

# 9/29/08 Email from my father, Rex Franciotti, to me, explaining the story.

Dear Robert,

## **First some important background information**

My father owned a ladies' hat store where his employees manufactured ladies' hats as a subcontractor for several factories located in Manhattan. He employed a friend who knew how to design and create hat samples and price them. My father also employed a dozen or so women, four of these worked in the shop located on 31st Avenue Astoria under the elevated train, known as the BMT line and the rest of the employees worked at home. Dad would buy all the supplies like felt, beads, pins, needle, thread, etc. and he would deliver the raw materials to the home-workers. Dad would negotiate the contracts and deliver the finished products to the factories.

## **Second how the story began**

As part of his business activities my father ran into a number of different people, many were salesmen. One day one particularly annoying salesman, who had been hounding him to buy a ticket on an Irish horse race, finally got dad to relent and bought one. Soon he was notified by mail that his ticket had been assigned by lottery to a horse name Laureate II. A few days later Dad was confronted by a number of offers to buy his ticket, some came by phone calls and some by telegrams. At this point Dad began to realize that by luck he possessed a valuable ticket. Many advised him to sell, but fortunately there was one close friend who convinced him to hold on and trust to luck.

## **Third the race**

We listened to the race on the radio and we were delighted to find that his horse came in third. A few days later, we saw the race in a movie theater and it was obvious that the first and third horse blocked Laureate II from going on to a better finish.

## **The end of the story**

Dad sailed to Ireland and arranged to transfer the funds, \$50,000 for third place, to a bank in London. When he returned, he and my mother packed our clothes and arranged to sail the family to Italy. Surprisingly some of our relatives suddenly appeared on our doorstep looking for a handout from newly rich relative, my father had all he could do to keep them from molesting us. We made the trip to Italy because he wanted my brother and me to get a good education, but the real reason

was to avoid paying the tax on the winnings. When we arrived in Italy one of our relatives volunteered to fill out the many forms required. Unfortunately the relative mistakenly registered my brother as being older than his correct age. We lived in Rome for three years; my brother and I were enrolled in a private school. We lived in a very large, rented, richly furnished mansion on one of the hills of Rome, and we enjoyed a beautiful life, with maids and a chauffeur. Then one day in 1939 with Italy part of the AXIS at war with England, France, Poland, etc..., my brother was notified that he was being drafted in the Italian Army, even though he was only fifteen years old. So my parents packed everything in a hurry and we managed to sail on one of the last ocean liners sailing back to New York City. At the arrival in NY harbor, while we were waiting for our luggage to join us, some government officials approached my father. They were from the Tax Department notifying my father that he owed a tax on the Irish Sweepstake winnings, plus a sizable penalty for tax evasion for the past three years, plus a penalty for illegal gambling, since they did not approve of participating in the unrecognized Sweepstakes race.

It was not a good ending to the story, but we were all happy to be back home in the USA, and with vivid memories of a glorious three year stay in Rome. This wound up being a long story, but as I wrote this I kept remembering and reliving the wonderful experiences. Of course, we met many of our Italian relatives and we made many new friends. There are so many stories of the experiences in school and the different social life that I would like to describe. If I had the time I could fill a book with all the memories that still clutter up my mind.

Dad