ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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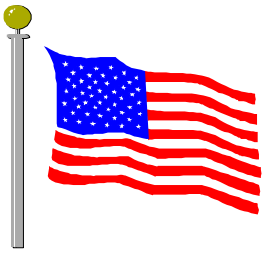

President's Message

Cari Amici:

Welcome to Spring! We offer a special thank you to **Brian Anderson** for his informative lecture on the resources available at the NYC Municipal Department of Records. This month we welcome three of our expert members who will provide us with valuable internet sites including, of course, our own website. Our databases have been accessed by genealogy buffs from around the world. We receive grateful messages on the service we have provided. This is all made possible by our coordinator, **John Martino**, and his volunteers – YOU.

Let me guess – you have been preparing traditional Easter specialties this week, i.e. Pizza de Grano, Pizza Rustica, traditional Easter panettone, etc. Let us not forget to transcribe those recipes and send them to **Angela LaGiglia** (alagi10105@aol.com) who is compiling a book of our favorite delicacies Please add a personal note about your donation.

We look forward to hearing about your unusual research discoveries. If you write an article, it does not have to be lengthy, and send it to us we will publish it for all to read. After all, this is what we are all about.

Buona Pasqua,

Michael Genovese and Marilyn Verna
Co-Presidents

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Computer Corner

Our April meeting will be devoted to using the Internet. Three of your fellow Italian Genealogical Group members will zero in on a few important websites. The aim is to look at them in some detail and answer questions you may have. We are sure most of you are using Ancestry but are you using it in all its depth and variations? **Tony Sasso** will focus on this website.

John Martino will examine the Italian Genealogical Group databases online and answer questions on using them. As you know we have added Manhattan brides index, which is a really big database. Maybe a little information from John will be helpful in using it. For the third segment of the program, **June DeLalio** will discuss some new websites for United States and Italian research that you may not have tried.

If you use these websites all the time, you may find tricks and shortcuts that will be helpful to you. If you're a beginner at using the Internet, you'll see what you have been missing in your research.

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ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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

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Annual Membership: Individual $22 per year; Family $27 per year; Outside U. S. Membership $27 per year
Newsletter is published 10 times a year.
Meetings are held the 2nd Saturday of each month, Sept. to June at 10:30 AM

Researching Italian Records For Beginners

William S. Gimello

Part 7-- Passenger Lists

Several years ago I visited the National Archives in New York City and in a few minutes I was able to locate the passenger list of my mother's parents by reviewing the volumes of the *Italians to America, List of Passengers Arriving at US Ports*, Edited by Ira A. Glazier and P. William Filby. The sixteen volumes cover the passenger lists from January, 1880-April, 1901. Thanks go to **John Martino** who donated the volumes.

Microfilm reels contain passenger arrival lists to the Port of New York City, covering the years 1789-1957 as well as passenger arrival lists to the Port of Galveston, Texas from 1896-1951 and the Canadian Border from 1895-1873. There are still a significant number of Canadian-Italians living in Quebec and Montreal.

The National Archives Regional Areas listed below have a variety of limited series of customs passenger lists and immigration passenger lists of ships arriving from abroad at many Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf Coast ports as well as Canada.

New England Region, 380 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA, 02452

Northeast Region, 201 Varick Street, New York City, 10014

Mid Atlantic Region, 900 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19107

Southeast Region, 5780 St. Jonesboro Road, Morrow, GA, 30260

Great Lakes Region, 3150 Springboro Road, Dayton, OH, 45439

Great Lakes Region, 7358 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL, 60629

Rocky Mountain Region, West 6th Avenue and Kipling Street, Denver, CO, 80225

Southwest Region, 501 West Felix Street, Fort Worth, TX, 76115

Pacific Region, 24000 Avila Road, Laguna Niguel, CA, 92677

Central Plains, 2312 East Bannister Road, Kansas City, MO, 64131

Northeast Region, 10 Conte Drive, Pittsfield, MA, 01201

Pacific Region, 1000 Commodore Drive, San Bruno, CA, 94066

Pacific-Alaska Region, 6125 San Point Way NE, Seattle, WA, 98115

The passenger lists available in these regional centers are:

