

The Maggiorino Laurenzio household in the 1920 and 1930 census, by Connie Lenzen



CONNIE LENZEN
Certified GenealogistSM

10411 SW 41st Avenue
Portland, OR 97219-6984
connielenzen@comcast.net

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TO: Irene's file

GOAL: Compare, contrast, and discuss information from the 1920 and 1930 censuses about the Maggiorino Laurenzio family of Multnomah County, Oregon.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY: Maggiorino Laurenzio was born on 21 March 1890 in Carema, Italy. He died on 27 September 1952 in Portland, Oregon. He married Ermelinda Barberis, perhaps in Portland, Oregon. She was born on 19 January 1893 in Italy and died on 26 November 1964 in Portland, Oregon. They had two daughters, Irene and Marie.

RESTRICTIONS/LIMITATIONS

Ten hours research and reporting

REPOSITORIES VISITED

No repositories were visited.

ONLINE RESOURCES USED

Ancestry

IPUMS-USA

United States History

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Maggiorino and Lena Laurenzio were Italian immigrants. They lived and worked amongst other Italian immigrants in Portland and in Troutdale outside of Portland. In 1920, Maggiorino was a "gardener" on a farm. In 1930, the Laurenzio family lived outside of Portland where he was engaged in truck farming. The family lived in neighborhoods populated by common and skilled laborers who, based upon the employment statistics from the 1930 census, were working in occupations that had not yet been affected by the Great Depression. By 1930, Maggiorino was not a naturalized citizen even though he had submitted his first papers. The homes in the neighborhoods where the Laurenzio family lived were mostly householder-owed, but Maggiorino did not own a home in 1920 or 1930.

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Note: a full discussion with source citations is found in the Itemized Research Findings section.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Maggiorino's year of immigration was given in the censuses as 1909 or 1910. Locate Maggiorino Laurenzio in the 1910 census. Use Ancestry's census index.
- Locate the family in the 1940 census to see if their situation has changed or stayed the same.
- Research availability of Oregon marriage indexes to pinpoint Maggiorino and Lena's marriage. Use the FamilySearch Wiki, https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Oregon_Genealogy.
- Research Maggiorino and Lena in Ancestry's passenger ship indexes.
- Research Sundial Ranch in order to pinpoint where on the Columbia Highway that the family lived. Conduct a Google search.
- Research Portland's Italian immigrants. Do a Google search for "Italian immigrants" "Portland, Oregon."

ITEMIZED RESEARCH FINDINGS

Maggoeono Launzo household, 1920 Multnomah County, Oregon, census¹

Chart showing some of the census facts.

Launzo	Maggoeono	Head	29	1909	PA	Italy	Italy	Italy	Gardener on farm; working on own account
	Lena	Wife	25	1912	Al	Italy	Italy	Italy	none
	Irene	Dau	1/6/12			Ore	Italy	Italy	none

In 1920, the Maggiorino Laurenzio family was living in a rental home on East 29th Street in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. There were no other people named Launzo or Laurenzio in Ancestry's 1920 Oregon census index.

Mrs. Ruby L. Madison enumerated the census on 13 January 1920. Her name suggests she did not speak Italian, and that might be why Maggiorino's name was recorded as "Launzo Maggoeono." The census informant is unknown. It could have been Maggiorino or Lena or even one of the neighbors. The column for "Whether able to speak English" was marked "Yes" for both Maggiorino and Lena. This suggests the Mrs. Madison either spoke to one of them or was told this information by a neighbor.

In column 10, the enumerator was to indicate the color or race. The instructions specified

"20. Column 10. Color or race.—Write "W" for white, "B" for black; "Mu" for mulatto; "In" for Indian; "Ch" for Chinese; "Jp" for Japanese; "Fil" for Filipino; "Hin" for Hindu; "Kor" for Korean. For all persons not falling within one of these classes, write "Ot" (for other), and write on the left-hand margin of the schedule the race of the person so indicated."²

"Italian" was penned next to the households where the head of the household was Italian. Of the eleven households on the page, seven were Italian. The heads of two households were born in Canada, and the other two were born in the United States.

The "Ot" designation was crossed out, and "W" was penned over it. This misattribution of the race suggests prejudice against Italian immigrants.

Maggiorino and Lena were born in Italy, and Italian was their native language. Maggiorino arrived in the United States in 1909, and Lena arrived in 1912. He had filed his papers for naturalization, as indicated by "Pa" in column 14, meaning he had declared his intent to become a citizen. Lena's citizenship was given as "Al" for Alien.

¹ 1920 U.S. census, Multnomah County, Oregon, Portland City, Pct 137, ED 62, sheet 13B (penned), dwelling 260 family 275, Maggoeona Launzo; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 10 January 2015), citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1500.

² Information about census enumerator instructions obtained from "1920 Census: Enumerator Instructions," article, Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota, *IPUMSUSA* (<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/inst1920.shtml> : accessed 13 January 2015)

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The Italian families were headed by the following men: James Gemma, age twenty-nine; Ansalmo Bosso, age fifty-two; Alexander Ray, age sixty; Frank Maraseo, age thirty-four; Peter Guasco, age forty; and Frank Giacchero, age thirty.

The Italians immigrated between 1881 and 1913. The children in the families ranged in age from six months to eighteen with nine children attending school.

Maggiorino was working as a gardener on a farm on his own account. Ansalmo Bosso, a neighbor on the census page, also had this occupation.

