ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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Volume 13, No. 4 **December, 2006**

President's Message

Cari amici,

This holiday season seems very hectic for most of us. We make time for shopping, cooking, sending greetings, and gathering with our relatives and friends. Let's make time to reflect and be thankful that we are able to enjoy the company of those whom we love.

What better way of celebrating this joyous time of year than embarking on our interviews with the elders of the family. Everyone knows that an Italian family is at the dining room table all day. Let's make use of that time to record "ancient stories." These transcribed memories are perhaps the best gift we can give our children and grandchildren. Personal historical events are priceless. Let's not miss our opportunity.

Our January meeting will focus on our individual research, sharing our progress, and questions and answers. Please bring your documentation to share with members in a regional setting. Please prepare to share with our group the memorable reminiscences you collected.

Buon Natale e Buon Nuovo Anno,

Mike Genovese and Marilyn Verna
Co-Presidents

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January 2007 Meeting

June DeLalio

At the January meeting we will break into groups according to the area of Italy where we are researching your ancestors. We have done this in the past very successfully. It's a situation where everyone learns from each other and helps one another to dissolve their "brick walls". Each group will be monitored by a leader, or as the term goes these days, a facilitator.

While we have done this type of meeting before, this time we will try to follow up in later meetings to see how much progress has been done or give other solutions someone's problems. As you know each area of Italy is different as to how the records are structured, filed and available. If you haven't had an answer to your letter overseas, maybe someone knows the reason why and knows another way to obtain that information. Come and ask questions. Your only requirement for this meeting is to bring a document or family tree with which you have a problem. Also be prepared to help others. You may know more about that town or area than other members and can describe or have photos of the area.

This organization is only as successful as each of our members. Come to the meeting to question and to help. We will break down into areas such as Western Sicily, Eastern Sicily, Calabria, Bari and Puglia, Naples and Salerno, Northern Italy, etc. If there are too many people from one area, we will break down into smaller groups. This meeting will be as successful if each of you participates in it.
Per favore, venite!

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ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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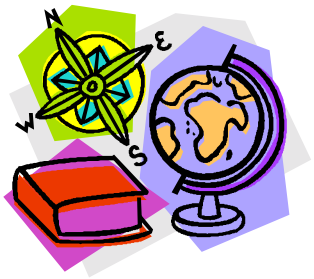
Meetings are held the 2nd Saturday of each month, Sept. to June at 10:30 AM

Profiles from the Four Corners

Michael S. Genovese



This month's profile is **Nick DeRose**, a member of IGG since 1995. Nick, his brother and sister were born and raised in the Los Angeles area. Even though his immediate family and some extended family members were scattered over eleven Western States, his family remained close. His grandparents, however, didn't pass on stories about their parents and their growing up in Italy, then Indiana and Colorado. This fact later became a significant factor in Nick's wanting to research and document his family's stories.

Nick has four children and shares his life with his wife, Karen. He is now retired but was a chemist and facility manager for the H.B. Fuller Company in California and Massachusetts. From 1992 to 1999, he lived in Marlboro, MA., Baltimore, MD., and Wilmington, MA. Nick relates, "With visitors and on our own, we traveled the east coast from Nova Scotia to Florida. We did a lot of genealogy and visited places we hadn't been before." In September 1999, they moved back to the West to be closer to their family and settled in Apple Valley, California.

Nick became a serious genealogist when he joined the Pomona Valley Genealogical Society in 1987 (he is still a member). When living in Massachusetts, he and his wife had been members of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Nick became a charter member of the Italian Genealogical Society of America and joined IGG in 1995. He was a NARA volunteer at Waltham from 1997 to 1999 and he has given presentations on creative research techniques, on census records, passenger lists, naturalization records, WW I Draft Registration Records, Selective Service System Records, and Railroad Genealogical Records.

His mom's side of the family is not Italian and he has been able to trace back her family records to 17th and 18th century Colonial America. On his dad's side (Italian), he has traced his roots to the early 1800s. For the past ten years, Nick has been recording life stories and memories of elder relatives, several of whom have since passed on, he is now eager to publish a book to share these stories with other family members. An earlier version of Nicks latest article is entitled, ***Total Immersion Foreign Language Courses***.

