ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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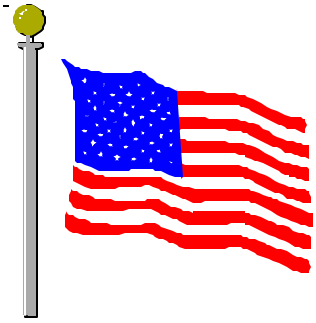

President's Message

Now that the holidays are over, many of us are back into some serious research. To implement this, Long Island area residents should mark their calendars to attend the Long Island Genealogy Seminar on April 8 at Stony Brook University. This conference is co-sponsored by the IGG and other federation member organizations. IGG members, **Joanne Heffernan** and **Anthony DiBartolo** will be among the speakers at the conference. Watch your mail for your registration booklet, or consult our website for further information and registration material.

Our website has become an invaluable tool for all genealogical researchers, thanks to **John Martino** and his team of volunteers. If you haven't visited our website lately, run to your nearest computer and type in our website address You will be amazed at the resources you will find. We have been receiving many contributions from genealogists throughout the USA who are grateful for our work. We appreciate these donations which will help us continue to add to our databases. Please continue these donations.

Our next meeting will feature member **Phil Aievoli** who will speak about his research in Italy. I look forward to seeing you all at the Bethpage Library on February 11th.

Angela LaGiglia

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A Short Story

Tony Annicelli

During the search for my roots, of all the bits and pieces of information that I have obtained thus far, the most interesting and informative is my greatgrandfather, Pietro Barasso's, discharge papers from the Italian army.

His entire military history is hand written on the back of the discharge document.Because of the age and flowery penmanship, it took a while for me to find someone that could translate it. I finally found Juliet Viola at jviola@best.com, and she did an excellent job.

My great grandfather was the son of Alessio Barasso and Vencenza Blasi. He was born in 1835 and at the age of 22 enlisted in the Army of Two Sicilys for a term of eight years as a substitute volunteer for a Pasquale Marino Giannino for a term of eight years. His civilian occupation was shoemaker. He enlisted in Mirabella, province of Avellino and was posted to northern Italy with the 1st Regiment of Piacenza Hussars (cavalry) in 1857. That army was eventually disbanded and became the Bourbon Army.

In 1862, he was discharged after being kicked in the stomach and he developed slow peritonitis, which eventually killed him. It doesn't say whether a horse or person kicked him, but the family story is that it was a horse. Fortunately for me, before he died, he married and had a daughter Rosaria Barasso, who married my grandfather Gennaro Ianniciello.

Editor's Note: The above article was submitted by one of our own members. If you have an article that might be of interest to other of our members, please email it to me at Pignola@aol.com

Quote Of The Day

"The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity." --- Ellen Parr

ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

P. O. Box 626
Bethpage, New York 11714-0626

President	Angela LaGiglia
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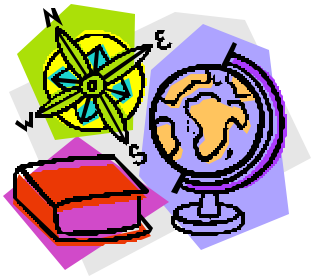
Profiles from the Four Corners

Michael S. Genovese



Our profile this month is **Grace A. Lancieri Olivo**, a resident of Atlantic City, New Jersey. Grace is originally a Long Islander, grew up in Queens and then moved to North Bellmore when she was eleven, where her brother still lives. She has been married 29 years to Leo, a casino supervisor; they have two children: Frank, 27, [who teaches Italian and has lived in Italy] and Mary, 24. Grace is the editor of the *Comunes of Italy* which is published to promote Italian genealogy and culture through awareness, research, lecturing, instruction and the preservation and understanding of genealogical and historical research. The magazine is really a gem. Each issue focuses on one particular province in Italy.