The occupations for the other heads of households were – laborer in saw mill, railroad engineer, construction laborer, draper in a department store, scavenger with his own wagon, bridge carpenter for a railroad, railroad worker, janitor for a private family, and chipper in a foundry. The presence of the railroad workers suggests the house was near a railroad.

In summary, men were mainly working at what could be called common and skilled labor jobs. Immigrants headed most of the households, and most of those were Italians who spoke Italian. With a common language, the adults might not have seen the need to become fluent in English. However, the children were going to school and presumably learning English.

Research suggestions:

Locate Maggiorino Laurenzio in the 1910 census. Use Ancestry's census index.

Research availability of Oregon marriage indexes to pinpoint Maggiorino and Lena's marriage. Use the FamilySearch Wiki, https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Oregon_Genealogy.

Research Portland's Italian immigrants. Do a Google search for "Italian immigrants" "Portland, Oregon."

Maggiorino household, 1930 Multnomah County, Oregon, census³

In 1930, the Laurenzio family was no longer residing in the city. Rather, they were living on a rental farm in Multnomah County’s Troutdale Precinct on the Columbia Highway near where Sundial Ranch Road intersected the highway. There were no other people named Laurenzio in Ancestry’s 1930 Oregon census index.

Chart showing some of the census facts

Last	First	Relationship	Age	Age at 1 st marriage	Born	Father	Mother	Occupation
Laurenzio	Maggiorino	Head	40	1 st married at 25	Italy	Italy	Italy	Farmer and partner, Truck Farm
	Lena	Wife – H	35	1 st married at 20	Italy	Italy	Italy	
	Irene	Daughter	11		Oregon	Italy	Italy	
	Marie	Daughter	7		Oregon	Italy	Italy	

The home rental price was given as “5,” and that was crossed out. Nine of the fifteen households on the census page were owned, and five were rented. One of the census questions was about radio ownership. Eight of the households on the census page had a radio, but the Laurenzio family did not have one. As native Italian speakers, they may not have considered a radio where English was the spoken language to be important.

Maggiorino’s citizenship status was still “Pa,” meaning he had submitted his first papers but had not completed the naturalization process. Additionally, none of the other six adult Italians on the census page had completed the naturalization process. His year of immigration was given as 1910. In 1920, it was given as 1909. A year’s discrepancy could be attributed to memory. Or, it could be that the person who provided the information for this census was a different person.

Seven of the fifteen households on the census page were living on truck farms, a farm where vegetables were grown for market. Italians headed three of these households; they were Luigi Vescogne, Maggiorino Laurenzio, and Domenico Cotali.

The men who headed the other truck farms were – Asahichi Hoashi, born in Japan; Frank Crawford, born in Oregon; Thomas Lowe, born in Scotland; and Horace McGinnis was born in Michigan.

The occupations of the men who lived on Columbia Highway and who were not truck farmers were – section laborer on the railroad, stationery engineer, foreman for an excavating company, and mechanic for an auto repair shop. Two men were employed as watchmen in a wool pullery. The men

³ 1930 US census, Multnomah County, Oregon, Troutdale Precinct 506, ED 26-340, page 4A (penned), 197 (stamped), dwelling 92, family 94, Maggiorino Laurenzio; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>) : accessed 10 January 2016), citing NARA microfilm publication T626, roll 1955.

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who lived on Sun Dial Road, with one exception, a poultry and truck farmer, had more skilled occupations. There was a house carpenter, a personnel manager for a retail-clothing store, a bookkeeper for Assurance Life, and a welder who had his own shop.

The United States entered the Great Depression in 1929, and the 1930 census asked questions about employment in order to determine the effect of that financial catastrophe. In 1929, 3.14% of the labor force was unemployed. In 1930, that number had risen to 8.67%.⁴ Maud Hill, the Troutdale Precinct census enumerator, recorded fifteen households on the census page where the Maggiorino Laurenzio household was enumerated. Twenty-one adult males lived in those households, and all reported that they worked on the last census day. Unemployment had not hit them.

Eleven-year-old Irene Laurenzio and her seven-year-old sister Marie both attended school at some time between September 1, 1929, and the census day.⁵ Ten other children joined them. Norma Vescogne, the twelve-year-old daughter of Luigi Vescogne, may have been a school and home friend to Irene.

Literacy was high amongst the people on the census page. Just two people out of fifty were reported as not being able to read or write in any language. They were Sago Hoashi, wife of Asakichi Hoashi, and Rosie Giscone, wife of Domenica Giscone.

Another question added to this census was veteran status. Four men reported they were veterans. Sixty-year-old John A. Nasmyth was a veteran of the Spanish-American War. The other three men were World War I veterans.

In summary, the family was still living and working near other Italians. Maggiorino had not completed the naturalization process. With his neighbors in the same situation, he may not have felt the need to become a United States citizen. He was working as a truck farmer, an occupation that appeared to be resistant to unemployment. While the family spoke Italian, Irene was going to school, and she could have brought home some English words.

Research suggestions:

Research Maggiorino and Lena in Ancestry's passenger ship indexes.

Research Sundial Ranch in order to pinpoint where the family lived on Columbia Highway. Conduct a Google search.

⁴ "Unemployment Statistics During the Great Depression;" article *United States History* (<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1528.html> : accessed 10 January 2016).

⁵ Information about census enumerator instructions obtained from "1930 Census: Enumerator Instructions," online, Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota, *IPUMSUSA* (<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/inst1930.shtml> : accessed 10 January 2015).