Port	Passenger Lists	Indexes
Baltimore	1820-1897	1820-1952
	1891-1957	
Boston	1820-1891	1848-1891
	1891-1943	1902-1920
Galveston	1846-1871	1896-1951
	1896-1951	
New Orleans	1820-1902	1853-1952
	1900-1952	
New York	1820-1957	1820-1846
	1892-1924	1897-1948
Philadelphia	1800-1906	1800-1948
	1883-1948	
San Francesco	1882-1957	1893-1934
Seattle	1882-1957	---
	1947-1957	
Canada	1895-1954	1895-1952

Passenger Lists before 1820 are generally not available, except for the Port of Philadelphia.
The Family History Library, 160 Washington Avenue, Plainview, New York has passenger lists for the Port of New York and soundex lists of the port of New York. These passenger lists can be ordered from your area FHC in your state.

The passenger lists have been indexed as follows and are available on line:

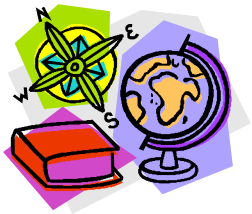
Baltimore	1892-1948
Boston	1891-1943
Galveston	1896-1948
New York	1851-1891
San Francesco	1893-1953

These databases have been created by Ancestry.com and are available to subscribers by visiting <http:www.Ancestry.com>

(Passenger Lists Continued on Page 8)

Profiles from the Four Corners

Michael S. Genovese



Our profile this month is on **Peter R. Bortolan**, a member since 2001. Peter hails from South Windsor. CT and has really written an excellent story of his quest to learn about his family's roots. He has put together a great article and we would like to present it to you in three segments over the next three issues. So this month's profile is only Part I of a three-part story. Let's read what Peter has so carefully written and entitled, "Roots, Italian Style".

Roots: Italian Style Part I

In October 2006, my wife Ruth and I spent three weeks in the Veneto visiting members of the Bortolan family that we had never met and, until about eight years ago, did not know even existed. The start of this journey goes back to 1976 when our family took its first trip to Washington County Maine, where Ruth's father's family is from. After a family discussion with Ruth's grandmother and trips to several family cemeteries, we were bitten by the genealogy bug. We worked long and hard to find that elusive person from the past – the immigrant ancestor. Thirty years later we still are not sure which one he is. Ruth and I disagree. People would ask me if I were working on my genealogy, and I would say no—of course. I knew all my immigrant ancestors!

Along the way I did make some notes on what I did know. My grandfather was Pietro Bortolan, who was an only child born in Adria. Pietro's father, Napoleone, was born in Treviso. My grandmother, Silvia Auletta, was from Pozzuoli. Pietro and Silvia were married in Pozzuoli. When my grandparents first came to this country, they went to New York City. Subsequently, they moved to Newark NJ and finally to New Haven CT. I also knew that in the early 50's my uncle Joseph had searched for a coat of arms whose existence had been a family legend. I knew that he had found one that had been granted to a Giovanni Bortolan of Vicenzia. My father had made me a color copy of the coat of arms. There were also tales of someone in the family owning a factory that made cannons and another one was a bishop. I also had the address of the house in Pozzuoli where my grandmother had grown-up.

In 1998, my niece Joan, as part of a program at her college, was going to spend the summer in Venezia. My sister Nancy and I decided that, with our spouses, we should take our first trip to Italy and visit Joan. So we planned the trip with the provision that we see both Treviso and Vicenzia.

One thing I learned a long time ago is that it never hurts to talk to people about what is going on. You never know what you find out. We next had an example of that. My sister teaches in an elementary school in Somers, Connecticut. She mentioned in her class that we where planning a trip to Italia in the summer. The father of one of her students was in charge of the American operations of an Italian company. He offered to plan our trip for us, which was, a wonderful bit of luck for us.

