

THE LEONE AND PASCALE FAMILIES

by Bette Maiuto

In Marsicovetere the Pascale Family were wealthy landowners, but the area had been devastated by an earthquake in 1857 and since they had a large family, the sons had to make a living for themselves. Of the daughters, Raffaella married musician Giuseppe Viggiano and Battista married Francescantonio Leone.

Francescantonio Leone, known as Antonio, was born in Marsico Nuovo in approximately 1868, the son of Luigi and Maria Leone. He wanted to marry Battista but was not considered good enough or wealthy enough, so he travelled to South America where he made a lot of money and returned home to claim his bride. They were married in Marsicovetere on 20th June 1889, and a son Luigi was born in July 1890. Sometime afterwards they set sail for Australia, arriving in Victoria in April 1891. Luigi was ill and died in August 1891. Later that year my grandfather, Francesco Domenico was born on 10th November. One of the women attending the birth was Mrs Briglia.

FRANCESCO DOMENICO LEONE was born on the 10th November 1891 in Little Lonsdale Street, followed by Luigi in 1894, Maria Rosa 1896 and twins Nicoletta and Battista, born in 1899. The family lived initially in Little Lonsdale Street, then in Exploration Lane, then at 96 Cardigan Street, then finally at 270 Cardigan Street in Carlton. In the 1920s Antonio and Battista moved to Pine Avenue, Elwood, where they lived until their deaths, the house staying in the family until the early 1980s. My grandfather Frank lived in Carlton until his death in 1945.



The Leone family in Melbourne, 1899.



Luigi Leone, flautist.

The family all earned their living as musicians. They worked as musicians at the Carlton theatre during the days of silent movies, for which they provided the musical background. One book of manuscripts still exists which belonged to Frank Leone. It contains

handwritten musical scores with the date of the event. There are marches, serenades, waltzes, excerpts from opera and Gilbert and Sullivan, and since this book covers the era of the First World War, there is a "Patriotic Collection". There are comments at the bottom of some pages, such as on 25/10/1913 "Henley Today", "8 Hours Day 1917", "Show Day 1917". On 25/4/1917 is written "2nd anniversary of ANZAC day", and on the 8th July 1917 "Musica per il Circolo Italiano", [The founding of the Cavour Club] and many others.

Grandfather's brother Luigi, also known as Leo Leone, was a specialist on the flute. One highlight of his career was to accompany Dame Nellie Melba, the famous Australian Opera Singer. To show her gratitude Dame Nellie presented him with a gift of a flute, with an inscription on the case "To Luigi Leone From Nellie Melba". This flute is now in the possession of Luigi's daughter, Mrs Elizabeth Meredith and was part of the display in the recent Bicentennial Exhibition. Also in the Exhibition besides the manuscript book which I have already mentioned, was an embroidered violin cover of Frank Leone and the old fashioned Pasta Machine used by the Leone and Viggiano families for many years. It is believed that Battista and Antonio brought it with them in 1891. Cousin Joe Viggiano, the son of Pat Viggiano and Rose Leone, remembers his parents and grandparents making pasta on this machine, and very kindly allowed it to be part of the display.

My grandfather married Winifred Barnett who had moved to Carlton as a child after the death of her father, the son of a pioneer gold miner in the central Victorian town of Dunolly. This town was famous because it was just outside the town where they discovered the largest gold nugget in Australia, if not in the world, the "Welcome Stranger". Her mother had a milk bar at 277 Lygon Street where there is now a gelati shop. Later when Winifred was an adult she ran a tobacconist store at 275 Lygon Street which is now Grinders Coffee Shop.

Frank and Winifred were married at St George's in Carlton in 1921 and my father, Frank, was their first son, born in 1922. My grandfather Francesco Domenico Leone died two years before I was born, so I never knew the Italian side of the family. My father spoke Italian and enjoyed cooking Italian food, and over the years he told us many stories about his father and relatives. I went to Queensland with my husband for 13 years and only began to research the Family since my return in 1985. Although my father was dead by then, he would have really enjoyed it.

