capital stock of the organization was set at 10,000 divided into 10,000 shares of $1.00 apiece.

The actual intent was to set up a large corporation farm with an idea to lease to tenant farmers. This plan for a variety of reasons did not materialize and in 1909, "the corporation was dissolved, and 28 forties of land owned by this corporation were split among the stockholders. John Fragno was the only one of this group who actually started farming operations in Kimball. The others sold their holdings to Italian immigrants." These men were raised on farms in Italy and sought to return to the land. They were from Piedmont, north of Venice and from Campobello, Sicily and from Bessemer and Verona in Gogebic County.

John Fragno (Born 1869) and his family was settled in Wallace, Idaho – the third most valuable silver district in the world – where he worked in a silver mine. His daughter Mary was born there (1893-1969) but the family moved to Kimball a few years later where John became a farmer and the family lived in the remains of the old Scott and Howe Lumber camp. The farm had 23 cows that were milked morning and evening. Hay was cut for winter use from the right-of-way of the Wisconsin Central Railroad. They raised chickens and the brooders were heated by kerosene lamps that had to be attended night and day. Mary made weekly trips by horse and wagon to Hurley to sell the butter, eggs, milk and cheese to the Galdabini store and other outlets and returned with provisions for the family and laborers. Due to failing health of John in 1916 the family moved to Hurley.[56]

Original cabin, Brunello Farm. c1906. Kimball, Wisconsin.

Dominic Vittone was from Lucana, Piedmont and arrived in the United States in 1896, first settled in Springfield, Illinois and then moved to Anvil, Michigan working as an iron miner. Next he and his wife, Margarita bought land from Agricola and started farming. The Vittone farm in 1952 was the largest and most productive in Kimball Valley. By the 1950s William (1917-2003) and his wife Rena had some 62 head of cattle and operated on a large scale.

Focusing on a number of Italian families in the valley. Peter Massoglia with his family lived in Bessemer and settled on the north slope of the valley. In 1902 Giacomo Lupino went to Kimball and worked on the railroad and lumber camps before being able to send for his wife and family from Italy. They settled north of the Massiglias. Louis Brunello arrived with his family along with Donato Canalia who was operating a farm in the early 1950s. Later the Sola and Nora families and the Peter Pinardis arrived, and their sons opened up farmlands and built their homes.[57]

In 1940 there were ten Italians working on dairy farms while others continued with their farms. Some of the descendants of these early settlers in the 1980s continued to work the land raising potatoes and dairying.[58]

A similar story can be told of Anton Bugni of Iron County, Wisconsin. In the spring of 1920 he was living in Montreal south of Hurley and was a dual "woodsman-farmer" obviously going through the tedious process of clearing the land. He found farming difficult and financially unrewarding and within the decade was a logging contractor and by 1940 was living in Hurley.[59]

ST LOUIS COUNTY, MINNESOTA - ITALIANS

Now our odyssey turns west and northwest into St. Louis County, Minnesota, home to the famous Iron Range. The first Italians first settled in Duluth in the 1880s and their experience was urban and at that point had little to do with mining. However beginning in the 1890s the iron mines of The Range – Vermilion, Mesabi, Cuyuna – were developed. The number of Italians in

St. Louis County climbed and declined: 250 in 1890, 859 in 1900, 4,184 in 1910 that was the high point and then the decline slowly entered: 3,909 in 1920, 3,043 in 1930, 2,559 in 1940, 1,925 in 1950, and finally 744 in 1970. However, Italian-Americans remained as there were 3,726 living there in 1970.[60] Italians were concentrated in Hibbing and Chisolm. In Eveleth hundreds of Italians worked in clay pits and brick making and terra cotta factories.

A group of Italians settled in the western industrial zone of Gary-New Duluth especially after the opening of the Morgan Park steel plant in 1915. As Rudolph Vecoli has written:

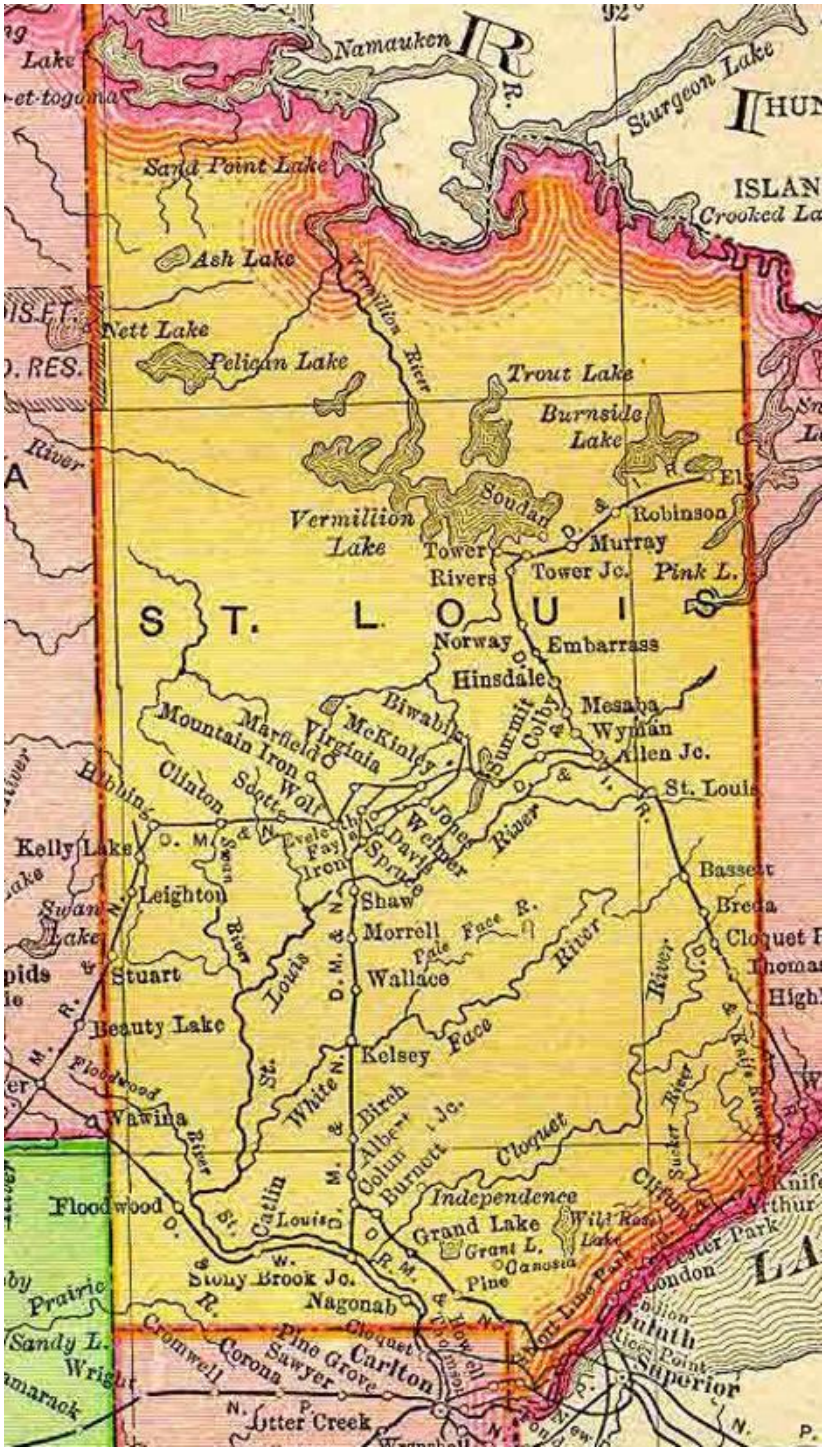
> Most of these came from the *paesi* of Cordenons and Pordenone in Fruili with a smaller number from the Veneto and Austrian Istria. Many had migrated from the Michigan copper country after the 1913 strike. Located between 96th and 105th avenues West, these people lived in shacks and boardinghouses, grew vegetables, and raised chickens, pigs and cows.[61]