Grace has been an active member of IGG for the past 9 years. She states that in the mid-1990s, IGG was one of the few organizations that offered support and assistance to those pursuing their Italian ancestry. Her passion for "her Italian roots" has always been part of her life, but the realization of just how important it was to her become very clear when her last grandparent, Grace Grande, died in 1990. Grace Olivo was very close to her paternal grandparent, and now that connection, that wonderful person who had roots, customs, recipes and family stories from Bari had gone. It was this event that triggered her quest to know about her Italian roots. Grace knew she had roots in Sicily [Misilmeri & Ventimigilia di Sicilia] and Puglia [Bitetto, Spinazzola and Minervino Murge] and eventually discovered that her Barese family had roots in Basilicata [Tito and Picerno].

When she joined IGG in 1997, a bit of information in one of our newsletters was an e-mail list started by Steve Saviello which was called Comunes of Italy. Steve had simply started to facilitate networking among Italian-Americans with roots in various communes in Italy. Grace quickly joined this listing and credits this networking for her initial genealogical thrust. Through this networking, Grace obtained a list of Lancieri's and began writing letters to them hoping to make family connections. She also used the local LDS Family History Center extensively. Ultimately, it was her constant probing and letter writing that made a difference. Then one day, someone contacted her from Italy and said, "I'm your cousin," and this started Grace's journey to the past, culminating in a trip to Italy in 1999.

In the November-December 2005 issue of Comunes of Italy, Grace she writes about her 1999 trek with her two cousins to her roots in Tito, near Potenza, to learn about her Grandpa Lancieri. Tito was the town where the first Lancieri, probably a direct ancestor of Grace, built his home over 500 years ago. The Lancieri ancestors have lived in Tito since the 1500s, and now Grace and her two cousins were able to actually visit the Palazzo Lancieri. Grace was amazed that above the doorway of the building was the Lancieri coat-of-arms well familiar to them. In fact, she and her cousins quickly discovered that the homes on both sides of the street were all Lancieri homes. A close up of the stone over the main entrance indicated in Latin that the palazzo was built in 1563 by Angelus Antonius Lancieri.

Grace's journey to the past has been very successful. She is so proud that this past Christmas two young men came to America from her Barese's grandmother's hometown of Bitetto. She also recently sponsored the filming of a DVD of the present and past of her maternal grandmother's town, Ventimiglia di Sicilia in Palermo Province.

In addition to being the editor of this wonderful magazine, *Comunes of Italy*, Grace chairs the New Jersey Commission for Social Justice, one of the arms of the Order of the Sons of Italy. The Commission is involved in positive imagery of the Italian-American and our roots. In her "spare" time, she operates her own wholesale business in Atlantic City, and is the New Jersey distributor for Alter Ego Salon Hair Products, which are imported from northern Italy.

When interviewing her, I was so impressed with her enthusiasm and energy. Her passion and dedication to sharing her Italian culture and genealogy is matched by her knowledge of these

issues as well. For those interested in learning more about the life and culture of Basilicata, she highly recommends reading *Seasons in Basilicata* by David Yeadon. Grace also reports that in March of this year, the Down Jersey Folklife Center in Wheaton Village, New Jersey will have an exhibit on Italian Folk Art and Crafts entitled "Artigianato Popolare." Wheaton's focus on Italy will continue throughout 2006.

To contact Grace: graceo@comcast.net
www.italianancestry.com/coi

Comunes of Italy is published six times a year. The subscription price for ONE YEAR (6 issues) is $25.00 US in the USA, $30 to Canada, and $45 to other foreign destinations. To subscribe, send a check or money order, payable to "L & G, Inc" to: Comunes of Italy, 2709 Artic Avenue, Atlantic City, NJ 08401.

(Grace's interview is one of a series of continuing articles about members who do not live in the immediate New York metropolitan area. If you fall into this category and would like to tell us about yourself and your research, write to Michael S. Genovese, IGG Membership Profiles, 50 Daisy Avenue, Floral Park, New York 11001 or e-mail your story as a Word attachment to mikegino@aol.com We reserve the right to edit to fit space limitations.)

