

From Gualdo to the States: five brothers and my granduncle.

Luca Gammaitoni



We are at the beginning of the last century and life in Gualdo Tadino is not easy. It is the morning of January 18th, 1903, when Nicolò Gammaitoni, son of Luigi Gammaitoni (1820-1901) and Annunziata Sassi (1827-1873), sees the silhouette of the statue of liberty looming on the horizon: finally it's the long sought New York city.

He had left eight days earlier on board of the transatlantic "La Savoie" with other companions, from the port of Le Havre, in France. Many passengers are Italian and some come from Gualdo Tadino, Nocera Umbra and the surroundings. He is not alone, with him is his cousin Luigi Gammaitoni, five years older. Nicolò is not a boy anymore, he is already 45 years old and, at home, has left five children and a wife. With 20 dollars in his pocket (as annotated by the immigration office) he is crossing the ocean to join his younger brother Eugenio (1873-1938) already in the States for just under two years. After the operations on Ellis Island he will reach him in Scranton (Pennsylvania), the typical destination for emigrants from our places. There is work there, of course if



you are content with being a coal miner in and around Springfield. The language is not a problem: you are among *paisani* and you speak the *Gualdese* dialect. In few weeks he settles down and sends news back home: they are encouraging and so, after a few months, one of his sons, Noah Gammaitoni, reaches him, landing in New York on November 29th at the very early age of twelve. Next is Giuseppe, his eldest son in 1907 joins his father and the young Noah: new workforce for the miners. Things go apparently well and soon comes the time to move the whole family.

In 1910 Nicolò is in Gualdo Tadino to collect the rest of the family: his wife Angela Anderlini (1860-1936) and his sons Egidio (born in 1895) and Vincenzo (last-born in 1898). In Gualdo remains the daughter Anna, second-born (1888) who finds nothing better to do than fall in love with another Gammaitoni. This is Giovanni Gammaitoni born in 1884 in Gualdo Tadino, brother of my great-grandfather Antonio. The relationship

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

No. 296343

CERTIFICATE OF ARRIVAL

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the immigration records show that the alien named below arrived at the port, on the date, and in the manner shown, and was lawfully admitted to the United States of America for permanent residence.

Name:	Gammaitoni, Giovanni
Port of entry:	New York
Date:	Dec. 12, 1920
Manner of arrival:	La Torrine

I FURTHER CERTIFY that this certificate of arrival is issued under authority of, and in conformity with, the provisions of the Act of June 29, 1906, as amended, solely for the use of the alien herein named and only for naturalization purposes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Certificate of Arrival is issued

Nov. 11, 1926
(Date)

Raymond F. Crist

Form 100-Imm. U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1924 14-2021a

between Anna and Giovanni gives its early fruit and a daughter Pierina (1910-2000) is born on April 4th, 1910, only six months after their marriage. Was it a repairing wedding? Be that as it may, the situation in Gualdo remains difficult and thus, also Giovanni decides the great leap: on October 29th 1910 he lands in New York and joins his brothers-in-law. Anna, with her new-born daughter remains in Gualdo. She will join him after a year and a half, on July 14th, 1912, with his daughter Pierina still very young. We don't know what happens in those years. John and his brothers-in-law work in the coal mines in Pittsburgh, Illinois. Then, for some unknown reason, Giovanni, his wife and daughter are back in Italy, in Gualdo Tadino, where the couple's second son was born on 20 September 1920: Olivo Gammaitoni. As soon as December of the same year Giovanni leaves again to return to America and to the work in the mine. Anna joins him with her two children on July 19th, 1922. Since then they are stable in the Sates in the Taylorville area where Anna's brothers and parents are also based.

In the meantime, the four brothers settled down and have also changed their names, adapting them to the local language: Giuseppe has become Joseph, Joe for the friends, Noè has become Noah, Egidio calls himself James and Vincenzo is Vincent.

In the 1910 census, Joseph Gammaitoni is 26 years old and appears to live with the Bertucci family, as a tenant, in Taylorville, Ward 4, Christian County, Illinois.

In 1918 Joe, James, Noah and Giovanni are all registered in the US army. Joe is 34 years old and now lives apparently alone in 120 E. Palmer street, in Taylorville, in Christian County in Illinois. Together with his brothers and brother-in-law, he works as a miner at the Springfield Coal Company.

Noah seems the most enterprising of the Gammaitoni family: in 1921, while doing the coal miner, he declares loyalty to the American state, in view of the request for citizenship that advances in 1922. He lives in Jessup, in 709 Church St., has already married the *gualdese* Margherita Alfonsi born on 5-5-1898 and divorced. From the marriage, on 25/4-1915, a daughter was born in Taylorville: Olga Gammaitoni. Noah becomes a naturalized American citizen in 1927, together with his brother Egidio (James).