St. Louis County on the iron ranges attracted hundreds of immigrants, many of whom turned to farming to supply the mining communities. As with most areas in the north Finns and Swedes dominated the farming communities. Possibly following the advice of consular officials few Italians ventured into farming and a matter of fact only four names surface in the census records.[62]

The most prominent farmer-entrepreneur was Herman (Ermenegildo) Antonelli (1864-1937). He came to the United States in 1892 from the province of Tuscany, Italy. He was an infantryman in the U.S. Army during the Spanish American War from July to December 1898. In 1900 he first settled in Ely with his brother and cousins where they worked as iron miners. By 1910 he had married Pauline Cappolari and he became a successful retail grocer operating the Italian Mercantile Company in Hibbing. He is a good example of an immigrant who moved from iron mining to retail mercantile and farming.[63]

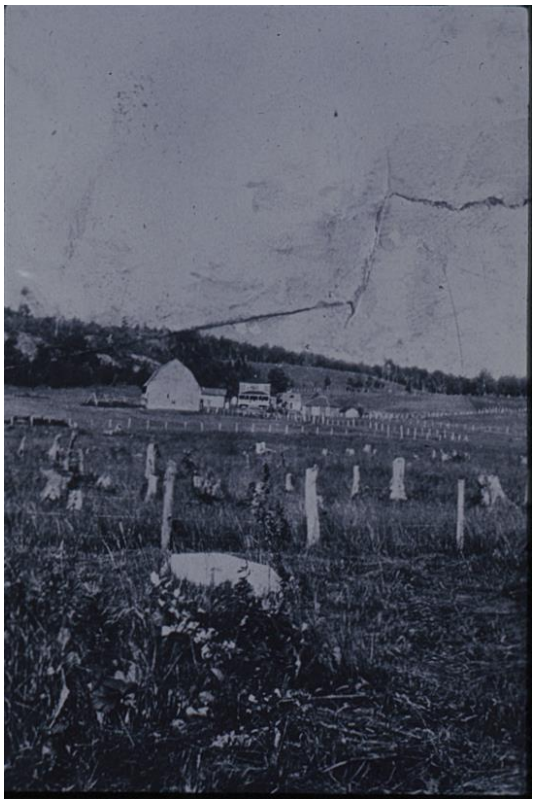
Antonelli established a good-sized farm south of Hibbing where the Antonelli Road commemorates his farm in the area. The farm was more than a vegetable truck garden as in 1912 he grew wheat, which stood four feet high and yielded an average of thirty bushels per acre.[64] Four years later he rented his farmland to two Italians: John Polvari and Peter Pecci who continued to work the land. He was retired by 1930 and his family did not follow in his agrarian footsteps as his sons were engaged in automobile service.[65]

The Menghini family was from the Austrian/Italian Tyrol and first settled in the 1890s in Norway, Dickinson County, Michigan where they farmed. Vincent (1873-1962) was a teamster and continued as such when he moved to Hibbing later in 1910. Eight years later he was farming in the vicinity of Eveleth, and he continued farming throughout his life. Another Tyrolese Italian was Frank Regale who in 1920 was single and operating a mortgaged farm surrounded by Finns. Joe Defacio was born in Cairo, Egypt, son of an Italian immigrant working in Egypt which was common. He immigrated to the United States in 1900 and moved to Cumberland, Wisconsin,



Map 4 St. Louis County, Minnesota.

home to Sicilian farmers. He married Minnie and they moved to St. Louis County where he farmed and they raised their family. [66]



Italian farm at the edge of the wilderness, Wisconsin.

In the area of Ely and Tower, some 20 to 35 miles from the Canadian border, a number of Piedmontese farmers settled. Joseph Bracco (1853-1932) arrived in 1873 at New York with his wife and they migrated to Red Jacket in the Copper Country of Michigan where in 1880 he was a laborer. Bracco and his family moved to Tower and in 1887 he operated a general store and saloon and was an agent for Milwaukee's Schlitz beer.[67] He had a long interest in farming and on September 2, 1892 he obtained 158.69 acres from the land office in Duluth. In the spring of 1900 he was the proprietor of a general store in Breitung where his sons were a bookkeeper and delivery clerk. By 1930 at 78 years of age he was operating his general farm and his four sons: Frank (50 years old), Louis (37 years old), Jacob (35 years old), and Joseph, Jr. (23 years old) were working as farm hands. It is an interesting note that they were an Italian farming island surrounded by many Finnish farmers.[68]

Bracco eventually sold his successful saloon and grocery business in Tower. His farm was located about two miles west of Tower on Highway 169 about halfway between Tower and the "Y" in the road. During the depression following the Panic of 1893 many unemployed laborers and miners from the local iron mines bought their groceries from Bracco and then in return, helped him to clear his farmland. He raised hay, which was sold in Tower and Ely where there was a big demand for it for horses used in logging. Bracco maintained a big garden where he raised vegetables for home use. He developed a big irrigation ditch which brought water from a stream across the highway. It was an elaborate system which carried water in overhead flumes. The ditch passed through his outhouse and went into the garden where robust vegetables were harvested. Bracco was well-known for this irrigation system. When he passed in 1932 the farm was sold to the Trucano family.[69]

