

## MALTESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Maltese Historical Society is planning on writing a book on the immigration experiences of the Maltese community in the San Francisco Bay Area. A major part of the book will be the stories told by the immigrants themselves or by their children or descendants. If you are interested in writing a story to be included in the book, we are now accepting submissions. Your name will be credited as the author of your submission. Your completed story can be sent by email to [charlesvella@comcast.net](mailto:charlesvella@comcast.net) or as a paper copy to Mona Vella Nicholas at 2565 Trenton Drive, San Bruno, CA 94066. We look forward to reading your immigration stories.

Below you will find some prompts which may help you with writing your story. Please choose only one of these prompts to write about. Each story should be 1-2 pages in length. Give as many details as possible. Do not limit yourself to the questions suggested in each prompt.

### PROMPTS FOR IMMIGRATION STORIES

- 1) Describe your immigration voyage. Include dates of departure from Malta and arrival in the U.S.; types of transportation (ship, airplane, train); point of entry in the U.S.; experiences en route.  
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- 2) Culture shock: What differences did you encounter between life in Malta and life in the U.S. (food, language, people, holidays, lifestyle, etc.)?
- 3) Becoming an American citizen: What reasons did you have for wanting to become a citizen? What did you have to do to prepare for citizenship? What was the citizenship ceremony like?
- 4) Living Conditions: Where did you live when you first came to the Bay Area? Did you live in San Francisco? What part of the city? Did you live with another family? A relative? Did you live in an apartment? A house? What was your living arrangement like? How did it compare to your living arrangement in Malta (stairs, hot water, bathing facilities, cooking facilities, sleeping arrangements, etc.)? How did your living arrangements change over the years (renting a house for just your family, buying a home, moving to a different neighborhood, etc.)?
- 5) Making a living: What was your occupation in Malta? What was your occupation in the U.S.? How were they alike/different? What in Malta prepared you for the job you found in the U.S.? Did you have to learn any new skills to help you get a job in the U.S.? Were they on-the-job skills or did they require outside training? How did income here compare to Malta? How well did your income provide for your family here compared to your income in Malta (cost of living)? Were certain things in America a necessity which were not a necessity in Malta (a car, for example)? Why? What about opportunities for advancement or for starting your own

business? What were the differences for women working outside the home in Malta and America? If you are female, did you work outside the home once you arrived in America?

- 6) Religious differences: What were religious practices like in Malta? How important was religion in the daily life of the Maltese society in general? Did any of these practices transfer into your new life in America? What was the same? What was different?
- 7) Education: If you started school in Malta but came to America before you were able to finish your education there, compare the two experiences. What was the same? What was different? How well were you able to blend in with American students? Was language a barrier? Was there any difference between how far you went in your education here and how far you think you would have gone had you stayed in Malta? How did your education affect your choice of career? Did you have a specific school experience which would make a good story?
- 8) If you were born here, what was it like being the child of immigrant Maltese parents? Did your parents speak Maltese at home? Did your family practice any customs which your parents had practiced in Malta? Did your family socialize with other Maltese families? How (visits, religious events, social activities, etc.)? Did your family socialize with American families? What about you? Were your friends mostly Maltese, American, or a mixture of both?
- 9) Do you have an interesting little anecdote which has nothing to do with any of the above suggestions but which may be of interest to a reader and which are associated in some way with being an immigrant or the child of an immigrant? The incident may be funny, sad, surprising, educational, etc.