



La Russo Famiglia



(1800's - Present)

Contents:

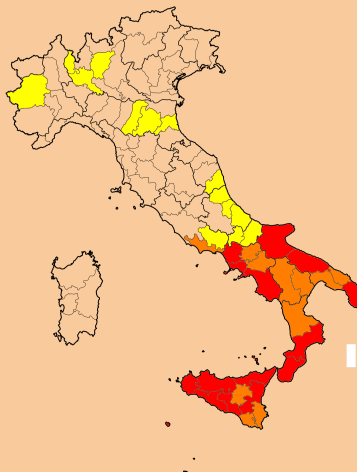
- Birth Charter
- War/Post War Era
- A Man of Power and Respect
- The Catholic Church and their Ties
- Immigration of the Family
- Reconstruction Charter

—

Birth Charter:

Let's take it back to 1893. The birth of Giuseppe Genco Russo, or otherwise known as "The Father". Giuseppe grew up in Caltanissetta, Sicily. His father being a peasant and former beggar, Giuseppe needed to support himself out in the world. Starting young at 11, Giuseppe worked as a "shepherd", tending to small goats and other farm animals of such kind. He had a very humble upbringing and really knew what it was like to have nothing. Over time he found a way to make money off of these goats and sheep. At 14, he started robbing cattle. At the time Giuseppe would be, as they called it, a "Highway Burglar". Giuseppe would find older men who would be moving their cattle, and rob them of their animals, using violence and other methods to do so. Over the coming months, he began to create a name for himself out in the streets of Caltanissetta. To other

thieving criminals, he was known as a "Man of Respect" or a "Man of Honor". Guiseppe would do his robberies until he was 25, which at the time he had to enter the war. The year being 1918, Giuseppe Genco Russo would enter the military for his first and last time.



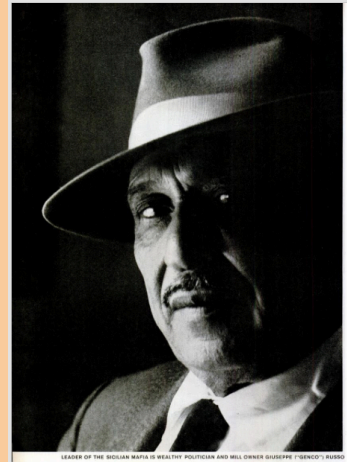
(Italian Mafia Territories)

War/Post War Era:

During his time in WWI, Guiseppe had enough time to gain another reputation among his peers. Before leaving the military at 29, he would be named as "rebellious" and known for "not having patience with discipline".

This would gain the eye of Cosa Nostra. Eventually in a secret unknown location, Russo and many of his associates would be initiated into the life of Cosa Nostra. By 1927, he was marked by local police in a report stating Giuseppe was; "a mafioso that acquired a respectable financial position out of nothing".

After the war, Giuseppe and his associate Giovanni Venizzi would extort local farmers for "protection" money.



They used weapons and violence to scare these peasants. We can see from this that his reputation in Sicily was starting to actually grow and he was starting to put fear into the local farmers and merchants. 2 years following the police report, Giuseppe would find love with an unknown local woman, and would father a son named "Vincenzo 'Vinny' Russo". During all of this, Giuseppe still had yet to claim any real "land" or territory for his "Mafioso" ties. His income at this time would come from feared workers, otherwise known

today as "extortion". Guiseppe would slowly start to gain shares and cuts into local estates and business until his arrest in 1929 by the "Facisist regime of Italy". Guiseppe was arrested for charges ranging from

"theft and extortion to membership in a criminal association", plus a rumoured 11 murders and several attempted murders. Lucky for Guiseppe, he would only stay in jail for a short time before his release due to "insignificant evidence". 2 more years later Guiseppe would be tried and convicted for 7 years on criminal association, which was lowered to 3 years. He had submitted to special surveillance between 1934-1938.