Genealogy

Genealogy begins as an interest,
Becomes a hobby;
Continues as an avocation,
Takes over as an obsession,
And in its last stages,
Is an incurable disease.

--Author Unknown

Important for February IGG Newsletter

William S. Gimello

The Italian Genealogical Group will no longer accept any future orders for Italian Regional Emblems effective January 14, 2006.

Thousands Dead in Italian Earthquake

Disaster Grows in Magnitude With Each Succeeding Report.
In Messina Alone It Is Stated That There Are 50,000 Victims
Vandalism of the Worst Kind Has Broken Out Martial Law Declared.

Rome, Dec. 29 1908--South Italy and the Island of Sicily have been visited by an appalling calamity, the extent of which cannot yet be grasped. An earthquake yesterday morning wrecked city after city and obliterated smaller towns and villages without number. Then a tidal wave swept along the Strait of Messina and added to the horror, drowning the people in their helplessness and panic. Fire came to complete the work of destruction. Flames broke out in the devastated cities and countless numbers of the wounded men, women and children were burned to death.

An adequate estimate of the total casualties is as yet impossible but the Rome Tribuna places the number at somewhere between 60,000 and 70,000. The horrors and destructiveness of this visitation probably will exceed that of any earthquake in Italy since 1783, when 40,000 persons perished at Messina alone.

Reports of heavy loss of life are coming in every hour from city and town and nearly every village in the stricken zone, and the story in its detail has only begun to be told. The horror grows as further reports come in.

Messina has been fire swept. The dead there alone will run into the tens of thousands. Reggio is a sepulchre of the dead. Cantania suffered heavily. Mount Etna, the volcano on the Island of Sicily, is active. The detonations are reverberating over Cantania and add to the terror. Volumes of smoke are pouring from the crater. . . .

The Syracuse Herald (Syracuse, New York), 29 December 1908, page 1

Guest Speaker January Meeting

June DeLalio, IGG founder, was introduced to the members by President **Angela LaGiglia**. The topic was Reading Italian Civil Records.

June reminded us that the backbone of Italian genealogical study still remains the images from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints Library. While we can write to the various Italian civil authorities, often what we get back is minimal and sometimes hardly more than what we gave them! Fortunately, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is continuing to make more Italian records available to us.

June recognized that those attending the meeting included the experienced researchers who can read these records well, others for whom all this is new and the rest being somewhere in between. She hoped that the examples used and the discussion would help everyone get more out of Italian records.

The first record presented was a Sicilian birth record from 1829. For those in the group who never had seen one before, it must have been a shock. The condition of the document, its age, and the 19th century Italian handwriting combined to make it look impossible to read! June, however, said that if we know about 10 to 20 key words, we can begin to find the needed information within the document.

"Atti di Nascita" identifies the document as a birth record. The word *"L'anno"* (year) at the beginning of the document tells us that a date will follow, i.e. year, day and month BUT remember this refers only to the date of the registration of the birth and not the actual birth date!

"Avanti Noi" (before us) tells you that you next will read the name of the official who recorded the information. Thereafter, the most important words in the document will follow *è comparso"* (appeared). The name after those words tells you who appeared to register the birth. In most cases, it will be the father of the baby, but in some cases it was common for a midwife *[levatrice]* to do the reporting.

In the middle of the document the date of the birth is written, and the name of the mother and her age follows. Later in the document it will state if the child is a boy or girl, *maschile* or *fanciulla,* in case you are not sure of the sex of the child due to handwriting problems.

Two other important words June mentioned are *"come sopra"* (as above), which is often found in documents as they did not want to repeat information that was given above. Also two witnesses to the registration are listed, but they are usually not relatives.