From letters, photographs, newspaper clippings, birth and marriage certificates, and stories passed down through the years, I have been able to put together a rough idea of how things were in the family then. Other families from Marsicovetere were the Briglia, Di Giglio and Viggiano families. One other thing in common was that all these families were connected by marriage to the Pascale family. The Barrile family was also from Marsico and at a wedding in January 1905 at St George's, between Giuseppe Briglia and Rosaria Barrile, one of the witnesses was Giuseppe Viggiano, showing that there was some family connection here.

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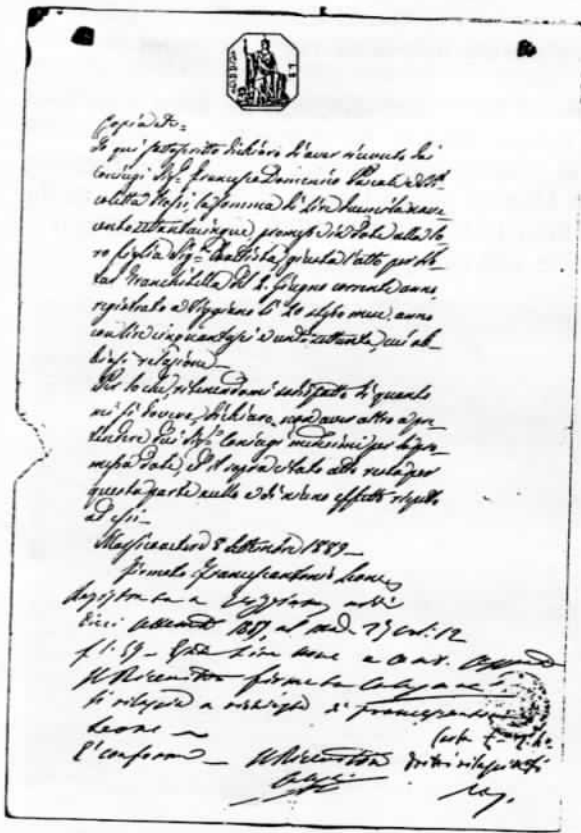
The Di Giglio brothers Rocco and Michelangelo were agents for the various musicians and hired them out for parties, weddings, smoke nights, baptisms etc. The business was run from 115 Little Lonsdale Street, the building where my grandfather was born in 1891. They later moved to 62 Lygon Street. Although the Leones and Viggianos were formal musicians, they also earned money by busking in the streets and became quite well known around Carlton and the city areas. They also played at the Princess Theatre and Her Majesty's Theatre.

My husband and I were travelling to Italy in late 1988, so we looked in the phone book of Marsicovetere and wrote a short note to the four Pascale families mentioned, saying we would be passing through in December to trace any remaining relatives. You travel on the Autostrada, south of Naples, and turn off and drive through the Valley of Agri, which is a beautiful area. Past Marsico Nuovo the road continues to Villa d'Agri, a town nestled at the foot of Mount Volturino which is 1837 metres high. The mountain rises like a huge rock from the valley floor and about half way up is Marsicovetere.

Upon our arrival we were directed to the home of Nicola Pascale, a charming man in

his early eighties who is a first cousin of my grandfather. We were both very pleased to meet each other, and he had been expecting us due to our letter. Nicola had known my great-great-grandmother, Maria Rosa Leone, who was originally from Marsico Nuovo, but had spent her last years in Marsico Vetere, being cared for by the Pascale family. He took us to the home of Umberto Pascale, son of Vincenzo Pascale who had been in Australia but had returned to live and raise his family in Italy. His wife was a Di Giglio. Then Nicola took us to "Casa Paterna" where the family of Michelangelo Pascale lives. Michelangelo lived for many years in Brisbane QLD during the early 1900s, where his first two children were born. However Michelangelo returned to Italy to raise his family. He also inherited the family home, being the eldest surviving son.