A Man of Power and Respect:

After his problems with authority, Guiseppe was now known by police and friends as "a man of order". This was due to Guiseppe wanting to enter politics at the time and his heavy mafia ties. This seemed to work for Gusiseppe. After WWII, Guiseppe would have 2 major estates under his hand. One being the "Polizzello Estate" where he once herded the goat when he was 11, and the other being The Princes of Lanza Branciforte di Trabia, which was rumored to be 2,000 hectares or 20 km². Both Guiseppe Russo and his fellow mafia friend, Calogero Vizzini, organized "peasant



cooperatives'' during both post-war periods. Here is where we see the 2 families of Caltanissetta begin to form members, power, and territory. These cooperatives maintained their hold over the peasants, and guaranteed their own continued access to the land. This caused the civilians to make a choice, protection and access to their land and farms, or conflict with the bosses, Russo and Vizzini. By 1950, Russo and Vizzini had full control of their region in Sicily, meaning they had full control of the peasants, Landowners and the State. This helped them from their rackets for their families and brought in even more money on their "protection" rackets. The incomes for the 2 families were mainly coming from extortion, protection fees, and real estate. They would use violence and fear to uphold power within their region, causing many to follow their rules.

The Catholic Church and their Ties:

Beginning also in the 1950's, The Russo Family side of Sicily started to gain major ties within the Catholic church. They would use churches and holy areas to discuss business and other secretive discussions, due



to police and other mercenaries not suspecting of them there and gaining power over the religious people. This was huge at the time because 97% of Sicily was practicing Catholicism. Local peasants would often complain

due to Russo's ties to priests, and how the priests were tied to the mafia, the mafia had large amounts of money, which led them to banks which were owned by the priests, giving power to the mafia in the end. This

made many peasants upset as they felt it was unfair to their everyday life. From around 1950-1960's, Russo and his associates would milk and use the Catholic Church to their advantage. Soon enough the church "completely" separated from the mafia, but some say that they still help the mafia today.

Immigration of the Family:

Because of the many immigration of Italians and other western European people to the U.S at the time, along with Italian Police now attempting even more to stop Cosa Nostra, Russo and friends would make sure to have people in positions in the U.S., to keep things "safe". By 1969, Russo would have 3 growing factions of around 5-10 guys in NYC, Philadelphia and Miami. Russo also had Vizzini's men working for his crews, helping out

when needed. Out in New York City, Russo's main faction or "Mother Family" would be ran by his son Vincenzo

Russo. Known as "Vinny Shacks", Vinny ran a crew of 10 guys. He had 2 Captains and around 8 soldiers. Vinny would start to make ties in



NYC to many of the construction crews due to his skills as a young man. He would fund companies needing work with the money from the family. He also would make sure his new company name "Russo's and Sons" was on each construction site. In 1972, Russo's and Sons

Construction Inc officially opened for business to the public eye. This opened up even more money for Guiseppe back home. Vinny and his crew were bringing in around \$300k a week, which in the 70's was an insane amount.

The Russo Family in NYC was doing very well up until 1976. Sadly, Guiseppe Russo would pass away peacefully on March 18th, 1976 from pulmonary emphysema. His son

"Vinny Sacks" was then named Don or boss of the La Russo Famiglia.

Reconstruction Charter:

Due to the death of his father, Vinny was now under much pressure being named Don of the family. With Calogero Vizzini's sons and their crew's slowly being merged with La Russo Famiglia, a meeting was held in Palermo to decide who would take over what areas. At this sit down were all the major mafia heads at the time. Vinny Russo would have a sit down in 1981 with 4 major American Don's and 2 Major Sicilian Don's. They split up the areas in Sicily, giving many of the remaining Russo estates to other factions and clans.

They gave Vinny a 3% cut of all rackets in his hometown, Caltanissetta, due to him being the son of Guiseppe. This helped ease Vinny's emotions as he was

upset over losing that territory. In exchange, La Russo Famiglia Empire was split up into 2 major families, The Russo Famiglia and The Vizzini Famiglia. These were the 2 blood lines of La Russo Famiglia. The Vizzini side mostly stayed in Sicily, helping rackets and other smaller factions grow. The Russo side would control their NY territories with the Vizzini famiglia backing them and funding them back in the old country. By 1981, Vincenzo "Vinny Sacks" Russo would be wacked by an unknown hitman in the streets of Little Sicily. This put Vito Russo, his 2nd cousin, at current Don. Back in the old country they had a sit down that would make Vito the current Don, also giving him all family businesses in NYC. Vito was from Sicily so many of the soldiers needed to gain trust with the new don. In 1983, 2 soldiers from the Russo Family were arrested on extortion and racketeering charges after they were caught beating a local shopkeeper by a local officer. The 2 men would cooperate with the feds and speak on family business to police. This put the Russo Family on