In December 2005, I decided to learn Italian in Italy since most of my ancestry is from Italy, some is from Lombardia, some from Liguria, some from Abruzzo, and some from a village in Cosenza province. My ancestral search embraces a minimum of four different dialects: Milanese, Ligurian, Abruzzese, and Calabrese. If I had had the opportunity to learn one of the dialects as a child, I would still not be able to communicate with the other three. There are at least 23 dialects, but I wanted to learn modern Italian, the official language in Italy.

After checking out language schools on line, I decided on Global Experiences, Inc. which represents "Centro Linguistico Italiano Dante Alighieri" in Rome. Global Experiences, Inc. makes arrangements between you and the school and between you and your landlord. Transportation to Rome is your responsibility. There are several different Italian language schools in major cities of Italy but, Centro Linguistico Italiano Dante Alighieri school is the only one in Rome. Since "All roads lead to Rome" what better city is there to live and study in!

The course I took was excellent and the teachers were very helpful. Each class is broken into two parts, the first being dedicated to vocabulary, parts of speech, grammar and sentence structure. After a 20 minute break, the next hour and forty minutes is conversational. Each session is four weeks with a week break in between. If one takes additional sessions, the first day of the new session is comprised of an exam to test ones ability to think and converse in Italian.

The first four weeks went very fast, and I was glad that I had signed up for two sessions. The week break was not long enough to let the material sink in. While I made it to level two, the second session began to drag after a week and a half. Most of our brains were on overload. In eight

weeks we covered almost two years of college Italian. Other foreign students who had come to this school from other Italian language schools claimed it took them about six months to think in the language and thought this school was very good. I was a first time traveler to Europe, going by myself, and having no friends or relatives in the area. After saying all that, would I do it again? Yes, but I would have prepared myself much differently. Here is my advice.

First, take six months to a year to arrange my plans. Second, develop a vocabulary of words and phrases you can instantly recall and respond to. Don't worry about the grammar or sentence structure. What words should you learn? Learn words about school, clothing, house and buildings, family members, geography, time, days and seasons. Also learn words about weather, physical and personal characteristics.

Third, find out if the school has a language lab, or take a small battery tape recorder, to practice speaking and listening to oneself. Fourth, find a school in the area your ancestor came from so that you can spend time learning about the history and culture of the region.

To do genealogical research in a foreign country, it helps to speak the language fluently or have someone with you who does. My next trip will include a language course in a city of my ancestors. Mornings will be spent studying and the afternoons and week-ends can be used for sight seeing, visiting churches, libraries and archives in hopes of finding more genealogical information.

(Send articles by mail to Michael S. Genovese, IGG Membership Profiles, 50 Daisy Avenue, Floral Park, New York, 11001, or by e-mail as a WORD attachment to: mikegino@aol.com)

ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Time: Saturday, December 9, 2006 - 12:30 PM

Place: Filomena's Restaurant
1034 Hempstead Turnpike
Franklin Square, New York
516-437-4919

Price: $25 Per Person

MENU
Salad
Penne Ala Vodka or
Rigatoni Di Pomodoro

Entrees – Select One
Chicken Francese
Chicken Parmigiana
Eggplant Parmigiana
Filet of Sole

Sheet Cake
Coffee, Tea or Espresso
Soda Regular or Diet

Checks Payable to
"Italian Genealogical Group"

Mail to: Mrs. Barbara Florio
259 North Beech Street
North Massapequa, NY 11758
516-798-1023

Directions: Woodridge Savings Bank Parking Lot, North Side of Hempstead Turnpike, 2 blocks West of New Hyde Park Road

The Road to Beginning Your Italian Genealogical Research

June DeLalio

Joanne Heffernan, a long-time Italian Genealogical Group member, gave us an illuminating lecture last month on beginning your family history research. What she told us would hold true for Italian, Germans, Irish and any other ethnic group. It all starts with your own family and finding data in the United States records. It is the key to successful research overseas.

She spoke about her own family and told how she obtained vital records for each of them to verify her own data. Taking apart a marriage record, she showed how each piece of information in it would lead to research somewhere else. The age of the couple would tell you to look for their birth records which would tell you where their families lived at that earlier time. The marriage record will give you the place of birth of the couple. Sometimes you may even find that they had married before and you never knew it. Their addresses on the marriage record would lead you to look for them in the census, which would give information on their families and more. The parents of the bride and groom would be listed on the marriage record, which could start a search on each of those four people. And so it goes. One piece of information can send you on to various databases and sources of information.

Joanne had a multi-ethnic family. We were able to see that her advice would hold for all research and would lead to finding the place and time when the first members of the family came to the United States. She lead us from each piece of family information to using Passenger Lists, Naturalization records as well as the censuses and some other less well known records.