In the summer of 1998, we flew from New York to Milano, and then took a train across Italia to Venezia to meet Joan. We spent three days visiting Venezia, then picked up our leased car and headed to Treviso with only a map in hand. While driving in Treviso, I felt that we were getting too far from the center of the town so I decided to turn around and go back. We crossed what looked like a canal, and I made a left turn onto a street that ran along the canal. We had driven one block when I saw the street sign on the next corner – vicolo Bortolan. I found the nearest parking place and we got out to look. The street was one block long with an office building on the corner. I went into the building and found a lawyer's office. I went in to ask if they knew anything about the street. Unfortunately, my Italian at the time, like most of us from the second generation, was nonexistent. The people in the lawyer's office spoke no English. But now I had proof that the Bortolan name was truly Italian. This fact had always been held in doubt because "Bortolan" does not end in a vowel and all Italian names end in a vowel. We then found the

Municipal Building and tried to see if we could get any vital records. But again, no one in the office spoke English, so we left Treviso and found the road to Vicenzia. On the way to Vicenzia, I decided that the probabilities of finding, at random, that street were too high to calculate. It must have been a sign for me to start working on my own genealogy. We arrived in Vicenzia and found the palazzo of Giovanni Bortolan.

After our return from Italia, I put together the information I had with the few family documents that my father had given me. I checked with the other members of the family, but no one had much to offer other than what I already knew. I knew that someone in the family, had done some work on the history of the family but they were unwilling to share what information they had found other than a comment that a priest in Venezia had been very helpful to them. So I decided to try something new – the Internet. I began to use search engines to see what would be found if I just searched the name Bortolan. I quickly found that I needed to rely on Google since it would provide some basic translation capabilities. It was a very slow process since I was only on dial-up at this point in my research in the year 2000.

I decided to try something different using Google to see if I could find email addresses for the people I was researching. Once an address, was found I would send and email – in English – asking for any information the person could provide. I finally struck pay dirt. I received a reply from Giovanni Bortolan in Padova. Giovanni said he was working on his genealogy also and would gladly collaborate with me on the work. He also said that he had been in contact with a Giacomo Arcidiaco from Pavia and that he also was working on the genealogy of the Bortolan Family and provided me his email address. I contacted Giacomo and brought him up to date on where I was with the project. He agreed to collaborate with me. As we ultimately found out, Giacomo's mother's great grandmother – Anna - was my great grandfather – Napoleone's – sister. I continued to mine the Internet, and we continued to share what information we had. I finally found what turned out to be the treasure from the mine, the name of a priest in Venezia.

I sent the information about the priest to Giovanni and Giacomo and told them that I felt there was a very high probability that this was the same priest from whom my family member had gotten information. Giovanni replied that since Venezia was only an hour away by train he would go to Venezia and meet with Monsignor Gino Bortolan. A couple of weeks later, an email from Giovanni arrived addressed to Giacomo and me. Giovanni said he had met with Monsignor Bortolan and he had snail mailed us copies of the information he

Vicolo Borotolan in Treviso

had received from Monsignor Bortolan. A week later an envelope arrived with the copy of a large, hand printed, genealogy chart of the Bortolan Family descending from Sebastiano Bortolan who died in Carbonera (TV) on 17 May 1675. The chart was very detailed up until about 1850 when it started to follow one branch of the family, and finally ending with one name-- Giovanni Mondani Bortolan of Bologna. Giacomo decided that Giovanni Mondani Bortolan must have been the one who did the chart, and he decided to try and find him. A month passed, and I got an email from Giacomo. He had spoken to Giovanni Mondani Bortolan in Bologna and said "yes", he had given the chart to Monsignor Bortolan and that he had promised to send Giacomo copies of his notes. Ultimately, I received copies of two sets of notes, one of vital records copies from churches in around Treviso, and another of notes copied from the records of Notaries in Treviso. I still do not fully understand the legal system in Italia but, it appears that Notaries in Italia are used

much the same way that they are used here in the US except that the Notaries maintain ledger copies of the documents that they handle. Ultimately, these ledgers end up in the Provincial Archives. They are a source of very interesting family information and are very frequently overlooked as a resource. Should I have reasonably expected to find a family genealogy dating back to the 17th century through a search in the Internet? Obviously the answer is no. But, I was still surprised at what I had found once I started looking and asking questions.