Carlo M. Trucano (1878-1947) was born in Borgiallo, 25 miles north of Torino/Turin, province of Piedmont and arrived in the United States in April 1909 with $30 in his pocket. He worked at various locations in the West and moved to Lead, South Dakota and later he moved to Tower where he was first employed as an iron miner but by 1918 was a farmer as he registered for the draft. He became a successful farmer whose farm was

Typical environment south of Tower that attracted Italian farmers.

across the road from Bracco's farm. He married Bracco's daughter, Catherine. Trucano raised chickens, pigs, cattle and vegetables for their large family. They also sold produce in Tower. His farm became a destination for the Piedmontese and Italians in Tower who visited on Sundays. With the death of his father-in-law, Joseph Bracco, in 1932 purchased the farm. At this time his home on the property was valued at $3,000. In 1940 at sixty years of age Trucano was a widower raising eight children ranging in age from 7 to 28 and was aided by the older children working the farm.[70]

Trucano Family, July 1941.

There were other Italian farmers in the area of Tower. Peter Peyla (1859-1935) was born in San Giorgio, north of Turin, Italy and arrived in the United States in 1880 and worked in the coal mines at Grundy, Illinois, where he married his wife Agnes Desteffani (1863-1947) in 1885. They moved to the Iron Range where Peter worked as an iron miner. In 1896 he filed for homestead land. At the time the country was a wilderness. Trying to reach his homestead, Peter got lost. After wandering for four days he reached Soudan Mine without his supplies and most of his clothes. Good fortune followed and Peter was a successful farmer until his death. In 1910 his 19-year old daughter Mary was listed as a farm hand. As a community leader he was postmaster (1907-1924) and gave the hamlet its name. Today as times have changed the land is eagerly sought after for vacation homes.

His neighbor was Frank Flaim (1851-1928) who arrived in the United States from Italy in 1900 and immediately was employed as an iron miner on the Range. He married Rosa Desteffani, sister of Agnes and thus Flaim and Peyla were related through marriage and the two farming families lived close-by. On the Flaim farm they raised sheep and cattle and sold eggs and vegetables from their truck garden.[71]

Did members of the Peyla family continue to farm with the passing of their father? Before his father's passing Joseph, who worked with his father had left the farm. In 1930 he was an auto mechanic in Tower and his younger brother John was an auto salesman.[72]

The Peyla Family c 1942

To the south we have an unusual story of two Italian truck gardeners in the Hibbing area. Dominic Tappere and Joseph Valardi farmed and lived in an on-site shanty. They also added to their finances by operating a still during Prohibition. For an unknown reason a fellow, James Owen, invaded their shanty and shot both men killing Tappere and then they proceeded to haul out the still, groceries and kegs filled with alcohol.[73]

Looking again to songbird hunting, in the fall of 1912 a Game Warden was patrolling the Partridge River country southeast of Aurora. He returned to Virginia with a group of Italian hunters: Angelo Vinezio, John Marissorosa, Lapranzi Papri, and Ugo Radisson. He brought with him evidence in a sacksful of partridges, robins, songbirds, an owl, and a few hawks that he found in their possession. A dinner of songbird was common among Italians. They pleaded guilty to hunting partridge during the closed season and paid fine aggregating $78.80. The warden seized their guns, birds and hunting paraphernalia.[74]

PROJECTED ITALIAN COLONY

The concept of developing Italian agricultural colonies especially in the southern United States was promoted in 1905 by Edmondo Mayor des Planches, Italian ambassador to the United States.[75] This was part of the plan of the Italian government to turn Italian immigrants into truck

gardeners which could have worked in this part of the country. The reality was hundreds of Finns and Scandinavians had left the iron mines on the range and turned to farming.

The idea of creating an Italian agricultural developed around land near Duluth. In the summer of 1908 the Hibbing Commercial Club took up the matter of opening farmlands to settlement in the immediate vicinity of Hibbing. South of Hibbing there were thousands of acres of good farmland which was not developed. The land was owned by lumber and logging companies and not on the market. Herman Antonelli, manager of the Italian Mercantile Company of Hibbing was anxious to find lands for a large colony of Italian farmers but within a reasonable distance of town. The Club hoped to get the companies to put the land on the market.[76] Nothing came of this project.

In August 1915 Italian officials: Count Guilio Bolognesi consul general at Chicago; Armini Conte consul at Milwaukee and Attilio Castigliano consul at Duluth had a plan for the colonization of a large tract of land near Duluth. Such an ambitious project attracted the interest of the Commercial Club and some of the members gave the men a guided tour of the area and possible sites. Then they met with Duluth city officials to discuss the project that involved the purchase of several thousand acres of land that would be developed according to approved guidelines of the city. However, they planned to spend time considering the various tracts and working out the details of their plan.[77] Unfortunately, at this time Italy was involved in World War I fighting the Austrians and did not have the interest nor funds to pursue this project.

ONTARIO CANADA

Across the international border in the province of Ontario finds two large and vibrant Italian communities at Thunder Bay (formerly Fort William and Port Arthur) on the western end and at Sault Ste. Marie on the east end of Lake Superior.

FORT WILLIAM-PORT ARTHUR

North and across the international border at modern Thunder Bay were the twin cities of Fort William and Port Arthur.[78] These cities became major Canadian shipping ports and rail center. The Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific reached the area. Coal was received and wheat from the Canadian prairies was exported. Italians first arrived working on the railroads and then stayed. They got jobs in the freight yards, as section crews and stayed finding other jobs or working in the woods logging during the long winters. As shipyards developed during World War I many found a new source of jobs. A well-developed community emerged.

In the 1911 federal census there were no Italians farmers in Fort William-Port Arthur and vicinity. However, there was a lone dairyman in Fort William and a gardener in Port Arthur. In 1915 there were six farming families with each owning 160 acres. They grew oats, potatoes and forage.[79]

As they did to the south Italians developed small family gardens around their homes keeping rabbits, chickens and goats in and around their houses. They gathered dandelions, mushrooms and berries. The more established groups of society raised their eyebrows at these moves for economic well-being. However their biggest activity was the cultivation of gardens

with a broad variety of vegetables, which were preserved and augmented their food supply. Potatoes were an important feature of these gardens, and this is continued to the present day. Besides their home gardens men tilled the soil and planted vegetable garden wherever they could find available land. A good example of this activity is Silvio Aquino, who obtained city approval for his gardens. He planted two on Algoma Street, two on Farrand Street, and one on Rutton. The produce that was not canned was stored in a dugout basement. He shared his surplus with his neighbors.