Joanne's Story Board
SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND

We had many people in the audience who were new to family history research. They became excited about starting their research, while the more seasoned researchers were reminded to check various records which they sometimes forget to use. Bravo, Joanne!

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

Researching Italian Records For Beginners

William S. Gimello

Part 3 - Italian Records

Before you begin your research of your Italian ancestors, I strongly urge you to purchase a copy of *Italian Genealogical Records* by Thafford R. Cole. This is the classic book on Italian records and can be purchased by mailing a check for $39.00 payable to the Italian Genealogical Group, c/o Linda Carco, PO Box 626, Bethpage, NY 11714-0626.

Once you have located your Family History Center, you are now ready to begin researching your Italian records. The microfilmed records for southern Italy usually date from 1810-1910, but some Sicilian towns have earlier dates. Northern towns have various dates according to each town and province. The microfilm reels are usually limited to civil records, but some towns include baptisms and cannon marriages.

Ask the volunteers in the FHC for a copy of the microfiche index on Italy. The microfiche index consists of 3"X5" sheets that contain the names of those towns whose records have been microfilmed by the Mormon Church. The volunteer will show you how to mount the microfiche sheet on the viewer. Review each sheet until you find your specific town. Copy down the serial number of the microfilm reel, as well as the time period covered. Also record whether each reel includes birth, marriage or death records. If your local FHC does not have a microfiche index , ask the volunteer to download a computer printout or try Familysearch.org. Again, you must tell the volunteer the name of the town, province and region.

Once you have the above information, you are now ready to order a microfilm reel. Each reel costs $5.75 for a thirty-day period. It normally takes three weeks for the delivery of the reel from Utah. My experience indicates it takes 48 hours to review one reel. If you can only visit the FHC once or twice a week, I suggest you order each reel for a 90 day period.

Let's say you're reviewing a reel of birth records from the years 1810-1820. The first set of records on the reel should begin with births in 1810. However, sometimes the documents are not in chronological order. Scroll down to the last birth record for 1810. If you are lucky, you will find an index of births immediately after the last birth. Search the index for your surname then scroll to the records. Record the ordinance numbers, the date, the birth is registered, the person announcing the birth (usually a relative) the name of the child, the date of birth, the names of the parents, including their ages, and the name of the paternal grandfather. Some documents will include the specific address of the parents and most documents list the witnesses. If you want a copy of the document, the volunteer will instruct on the use of the Photostat machine. Continue this process until you have recorded all the pertinent documents on the reel.

Two weeks before you expect to complete a reel, I suggest you order your next reel. Complete this process until you have completed recording all the documents of your ancestors. Expect to review 8-12 reels of records if you want to review all the reels available for your ancestor's town.

The most important thing to remember is to keep very good notes in a notebook and to be very patient in recording the information.

Part IV of Italian Records For Beginners will list the Italian words with their English translations that frequently occur on birth, marriage and death records.

Note Well

Any member who has a change of e-mail address should report this change to our **Webmaster**. One of the main reasons for this, is that your current e-mail address is needed to gain access into the MEMBERS ONLY section of our web site. If you change your e-mail and do not report the change to us, you will not be able to gain access to the MEMBERS ONLY section.

A Family History Overhaul

Carrie A. Moore
Desert Morning News

Whether your LDS ancestors pulled a handcart across the Plains or you have no affiliation with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there's a wealth of information being processed for placement on the Internet beginning next year that can tie you to your family tree - free.

Thousands of Latter-day Saints in town for the church's 176th Semi-annual General Conference, know something about their ancestry because they've long been taught to know who their progenitors are.

But relatively few know all of what's now available to help fill out their family tree, including archives that chronicle the early history of the LDS Church in exacting - and often personal - detail.

And with a complete overhaul of the church's FamilySearch.org Web site planned for the months ahead, even those who have no experience researching family history will be able to "do something meaningful without having to learn anything prior," according to Steve W. Anderson, online marketing manager for the church's Family History department.

New online tools will allow novices to log on and - with a few mouse clicks - pull up their family tree, with details about ancestors, of any faith or none, that are part of the database. "You'll be able to attach images or photos to it, or something like a timeline of events. It will have all kind of things to make it a much richer resource."

Users will have their own login, allowing them to add information about living people to their family tree if they so choose, though that information will not be available for others to view in order to maintain privacy. Anderson said there is some concern about the accuracy of allowing people to simply add information, but "if someone disagrees with your account of it, there will be an opportunity to put additional information or opinion there."

