



Egildo and Carolina Braga managed to save their life while their son Rino perished in the cold waters of the St. Lawrence. They were reserved people and once back to Turbigo – so the relatives recall – they didn't vent their story and their feelings which was almost what they had saved. The sinking of the ship left them with nearly nothing on aside from the money belt and a golden chain, the current trophies of the family.



Everything else gone, Carolina mentioned that she wore for a while the blanket she was given by the rescuers (*vestia cunt i cuert qha man dai*). She is remembered as a strange woman, the only one who carried the cross during the usual religious processions, who used to go to church all the times and solicit the grand-daughters to accompany her. Carolina often recalled how she had left for America, she was only nineteen, and going to Le Havre, Northern France to board the ship *Lorraine* on May 20, 1911. At that time most nuptials were combined and at times embracing the husband by proxy was like hugging a tree (*Brasciacoll a 'na pianta*) but in general they worked and the official photographs of Egildo and Carolina show a happy couple who got married in Eveleth, Minnesota on 3 June 1911, and on occasion of the wedding of Egildo's brother Carlo in 1914, they are portrayed quite joyful with their son Rino. The stories told by Carolina, mostly to her daughter Enrichetta have been passed on to their descendants with little variations.

Upon returning to Turbigo. Carolina and Egildo were married again 11 November 1914 since the local catholic priest was unable to translate the documents that declared their marriage in Minnesota.

Time healed some wounds and at times Carolina narrated her life in Eveleth, the mining centre where she ended up taking care of the boarders of the big house where she lived. The single miners were granted room and board in a familiar environment, 17 she counted, where Carolina toiled all day long, not what she had dreamt.



The first son Rino was born in March 1912 and his loss was dramatic also due to circumstances but life resumed and Caterina (Rina) was born 17 Mar 1915. Alas she died 25 November 1917. Right after the end of WWI Enrica (Enrichetta) was born 17 February 1920 (She married Angelo Bottiani, 20 August 1913 – 14 September 1987) and soon, 24 September 1920, Egildo boarded the *Dante Alighieri* in Genoa to return to Eveleth, Minnesota to his brother Carlo. But this time America didn't jive with him and a couple of years later he went back to Italy. While Enrichetta was growing, her brother Mario was born (5 October 1924 -2 February 2001).

Egildo, an imposing person of over 100 kilos in his late years, is remembered as a good tempered man, with a double chin, very fond of his grand-daughter Rosella whom at first he didn't particularly like since he was expecting a boy, after three girls, but little by little she became his darling. The grand-father who often cried used to go to the local bar (circolo) to play cards and drink some red wine; then he would buy sugar pipes (Pierangela remembers sugar red pipes) at *Luina's* or gremolino for his grand-daughters. (*Gremolino is a typical sweet of Galliate (a town near Turbigo) made of sugar, flour, butter, raisin, then polished with eggs and covered with granulated sugar*).

Pierangela Braga, Mario's daughter recalls that her grand-father Egildo, after returning definitely from Eveleth, Minnesota worked as a farmer. He owned a donkey, a couple of cows, hogs, hens, ducks, geese and rabbits. He bought a piece of land close to his house where he grew corn and rented some other fields to produce hay for the livestock. Also in the mind of Pierangela, Egildo emerge sas a big man with a beige shirt and the typical suspenders to support the trousers.

Many years would elapse before the grand-daughters found out and understood what had happened in their family and why certain topics were avoided and came to understand the inner suffering that permeated their lives.

So the memories go beyond pain, Pierangela was afraid of the hogs that Egildo frequently let free to roam in the courtyard and she would climb on a cement platform under the grapevine arbor of Concord grapes where she stayed until the hogs were locked up again.

At that time donkeys, quite stubborn in general, were used as a means of transportation.

Both Rosella and Piera Braga re-confirm that Carolina used to take them to church every morning, she was also the only woman in Turbigo that carried the cross that headed the religious processions in town. Also her breakfast consisted of milk and bread and then fried bacon with eggs added at times.

*Egildo died in 1962 and Carolina in 1974.*

Today they live through the great-grand-daughters such as Camilla and Celeste Borlando (Pierangela's) and the continuous remembrance that carry the family's stories and events.

Egildo and Carolina were no heroes but they didn't go to Eveleth on vacation but to work in the iron mines of Eveleth and to take care of the miners.

*Don't let us forget them*

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