It seems that the life of the miner is not for Noah Gammaitoni: in 1925 he owns a saloon (which he probably manages together with his sister Anna), on George Avenue in Wilkes-Barre (PA) (photo).

Giovanni, become John for everybody, continues to be a miner and in 1926 applies to become an American citizen; his brother-in-law Giuseppe Gammaitoni, who is already naturalized, witnesses to him. Egidio (James), also a miner in the same mine of his brother. Things seems to be going well also for him but the great economic crisis of 1929 comes and changes everything. The consequences are dramatic for all the American people and the Gammaitoni are no exception. On August 5th, 1932, in the early afternoon, retired banker John B. Colegrove, convicted president of the bankrupt bank of Taylorville, is kidnapped from his home. James Gammaitoni, who had lost \$ 6,000 in the bank's bankruptcy and had not failed to threaten President Colegrove in public not so long ago, is

immediately suspected of the kidnapping. James holds Colegrove responsible for losing his money and had even fired a couple of pistol shots, without hitting him.

The news hits the national newspapers. Taylorville Sheriff Charles Weineke arrests James, along with an alleged accomplice, an Italian from Detroit who responds to the name of Amelio Buzzuoli. Initially the charge is of kidnapping and murder. Colegrove's personal belongings (a notebook) are found at James's house and traces of blood are found on James's car. James defends himself by declaring that the blood comes from a rabbit he killed. The two are held back and the search for the banker's body begins. After a day of unsuccessful search, Colegrove reappears on the 7th morning at a friend's house, near Springfield. Injured and battered, he is taken to the hospital where he says he was kidnapped from his home, loaded in the car and transported a few hours away. Arriving in an unidentified location he was tied up, beaten and left half-dead in a field.

SUSPECTS AND VICTIM OF KIDNAPING

BANK OFFICIAL NEAR DEATH AFTER ATTACK

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Aug. 8.—(AP)—Near death from loss of blood and exposure, his body bruised and lacerated, John B. Colegrove, aged president of a defunct Taylorville, Ill., bank, lay in a hospital here today and related how he had been attacked in his home, kidnaped, bound and gagged, and then, after being carried alive to an auto, tossed into a weed patch where he was left to die.

Colegrove, under penitentiary sentence resulting from his bank's failure, resurfaced in the weed patch from late Friday night until early Sunday, when he managed to loosen the ropes with which he was bound and made his way into Springfield to the home of a friend.

Meanwhile Christian-co officials, where the kidnaping took place, were questioning two suspects, one of them a depositor in Colegrove's bank who lost \$2,475 when it closed. Colegrove, banker screaming and saw him put into the car.

Colegrove said his abductors put tape across his mouth, tied him with ropes and then drove for several hours. Finally he said they tossed him out of the car into the weed patch.

The suspects being held at Taylorville were arrested Saturday morning. One of them, James Gammaitoni, who lost his deposit in Colegrove's bank, had previously threatened the banker, police said, if his money were not returned. It was due to this that suspicion was directed at him when the banker was kidnaped.

VANDER WEYDEN ARRAIGNMENT IS POSTPONED

J. W. Vander Weyden, 45, of route 2, Columbus Drive, who was to have been arraigned Monday

TOP photo shows James Gammaitoni, 35, and Amelio Buzzuoli, 32, who were arrested Saturday morning.

In alto, da sinistra: lo sceriffo Charles Weneke, Amelio (Emilio) Buzzoli (32 anni), James Gammaitoni (35 anni). Sotto il banchiere rapito John B. Colegrove

District Attorney Henry Groundy, who had earlier obtained Colegrove's conviction for accepting deposits from customers when the bank was already bankrupt (1 to 3 years, on hold pending appeal), interrogates him and obtains the description of the suspects. The next day, the prosecutor convenes a

ATTORNEY TO ASK DEATH PENALTY IN COLGROVE KIDNAP

State's Attorney Harry B. Grundy Will Demand Extreme Penalty of Law "If Evidence Warrants It."

COLGROVE SAYS HIS ABDUCTORS ASKED \$30,000

Two Men Held Under Arrest Arraigned on Charges of Kidnaping for Ransom, Robbery and Assault.

press conference and declares that he obtained evidence that this is an abduction for the purpose of extortion, an offense that provides for the death penalty. James Gammaitoni and his accomplices (a gang of four is assumed) would have asked for a ransom of \$ 30,000 to free Colegrove. It also emerges that the other arrested, Amelio Buzzoli, would have arrived from Detroit only two months earlier and would have a history of extortion. How much this corresponds to reality or is only easy propaganda orchestrated by the prosecutor, it is not possible to say. What is certain is that Italian + Detroit + extortion sounds so much of the mafia activity.