In addition to the redesigned Web site, the church is pushing forward with a digitizing project that will eventually allow the images of such information as census records, birth, death, marriage, tax and land records - now contained on its 2.4 million rolls of microfilm - to not only be placed online, but to be indexed in order to allow nearly instant access.

The project is estimated to take from five to 15 years to complete. After that anyone looking for access to literally billions of individual documents will be able to search for them in minutes online. In the past, the only way to access those records was to order a copy of the microfilm through the mail.

"We're trying to make the information much more accessible and also much more meaningful," Anderson said. "The Web has made us all a little attention-challenged, yet we all flock to it. All that we're doing here with online programs and databases puts us right at the doorstep of a mountain of significant change."

The church is currently working with thousands of volunteers worldwide to help index the digitized records - many of them through state and local genealogical societies. Public access to selected records that have been both digitized and indexed is anticipated "fairly soon - definitely by next year," he said.

Family History communications and planning manager Paul Nauta said the indexing technology is "coming along nicely" at this point, and managers will begin testing the indexing internally through church groups and with selected genealogical societies nationally who have volunteers now working to index records that their memberships find valuable.

The project, dubbed "FamilySearch Indexing," is drawing growing interest from volunteers in a variety of areas. A demonstration of the new technology will be featured at the Ogden Regional Family History Conference Oct. 6-7 at the Eccles Conference Center during a presentation called "Opening the Granite Mountain Vault." (For information, see www.myancestorsfound.com/NorthUtah/highlights.htm)

Curt Witcher with the Indiana Genealogical Society is one of two people overseeing volunteers who are indexing all Indiana marriage records from 1820 to 1957 for the digitized images the

LDS Church has. He heard about the indexing project at a national conference and asked his society to participate.

Volunteers range from beginners to experienced researchers, he said, because the workload has been processed into manageable bits - meaning volunteers can spend only 30 minutes at any one time and feel a sense of accomplishment.

He said it's difficult to estimate how long it will take to index millions of records covering a 150 year span, but he's estimating it will be 36 months. As enthusiasm builds, "it wouldn't surprise me if it took less than half that time," he said.

Errors are bound to occur, but should be caught because the system is designed so every record is in entered twice - by two different people working independently of each other. If one record disagrees with the other, an arbitrator will decide which one is correct.

Amy Johnson Crowe with the Ohio Genealogical Society said the church approached her group more than two years ago about volunteering, even before the project began. They've been working on an index for Ohio tax records already digitized by the church since December. She dubbed the project "mind-boggling," saying when people hear about it, "they usually want to get involved. It's so incredible from what we thought was possible only a couple of years ago. ... There is a lot of excitement about this."

As online access grows exponentially, information about early Latter-day Saints - and details of their lives that may otherwise have been lost - is readily available, some of it online.

For example, the Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel database can be found at lds.org under the "church history" tab, and provides names, dates and even journal entries about Latter-day Saints who came by wagon team or handcart to the Salt Lake Valley, as well as a complete list of sources - some of them full-text. While the church's Family History Library is known worldwide, the less-frequently-used Church History Library, now housed inside the east wing on the main floor of the Church Office Building, offers information not available elsewhere.

Holdings in the Church History Library have grown so large that a 250,000-square-foot building is now under construction west of the Conference Center to house them all, along with administrative offices.

Brent Thompson, director of records preservation, said most of the site excavation for the structure is complete, and concrete was poured earlier this week for the initial part of the foundation. Workers have also tunneled under North Temple to provide eventual access to the Church Office Building. Construction is on target to be completed next year, but Thompson said it likely won't be ready for public use until 2008.

Anderson said the combined initiative to expand public access to ancestral information is "huge. Together they represent probably the most significant changes in family history work ever undertaken."

E-mail: carrie@desnews.com

IGG Speaker for February 2007

June DeLalio

The February meeting will highlight the topic of Researching Ship's Manifests, with all their wonderful and frustrating attributes. **Don Eckerle**, a member of the Italian Genealogical Group and the German Genealogical Group, will speak about how the passenger lists developed and how they are used. Don, and **John Martino** have been a team working for years indexing the ship's lists as well as their many other projects that have borne fruit and appear on our website for your research. Don will also talk about the various places you can access the passenger manifests.

