



## Jennifer Brown Hills

17 February at 08:47

This is a picture of my grandmother, Annina, and her three children; Francesco, Giovanni, and Michelina (my mother). World War II devastated the small town in Italy where they lived. Both physically and economically. When my grandfather return from the German internment camp after the war that was a little work and people were starving. Grandpa's other siblings had already immigrated to United States so he decided the best thing for his family would be to come to this great country. However at the time United States was no longer taking immigrants from Italy. So my grandfather went to Canada and then came to his family in Pittsburgh. Or so the family story goes. A few years later when he had saved up enough money he sent for my grandmother and his three children. Having never left her small village in the south of Italy my grandmother traveled with three small children all the way to Naples to board a ship to the United States. It was a journey she would never forget and never want to relive. Growing up I spent a lot of time with my grandmother listening to her stories of her life. Her childhood in Italy, what is was like to live in Europe during WWII, leaving her family and all she knew to start a new life here, and the countless racism and xenophobia she faced as an immigrant. I never fully understood all that she endured until I became a mother. Only then could a grasp the desperation and passion of a mother to provide safety and nourishment for her child. The lengths she would travel to make sure her children were safe and fed. I've always admired her. I miss her everyday.

She is why I stand with immigrants today. That's why I support all those mothers, or fathers, or future parents, or anyone, fleeing poverty, war, persecution, and a host of other cause a mother to leave her home for the sake of her children.

Most of us are Americans because someone at some point in history risked something so you could be here. They endured so we could prosper. They suffered so we would be fed. We stand here today--on their backs.