Subsequently, I found a Paola Menato Bortolan from Roncade (TV) who was working on the genealogy of her husband Vladimiro Bortolan. As it turned out Vladi's great-great grandfather and my great-great grandfather were brothers. I located Marco Bortolan in Vicenzia, and subsequently found family members in, Canada, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, and Switzerland. We still have not gotten all the other family lines tied together but, as I was discovering, the work of the genealogist never seems to end.

In 2002, Ruth and I started talking about a vacation. We contacted a friend's travel agent and booked a 10-day trip to Positano and Capri. The travel agent also got a driver/guide for us. We felt that we still wanted to do our own thing while traveling, so tours were not yet the thing for us, but driving on the Amalfi coast with no guide was more than we felt we wanted to do. Hiring Gaetano was a good decision. As part of the plans for the trip I wanted to go to the Archeological Museum in Napoli to see the things found in Pompeii and to try to find the house in Pozzuoli where my grandmother grew up. We visited Positano, Capri and Amalfi and headed back to Napoli to see the Museum. After the Museum, Gaetano drove us to Pozzuoli. We knew that my great grandparents had run a pensione in the house and that the downstairs of the house was now a restaurant. We found the street and found the house. Gaetano went into the restaurant to talk to the owner, who confirmed that the house had been a pensione and that the owner knew a taxicab driver by the name of Pasquale Auletta. The meeting moved to the street in front of the restaurant and the cell phones came out. We were soon told that Pasquale was on his way to the restaurant. He arrived and the meeting continued with more cell phones going. We subsequently were told that Pasquale had been told by his sister – who worked in the town hall – that I was his cousin. Pasquale had to get back to work but later joined us at the restaurant for a grappa. He said the next time we came to Pozzuoli he would take us to Sarno, the home of the Auletta Family, just one more task for the genealogist.

Ruth Borotolan, Pasquale Auletta & Peter Borotolan

On return home, I continued to search the Internet for information and email addresses and to share information with family. By 2004, I felt that it was again time for us to visit Italia to meet the family. Then my 95 year old mother fell and broke her hip. That was the start of her being in and out of the nursing home until she died in Feb 2006 – one month short of her 97th birthday. In December of 2005 I found out that I am eligible for Italian Citizenship and started to accumulate the required documents. One thing I found was that it was easier to get documents for Italia than from the Department of Homeland Security, but that is a whole other story.

Then in May I received an email from family in Brazil informing me that they were going to be visiting in Connecticut and wanted to know if we could meet. In June we had lunch with Terezinha Bortolan Rivarola, her son Gustavo and her nephew. They told me that the Bortolan Family in Brazil has a reunion annually in October or Novem-

ber – their spring - and wanted to know if we were interested in attending it. I told them that we wanted to go to Italia in October, but couldn't go this year, but next year was a strong possibility. I decided it was now time to plan the trip to the Veneto in October and to start using the *Learn Italian* tapes.