The right side of the document, between the years 1819 to 1865, was for the recording of the baptism of the child. The priest returned the document to the Town Hall after baptism so that the baptism could be recorded in the Birth Registers. When finding a large amount of records without an index, June suggested that you can go through the documents quickly by looking 2/3 down the right side of the page (referring to the baptism) where the full name of the child is given. June pointed out that Italian vital records after 1865 were handwritten for a period of up to ten years before the new government of Italy came out with printed forms.

After viewing other birth records, we now turned our attention to the marriage record. For the years 1819 to 1865, the record is called the *Solenne Promessa di Celebrare Matrimonio*. After 1865, all vital records make no reference to the Church.

In later records, many of the marriage records and some births, refer to the residence of the persons involved. By finding and keeping these addresses, you can learn a lot about the family and their place of residence in the town. While some street names have changed over the years, the majority of them have not, and June suggested using the Internet maps to find out where they are located in the town. The most important things to look for in marriage records, particularly the long forms from before 1865, is the list of documents the bridal couple had to bring to the Town Hall. They may be only the birth records of the couple, but often the couple also had to bring many others because of the deaths of parents, grandparents, and even former spouses. Some marriage records may be a treasure trove of information. Sometimes copies of these papers can be found on microfilm listed as "Allegati."

Finally, the death records were looked at. They have changed little over the years. The names of the people at the beginning of the document are witnesses. June stressed that you have to look for the words *è morto* (for a male) or *è morta* (female) in about the middle of the document. Thereafter is the name of the person who died, his or her age and the name of his or her spouse, if any. Just before the words *è morto* is the actual date of death.

June also stressed that there are many other kinds of records that can be used to fill out the story of your family after you have used the vital records. Some of them may be hard to find or use, but they do exist and should be looked for in fleshing out your family's story.

June also mentioned the following types of records: Military, Census, *Atti diversi* (records of still born and out of town deaths), and citizenship records.

Jump Drive Back-up

Tony Sasso

I recently bought a 1 gigabyte jump drive with the idea of using it to transport data from one computer to another (I have several computers). After owning it for a month I realized that it could also be used as a back up device for my Family Tree Maker file which is nearly 500 megabytes.

After using this drive for a while, I realized I could use a larger one to back up all my family files (including scanned documents and photos) and I picked up a 4 gigabyte jump drive that was on sale.

For the serious computer geek, there is also another little storage device I just purchased. I bought a new 80-gig external drive. This drive is about the size of a deck of playing cards. With this device, the entire storage of my desktop computer was backed-up and I keep the device in the bag for my laptop. The cost of this item was $130.

These drives, due to their compact size, make for easy transportation of data. If you check your weekly local flyers for places such as Staples and OfficeMax, you may be able to pick one up at a very good price. My 1 gig drive cost me about $55, and the 4-gig drive was $90.

Italians Use Revolvers

Resented John McGeary's
Criticism On Their Music
One Bullet Hit McGreary On The Left Side
And Lodged Against A Rib-Six Arrests

There was the usual early Sunday morning row in the eastern district Italian colony yesterday, and as a result the Ewen Street police court was filled with Italians this morning. Tony Chifo and James Chifo of 73 Kingsland Avenue and Benjamin Mucciaclaro of 85 Withers Street, three of the six Italians arrested, were held by Police Justice Lemon on a charge of assault in the second degree. The other three prisoners, Joseph Geaito and Charles Geaito of 110 Frost Street, were remanded for trial on a charge of interfering with a policeman.

Yesterday's fight occurred at Frost and Leonard Streets. Several Italians were serenading a fellow countryman when John McGeary of 382 Leonard Street happened along, accompanied by to or three friends. They shouted at the Italians, it is alleged, and yelled that the serenade was no credit to the neighborhood. The Italians dropped the accordions which they were playing and drew revolvers. McGeary and his friends took to their heels, but before they were able to get around the corner the Italians had discharged at least a half dozen shots. One of the bullets entered McGeary's side just above the heart, and for the time it was thought that he had been seriously hurt. An ambulance was summoned from St. Catharine's hospital, and when the doctor arrived he said that McGreary was only slightly injured and that the bullet had only penetrated the skin and then lodged against a rib.