Italian families had chickens and goats and slaughtered their own hogs to make sausage and salami. The folks turned to the environment and picked readily available dandelions, berries and mushrooms. Because of its abundance, versatility and nutritious benefits not generally known to many people, the dandelion was a favorite of Italians. Reno Albanese reported that non-Italians derisively once said that Italians ate "weeds."

Especially during the Depression when grapes were too expensive, Italians made berry wine. A favorite of Northern Italians, radichetta grew well into the winter as it was planted under the houses without basements and by piling snow around the sides of the house kept it from freezing.[80]

As with Italians elsewhere in the Basin, songbirds were part of their diet. Primo Fabo told how he aided family food needs by trapping sparrows near the railroad tracks: "I could bring home 75 sparrows in one afternoon. It was hard work depluming all those sparrows, but it was helpful."

Historian John Potestio wrote, "Interestingly, enough ethic identity can also find expression in and around homes through horticultural endeavors." It pointed out that large planters with small fig trees could be found in a number of living rooms. The laurel tree is a southern European plant whose green leaves are used in Italian cuisine. In an effort to challenge the northern climate "one family has managed to combine the aesthetic and the practical value of a plant that also fulfills a nostalgic need, a magnificent laurel tree grows in the middle of an impressive foyer."

For many the idea was to "tame the wilderness" and they worked the soil no matter how difficult it was. Eggplants are a Mediterranean plant and thus a warm season crop that cannot tolerate frost or freezing temperatures. They must grow in warm soil – 50 degrees Fahrenheit or above. This was a challenge for the Italians in Thunder Bay. As a result they planted eggplants on the sunniest outside wall of the house, where normally flowers would be planted. Some people even experimented with growing grapes.

Antonio and Gina Zavagnin from the Veneto region of northeast Italy took on the challenge of taming the wilderness of northern Ontario. They arrived in Thunder Bay in 1970 having worked as a bricklayer and ceramicist. They were intrigued by the reality of northern Ontario and cleared a small portion of their 36 acres on Gratton Road in Thunder Bay. They faced the bitterly cold winters, short growing season and being tormented by mosquitoes. So their land was dotted with apple, pear and cherry trees. Their small green house allowed them to get a head-start on the growing season growing all types of vegetables, particularly tomatoes

grown from seeds imported from Italy. Their farm animals include guinea fowl and two cows – Torino and Roma.

The local branch of Associazione Trevisani nel Mondo whose membership comprises people from the province of Trevisa north of Venice started the "Festa del Radicchio" held in the fall. Farmer Tony Zavagnin appeared in farmer's clothing wheeling a wheelbarrow into the Da Vinci Hall with the fruits of the earth to be auctioned off. He had met the northern Ontario challenge.[81]

Seeing a sufficient demand for wine, Pietro Belluz, from Azzano Decimo in the region of Friuli in Venezia Giulia, had wine-making knowledge. In 1916 he was the first person in northern Ontario to be granted a license for manufacturing wine. Soon the Peter Belluz Wine Manufacturing Company (later Twin City Wine Company). He had to deal with several obstacles – small market and distant supply – it become the longest operating of similar ventures in northwestern Ontario.[82]

Grapes were shipped from the Niagara Peninsula. In the early days kids and neighbors helped. In 1928 the winery on McTavish Street was modernized and expanded. He produced port, sherry, muscatel and "Lakehead Wines. In the 1930s the wine sold for 40-50 cents a bottle or $2.00-$2.50 a gallon. By the 1940s the winery had three cellars holding rows of 45-gallon oak barrels and concrete vats with 1,906 storage capacity. However, it moved out of Italian hands. In early 2013 Silvio Di Gregorio was interviewed on local television. He was hoping that a new variety of grape could be developed to deal with northern Ontario's weather. To date there is no indication that this variety nor vineyard have been developed.[83]

Twin City Wine Company held 45 gallon oak barrels.

The Belluz family created a farming tradition. In 1946 Don Belluz opened the Rolling Acres Farm west of Thunder Bay. In the 1960s and 1970s they farm only produced potatoes. Claire and Don Belluz were the founding members of Thunder Bay Country Market with "a firm belief in the importance of community run organization that could bring fresh local produce to as many local people as possible."

In early 1988 Don Belluz joined a number of other local farmers to create the Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture, a local chapter of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA).

This is Canada's largest voluntary farm organization. Don Belluz and Peter Van Ballegooie were the first regional director to the national organization.

Today a third generation of Belluzes continues the responsibility for the stewardship of their farm land, the Belluz Farms. Jodi and Kevin have challenged the northern weather and practice organic farming making fresh produce available for the local community. On their berry farm they grow strawberries, raspberries and Saskatoons. The Belluz Farm is well known in the area and is on a tourist visitor route.

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario & Michigan

The city of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario was home to Algoma Steel and the Abitibi Paper Mills along with jobs on the Algoma Central Railroad. As result Italians began to immigrate to the city by the early 20th century so that by 1902 there was a community of 200 Italians which grew to 938 in 1911. Here they developed vegetable gardens, two clubs, and a tight-knit community around Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church. A community had developed by the 1930s, which increased substantially in the post-World War II years so that in the 2011 Federal census Italian-Canadians and Italians comprise 20 percent of a population of 75,141. As a result it is another opportunity to see how Italians dealt with the farming possibilities in northern Ontario.[84]

The consular agent, Girolamo Moroni traveled to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and in the process interviewed Italian farmers in the area and has left us with a detailed and rare report of what he encountered. Italians at the Sault turned to farming beginning in 1912 and two years

later the Italian agricultural colony was composed of families primarily from Calabria who were located within eight miles of the city. There were 1,500 acres whose clay and sandy soil were easily cultivated. Most of the land was cleared of trees but if clearing had to be done it cost $25 per acre. The farms that were purchased had been developed beginning in 1912. Some Italians were so dedicated to a return to farming that some paid $12,000 for 400 acres, $7,000 for 90 acres whose prices varied from $16 to $200 per acre. Payments were made in cash or in three to four installments at seven percent interest. Some Italians rented land for $3.20 to $4.00 a year. Other Italians worked as day laborers.