Whatever it is, James and partner plead not guilty. The judge sets the bail at \$ 20,000 (which no one pays) and they go to jail waiting to be brought in front of the Grand Jury set for August 26th. Meanwhile, on August 10th, the chief of Illinois state police, T.P. Sullivan arrests

two more people: John Capsin and Mike Galassi. Galassi is the owner of the house where James and Amelio live. Capsin is young (18 years old) but is already charged with car theft. Their arrest, however, does not last long and the following day they are released because the evidence of their involvement is only circumstantial.

Finally, August 26th arrives and the defendants appear in front of the Grand Jury. A few minutes and they are sentenced to trial for attempted murder and kidnapping for extortion. Very heavy indictments, especially the second one that, in the state of Illinois, as mentioned, provides the death penalty. The trial is scheduled by Judge William B. Wright at the county courthouse and the first hearing is scheduled for April 12th of the following year, 1934. At the first hearing, chaired by Judge Thomas M.

Jett, Colegrove does not show. The next day a plot twist occurs: the two defendants James and Amelio change their statement, from innocent to guilty, and their lawyer, Carl Preihs, is able to get a mild sentence from the judge: only one year in prison because the kidnapping was not malicious and there

NEWS, TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 1932

2 FACE DEATH AS KIDNAPERS OF BANKER, 69

Taylorville, Ill., Aug. 8 (AP).—Charges of kidnapping for ransom, a capital offense, were lodged today against the two men held as suspects in the kidnaping and beating of John B. Colegrove, 69, head of a defunct bank.

The charges were placed after Colegrove, recovering in a Springfield hospital from severe head wounds and the effects of more than thirty-six hours' exposure, told State's Attorney Harry B. Grundy his kidnapers had demanded \$30,000 ransom, and that he previously had received threatening letters signed by James Gammaitoni, one of those held.

Gammaitoni and Amelio Pouzzouti, seized a few hours after Colegrove disappeared, refused to explain the presence of Colegrove's pocketbook and other personal belongings which officials found at Gammaitoni's home near Springfield.

Colegrove said he believed four men participated in the kidnaping, although he saw only two when he was set upon in his home Friday night.

The banker was slugged with a blackjack, pushed into an automobile and driven away. Neighbors heard cries but found the home empty when they reached it. After a long drive during which his hands and feet were bound and his mouth gagged, he said he was thrown out of the car and three of his kidnapers drove away.

The fourth stayed as a guard all Friday night, Colegrove said, demanding \$30,000 ransom, but left early Saturday, apparently alarmed because the others did not return.

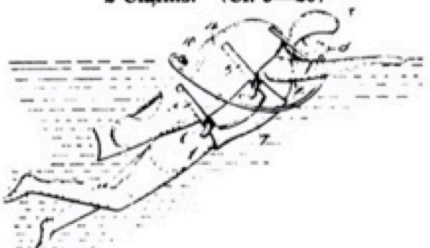
BIPLANE UPROOTS TREE, 2 ESCAPE

Bristol, Conn., Aug. 8 (AP).—A biplane piloted by Robert Battle of Schenectady, N. Y., crashed into an apple tree, uprooting the tree and demolishing both left wings of the plane early today. Neither Battle nor his wife, a passenger, was hurt.

John Gammaitoni Amelio Pouzzouti
Suspects in banker's kidnaping.

James Gammaitoni (in figura erroneamente indicato come John.

2,066,725
LIFE BUOY BELT
James Gammaitoni, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., assignor of one-third to Joseph Gammaitoni and one-third to Noah Gammaitoni, both of Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
Application December 7, 1935, Serial No. 53,410
2 Claims. (Cl. 9—20)



1. A buoyant belt comprising an inflatable member adapted to be strapped to and conform to the contour of the back of the wearer, means carried by the inflatable member and adapted to engage the chest and abdomen of the wearer for maintaining the inflatable member in engagement with the back of the wearer, said inflatable member being downwardly tapered whereby the body will be supported in an upwardly and forwardly inclined position in the water, the upper enlarged end of the inflatable member terminating in registry with the back of the neck of the wearer, a loop carried by the upper end of the inflatable member, said loop arching the head of the wearer and chin of the wearer and forming means whereby the weight of the head of the wearer is supported from the upper end of the inflatable member.

is the extenuating fact that James Gammaitoni has lost all his belongings in the bank's crack, caused precisely by Colegrove. The next day the two defendants are transferred to the state prison to serve their sentence.