I'm a Believer
Stories of the Italian Christmas Witch
Our Paesani

Francesca Di Meglio

Italy is such a magical place for children that they receive gifts from not one but two mythical figures during the holiday season. You see in Italy, the holiday season really lasts through Jan. 6, or the Epiphany, and on that day La Befana, known to some as the Christmas witch, brings goodies to all of Italy's children.

When my father was a child growing up in Ischia, a small island near Napoli, he - along with his friends - excitedly awaited the arrival of La Befana every year. They would hang their sisters' old stockings on the side of their beds, and the next morning the stockings would be filled with tangerines, chestnuts, a pencil for school and one piece of chocolate. You'd get charcoal if you were naughty - and that happened to my father one year when he was repeatedly cutting class to play soccer. In those days, money was scarce and La Befana, was often all the people had in the way of gifts during the holiday season. But now most Italian families get a visit from Babbo Natale (Santa Clause) on Dec. 25 as well.

La Befana rarely, if ever, visited our home in America when I was a kid. But whenever we spent the holidays in Italy, she arrived on her broom and we would get a few extra goodies - tangerines, chestnuts and a toy or two. I remember when I was 10 or 11, we went to Ischia for Christmas and on Jan. 6, I woke up to find a baby blue teddy bear that whispered "Ti voglio tanto bene" ("I love you very much") whenever I rubbed his belly.

I never really understood why Italian children adored an ugly witch with a big nose and ugly red mole who traveled in rags via broom. But she brought me a sweet blue bear. How bad could she be? As an adult, I learned that she's not bad at all. And the folk stories behind La Befana are heart warming. Despite her looks, she'll make a believer of anyone - and that, in a nutshell, is what the holidays are all about.

Legend has it that she was an old Italian grandma-type happily cleaning her house, when three men showed up at her door. No fool, she was skeptical. She shooed them away when they said they were searching for baby Jesus, the newborn king. After a little while, she had second thoughts. Perhaps, the men were honest and telling the truth. If so, she missed her chance to help them reach the king. She decided she should try to catch up with them. But they were long gone. So, she handed out gifts to all of the children in the neighborhood in the hopes that one of them was Jesus. Every year she goes to look for the three wise men - and most importantly baby Jesus. When she does, she leaves little surprises for the little Italian girls and boys.

Some say she didn't go with the wise men because she had chores to do. Others believe she promised to find them after she finished the housework. Still others have an entirely different version of the story. I've also heard that La Befana was a mother to a son who lived in King Herod's day. Herod reportedly decreed that each male child born was to be killed because one of them could be the new king. La Befana was so traumatized when her son was murdered that she didn't believe he was really killed. She set out in search of him carrying all of his belongings in a sack.

She quickly aged from worry - her face became wrinkled, her hair turned gray and she grew to look like an old, haggard lady. She finally found a male baby in a manger and she laid out her son's belongings at the baby's feet. The baby was Jesus Christ. And He blessed the lady as "Befana," the giver of gifts. After that, every year on Jan. 5, the

eve of the Epiphany, she would be mother to all of the world's children and would care for them by bringing them treats.

I personally prefer to believe that last story is the truth. Who can't feel for a grief stricken mamma? What a lovely thought that a woman who lost her baby can turn her sadness into an excuse to nurture all children, including Jesus. But you can pick your favorite legend and stick with it. That's the beauty of La Befana.

Traditionally, the Epiphany or Little Christmas is a holiday for children in Italy. But the adults never give up a chance for a feast. Many family and friends go from house to house visiting one another after opening La Befana's gifts in the morning. There are parades featuring the Christmas witch - at which she is sometimes joined by her companion Befano. The children sing songs to her and dolls are left out in the windows. Some families burn the dolls to cancel out the past year and usher in good luck. You can start your own La Befana traditions. Just leave out your old socks or shoes for her to fill on Jan. 5 - and believe!

Francesca Di Meglio is a full-time freelance writer based in Fort Lee, N.J. Community manager of the B-schools channel at BusinessWeek Online, she writes regularly about management education and occasionally about small business and women trying to break through the glass ceiling. She led the development and first month of content of the undergraduate business school channel for BWOL.

Christmas in Rome

Preserving Family Histories

Risa Neuwirth

"I know what it's like to die. I died...and it wasn't a scary experience at all. It's not scary to die, it's scary to live." My gaze is riveted to the television screen as I watch my mother speaking about her close brush with death, when she'd been stricken with typhoid fever as a teenager during World War II. She begins weeping quietly, remembering the large family she lost in that great conflict. "I had a beautiful childhood, a warm, close-knit, loving family...and I think it's what sustained me through everything."