The major crops cultivated were: oats, forage, potatoes, cabbage and other vegetables. Pietro Manzo cultivated ten acres in oats and harvested 508 bushels of potatoes that sold for 40-45 cents per bushel making $21.33 an acre. Three tons of good quality of hay per acre was harvested and brought $13 to $14 per tons. The farmers had to pay per acre: $3 for tillage and plowing, $2 for seed and for harvesting in general $9 per acre. Potatoes were successfully cultivated and netted $50 to $65 per acre. The yield for vegetables netted around $100 and $125 and more per acre.[85]

Giuseppe Donato, Romano Zorzi and a certain Bonono also developed truck gardens outside the city. Cesare Accibatti had a truck garden within the city (T-137). Some farmers kept cows and sold the milk to dairies but did not develop their own dairies. In the West End where Italians were concentrated every home had a garden. They raised rabbits and chickens and a few had a cow and made ricotta. The women canned everything: carrots, onions and potatoes were stored in cool root cellars. Some women gathered raspberries and sold them. Produce was exchanged for salt, oil and other favored goods. Blueberry picking went on for two days and then they were canned.

The Italians made their own wine from grapes ordered from the Niagara Peninsula. Each brought a bottle for a Saturday night party. There were few bars in the West End so you relied on home-made wine.

In the West End, Italians developed gardens and provided for their food. They made prosciutto, sausage, head cheese, and dry salami. The sausage was preserved in larded crocks. The salami was dried and aged in the dirt basement – never cemented – that was cool and moist. Everyone kept a hog and raised chickens. The owner of the Diplomat Hotel kept goats and he hired kids to tend the goats. In the fall families would split a hog between them. A traveling butcher went from house-to-house slaughtering and processing the hog, in many cases in the basement of the house. Jerry Vittori was one of the traveling butchers. As Leni Pianosi observed Italians used every part of an animal and only threw out chicken feet.

Leno Pianosi remembers how after school he worked in the garden for the family food supply. When he went into the cellar and saw the shelves lined with all sorts of preserves, corn, beans, broccoli, peaches, plums (store bought) – the product of family gardening. There was also salame and sausage. This was the winter larder. He would find something to make himself a snack. As he surmised “when you thought you were poor you never knew how rich you were.” [86]

Ray Stortini born in 1929 recounted life during the Depression of the 1930s. His father was out of work for six years and they survived on taking in occasional boarders, selling bottles of home-made wine and surviving mainly on what their vegetable garden produced. Growing flowers had come to an end as Italians saw them taking land for growing food. The city of Sault Ste, Marie came into possession of property taken from unpaid taxes and allowed people to cultivate plots. The Stortinis got a piece of farmland in Korah Township, which was too far to plant a garden and protect from roaming cows. As a result they planted potatoes. The harvest in the fall was a family affair and saw them return with sacks, wheelbarrows and home-made carts filled with potatoes. Even the smallest baby potato was harvested. Potatoes became the main ingredient in the family diet. His mother roasted, boiled, mashed, baked and fried. They were served with rabbit stew, frittata, omelet and potatoes and with asparagus or tomatoes.[87]

Even in the city people kept pigs that were fed scraps from the tables and thrown away food from groceries. Then in the fall the processing took place with resulting pork in larded crocks, salami and sausage.

The earlier Italian farmers whose farms were outside the city regularly brought their wagons filled with vegetables and made the rounds through the city with fresh vegetables. One of these old-time farmers was Vincent Euale who eventually moved into town with his family.[88]

THE ITALIAN SETTLEMENT

On the south side of the St. Mary's River which divided the two Soos in the 1890s many Italians had been encouraged to settle in Sault Ste. Marie to work on the power canal, the St. Mary's Shipping Canal and clearing the Neebish cut. There were also industrial jobs at the Northwestern Leather Company tannery, the Soo Woolen Mill and Union Carbide. Other Italians developed shops and worked in the service industry. However, others heard of relatively inexpensive land located to the south of the Lock City that was available that could be homesteaded which would return them to an occupation they were familiar with – agriculture.

Having come from farming communities in southern Italy and Sicily some of these new arrivals to the Soo learned of fertile farmland some 35 miles south of the Soo that had been settled earlier by Anglo Canadians and others. Also land could be homesteaded in Mackinac County. The word spread and by 1900 the Fornicola and Sauro families were settled in Cedar Township (later Clark) and the Poglese, Montaire, Whitehead, and Romano families settled in neighboring Marquette Township north of Hessel-Cedarville. At this time the settlement consisted of thirty-five people both immigrants and their Michigan-born children who maintained the Italian language and traditions.[89]

In 1982 Joseph Poglese of Sault Ste. Marie shared his family memories of settlement of their farm in Marquette Township. Michael A. Poglese (1852-1932) who left his home in southern Italy and arrived in the United States in 1885 and proceeded to Sault Ste. Marie, where jobs were available working on the canal. Coming from a farming background he was delighted to hear that land could be homesteaded to the south. He was probably encouraged in this venture as he learned there were two or three Italian families – Mangone, Whitehead, Montaire, Romano – settled in the area. He proceeded to walk the 30 miles directly south and stayed with people

along the route. Once he arrived in the Hessel-Cedarville area he obtained a farm adjacent to the Montaire, Whitehead and Romano farms. It consisted of 160 acres of well-wooded land. He constructed a rude shack, worked hard to clear the land and established a farm and obtained two calves and built a brush shelter for them. Once when he left to purchase supplies vandals burned him out, but he responded, "I was given the property, and I am going to keep it if I live or die."

Michael planted a truck garden and traveled over crude trails to Cedarville-Hessel where he sold his produce. As he prospered, he constructed a more substantial log structure, additional shanties for his cattle, and a larger store barn for hay and grain. Having developed his base he invited Carmela to come from Italy which she did in 1893 and they were married. The farm prospered with the Pogleses growing potatoes, making extra money cutting wood and developing an apple orchard. Michael was able to carry a 100-pound sack of flour from Pickford to the farm. In 1930 at age 78 Michael continued to live on the farm with his wife Gertie while his son Carl with an Italian-Canadian, Steve Scarfone worked the property.

As with many Italian families the sons entered farming as laborers. His son Joseph went into farming and had the first mechanical thresher in the county and rented it from farm to farm and he made extra money pitching hay. However, farming was not to be his life. He eventually went to the Soo and worked at Union Carbide for 45 cents an hour. Later he worked on water and sewer lines and by the 1920s he had his own excavating firm. During World War II with the rapid construction of the MacArthur Lock he had two trucks working on the project.[90]

A few widows took to the fields. In 1910 twenty-eight-year-old immigrant, Amelia Romano was a widowed farmer. Aided by her eighteen-year-old son Andrew they care for eight children ranging in age from one year to thirteen years of age. In 1920 Anna Sauro as a sixty-year-old widow was farming aided by her son.