On December 7th, 1935, James, already released from prison, together with his brothers Joseph and Noah, files a patent for a life preserver (pictured).

Angela Anderlini, Nicolò's wife and mother of the five brothers, returns to Italy, probably accompanied by Egidio (James), Vincenzo and by her husband Nicolò. There must be serious health reasons, because on September 10th 1936, Angela dies at seventy-six. On May 27th, 1937 Egidio and his father Nicola, now seventy-nine years old, leave Italy and returns to the

United States. Vincenzo remains in Italy and settles in Perugia on September 28th, 1936.

On 14th December 1939, Nicolò Gammaitoni dies in Wilkes-Barre: he is eighty-two years old. Unfortunately, the tragic events are not limited to this: on September 22nd, 1941, an accidental explosion in the mine kills Giovanni Gammaitoni, my granduncle. He is only 57 years old and leaves his wife Anna and their two children: Pierina (Pearl) and Olivo (Leo). Pierina marries Enrico Vecchietti and has a son, Arturo, but remains a widow on June 28th, 1937. On November 6th, 1943 she marries again, this time with Luigi Del Gobbo, originally from Camerino, Italy.

NICHOLAS GAMMAITONI
Nicholas Gammaitoni, 82, died at the home of his son, Noah, 113½ Railroad Street, Parsons, yesterday at 4:10 following two months' illness. His wife died on September 10, 1936.
He was born in Italy and came to this country three years ago for the third time. He arrived in 1901, 1910 and 1936.
Surviving are Noah, Parsons; Joseph, Wilkes-Barre; James, Parsons; Vincent, Italy; daughter, Mrs. Anna Gammaitoni, in Parsons, and several brothers and sisters in Italy.
Funeral will be held from 113½ Railroad Street Monday at 1:30.

Lower Paxton Township: Maurice R. Metzger to William H. Houseal, five lots in Cherry and Rook streets, High-spire.
Explosion Kills Miner
By United Press
WILKES-BARRE, Sept. 24. — A premature blast at the Mineral Spring Colliery of the Sullivan Trail Coal Company, today was blamed for the death of John Gammaitoni, 57, of Parsons, Luzerne County. Another miner, Peter Klitchko, 30, also of Parsons, was confined to a Wilkes-Barre hospital for treatment.
PENSION GROUP TO MEET
The Railroad Pension Association will meet tomorrow evening at 8 o'clock at 1229 North Third street.

Olivo (Leo) marries on October 20th, 1943 with Carmel English (daughter of two Italians) and has two children: Denise and Leo (born 25-1-1947) whose descendants still live near Wilkes-Barre.

Giuseppe did not marry. In the 1930 and 1940 census he is listed as the owner/amanger of a restaurant in the city. Manager of a different restaurant is also his brother Noah who, after the divorce, married again with Lena Matranzie from whom he had a daughter in 1936: Helen Jane. Noah is listed to be the manager of the caffè "Noahs

Ark", 108 Rudford st. and, subsequently, the Joe's Cafe on Pennsylvania ave in Wilkes-Barre. In 1964 when his second wife Lena dies, he is the registered owner of "Gammaitoni's Café" in 473 North Pennsylvania ave.

James was registered again by the United States government in 1942 in view of the war but there is no evidence that he was actually involved in the war. After the war he moves to Lodi in California, where he starts to cultivate cherries.

Noah Gammaitoni
Noah Gammaitoni, 586 S. Main St., died Wednesday morning at home.
Born in Guldo Tadino, Italy, he came to the United States as a child. He operated a tavern in Parsons for many years and later operated Joe's Cafe, Pennsylvania Avenue.
Surviving are, a daughter, Mrs. Olga Matthews, Glendale, Calif.; two grandchildren.
Funeral will be from Recupero Funeral Home, 141 Park Ave., Saturday at 1. Interment in Denison Cemetery, Swoyersville. Rev. Joseph Bord will officiate. Friends may call Friday 2 to 4 and 7 to 9.

The following years pass for all without particular episodes, apart from what happened on July 25th 1970, when Noah Gammaitoni, already seventy-nine years old, is admitted to Mercy Hospital because he was attacked by his brother James (seventy-five years old). The motivation of the beating is unknown.

Giuseppe Gammaitoni dies first, on June 13th 1971, in Wilkes-Barre. Following is James, who dies in San Joaquin, California, on April 14th 1976. Then it is Anna's turn, on March 10th 1977, at the home of her daughter Pierina where she lived for the last 10 years of her life. Finally, Noah Gammaitoni also dies on June 19th 1979, also in Wilkes-Barre.

Thanks to Daniele Amoni for the advice provided and useful genealogical information.