It was now time to email my contacts in Italia and to tell them of our plans and our desire to finally meet them. Remember, I had never met or spoken with any of them and I really did not know what to expect for a reception. I heard from Giacomo in Pavia, Marco in Venezia, Giovanni in Padova and Vladi and Paola in Roncade, and everyone said that they would be glad to meet with us. I never heard from Monsignor Gino – better known as Don Gino in Venezia or Giovanni Mondani Bortolan in Bologna. I knew that Don Gino was at least 85 years old and the Giovanni was probably 80 years old so I did not know whether I would hear from either of them. So, once more, I put our travel agent to work. I knew I was going to need a guide/translator for five days in Treviso Knowing Venezia, I decided that enough English was spoken there and with my limited Italian we could get by without help. Three weeks before we left, I finally located someone – Miriam - who could help us for the five days I wanted. I told her what we wanted to do in and around Treviso, so the final piece of the plan was in place. About two weeks before we left I went into a bit of a funk. This long awaited trip was planned around meeting people whom we had never met in a country where we did not really speak the language. As a result we risked having either great time or a substantially less than a great time. But, the plans were made so we were off! *(To be continued)*

15 Mar 2007
PETER R. BORTOLAN
355 Diane Drive
South Windsor CT 06074-3232
Tel 1-860-644-2061
bortolan@cox.net

Send articles by mail 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

Genealogy Enthusiast

Submitted by Bill Battagliese

- To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child.
- For what is the worth of human life unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors, by the records of history?
- To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root.
- Past and future, they both belong to us. Keeping records of our family history will be the bridge that connects generations.
- In our busy lives we sometimes forget the simple things and the wonderful people who made us what we are today.
- It is important to keep alive in our hearts and minds the stories, and traditions from the past, the people whose lives are entwined with ours,.. our Ancestors.
- My family tree is a few branches short; my ancestors must be in a witness protection program.
- Shake your family tree and watch the nuts fall!
- Isn't genealogy fun? The answer to one problem leads to two more.
- Genealogy begins as an interest, becomes a hobby, continues as an avocation, takes over as an obsession, and in it's last stages it's an incurable disease.

NARA is proposing huge fee increases for obtaining records.

Members might want to write to their congressional representatives to protest this proposed increase. Also, Representative Jose E. Serrano (DEM-NY-16th) is the sub committee chair of the Financial Services and General Government Committee. Anyone with comments about the increase in prices of the mail order requests might want to send an e-mail to him at jserrano@mail.house.gov

Federation of Genealogical Societies

William S. Gimello

Our New Jersey members should be interested in this New Jersey State Archives information on marriages. I am, since my mother's father migrated to Hammonton, NJ in the 1880's. My father's parents settled in Philadelphia in 1882 and later moved to Camden, NJ in 1887-1888.

New Jersey

New Jersey State Archives

<http://www.njarchives.org/links/marriagedb1867.html>

An index to marriages performed in New Jersey 1848-1867 is online at the above Web site. This covers most of the counties; others are being added. Searches may be made by name of groom, bride, county or registration, or year of marriage. The entry lists book and page number to locate the originals. Additional details may be requested for a small fee.

Here are some Genealogical Conferences for our out of state members:

April 28, Ontario, Barrie, Canada: The Region V Conference of the Ontario Genealogical Society will present "Genealogy-Close to Home." This conference will feature researching in Simcoe County, presented by Paul McGrath, Kathie Orr, Gwen Patterson and Pam Tessier, Marian Press and Fawne Stratford-Devai. For more information e-mail touchthesky5@rogers.com or telephone (705) 435-3071.

April 28, California, Santa Rosa: John Philip Colletta will be the featured speaker for the Sonoma County Genealogical Society's conference. For more details go to the society's Web site http://www.rootsweb.com/~casgs/colletta.htm or send an e-mail to LoisNim@sbcglobal.net.

May16-19, Virginia, Richmond: The National Genealogical Society and the Virginia Genealogical Society, the Fairfax Genealogical Society, and the Genealogical Research Institute of Virginia, will host the "2007 NGS Conference in the States and Family History Fair." The event marks the 400th anniversary of the founding of America and the Jamestown Settlement. Day-long tracks on DNA, the Library of Congress, National Archives records, and Virginia records and repositories will be featured.