The population rose and fell with the arrival of new farmers and the deaths of others. In 1920 they were joined by the Carheil and Mangene/Mongene families. The decline in farming by the Italian immigrants was pronounced between 1920 and 1930 in Clark Township. In the former year there were six families – Amarose, Fagi, Sauro – while a decade later the number was reduced to three. In 1940 one of the early farmers, 71-year-old John Sauro continued as a farmer and now WPA laborer while his two sons worked as farm helpers in Bruce Township. They had been joined by Joe and Mary Deno who farmed. Of their five children two of the oldest were farm laborers.[91]

Joe Poglese operating a harvester, c1915. Mackinac County

There were never enough Italian families to develop their own Catholic church. The first Catholic church was erected in 1891 and dedicated to St. Anaclete. In 1906 the original church was replaced by a white frame structure dedicated to Our Lady of the Snows.[92] However the Italians did establish their own cemetery known as Italian Hill Cemetery, four miles north of Hessel on St. Ignace Road. Directly north of the cemetery as a lasting memorial to the Italians is Poglese Road.

Familiar with farming many of the sons became farm laborers and later farmers. However other offspring stayed on the farm but worked in lumber camps and later during the Depression found jobs as laborers for the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The auto industry in Metro Detroit attracted others. A number of the sons served in World War II. Many of the descendants of these families continue to live in the eastern Upper Peninsula especially in Sault Ste. Marie. Some of them have kept the old farmland which they use for deer hunting in the fall.

Thunder Bay historian John Potestio accurately concluded, "The imperative of survival in a foreign land was hard work, thrift, reliance on family and utilizing opportunities presented to them by the new environment." This was true and was followed by Italians throughout the North Country who used their paesano agrarian skills.[93] They developed extensive gardens around their homes, rented larger plots of land, gathered native plants, and raised small animals. This activity allowed them to augment their basic salaries with family produced food.

Captured in interviews are how these Italians developed their gardens. The copper and iron mining companies were concerned about maintaining a constant labor force and thus provided a company home with garden space and rented acreage at the edge of town.

A RETURN TO SOUTHERN FARMING

Most of the immigrants who came to the United States and Canada were originally farmers and loved the land. When they arrived, they found that land was costly and they needed immediate jobs and thus in the North Country they went to work in the iron and copper mines and when available into industry. There are a few examples where Italians turned to the soil.

There were a several families that decided to leave the North Country and try their farming ability to the South. One of these was John (1872-1923) and Isola Andrina (1866-1908). John came to the United States in the 1890s and first worked in the iron mines of Iron Mountain and the coal mines of Illinois. He returned to Italy, married Isola Besano. Their daughter, Jennie was born in 1906 and they came to the United States in 1907 first settling in New Jersey. They moved to Hancock where Isola had relatives around the Gedda family who operated a bakery. Then they moved to Belleville, Illinois where John worked in the coal mines and found some Copper Country Italians working there as well. His wife died in Belleville in 1908 and he remained working there until 1914 when he moved south to Republic, Alabama where he found relatives, but he wanted to farm.

At this point John Gedda enters the picture. He had arrived in the United States with his wife in 1902 and settled in Quincy Township, Houghton County where he farmed. Unhappy with the northern conditions he heard of available farmland in the vicinity of Hilliard, Florida, a town about 30 miles northwest of Jacksonville on a major railroad line. He and his wife Mary bought some land and talked up the idea among friends and relatives. John Andrina with his wife and children settled nearby and they were soon joined by Peter Andrina. Both of these families were related. Other Italian families – Bono, Picchotina and a Venetian family by the name of Scusso.

When they first arrived the Andrinas and Geddas lived in the house that John had constructed. The other people found another place to temporarily live. Life at the beginning was difficult because the land was forested and the trees had to be cut and removed. Eventually each family had its own home and they all lived about a half mile apart from one another. They grew rice, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, peanuts, watermelons and all kinds of fruit, but especially oranges and pears. At first it looked as if this colony was going to be successful as they were located on a main rail line – Atlantic Coast Line Railroad – and thus their produce should have easy access to northern markets.

Problems soon developed as the railroad overcharged them for freighting their goods. At one point they shipped four large barrels of big white onions and received a bill from the railroad who overcharged them. As a result there was little profit to be gained from their endeavors, so they turned to subsistence farming and sold eggs in town. There were no local rice or sugar mills and these products had to be shipped away which was costly. The Andrinas remain there for about four years, trying but not making a go of it. Within a six-month period the Andrinas, Geddas and Bonos left the area with the Andrinas having to borrow money to leave although

they owned ten acres of land. The Andrinas and Geddas returned to Illinois where in 1920 John Gedda was operating a small farm while his sixteen-year-old son became a coal miner. He spent the rest of the time here. The Andrina family settled in Belleville where John was a coal miner. The Bonos went to Kansas City, Missouri while the Scussos with a large family seem to have stayed in Hilliard.[94] Once again we see the agricultural drive of these Italians.

As the late nineteenth century proceeded, many saw the blight of urban immigrants appalling and sought to return them to the soil. Italian newspaper editors in New York, the Catholic Church and Italian consular officials and the embassy in Washington promoted this concept. The major promoter and organizer of the Daphne colony was Alessandro Mastro-Valerio (1857-1944) eventually the editor and publisher of *La Tribuna Italiana* in Chicago. In 1888 this immigrant bought a tract of government land in the modern-day area of Daphne-Belforest, Alabama. He was concerned with returning immigrants forced to live in crowded cities to return to the land. He dedicated 14 years of his life to the colony and worked with the United States Department of Agriculture and the State Experiment Station at Auburn. New colonists were offered 25 - 50 acres of land for a price of $1.50 to $5.00 an acre. Although they initially grew grapes imported from Italy, by the mid 1920's they were cultivating potatoes and corn.

The Mancis and others from the north became successful farmers and storekeepers. c1925. Daphne, Alabama.

Mastro-Valerio spread the word about the farming opportunity through newspapers articles and he had flyers circulated in the coal and iron mining communities of Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota. In his ads Mastro-Valerio stressed that the move south would not only free the immigrants from cold winters and the dangerous working conditions in the mines but would provide them with a better life in the country.