Policeman Anthony was attracted to the scene of the shooting by the report of the shots, and he tried to place the Italians under arrest. He was unable to do so alone, but when other officers arrived from the nineteenth precinct station house, five of the six prisoners were caught and locked up. Mucciaciaro was not arrested until last night. In the court this morning the Italians under arrest all pleaded not guilty and the cases were adjourned.

(Brooklyn Daily Eagle dated 1896 July 13.

Changing Computers

Juliana Smith

You'd think I'd know better. Actually I did, but the excitement of my new computer got the best of me. For the first time in about five years, I had a brand new computer of my own. It's cute and sleek and I couldn't wait to start using it. I opened the box dancing around like a kid in a candy shop. I powered up and it struck me---there's no data on it. All my "stuff" is on my old beast.

A feeling of dread began to creep in as I set my new computer aside and started contemplating how to move all my precious stuff, to this new machine. I decided on a plan and ran with it. (After all, I stayed at a Holiday Inn Express last night.) I moved documents, pictures, emails, and family history files. I sat down to work and realized that I hadn't moved all my settings. Oops.

While it isn't a complete disaster, it's going to take me some time to get things back to the way I'm used to. I didn't completely mess things up, but I did forget a few things, and after I backtracked and did some research I found there was lots of help available to me, had I just taken the time to do a little more research. Since we'll all probably find ourselves in this predicament at one time or another, I thought I'd share some things that worked for me--and a few lessons I learned the hard way.

Before You Move

Before you begin moving files around, there are some things you'll want to take care of first. I went through all of my folders and did some housekeeping. Files I just wanted archived I put in a separate folder so that I wouldn't have to clutter my new computer with them. The "Recycle Bin" also got a real workout that day as I deleted files I no longer needed. (This was a huge step forward for me since I am an electronic packrat!)

I made a list of the files I would need on the new computer so that when it came time to transfer, I would not forget anything. The only casualty was my favorites list. Years ago (probably with my last computer change) I backed up my favorites in with "My Documents." Thinking this was my current file, I moved that one and left my good list, so I'm going to have to rearrange things again so I can retrieve it. I'm going try to hold off for a couple days though to see if it I left anything else important behind. That way, I'll only have to do it once.

An important precaution I took was to completely scan my computer for viruses before I moved anything. While I have my computer set to scan automatically every week, I did an extra scan before I began to make sure everything was still clean. I don't want any nasty bugs on my new baby!

You'll also want to install your security and anti-virus program and on the new computer right away. Make sure your new machine also has the latest security patches as well.

Do Your Homework

After I realized my predicament, I did a quick Google search for the terms:
"new computer move files"

Look at that--a ton of articles telling me how to move my data properly. (I can hear my dad now, "If all else fails, follow directions." Someday I'll learn that lesson!) Here are a few articles I found. (There were quite a few others as well.)

Moving Files and Settings to a New PC (Microsoft.com)
www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/setup/getstarted/bott_fstw.mspx

An Easier Move to a New Computer (PCWorld.com)
www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,54664,00.asp

I highly recommend performing a similar search, possibly also including the name of your operating system before you begin your transfer. There are a number of options available and most of the articles I found were very thorough in explaining how to take advantage of them. Having this information in advance will help you to choose the option that works best for you and your computer set up.

If you have looked at the options and think you'd have better luck performing surgery on yourself, maybe it's time to seek professional help.

Many office supply stores and computer services will transfer your data for you.

To Burn or Not to Burn

Most of the articles I found recommend networking the computers or connecting them via a crossover cable. A few mentioned burning the data to a CD or DVD and moving it that way. I tried that first thinking that the DVD would also serve as my current backup.

