

Luigi Tammoni's diary
From Naples to New York.

Written by Giacomo, Giuseppe and Maria Grazia

January 30th, 1940

Assets	Value in Italian lire
Equipment	50
Land	300
Shed	150
Stable	75
Livestock	100
House	200

Today a gentleman from Filiano has bought the old shed, with the money I got I'm going to buy the tickets to leave to America. Oh yes, leave or die. Now you can't live here anymore. The land is parched and the livestock are sick. Our family is now barely able to bring food on the table. My brother Luca is leaving with me! It will be easier for both to have a future in America. I do not deny being afraid, but I am confident that I can have a better life and be able to help my parents financially when I find a job.

January 31st

An old cardboard suitcase tied with rope is placed behind the front door. My mother is arranging it; sheets, towels, underwear and some warm clothes. They say that in America it's colder than here. Now we're going out to say goodbye to all our relatives that we might not see anymore.

February 1st

Today is the departure day, Uncle Vito is taking us on donkeyback to Potenza where we will take the coach to Naples.

February 2nd

Finally after travelling hours by coach we arrived at the port of Naples, and we were amazed to see how many people like us are waiting to get on the ship to America. I am very worried about the idea of leaving and leaving my country; however, I am willing to do so to try to have a better future. I see many people carrying huge trunks full of clothes and personal items on the ship, and others crying while saying farewell to their loved ones who accompanied them to the ship.

February 3rd

We finally left. My brother and I are travelling in third class, because we are not a very wealthy family and in order to get the money for the tickets we had to sell many of our

family assets. It's hell here that only those who live it can understand. We live in pitiful conditions, we have only a little more than a square meter each, and this is why every day new conflicts arise for those who want to get more space for themselves.

February 10th

It's been a week now since we left. It's difficult to sleep because of the constant quarrels between the other passengers, and because of the heat, and the only way to let some air in is through a small window, which allows you to look at the sea.

February 13th

The journey is proceeding quite well, we have just learned that we will arrive in New York in less than two weeks if the weather is fine.

February 17th

Now it's been two weeks since we left. These days I've made friends with some guys who like me can't wait to get there, because you can no longer live in the conditions of poor hygiene and chaos that reign in the third class. The only thing that gives us comfort is the opportunity to eat three times a day, which for me and my brother is big news because at home we eat only twice a day.

February 24th

It's dawn and we've just arrived at Ellis Island. I thought that I would no longer have to suffer humiliation and discrimination, but no, as soon as we got off the ship we had to wait for a large number of medical and psychological examinations to be made and then a long wait to get the answer. Some guys I met were sent back because they are illiterate. My brother and I have passed checks and now we will go in search of our relatives who came here a few years ago, but we know nothing about them. When we find a place to stay, I will start looking for a job to feed my brother and me. Thus my new life begins.

