

# I'm a Sicilian American

*Dedicated to my parents **Gaetano** and **Rosa Alessi Coniglio** and my eldest brother **Guy**, who came to America in 1913 and 1914 from Serradifalco, **SICILY**.*

*I'm a Sicilian American.*

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I'm the son of immigrants who left a land of history and beauty, of poets and dreamers, volcanoes and olive trees. A land that taught the world what a modern nation could be, before most modern nations existed. A land that formed the largest country, *The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies*, from Naples and Abruzzo to Messina and Palermo, that was subsumed into the new 'Kingdom of Italy' after the 'unification'.

My parents left because for all its lore and loveliness, and their fierce pride in it, Sicily was poor and demeaned, and could offer little hope for their family's future.

*I'm a Sicilian American.*

My heritage includes mythical Persephone, Vulcan, and Icarus; Greek scholars Archimedes, Empedocles and Diodorus Siculus; composers Bellini and Scarlatti, and writers Verga and Sciascia.

*I'm a Sicilian American.*

I'm Antonio Crisafi. I came before there was a United States and in 1696 commanded the fort at Onondaga.

I'm Padre Saverio Saetta, who died in 1695 while bringing Christianity to the New World.

I'm Enrico Fardella, who fought against the Bourbons in Sicily, one of the first people's revolutions in Europe, in 1848, and then became a brigadier general in America's Civil War.

*I'm a Sicilian American.*

I'm a descendant of Southern Italian immigrants who formed 80% of the 'Italians' who came to America in the 'Great Migration' of the late 1800s and early 1900s, most, from the island of Sicily.

I'm one of the nineteen Sicilians who were murdered in New Orleans in 1891, in the largest mass lynching in American history.

*I'm a Sicilian American.*

I'm Chaz Palminteri, Frank Capra, Armand Assante, Sonny Bono, Iron Eyes Cody, Ben Gazzara, Frankie Laine, Cydi Lauper, Chuck Mangione, Al Pacino, Louie Prima, Pete Rugolo, Frank Zappa, and thousands of others who have made the world wonder, laugh, and sing with our artistry.

I'm Frank Sinatra.

*I'm a Sicilian American.*

I'm one of millions of one-, two- and three-star mothers who anguished while their sons fought for the American Dream in World War II, in the frigid trenches of France or the steaming jungles of the Pacific.

I'm one of many mothers whose son never returned.

*I'm a Sicilian American.*

I say "*Comu sta?*", not "Come stai?" I answer "*Bonu!*", not "Bene."

Not "Dov'è?", but "*Unni è?*"; not "La." but "*Dda!*"

*I'm a Sicilian American.*

I never met a mafioso, nor wanted to, nor played at being one.

*I'm a Sicilian American, and proud to be one.*

~ Angelo F. Coniglio ~ 10 May 2014



**Kingdom of  
the Two Sicilies**

<http://bit.ly/LaBeddaSicilia>