Frank Manci (1867-1953) was a native of Peruga, Italy and arrived in the United States in 1888. He and his wife Carmela settled in the Upper Peninsula where he probably worked in a mine and where their first child Alvira was born in 1891. Then they moved to the Iron Range of Minnesota where they lived from 1894 until 1901. At this point they read a widely distributed pamphlet advertising available farmland in Daphne, Alabama where an Italian colony was being established. They left the North Country and moved south. Frank was quite an entrepreneur who was a successful farmer, operated a grocery store, ran a sawmill and distilled turpentine. He became a noted community leader in the Daphne-Belforest area. Their descendants remain in the community today continuing the farming tradition.[95]

This has been the story of one of numerous ethnic farming communities that successfully challenged the weather and soil of the North Country. Coming from "Sunny Italy" many Italians were able to return to the soil and produce food for themselves and neighboring communities. Now only did they farm, but they brought with them their wine making traditions. Surprisingly for many, the North Country was the gateway whereby Italian cheeses first entered the United States.

Endnotes

[1] The five useful works for his study are: Robert F. Harney. "Men without Women: Italian Migrants in Canada, 1885-1930," in Franca Iacovetta, editor. *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s.* Toronto: University of *Toronto Press, 1998*; John Potestio. *The Italians of Thunder Bay.* Thunder Bay, Ont.: Lakehead University, The Chair of Italian Studies, 2005; Russell M. Magnaghi. *Miners, Merchants and Midwives: Michigan's Upper Peninsula Italians.* Marquette, Mich: Belle Fontaine Press, 1987; Mary Ellen Mancina-Batinich. *Italian Voices: Making Minnesota Our Home.* St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2007. The following is a comprehensive bibliography of Italian migration see: Magnaghi. "Italian Immigration in the Lake Superior Basin, A Bibliography," *Upper Country: Journal of the Lake Superior Basin* 7 (2019): no page.

[2] There are few works of the area that deal with Italians and agriculture but some exist: John Andreozzi. "Italian Farmers in Cumberland," in Rudolph J. Vecoli, editor. *Italian Immigrants in Rural and Small Town America.* Staten Island, NY: The American Italian Historical Association, 1987; Russell Magnaghi *Miners, Merchants and Midwives: Michigan's Upper Peninsula Italians,* Marquette, Mich.: Belle Fontaine Press, 1987; and John Potestio. *The Italians of Thunder Bay.* Thunder Bay, Ont.: Lakehead University, Chair of Italian Studies, 2005.

[3] Specific population figures from the 2020-2021 census: St. Louis County, Minnesota (excluding Duluth) 113,529; Duluth and Superior: 113,448; Thunder Bay District, Ontario: 123,258; Marquette County: 66,017; Sault Ste. Marie, ON: 74,249 and Michigan 13,337 = 87,916.

[4] For population figures see: Russell M. Magnaghi. *Michigan's Upper Peninsula Immigrants and Their Occupations as Seen in the 1910 Federal Census.* (Marquette, Mich.: Northern Michigan University Center for Upper Peninsula Studies. 2010); Federal Census for Minnesota and Wisconsin, 1910; Federal Canadian Census 1911.

[5] Attilio Castigliano. "Origine, sviluppo, importanza ed avvenire della colonie italiani del Nord Michigan e del Nord Minnesota," *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione* #7 (1913), 5; Bernardo Attolico. "Sui campi di lavoro della nuova ferrvia transcontinentale canadese," *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione* #1 (1913), 5, 6, 9; Pietro Cardiello. "Michigan," *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione* #11 (1902), 11; Girolamo Moroni. "La Provincia dell'Ontario (Canada)," *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione* #6 (1915), 60-61.

[6] Alberto Capatti and Massimo Montanari. Translated by Aine O'Healy. *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

[7] Interview with Carmena Raffaele, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., 10-08-1982 deposited in the Central Upper Peninsula and University Archives, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan (hereafter "NMU Archives"); author's recollection.

[8] Interview with James Rovano, 1982; Carlo Carliaro, 21 June 1982; Felix and Laura Dozzi, 10 October 1982; Tomati Crispignia, 07 June 1982 and 18 April 1983 deposited in the NMU Archives.

[9] Interview with Elio Argentati, Dollar Bay, Michigan, 09 January 1982, deposited at Michigan tech University Archives.

[10] *Calumet News* 01 March 1910; 14 January 1911; 31 January 1911; 03 March 1911; 08 January 1913; 18 November 1913; 02 December 1913; 02 March 1914.

[11] U.S. Federal Census, 1860. Michigan, Houghton, Houghton, p. 12.

[12] U.S. Federal Census, 1870, Michigan, Houghton, Franklin, p. 19; 1880 Red Jacket, District 009, p. 15.

[13] *Calumet News* 31 August 1910 and 09 August 1911.

[14] Cristina Menghini. "Examining Patterns of Italian Immigration to Michigan's Houghton County, 1860-1930." M.A. thesis, Michigan Technological University, 2004, pp. 38, 40, 44, 46

[15] U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Michigan, Houghton, Torch Lake, District 0136, p. 11; 1920, District 0173, p. 12; 1940, District 0041, p. 5.

[16] *Calumet News* 14 and 16 October 1911, 20 December 1911.

[17] Interview with Victoria Perona Bono, Calumet, 10 December 1982, deposited in the NMU Archives; U.S. Federal Census, 1920, Michigan, Houghton, Calumet,1 District 0103, p. 21; 1920, District 0125, p. 1; 1930, District 0010; 1940 Kearsarge-Wolverine, District 31-12.

[18] Interview with Mike Gemignani, Quincy Hill, 14 May 1982, deposited in the NMU Archives.

[19] The original spelling of the name was "Vittone" but went through a process of Americanization.

[20] U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Michigan, Houghton, Franklin, District 0115, pp. 74; 1920, District 0144, pp. 16-17; 1930, District 0021, pp. 6 and 7; 1940, District 31-21, p. 9.

[21] 1910 Census, Michigan, Houghton, Franklin, District 0115, p, 74.

[22] 1920 Census, Michigan, Houghton, Franklin, District 01544, p. 16.

[23] Peter Vitton, Franklin Location, 10 December 1982 interview deposited in NMU Archives.

[24] 1940 Census, Michigan, Houghton, Hancock, District 31-26, p. 7.

[25] U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Michigan, Houghton, Franklin District 0115, p. 74; 1920 District 0144, pp. 16 and 17; 1930 District 0021, p.6; 1940, District 31-21, p. 9; *Calumet News* 10 August 1911 and 20 March 1912.

