

Document #2: ITALIAN AMERICAN

Rocco Boffilo, from Calabria, explained why he decided to emigrate.

Things go badly here. Many *Contadina* [peasants] here do not eat bread. They live on potatoes and beans. The salaries have increased, that is true, but one can only find work three or four months out of the year. Why do so many go to America? Because they are better off there. The work here, in comparison, is too much to bear.

Up at sunrise, carrying your tools while walking several kilometers to the fields and then returning during the darkness in the evening, totally exhausted: that is the life we live here. And add to that a long, frigid winter season.

When someone returns from America to tell us that the wages are superior and that there are fewer discomforts, many of the men cannot resist the temptation to go and find out for themselves.

Source: Hoobler, Dorothy and Thomas. The Family Album series. New York: Oxford Press, 1994