

Research Question: When and where was Salvatore Roccanova, son of Vincenzo Roccanova and Maria Maddalena Francavilla, father of Barbato Anthony Roccanova (b. 17 June 1932), who died on 12 April 1975 in Staten Island, New York, born?

Source 1: Salvatore Roccanova’s petition for citizenship in the United States.

1. Citation
<p>“New York, Southern District, U.S District Court Naturalization Records, 1824-1946,” database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2060123 : accessed 23 January 2023), search term: “Salvatore Roccanova,” Salvatore Roccanova petition for citizenship (1934), petition no. 232618, Southern District of New York, image 400-530; citing NARA microfilm publication M1972, Southern District of New York Petitions for Naturalization, 1897-1944, Record Group 21 : Records of District Courts of the United States; National Archives – Northeast Region, New York City.</p>
2. Source
<p>Original. This is an image of the original petition for citizenship created by the United States District Court of the Southern District of New York for Salvatore Roccanova. The document contains the signature of the petitioner, two witnesses, and the Deputy Clerk of the court who created the record. This record was retained by the court and the petitioner was issued a certificate of citizenship upon the granting of their petition as proof of naturalization. The certificate of citizenship would have been a derivative source created from this original source.</p>
3. a) Information Items, b) Informant, c) Information type
<p>a) Information Items: Salvatore Roccanova was born 6 Aug 1902 in Craco, Matera, Italy. He has a son named Barbato who was born 17 Jun 1932 in New York, New York. b) Informant: Salvatore Roccanova. c) Information type: Primary AND Secondary. The information regarding Salvatore’s birth date and place is secondary information. While it pertains to himself, he does not have first-hand recollection of the date and place of his birth. He has been told this information by someone, likely his parents or other family members. The information regarding the names, dates, and places of birth of Salvatore’s children is primary information. Salvatore would have first-hand knowledge of this information, likely having been present at the birth and involved in the naming process.</p>
4. Evidence
<p>Direct.</p>
5. Analysis
<p>The petition is a collection of facts being pulled from various sources including interviews with the petitioner and witnesses, forms filled out by petitioner prior to the interview, the declaration of intention (filed in the same court three years earlier in this case), and the passenger manifest showing the date of arrival of the immigrant in the United States. While there are many potential sources and informants for the information items contained in the petition, the informant for the relevant information items is Salvatore.</p>

Before 27 Sep 1906, naturalizations took place in a variety of courts: municipal, state, or federal. At the time of this petition in 1934, most naturalizations took place in federal courts.

This record was created and retained by the United States District Court of the Southern District of New York where the naturalization proceedings took place. At the time of the creation of the record, naturalization was a judicial process which took place in a court. When a petition was granted, the court would generate two certificates of citizenship. One of these certificates was sent to the petitioner and one to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), now the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Responsibility for overseeing the naturalization process was transferred to INS, now USCIS, in 1991 and naturalization became an administrative, rather than a judicial, process.

NARA retains copies off records that were created by federal courts, as is the case with the record in question. Copies of the original can be ordered from NARA.

Salvatore's petition was filed on form 2204. This form contained the following information: "name; place of residence; and occupation; date and place of birth; port and date of emigration and immigration and vessel upon which the applicant traveled; date and place of the declaration of intention (if necessary); marital status; name(s), date(s) and place(s) of birth of the applicant's spouse and children; country of former allegiance; knowledge of the English language; time of residence within the United States and within the state of residence; the declaration of intention number; and the certificate of naturalization number. This form also included the affidavits of the petitioner and witnesses. The witnesses gave their names, occupations, and addresses. Finally, the petitioner would date and sign the petition."¹ This form was used by all federal courts at this time.

The petition is a loose paper that is organized in a folder along with Salvatore's arrival certificate and declaration of intention. His is not the only record in the folder. It contains a range of records which are arranged by petition number. The source was viewed in an online collection of microfilm at FamilySearch.org.

The image is clear, and the page is free from tears/rips. The ink does bleed through from the front to the back of the page, but legibility is not affected.

¹ <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/575701>

Source 2: Extract of Salvatore Roccanova's Italian birth record, issued by the town of Craco, Italy. This extract is a loose paper in my personal collection and does not exist in an online format.