We were invited to stay in the family home by cousin Francesco Pascale and his family. Instead of staying for one afternoon we stayed three nights. The family were very pleased to have contact with the distant branch of the family and due to the hard work of my husband translating my many questions, I was able to find out so much. Cousin Michelangelo gave to me the original Dowry Document of Battista Pascale, a letter from Antonio Leone written to Italy on the occasion of the death of his mother, and showed to us the bedroom where Battista was born on the 5th May 1869. In their living room is the harp which Michelangelo Pascale took with him in all his years of travelling to South America, Cape Town, South Africa and Brisbane in Australia.



Translation of Dowry Document

I the undersigned declare to have received from married couple Mr. Francesco Domenico Pascale and Mrs. Nicoletta Fossi the amount of Lire 2,975 promised as a dowry to their daughter Miss Battista as per deed by Notary Franchitella dated 2nd June of current year, registered in Viggiano on the 20th day of same month and year, with payment of Lire 56 and 70 cents, of which there is a record. Therefore, as I am satisfied that what was due was given to me, I declare that I have nothing more to claim from the above married couple as promised dowry and that the above mentioned deed is annulled and of no value to them.

Marsicovetere, 8th September 1889.
Signed Francescantonio Leone
Registered in Viggiano 10th September 1889, Registry No.73, file 12, sheet 59.....

The following morning Carmelina Pascale took me to the Comune where I obtained various certificates of birth, death and marriages of family members. Although she spoke no English and my Italian is very basic, we were able to spend the entire morning there with no interpreter. It is fortunate that I bear a strong physical resemblance to the Pascale female relations, as there was no need to convince anyone that I was a cousin, it was obvious at a glance.

During our short time there, my husband and I were treated like honoured guests by the three families of cousins. Chickens were sacrificed on our behalf and we spent many hours laughing and telling stories with these people who, although strangers, were lovely people and cousins after all. We took many photos of all of the Pascale families and to my

surprise discovered that one cousin has two sons in Australia: one in Brunswick and another in Coburg. Since our return I have met one of these sons, Michele Pascale and his lovely family, who were surprised to find that they had Australian cousins who had been here for almost 100 years.

Sadly none of the relatives in Italy play musical instruments, while only a few here in Australia play, mostly for their own enjoyment. Phillip Viggiano and his sister Roxanne have made recordings as part of a pop group, while Roxanne has had work as a rehearsal pianist for the stage play "Cats". Don and Neville Leone were both, for many years, part of the St Patrick's Cathedral Choir, Don also being chosen as part of the choir which sang at the Papal Mass during the visit by Pope John Paul.

Michelangelo and Vincenzo Pascale, together with their brother-in-law Giuseppe Viggiano and his son Francesco Antonio, travelled to Cape Town, South Africa. They called themselves "The Pascale Family Band". We have some letters which were written from Italy to Cape Town in the years 1911 and 1912, and these give us a lot of information about family members and events. Young Francesco Antonio was only a child of 11 or 12 years in one photograph from South Africa. Later he came to Melbourne where he lived with his cousins the Leones, later marrying cousin Rosa. His brother Giuseppe followed later. He too married a cousin, Nicolette (Ada). The third brother Michelangelo stayed in Italy to care for his mother and many sisters. He was the bell ringer in the village. Although being a very small man, whenever there was an emergency day or night it was his job to ring the church bell. During our visit we were unable to see the inside of the church because it is still closed for repairs due to the earthquake which devastated this area 1979, however we photographed the bell for cousin Mickey.

Cousin Michelangelo came to Australia around 1917 and although he lived with his Leone cousins and there was still one unmarried female cousin, he chose to marry an Australian wife. He joined his brothers busking and playing with various bands. The brothers also played at Navaretti's in the city. Sadly cousin Mickey passed away in September at the age of 84 years and his wife Ellen died 5 weeks later in November 1989. Pat [Francesco Antonio] Viggiano died in 1963 and Alf [Giuseppe] is still living in Hampton.



Francescantonio (Pat) Viggiano, second from left, back row, on the ship bound for Melbourne in 1913. Courtesy of J. Viggiano.