Visit www.ngsgenealogy.org or www.eshow2000.com/ngs/2007/ for more details.

March 16-17, Colorado, Denver: The Annual Spring Seminar of Colorado Genealogical Society will feature John Phillip Colletta. More information about this event can be found at the society's Web site http://www.rootsweb.com/~cocgs or send an e-mail to Lou-Jean Rehn at ljrehn@yahoo.com.

June 8-10, California, Burbank: The Southern California Genealogical Society announces its 38th Annual Southern California Genealogy Jamboree and Resource Expo.

Check the Society's Web site http://www.scgsgenealogy.com for further updates about this event.

June 9, Pennsylvania, Erie: The 35th Anniversary of the Erie Society for Genealogical Research will be celebrated with a conference featuring James M. Beidler, Dick Eastman, and Stephen P. Morse.

Go the society's Web site http://www.pa-roots.com/~erie/2007GeneConf.html for more information or send a letter to Erie Society for Genealogical Research (ESGR), PO Box 1403, Erie PA 16512-1403.

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(Passenger Lists Continued from Page 3) Additional websites are<www.ellislandrecords.org> and <castelgarden.org>

Don Eckerle and I did not plan to provide our members with passenger lists in March and April. However, you should have an easy time in locating passenger lists of your Italian ancestors.

The Blaze of '73 Part II

Dan Allsup

Decades ago, a raging fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis wiped out the military histories of nearly 18 million Americans.

Could It Happen Again? Today, the National Personnel Records Center is still one of the National Archives and Records Administration's largest operations. It remains the central repository of U.S. military and civil service personnel records. Is a repeat of the fiery 1973 disaster possible? Ronald L. Hindman, director of the NPRC, makes no guarantees. But current safeguards make a recurrence highly unlikely, he said. "An efficient sprinkler system is installed, food and drinks are prohibited in the storage area, smoking within the facility by employees is cause for immediate dismissal, and firewalls are now placed strategically throughout the building," Hindman said.

Scott Levins, the center's assistant director, described other improvements. "Current facility standards require a fire-suppression system designed to limit the loss due to a single fire incident to fewer than 300 cubic feet of records." And the safeguards work. "Within the past 10 years, there have been two separate fires in a Washington, DC, records center. In each instance, the fire-suppression systems confined the damage to far fewer than 300 cubic feet."

Efforts to recover as many records as possible began within days after the 1973 NPRC fire was finally extinguished. When 90,000 cubic feet of soggy records were finally removed from the building, officials began what may be the largest records-drying operation in history.

Some records went through a freeze-drying process, but McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Corp. in St. Louis took the project high-tech when officials offered the use of their vacuum-drying facility, developed as part of the space program. Designed to simulate conditions in outer space for astronauts, the chamber-drying method allowed treated records to be safely opened page by page. The experiment was so successful that NASA pitched in to help by offering the use of its own vacuum chamber in Sandusky, Ohio. Reconstruction efforts continue today. "The fire was in 1973, but we're still responding today," said William G. Seibert, NPRC's chief archivist. "We know what records we've recovered, but unfortunately, we still don't really know what we lost."

It might still be possible for veterans to obtain their records even if they were damaged in the fire, Levins said.

"The center receives more than 1 million requests each year for military records, and many of these are requests to reconstruct records that were lost in the 1973 fire," he said. "The number is dwindling as the years go by, but we still receive enough requests to staff 30 full-time employees. Reconstruction efforts will go on indefinitely."

An untold number of veterans may never have their records restored. Carl Yurek, 86, is one of the lucky few whose records were recovered and partially salvaged. A native of Wyoming, Pa., Yurek is a World War II Army veteran who served in the European theater. He was discharged in 1945 after suffering severe injuries in a vehicle accident.

