

PETER SPELLIOS

Although equal parts Italian and Greek, I am a perfectly imperfect combination of both. On any given day the genetic and familial traits of each show unpredictably. How is it possible that I smell my long-passed grandmother's meatballs while I write this?

Letizia (Letty) Esposito Demo was born in 1909 in Calabria, in the province of Catanzaro, in the town of Miglierina. Savero, her father and a shoemaker, owned a general store that sold salt and shoes – leaving it all behind to settle in North Adams, Massachusetts in 1910. Nicolina, her mother, arrived in 1914 with 5 of her 6 children, leaving 6-year-old Horace behind with smallpox (He later joined in 1921).

Letizia (“Gram” to me) was the 9th of 11 children (3 having died in childhood). She married Joseph Demo in or about 1930 and remained in North Adams her entire life. She worked many years in the Sprague Electric factory and was gifted at virtually all she did. She raised 3 children and loved her family dearly – until her death in 2005, days away from her 96th birthday. So much I could share about Gram's work ethic, Gram's love, and Gram's strength. The earliest of many strong women shaping my life. This is my story.



Betty Spellios looking up Gram's (her mother's) birth certificate in Miglierina, Italy (2014).