[26] 1940 Federal U.S. Census, Michigan, Houghton, Franklin, District 31-21, p. 8.

[27] 1940 Federal U.S. Census, Michigan, Houghton, Franklin, District 31-21, p. 18.

[28] *Calumet News* 13 April 1914.

[29] U.S. Federal Census, Michigan, Houghton, Laurium, District 0007, p. 34; 1940, District 31-39, p. 18.

[30] U.S. Federal Census, 1900, Michigan, Houghton, Hancock Township, District 0183; 1920 District 0153, pp. 1, 7-8; 1930 District 0027, pp. 1-2; 1940 District 31-28.

[31] U.S. Federal Census, 1900, Michigan, Houghton, Calumet, District 0172, p. 16; 1910, Schoolcraft, District 0134, p. 24; 1920, District 0168, p. 29.

[32] U.S. Federal Census, 1910 Michigan, Houghton, Keweenaw, Allouez, District 0149, p. 24; 1930, Laurium, District 0007, p. 38; 1940, District 31-9, p. 23.

[33] Interview with Anthony Richetta, Laurium, Michigan, 24 May 1982, deposited in the NMU Archives.

[34] U.S. Federal Census, 1920, Michigan, Houghton, Adams, Trimountain, District 0113, p. 2; 1930, District 0003, p. 63.

[35] Interview with Louis Lombardi, Trimountain, Mich., 03 December 1982 deposited in the NMU Archives.

[36] Interview with Philip Marketty, Negaunee, Mich., 04-23-1982, deposited at the NMU Archives; Russell M, Magnaghi. "Reconstruction of the Life of Philip Marchetti," in Magnaghi. *Historiographical Problem of Upper Peninsula History.* Marquette, Mich.: Belle Fontaine Press, 1984, pp. 19-23.

[37] *Mining Journal* 14 August 1958; U.S. Census, 1910, Michigan, Marquette, Negaunee Ward 3, District 0198, p. 15.

[38] U.S. Federal Census, 1930, Michigan, Marquette, Forsyth, District 0005, p. 12; Interview with Felix and Laura Dozzi, Princeton deposited at the NMU Archives.

[39] U.S. Federal Census, 1930, Michigan, Marquette, Ishpeming, District 0007, p. 7; District 52-9; Interview with April Bertucci, Marquette, Michigan, 09 February 2022 deposited in the NMU Archives.

[40] For the best study of this region and its immigrants see: Bonifacio Bolognani. *A Courageous People from the Dolomites: The Immigrants from Trentino on U.S.A. Trails.* Trento, Italy: TEMI, 1981.

[41] Federal Census, 1930, Michigan, Gogebic, Erwin, District 0009, p. 17; *Ironwood Times* 12 March 1937; Interview with Amelia Valesano, Wakefield, Mich. 25 February 1982, deposited in NMU Archives.

[42] U.S. Census. 1900, Michigan, Gogebic, Bessemer, District 0062; 1910 District 0074, p. 10; 1920 District 0090; 1930 District 0001; 1940 District 27-1.) Interview with Paul Contratto, Bessemer, Mich., 23 August 1982, deposited in NMU Archives.

[43] Simon Winder. *Danubia: A Personal History of Habsburg Europe.* New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2013, p. 339.

[44] U.S. Federal Census, 1920, Michigan, Dickinson, Norway, District 0086, pp. 1, 27-29, 31-34.

[45] U.S. Federal Census, 1930, Michigan, Dickinson, Norway, District 0013, pp. 14, 15, 19; Breitung, District 0004, pp. 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 75; Waucedah, District 0018, pp. 11 and 12.

[46] Federal Census, 1910, Michigan, Dickinson, Norway Township, District 0070, p. 33; 1920, 0086, p. 26; 1950, 22-39, 1950, pp. 4-15; 1920, Wisconsin, Marinette, Niagara, District 0148, p. 43.

[47] *Ironwood Daily Globe* 06 January 1927, 04-05-1928.

[48] Lynn Miller, editor. *A Collection of Recollections, Crystal Fall, Michigan, 1880-1980.* Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980, p. 55.

[49] *Diamond Drill* (Crystal Falls) 01 February 1919; 30 August 1919.

[50] *Ironwood Daily Globe* 12 August 1935, 30 June 1951, 19 August 1960, 11 August 1973, 12 August 1974.

[51] *Ironwood Daily Globe* 11 October 1950; Interview with Elvira Angeli, 10 March 1982, deposited in the NMU Archives.

[52] For an overview of this region see: Peter Oberto. *A History of the Italian Immigrants from . . . the Asiago Plateau . . . of Veneto . . . .* Lu-Lu.com, 2016.

[53] A number of useful sources concerning Italian agriculturalists in the United States are: William P. Dillingham, chair. *Reports of the Immigration Commission. Immigrants in Industries*. Part 24. *Recent Immigrants in Agriculture.* (In two volumes, Vol. 1). Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911; Andrew F. Rolle. *The Immigrant Upraised: Italian Adventurers and Colonists in an Expanding America.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968, pp. 110-125; Russell M. Magnaghi. *Italians in Alabama.* Marquette, Mich.: 906 Heritage Press, 2017, pp. 63-108.

[54] Andreozzi. "Italian Farmers in Cumberland," pp. 110-125.

[55] U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Wisconsin, Washburn, Spooner, District 0226; 1920, District 0239; 1940, District 65-26, pp. 16, 19, 32, 61, 66.

[56] U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Wisconsin, Iron, Carey, District 0031, p. 26.

[57] Interview with Paul Sturgul, Hurley, Wisconsin, 10 February 2022, deposited in the NMU Archives; Eugene Kompsie, "Italian Immigrants Settled in Kimball's "Dago Valley," (22 August 1952), deposited Iron County Historical Society, Hurley, Wisconsin.

[58] U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Wisconsin, Iron, Carey, District 0031, pp. 20-21, 26; 1920, Wisconsin, Iron, Kimball, District 0099, pp. 5-6 ,8, 11; 1930, District 0010; 1940, District 26-10, pp. 3-5, 8, 10,11; Russell M. Magnaghi. *Miners, Merchants and Midwives*, p. 84.

[59] U.S. Federal Census 1920, Wisconsin, Iron, Montreal, District 0097; 1930, Pence, District 0015; 1940, Hurley, District 26-5.

[60] Rudolph J. Vecoli. "The Italians," in June Drenning Holmsquist, editor. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups.* St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981, p. 450.

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