Fortunately, before I disconnected everything, I obeyed the cardinal rule of back-up. I checked the DVD to make sure it worked. As it turned out, I couldn't open the files. The jury is still out on what is causing the problem, so I went to another alternative I had open to me--backing up my data on an external hard drive that I have connected. Another alternative might be moving the data to an online data hosting.

Now Where did I Put that Disk?

While transferring files, it's recommended that you only move the data files, and reinstall any programs from the original installation disks (or in some cases, through the software provider's website). I kept a separate box with the programs I have on my computer, so this step fortunately wasn't that difficult.

If you are upgrading to a new operating system, it's important to check and make sure the programs you have are compatible. In some cases, you may find that you need to upgrade the program.

Oh What a Tangled Web We Weave...

Once I had all my ducks in a row, it was time to switch the connections. As I pulled out my old desktop with all its connections, the USB port hub and all the peripherals I have attached, I was tempted to just shove it all back. The mass of gnarled and tangled wires actually growled at me as I attempted to separate them.

While it's nice that most computer cords have those color coded ports that match where they need to be plugged into the computer, I'm convinced they should follow suit with the rest of the cord. It would make it much simpler to follow along and find where it's plugged in to my surge protector. (Note to self: Call Bill Gates with my brilliant idea.)

For now, to make things simpler, I hit the office supply store. There are quite a few gadgets to help you gain control over the cable beast. I chose some Velcro bands that wrap around the cords to keep them orderly. Labels came in handy, I labeled the ends of the cords so that I could distinguish them.

What Now?

Once you've moved everything, what do you do with your old dinosaur? If your old machine had been giving you problems, you might be tempted (as I was) to take it to the highest point in your house and throw it out the window, seeing how far you can scatter the debris. As enjoyable as this might be, it is not the recommended approach.

First, you'll want to make sure you've gotten all the files you need. Keep it handy until you're sure nothing was missed.

Once you've decided that you truly have everything and are tired of it taking up space, you'll want to scrub any sensitive data from it. You don't want your personal information in the hands of some stranger. There is an article on wiping data off your computer at PCWorld (www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,110338,00.asp) that recommends several programs.

When you're ready to dispose of it, consider donating it or recycling it in some fashion. If you decide to pitch it, check with your local sanitation department. Because computers contain hazardous materials, your city may have its own guidelines for disposing of them.

A Happy Ending

I have learned quite a bit from this switch, and am slowly but surely getting back in the swing of things. As I reset a lot of things, I am finding better ways to organize my files. As I go through my family history files, I am finding some items that were misfiled and I'm hopeful that once I get through the transition and can sit and review things, my new computer will help me make some new discoveries.

Juliana Smith is the editor of the "Ancestry Daily News" and author of "The Ancestry Family Historian's Address Book." Juliana can be reached by e-mail at ADNeditor@ancestry.com, but she regrets that she is unable to assist with personal research. *Copyright 2005, MyFamily.com.*

Alternative Service Records

George C. Miller

Fire is certainly the bane of genealogists. I often think about what research progress I could have made if the 1890 U.S. Federal Census had not been lost in the Commerce Department building fire on 10 January 1921 and to water damage. Courthouses destroyed by fire during the U.S. Civil War, either by troops or by citizens wishing to prevent opposing troops gaining access to records, also have stymied my research.

Another catastrophic fire occurred on 12 July 1973 in St. Louis, Missouri, at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Between 16 and 18 million official military pension records were destroyed and many more were damaged. For many of us whose ancestors and relatives served in the United States Army and Air Force in the 20th century, the loss is horrendous. It is estimated that 80% of the records for Army personnel discharged from 1 November 1912 to 1 January 1960, and 75% of the Air Force personnel records for personnel discharged from 25 September 1947 to 1 January 1964 (with names alphabetically after Hubbard, James E.) were lost.