"I just decided I wanted to review my time in the service," Yurek said, "so I wrote and asked for my records. I got a letter back telling me they had been burnt in the fire, but they would give me what they could. It only took a few months. Even though some of the records were still missing, there was enough there for me to see and remember what I did in the war. I saw records of me being in countries I had forgotten. They told me things that I didn't even know about myself. It made me feel real good to remember how I had served my country."

A switch to electronic records storage began in 1994, and since 2003 each military service branch has maintained its own records electronically. The NPRC still maintains Coast Guard personnel files among its 57 million paper records.

"We simply can't afford to scan all of our documents because it would cost hundreds of millions of dollars," said William Seibert, the NPRC's archivist. "Because the records are a combination of onionskin, carbon paper and multifold documents that would have to be hand-fed into a scanner, the task would be unmanageable." And at a time when technology can put millions of *(Continued on Page 11)*

New Members for the Month of March

Al Matera, West Babylon, NY; **Ann Poliseo,** Woodside, NY; **Cecila Cozzi Bryant,** Los Banos, CA; **Debra Capasso,** North Bellmore, NY; **Katrina Lind,** Manorville, NY; **Angelo and Jeannette Ippolito,** East Meadow, NY; **Thomas and Christine Colligan,** Port Washington, NY; **Ronald Riolo,** Oakville, CT; **Grace S. Kornegay**, Port Charlotte, FL; **Tara Trentalange Leopold**, Bradenton, FL ; **John Iulo,** Vencie, FL and **Joseph Merante** from New York City, NY.

Tidbits: **Earl Julo**, last month's member profile, received some encouraging e-mails in particular from **William Battagliese** of Folcroft, PA who has been doing research on his family tree over the 50 years.

Donations: **Doctors Daniel and Janis Tuerk, residents of Palo Alto, CA** sent in a donation of $25 in memory of Pauline Coniglio who recently passed away. Condolences to **Frieda D'Agrosa**, her daughter. Frieda lives in Patchogue, NY. **John Iulo** from Venice, FL donated $28 to IGG. **Tori Petruzelli-Touponse** from CT sent a check for $25 in appreciation for information via our databases that lead her to obtain the marriage certificate of her orphaned grandmother's parents.

Inquiries: **Joe Merante** asks if any members have achieved a documented genealogical report dating into the early 1500s ? He also would like to know if any member has experiences into possible Jewish or Valdesian ancestry. Responses are welcomed by Joe. Please e-mail him at merantej@hotmail.com **Pasquale Simone** from Newark, N.J. seeks to find out what his family heritage and crest would be. His family is from the Naples area and the surname is Simeone. He realizes that this information is very generic, but would appreciate any leads. Please forward info to IGG c/o Mike Genovese at mikegino@aol.com

Condolences to **Anthony DiMarino**, faithful member and volunteer since 1997, who lost a dear uncle, Michael F. Maltese.

The Cooking Lesson

Netty Villecco Gautier sends in this poem that was composed by her godmother's grand daughter Sarada, who somehow was able to express and touch upon the feelings of what it felt like growing up during the depression years.

Curtains made from antique fabric,
diffuse light across the vinyl wallpaper
that wraps my grandmother's kitchen
in a botanical garden of artificial plants.

She is at the stove, teaching me to roast
peppers

Sinatra playing on the radio
calls her back to girlhood.

Public School 42 in the Bronx,
dancing with her friend, Connie
Italian girls in an early dream.

The depression years.
Searching with her mother under cushions
and in cabinets that held pots smelling of olive oil
for the money that would bring them closer to America.
Movies, a nickel nobody had.

Her Father, the philosophical tailor,
a lover of Dante, making her Sunday suits.
lines with dazzling silk
that chilled her skin to the touch.

Taking pictures with the girls, laughing.
"The Cat's Meow" in velvet
as boys, crazy in the head,
whistle from the rooftops.

Unaffected by age, my grandmother laughs
as the ashes from her cigarette fall into the
plate of just roasted peppers.

We begin again.

Regional Differences in Genealogy

When researching Italian records, you can take into account that people remain in the same town, generation after generation.