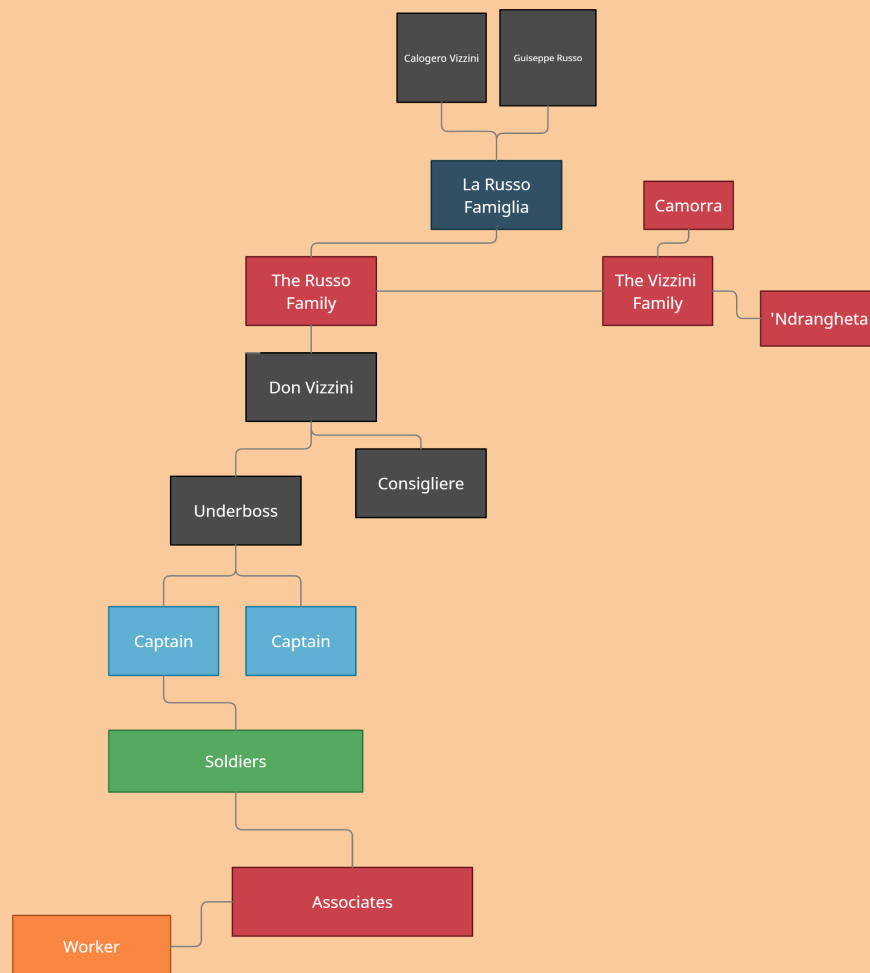
the map, and was marked at having over 10 made men, 2 captains, and proof that Vito Russo was the acting boss or at least giving orders of "The Russo-Vizzini Crime Organization". Back home this caused issues and made the old country famiglia put a new acting boss into position, hoping to ease up police tensions with Vito. Carmine Vizzini (Grandson of Calogero Vizzini,32) would be placed as acting boss of The Russo Family. Vito would be sent back to the old country, where he was never seen again. Present day (1986) It is thought that Carmine Vizzini is still the reputed boss of The Russo Family. It's rumored his member numbers are low after the power change, and a struggle for power is putting the family at its early roots.

Break Down of Families:

As stated before La Russo Famiglia is split up into 2 organized families. One is a crime organization while

the other is more of a political presence. The Russo Family, based in NYC, is made up of 10+ made men and captains. They produce money through illegal rackets to then bring a cut back home in Sicily. This is where the Vizzini Family comes in. The Vizzini Family is a more legit and political organization. Carmine Vizinni is the NYC Don. His father was a large political figure in Sicily back in the day. Because of his family's history, his name and bloodline are deemed royal in their section of Sicily. They provide the NYC family with money and protection when needed, this is their only involvement in crime. On the secret side, The Vizzini Family also will send out soldiers to NYC to wack or claim a "hit", only when deemed necessary by Carmine Vizzini. The street boss of the NYC family is yet to be discovered. The Vizzini also funds other crime organizations in Italy (shown below). Hopefully this breaks down the family ties/power structure.

Family Tree



(Created by Sharkzy)