The records from World War II service can be difficult to replace, but there are alternative records used by the NPRC to reconstruct general information and to respond to inquiries. In "Along Those Lines . . ." this week, I want to address some of the alternatives we have that can help us prove basic service and to possibly work around the lost records.

Valuable Discharge Papers

Military discharge papers have always been important records for the veteran. This is perhaps most true for those who served during World War II because of the veterans' benefits that were made available. The G.I. Bill passed by the U.S.Congress provided educational loans, home loans, surviving spouse and dependents benefits, and death and burial benefits, among other things. Personnel were advised at the time of their discharge to take their discharge papers to their county courthouse and have them recorded there. That way, in the event of their loss, there would be records on file that could help to obtain copies or that could be used as references. Therefore, if you cannot locate the original discharge papers of the veteran you are researching, and the NPRC fire destroyed their personnel service records file, a contact with the courthouse may provide you with an excellent substitute.

NPRC's Alternative Records

The NPRC tries diligently to respond to requests for proof of service, even when the original documents were lost in the fire. One of the best alternative sources they use is a collection of approximately 19 million final pay vouchers. These records are not available to the public for research and review. They do, however, provide the NPRC with the name of the service personnel, his or her service number, the dates of service, and branch and character of service. These are the most critical service data elements needed for the reconstruction process. With these and other organizational records such as enlistment ledgers (see below), service number indexes, and other records in the possession of NARA, the NPRC can usually verify military service and provide a Certification of Military Service. This Certification can be used for any purpose for which the original discharge document was used, including the application for veterans' benefits.

In addition, the NPRC obtained a collection of computer tape files containing medical treatment-related information. The subjects of the records were active duty Army and Army Air Corps personnel in service between 1942 and 1945. In addition, active duty Army personnel who served between 1950 and 1954 and a limited number of Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and military cadet personnel for the same period (about 5% of the 1950-54 file) are included. Again, these records are not accessible by the public but it is important to know that the NPRC does have and does use these and other alternative record types to help reconstruct a record of military service. For information on requesting records from the NPRC, see their website.

World War II Army Enlistment Records

The U.S. Army World War II Enlistment Records (1938-1946) are in the possession of the National Archives and Records Administration

(NARA) and are part of their Record Group 64. This series contains records of approximately 9 million men and women who enlisted in the United States Army between 1938 and 1946, including the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and the Enlisted Reserve Corps. The series does not include records for Army officers, members of other military services, or enlistments from other time periods.

Ancestry.com added the searchable database of World War II Enlistment Records to its collection in November, and it can be an excellent source of information to verify the actual enlistment. For example, I located the enlistment record for one of my uncles, Joe B. Mason in the database. It confirms his year of birth as 1914, his state of nativity (North Carolina), his place of residence at that time, his enlistment date (4 December 1942), and his place of enlistment (Camp Croft, South Carolina). It indicates that he enlisted as a private, was married, had 4 years of college education, was 72" tall, and weighed 137 pounds. Since his military personnel file was among those lost in the 1973 file, this is one alternative record that can be used to confirm the beginning of his service.

World War II Prisoner of War Records

NARA also has a collection of World War II prisoner of war records originally compiled from records and reports of the International Red Cross. There is information about approximately 140,000 U.S. officers and soldiers, as well as U.S. and some Allied civilians who were prisoners of war (POWs) during World War II. This period specifically covers 7 Dec 1941 through 19 Nov 1946.

Ancestry.com has recently added a searchable database of these POW records. The information includes the name of the person, his/her residence state, the date of the report, the person's rank (grade), service branch and arm/division, area served, detaining country and a number designating the holding camp, and the person's status.

WWI, WWII, and Korean War Casualty Listings

Another recent database added at Ancestry.com is the World War I. World War II, and Korean War Casualty Listings. The record for PFC William C. Smith, serial number 32771707, served in the 115th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division. His date of death is listed as 15 August 1944 and his burial location is shown to be the Cambridge American Cemetery in Cambridge, England, in Plot E, Row 2, and Grave 58. He was awarded the Purple Heart.