It is part of the Italian culture to settle in one place, marry people from within the same community, live in the same ancestral home and pass on the same trade to the next generation. As a result, we may be able today to trace a family as far back as the late 1500s by researching records in a single town.

The oldest records are the parish church records that were introduced after the Council of Trento in 1595; that marked the division of the population into parishes *(parrocchie)* where each priest was required to record the baptism, marriage and death of every parishioner. To this day, a parish church could serve one town, or a group of small villages or one neighborhood in a large city. In large cities, you will need to learn which neighborhood your ancestors lived in order to know the specific church that keeps the family records.

Family research projects may have to be conducted in different churches if the family moved to different parishes over the course of history.

All church records were handwritten and although each priest wrote in the language he desired, the preferred one was Latin. These are mostly unique records.

When Napoleon conquered a large part of Italy, he introduced important changes to most of the area under his control. With the Napoleonic code, civil acts of birth, marriage and death started to be recorded in the local town hall *(municipio)* by officials, in a more standardized fashion and in duplicate copies. Despite the effort to introduce this practice throughout Italy, only southern regions, mainly the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (from Campania down to Sicily, part of Tuscany, Lazio, Abruzzo and Molise) established the civil record system as early as 1809 (Sicily started in 1820).

After the unification of Italy in1870, this practice became official throughout Italy, i.e. central and northern regions. Dual-recording by both the state and church initially created some confusion. People were reluctant to declare and register their marriage, births and deaths in the local town halls.

It took some time before people adapted to the new system, which eventually became the official one. Because vital records are kept at the local level through- out Italy, you must know the exact "town-of-origin" to conduct a family research project. Once you have discovered and verified the proper town of birth you will have to determine where the records are kept..

Check the year the local municipality started to record family records, the condition of the records and what is missing, if anything. You may need to contact the local church for older records and this gets more complicated in case the town has more than one parish church.

If your ancestor came from a southern town, odds are that research will take place at the town hall. But if he or she came from a northern town, then the research will have to be split between the town hall and local mother church. Obtaining access to both sources can be difficult and time consuming. In both cases, hiring a professional researcher can be very helpful.

All in all, the goal for most of Italian-Americans is to reconnect to their long lost family and despite the difficulties that Italian research can present, the reward is always very high.

By courtesy of MY Italian Family. For more information on how to research your family, you can visit www.myitalianfamily.com. Alternatively you can write to My Italian Family LLC, 6597 Upper York Road-New Hope, PA 18938 or call FREE at 1-888-472-0171 or fax FREE at 1-866-728-8919 or e-mail at asl@myitalianfamily.com

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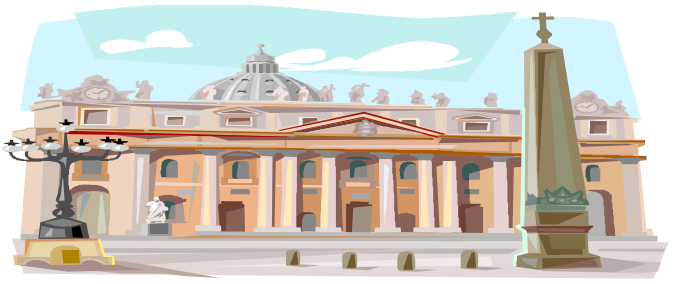
*(The Blaze of 73 continued from Page 9)*sensitive files into a computer hard drive smaller than a briefcase and just as transportable, the challenge of personal data security has only evolved into new dimensions over the past 33 years. New fire-safety measures may have greatly reduced the risk of another fire like the blaze of ’73, but the confusion that still smolders today over lost and damaged records amplifies the value of official government data and what it might mean to lose it. *End*

Dan Allsup is a St. Louis-area freelance writer. The American Legion Magazine **February, 2007**



Future Meeting Dates for the Italian Genealogical Group

April 14, May 12, and June 9, 2007

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.