1. Citation
Craco, Matera, Italy, "Estratto Dell'Atto di Nascita" [Extract of Birth Certificate], no. 19 (1902), Salvatore Roccanova; certified extract dated 19 October 2022, privately held by Matthew Rhodes, Wayne, New Jersey.
2. Source
Derivative. This is an extract of a birth record which is signed and certified by the current civil registrar in Craco and created 19 Oct 2022.
3. a) Information Items, b) informant, c) information type
a) Information Items: Salvatore Roccanova was born on 6 Aug 1902 in Craco, Matera, Italy to Vincenzo Roccanova and Maria Maddalena Francavilla. b) Informant: Vincenzo Roccanova, father. c) Information type: Primary. The information in the extract is taken from the original record of birth, which can be viewed in an online collection at Family Search. The information was supplied by a person who had first-hand knowledge of the event, in this case the father of the child.
4. Evidence
Direct.
5. Analysis
In Italy, births are only recorded in the commune, or town/village, where the birth occurred. There is no central record keeping for larger geographic areas such as provinces, regions, or national level records. All this to say that the original record held by the commune is the only source the extract is being created from. The original record was created 2 days after the birth in the Town Hall in Craco in on 8 Aug 1902 and can be viewed here: https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99WY-H5NS?i=270&wc=MCRX-CTG%3A349979001%2C350058801%2C350058802&cc=2043814 . The original record was created by the local registrar. The registrar identifies himself and the fact that he was delegated his position by the Mayor of Craco on the 7 th of October of last year, meaning 1901. The record states that Vincenzo Roccanova, father of Salvatore, appeared before the registrar and gave him the information about the birth of his son. The record is signed by the registrar who created it and is retained by commune of Craco in a bound volume containing births in Craco in 1902. Each original form is identical and provides spaces to identify the informant, names of child and parents, sex of child, date, time, and place of the birth and the recording of the birth. There are notes on the side of the form which I cannot entirely make out: 27-8-26 in New York [?].

The extract, which is the source I am analyzing, contains the birth date and place, name of child and parents, sex of the child, and signature of the current registrar and date of issue of this extract.

I requested this signed and certified extract to use for a dual citizenship application. It is a loose paper held in my personal collection. It is in great condition, and everything is legible.

Source 3: The newsletter for the Craco Society.

1. Citation
“Letters of the Heart,” <i>The Craco Society</i> (Newsletter), 2014; viewed online at (https://cracosociety.net/pdf/Craco-Society-Letter-from-the-Heart.pdf : accessed 20 Jan 2023).
2. Source
Authored. The society is using information from a variety of sources and is adding in a narrative for this publication of the newsletter.
3. a) Information items, b) Informant, c) Information type
a) Information Items: Vincenzo Roccano and Maria Maddalena Francavilla are residents of Craco, Italy on 10 Nov 1905 and 1 Jan 1906. Their sons Rocco and Carlo were born in Craco in 1888 and 1889. b) Informant: For residency in Craco in 1905: Maria Maddalena Francavilla. For residency in Craco in 1906: Vincenzo Roccano. For birth of sons Rocco and Carlo: Unknown. c) Information type: Primary for residency. Photos of the letters from Maria Maddalena Francavilla and Vincenzo Roccano are included in the newsletter. Undetermined for birth of sons. There is no source cited for this information.
4. Evidence
Indirect. The evidence of Vincenzo and Maria residing in Craco in 1905 and 1906 as well as their sons being born in Craco in 1888 and 1889 may be combined with other pieces of information from other sources to support a hypothesis for a birthplace and time for Salvatore Roccano.
5. Analysis
The Craco Society is a historical and genealogical society whose aim it is to preserve the history and culture of the commune of Craco and its residents. The society is based in North America and was founded in May 2007 by descendants of Crachesi immigrants. ² The newsletter being analyzed was published in 2014. The personal letters that the newsletter discusses were supplied by a member of the society who is descended from one of the individuals writing and receiving the letters. This member had the letters in their personal collections at the time of the publishing of the article.

² <https://cracosociety.net/Society.php>

There are photos of the letters on each page of the newsletter, and they are also transcribed in both Italian and English.

The photos of letters themselves vary in their legibility. This is due to the handwriting, the condition of the letters, and the quality of the photos. All the letters are written in Italian. The transcriptions are typed and clear, though the organization and placement of the Italian and English translations on the pages of the newsletters is a bit disjointed and difficult to follow.