It was the day after my mother had passed away following a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease. My brother and I were sitting down with a rabbi to plan her funeral service, and he'd asked us to bring along any memorabilia we might have of her before she became ill. In searching for photographs and mementos, we'd come across a videotape Mom had given us ten years earlier-an interview she'd done for director Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation, a project that documents the testimonies of Holocaust survivors. Back in 1995, when she'd recorded it, we had watched with a critical eye and dismissed it-she was nervous through much of it, and had left out many important stories and details. We'd put the tape on the shelf and forgotten about it.

That day, we walked into the rabbi's office and handed him the videotape. "Oh, let's look at this together," he said, as he escorted us to a room with a television. I had a moment of panic at the thought of watching it, only hours after seeing her at the morgue. My heart contracted as the rabbi turned on the television and we sat down.

Suddenly my mother's image appeared on the screen. The sight of her alive and well-the Mom we hadn't seen since she'd fallen ill took my breath away. Unable to speak or walk for the last two years, our mother had been a shadow of her former self. She'd always been a dynamic woman-strong, vibrant, articulate, charming, with a love of life and an optimism that belied the trauma of her youth. And there she was, the way I wanted to remember her.

The knot in my stomach began to ease as I watched her speaking animatedly, with all of her familiar facial expressions and gestures. I remembered that proud look in her eye, whenever she would talk about her four sisters--"My father was known throughout Antwerp as 'Mr. Gajst and his beautiful daughters!'"--and the often-heard remembrance of warm family dinners, filled with delicious food and conversation. I soon realized that watching this video was far more comforting than it was painful. It was actually wonderful to see her again!

During the days that followed, friends and relatives came to pay their condolences, and everyone wanted to see my mother's video. We watched it over and over again--ninety minutes of stories, spanning her childhood in Belgium up to the present. We heard how, at the age of 17, she'd hidden herself after her whole family had been taken away; her eventual arrest by the Gestapo, followed by nearly three years at Auschwitz; and her subsequent emigration to America, where she became a fashion model and later met the man who was to become our father... stories my brother and I had heard throughout our lives. My younger son, who'd been a toddler when my mother was stricken with dementia, was now ten years old. He watched her video intently; riveted by the images and stories of the grandmother he'd never had a chance to know.

As I sat there, I realized how fortunate we were to have this video. To be able to watch her telling her own stories, her memories...in her own words. Indeed, it was like seeing her alive again. It felt surreal, cathartic...and amazing!

I knew in that moment that we had something precious, and all too rare. How I wished I had a similar video of my father, who'd passed away in 1998. All his great memories and anecdotes...building his family's first radio as a boy, how he'd served under General Patton during the war, all the great old army stories, his lifelong obsession with baseball and his beloved New York Yankees, how he'd met our mother by chance in a coffee shop one morning--and the boyish grin he often wore as he told those tales-were lost to us forever, held only in our memories.

It was then that I realized I could help others have what I had. I'd worked for an oral history library for a few years, and had been immediately drawn in by the powerful, complex stories of peoples' lives. More recently, I'd been a producer and casting director in the film and television industry, helping to create TV shows, short films, and documentaries. The combination of these experiences seemed to converge, and it was clear that my life's paths had literally led me to this moment.

And so I formed a video memoir company, dedicated to helping families preserve their loved ones' stories and histories. Inspired by the discovery of my mother's taped interview, I decided to devote the rest of my days to helping others have what I have--a living, vivid memoir--for themselves, their children, their grandchildren, and all the generations that will follow. With the knowledge I've gained, I tell as many people as I can about how, with the aid of today's digital technology, creating a legacy for their families is not only simple, but almost imperative. I offer my company's services to those who wish them, and also speak publicly to teach people how to record their loved ones' memories themselves.

I hope my sons will show my mother's interview to their own children, so they can spend some time getting to know their courageous great-grandmother, who was brimming with life and love throughout her days... and beyond.

Risa Neuwirth lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her two sons. She is the founder of LifeStory Productions (www.LifeStoryProductions), a video biography company based in New York City.

(Editor's note: The above story, though not related to Italians, Conveys an important message to all family historians)

Future Meeting Dates for the Italian Genealogical Group

January 13, and February 10, 2006

All meetings start at 10:30 AM

Christmas Party December 9th.

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.