A complementary resource for casualties buried overseas is the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) website. The site contains searchable databases for World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, as well as listings of War Dead and veterans of the Mexican War, Civil War and Spanish-American War who are buried at the ABMC cemeteries in Corozal, Panama, and Mexico City, Mexico. Additional information about name, rank, serial number, unit, date of death, cemetery where interred and/or memorialized, and awards or medals. This site is definitely worth a visit for additional information.

Never Give Up!

When researching military service in the 20th century, remember that there are other avenues other than just the NPRC in St. Louis. The alternate records and databases I've described are a great beginning. Published military histories, personal memoirs of service personnel, unit diaries and ledgers held by NARA, and other resources may also contain information about your ancestor or family member. Alternative records do exist for you to investigate.

Happy Hunting!

George

George is president and a proud member of the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors. Visit the ISFHWE website. Visit George's website for information about speaking engagements.

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A Little Humor

John. R. Chapman

Some time ago, when I was involved with the Cleveland Family History Society (in England), a call went out for volunteers to copy the gravestone inscriptions in the churchyards surrounding Hartlepool, Durham, England.

I chose to record Hart parish church. It's easier to record in winter when the grass has died down and the day I selected was very cold, with about four inches of snow on the ground. Since it's not easy to write with gloves on, I chose to dictate the inscriptions into a tape recorder. To keep the batteries warm, I put the tape recorder under my coat and fastened the microphone to my lapel.

I took with me a small brush to clear snow and moss off the stones. Transcribing went smoothly until I got to an area of the graveyard near the wall where the snow had drifted. I tripped over a root and fell flat on my face into the snow. After muttering a few choice words, I heard, "Tut, tut, tut!" and looked up into the eyes of two policeman.

Apparently they had received a phone call about a strange man, shambling around the graveyard, scrabbling at the stones, and muttering to himself! I had to play back the recording to avoid being arrested.

(Editor's note: Sometimes the rest of the world does not see us as we see ourselves)

Definitions

Baby:
A new acorn on the family tree.
Cemetery:
A marble orchard not to be taken for granite.
Floor:
The place for storing your priceless genealogy records.
Genealogists:
Time unravelers.
Kinship:
It`s all relative!

Ancestry Quick Tip

Don't Take Anything for Granted

Virginia

I did not know what city or town my Polish ancestors came from when I discovered that church death records were available for my great-grandmother's brother. I hesitated because I already knew his death date and birth date and that he had never married or had children. It seemed I really wouldn't learn much because I had never seen a church death record that recorded the place of birth. I was wrong! This church had recorded his town of birth, which meant I was able to trace the entire family back to Poland. The moral of the story--don't take anything for granted.

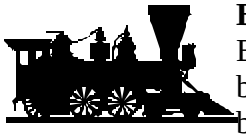
(Keep in mind this can also hold true for Italians and just about any other nationality. I've even seen towns of birth listed on marriage and birth records in New York City).

Future Meeting Dates for the Italian Genealogical Group

February 11, and March 11, 2006

All meetings start at 10:30 AM

Directions to the Bethpage Library, 50 Powell Ave, Bethpage, NY:



By Train: The Bethpage Library may be reached by taking the Long Island Railroad to the Bethpage Station. You can then walk east one block to Broadway, turn left, go (north) 3 blocks on Broadway; then (at the second traffic light) turn right on Powell Avenue; the Library is about 500 ft on your right.

By Car: Use the Southern State Parkway or the Long Island Expressway. If using the Southern State Parkway take exit 28A and go north on the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway (Route 135). If using the Long Island Expressway take Exit 44S and go south on the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway (Route 135). Exit Route 135 at the Powell Avenue Exit. Proceed in a westerly direction towards the village, about 3 blocks. There is ample parking across the street from the Library. Our meeting will be in the downstairs meeting room.