

*The D'Amico Family  
in America*



# D'Amico

**Gerardo D'Amico** (1888–1947) was born in San Severo, Italy on February 22, 1888 to Giuseppe and Giuseppina (Aglia) D'Amico. On June 28, 1907, he joined the wave of Italian immigrants coming to America, when he entered New York Harbor aboard the S.S. *Madonna*. He had only \$7 in his pocket and continued on to Providence, RI. Once settled on Federal Hill, the city's Italian neighborhood, he met his

future wife Teresa. The two were married in Providence on February 28, 1909 by Father Belliotti. They would go on to have nine children together, Joseph (Joe), Yolanda (Hilda), Guido (Cute), Aldo (Al), Gerardo (Jerry), Henry, Salvatore (Sal), Evelyn, and Rudolph (Dany).



**Teresa D'Amico** (1891–1972) was born in Teano, Italy on March 18, 1891 to Giuseppe and Concetta (*unknown*) D'Amico. In September 1907, she boarded the S.S. *Principe di Piemonte*, bound for New York. She was just 16 years old at the time and traveled alone to Providence, RI, where one of her brothers was already living. Ultimately, her mother Concetta, brothers Anthony and Peter,

**Left: A young Gerardo D'Amico, owner of Jerry's Hollywood Shoes and a successful shoemaker and businessman in East Providence, RI. Bottom: The ship S.S. Madonna, which took Gerardo on his two-week voyage from Naples to New York. Map showing the birthplaces of Gerardo and Teresa.**



and sister Amelia all came to America. She also had a brother Luigi, who died young, and another sister who stayed behind in Italy. Her father, Giuseppe, had been a constable in Teano. His untimely death was the reason that Concetta and some of the siblings decided to emigrate.

When Gerardo came to America in 1907, “shoemaker” was listed as his profession on the ship’s passenger manifest. So it was not a trade he learned in Providence, but one he brought with him from Italy and put to use when he was financially able to. He worked as a laborer at first, possibly in one of Providence’s many jewelry factories, and the family (along with Concetta) lived at 9 Lilly Street. After saving up enough money, he started his own shoe repair (and later, sales) business at 144 ½ Taunton Avenue, East Providence, RI around 1917. The family moved to the town shortly thereafter, residing initially at 82 Orchard Street. The business eventually expanded and moved to 132 Waterman Avenue and they settled behind it on Ivy Street. Jerry’s Hollywood Shoes ended up being a very successful business, even doing well during the Great Depression. As other families struggled to get by, Gerardo gave shoes away for free to those who could not afford them.

In 1923, with his business off the ground and family settled, Gerardo submitted his Declaration of Intent to become a United States Citizen and was officially granted citizenship in June 1927. His application describes him as 5’8” and 165 lbs., with a dark complexion, black hair, brown eyes, and a scar on his forehead. He spoke both Italian and English, and enjoyed singing opera. He went on to become a member of the East Providence Businessmen’s Association and a founding member of the East Providence chapter of the Sons of Italy in America (at the Luce Moderna Lodge) where he served as orator for several years.

During WWII, the family had their radio confiscated, which they gave to the authorities willingly. The U.S. government was worried that Italian Americans could be swayed into siding with their homeland, but these



**Above: A young and vibrant Teresa D’Amico. Below: Concetta (Teresa’s mother) with her son Tony. Both of them immigrated to America after the death of her husband Giuseppe.**





**Above: Gerardo with his oldest daughter Yolanda (c.1911.) prior to the opening of the shoe store. The family was still living on Federal Hill at the time.**



**Top right and bottom: Views of Jerry's Hollywood Shoes at 132 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI, prior to the addition. Gerardo and Teresa's home on Ivy Street can be seen in its original location, behind the shoe store.**



**Fighter Pilot Henry D'Amico flew 75 combat missions over Europe during WWII in his P-47 Thunderbolt named "Lil' Rhody". He was assigned to the 10th Fighter Squadron, 50th Fighter Group and flew escort flights, dive bombing and strafing missions and close support for ground troops. He provided cover over Cherbourg during the Invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944 and ultimately spent ten months overseas. By war's end, he was 1st Lieutenant and had been honored with the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with twelve Oak Leaf Clusters. After the war, he attended the University of Florida on the G.I. Bill where he earned a degree in architecture and settled in Florida to raise his family. (Photo c.1944–1945)**

was a fighter pilot and flew 75 combat missions over Europe. He helped provide cover during the D-Day invasion, flew bombing and strafing missions and was even one of those daring pilots that flew under the Arc de Triomphe once Paris was liberated. The family worried about him while he was overseas, but were all extremely proud. By the end of the war Henry had earned the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Gerardo passed away on 1947 and was laid to rest at St. Francis Catholic Cemetery in Pawtucket, RI. Despite their loss, Teresa remained the glue that held everyone together. She loved family, wine, and made the absolute best gravy in the world! She spent summers "downriver" in Warwick with her children and grandchildren (whose cheeks she was known to pinch), and family always remained the center of her universe. She even kept a rather quirky pet: a chicken named Fifi that she trained to use the toilet. One fateful night, the family got a shock when she called for her beloved pet while they were enjoying a roast chicken. As it turned out, someone had slaughtered the wrong chicken and they had just eaten Fifi!

Teresa eventually made trips back to visit family in Italy and years later, several of her children and grandchildren would also visit her sister's descendants in Teano. She is remembered for her warmth and the love and devotion she showed to her family. In Italian, D'Amico means friend. What better name for the life Gerardo and Teresa built together.



**Teresa went on to live a long life filled with family, wine and pasta! Top: Enjoying time with her grandchildren, Steven and Lynda in the summer of 1957. Left: Dressed up with her son Cute. Below: Spending time at home with her two daughters, Hilda and Evelyn, and future son-in-law, Sonny.**



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