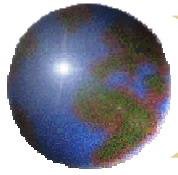


Frank Mordigliano (Morgan)

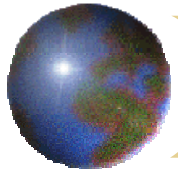
My Experiences in America

- Profiles
- Letters home



Frank's Profile: Background

- My name is Frank Mordigliano.
- I am 28 years-old.
- I was born in a small town near Naples, Italy.
- In Italy, my father was a construction worker in a small village outside of the city of Naples.
- I work in construction.
- My wife is Maria. I cannot afford to bring her to America, but I am planning to save money and send it to her and my two children, Luciano and Rosa.
- I have some education. I went to school until the 5th grade and then had to go to work to help support my family. My mother was sick at the time, and my father needed help to pay for her medical expenses.



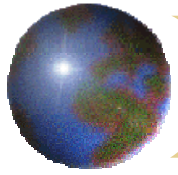
Frank's Profile: Life in Italy

Life in Italy

- Life in southern Italy is very hard.
- I was unable to find work. Many people are in the same position and are near starvation from hunger.
- Italy has been run by the very wealthy, and because of this, many poorer people are suffering. There is a King and rich people run everything.
- If someone says something to the wrong person about making changes in his life or helping other poor people, he could go to jail.
- Everyone is afraid for his life and family every day.

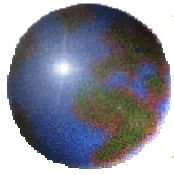
Why America?

- People say that in America there is a lot of freedom and you can say and do anything.
- There is no choice but to leave and try to find opportunity somewhere else. People say there are jobs in L'America and people can make a lot of money.



Frank's Profile: Dreams

- I want to go to America and help build railroads, bridges, or houses.
- I have experience in Italy. I helped build a house.
- I am hard working and willing to work long hours.
- I want to help the American people.
- I am strong with no real health problems.
- I want to bring my family to America.



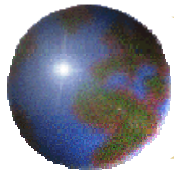
Coming to America: Letter Home



Other immigrants from the ship

My Dear Maria,

I miss you so. I am finally off the ship and have made it to L'America. I went through the inspection at Ellis Island. That was quite an experience! It was very confusing and tiresome for me, especially after the long journey. I longed to be with you. I have a new American name now. It is Frank Morgan. I think that the immigration official could not understand me when I said Mordigliano, so he changed my name to something less Italian.



Coming to America: Letter Home

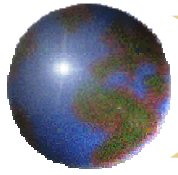


Immigrants

The government keeps passing new laws here against immigrants. So, because a law was just passed which does not allow people with physical or mental defects, and some diseases, the inspection process was very rigorous. Let me tell you all about my experience.

It was a long and very crowded journey on the S.S. Rose. There were people and baggage everywhere. Many people were getting sick because it was a bit rough at the time. So, we were all very happy to get off the boat when we landed at Ellis Island. When we got off the boat, the men had to go one way and the women and children had to go another way.

As we got off, some men put tags on our clothes with the number from the steamship. When we entered the building, we had to go to the baggage room first to check our belongings. Since I didn't have much with me, I decided to carry everything and not leave anything in case someone might steal it. After that, I had to wait in a very long line for the medical inspection on the second floor.



Coming to America: Letter Home

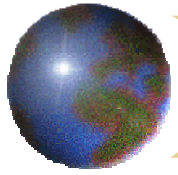


Catherine Noren/Photo Researchers, Inc.

Medical Inspection Area

When I finally made it to the front of the line, I was inspected by a medical officer. It didn't last long. I heard that they call it the "six second exam" because the medical inspectors look at six things: the scalp, face, hands, neck, gait, and general health condition. Then, they did a more thorough medical inspection.

One thing they did to me was that they took a buttonhook and pulled my eyelid back to look for eye infection. I was lucky because they didn't find any health problems with me. But, my friend, Mario, wasn't as lucky. They found an eye problem with him and wrote a big E with chalk on his jacket and sent him to another area. He will probably have to stay at Ellis Island in a dormitory until he is better and may even be sent back home. I feel bad for him.



Coming to America: Letter Home

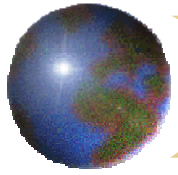
Then I was sent to the legal inspection. The questions asked seemed to be the same as the ones that I was asked by the shipping company before I left. I guess they want to make sure that I answer the same way and was telling the truth. Luckily, they had interpreters there so I could speak in Italian.

They asked me things about myself—my name, my age, if I was married, my job, if I could read and write, what my plans were in America, how much money I have, how I paid for my passage to America, if I know anyone here, and so forth. It was very tiresome!

I am very happy to be through that process and am excited that I made it. I had to take a loyalty oath at the end. I'm starting to feel like a true American!

But, I miss you and the kids terribly. I can't wait to get a job so that I can start sending money to you.

Love, Frank



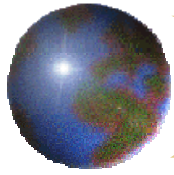
In L'America: Letter Home



Hello Again Maria,

Well, life in America is not as easy as I thought it would be. I am living in an area called the Lower East Side. My address is 94 Orchard Street. It's a big building with many apartments in it. There are immigrants from all over here.

I am living in a small apartment with many others from Naples. It is very crowded. I don't have a bed and just sleep on the hard floor. I haven't been able to find work in construction. But, I think that I may be able to get a job cleaning sewers because someone I know is doing that and said they could use some other workers. Since it is summer it is very hot. Sometimes, people sleep on the window sills just to stay cool and get some air at night.



In L'America: Letter Home

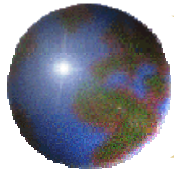


I have learned a little bit of English so I am very happy about that.

Oh, Maria, how I miss you and the children. I am going to try very hard to save money so I can come home and be with you. I miss your cooking. Sometimes I smell Italian cooking, but I also smell Greek and Armenian too.

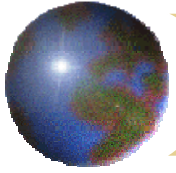
I am tired and will write more tomorrow.

I miss you, Maria.
Frank



Why take the risk?

- When I first heard this question, I could not think of many things I would take a risk for. Throughout my research, I saw that there were some who were willing to take the risk, and some who were not. Those that did were motivated by strong beliefs. While working on Frank's profile, I realized when you have a strong belief in something, like family, you are willing to take big risks, like leaving your country to live in another.



Sources

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<http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/index.html>
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