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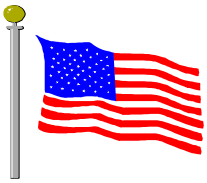
Volume 17, No. 2 **October, 2010**

President's Message



This month's President's message is being filled by your **Editor, Tony Sasso**. Due to the recent passing of Marie Pastore's mother, Eleanor Pastore. Eleanor suffered a fatal stroke the Tuesday after the Hofstra Italian Festival which she attended and helped at the IGG's table. Our condolences go out to the Pastore family. Anyone wishing to pay their respect to Eleanor can make a donation to their favorite charity in her name.

The Hofstra Italian Festival was once again a huge success. Our thanks go out to all of you that assisted the group with working our tables and setting up. It is appreciated.

October is not only the month for our holiday, Columbus Day which will be celebrated on October 11th, but also Italian Heritage month. It is a month that we all celebrate the achievements and successes of Italian Americans. To find out more you can check out this web site: http://italian.about.com/library/blniahmspecial.htm

This past month I received an email from Mike Genovese that pointed out one of the major problems with our organization and something I feel we all must address. Mike apologizes for not being able to attend our meetings lately due to family matters that he must attend to. Mike pointed out that our membership keeps declining. We are down 85 members in the past 5 years. This is not a good trend and I feel it is important enough to be addressed at an open meeting. We need some fresh ideas to generate new members and to keep our existing ones. Mike also pointed out that our web site may be "Too Good" and that we could be losing members because the web site is all they need.

I wish you all find new "cousins" this season and have a healthy and prosperous year.

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Computer Corner

More websites from **Anthony DiMarino, Tony Sasso** and **Barbara Florio.**

For the Italian White Pages go to <www.paginebianche.it>

Suffolk County, NY has launched their digital library branch. Residents now have a new library branch, one they can visit from their computers or phones. Live-brary.com offers one stop shopping for library card holders. Patrons can order books, audio books, music CDs, movies and videos. Also provides access to Suffolk's Biography and Genealogy collection, including Heritage Quest, Footnote, old newspapers and World Vital Records. All services are free and require only a library card.

This one is somewhat of a repeat but has had much more added to it. One has to go through the links to enjoy the areas of New York, Bayport, Patchogue Long Island and much more. Be sure to scroll down thwe bottom of the head page where it reads "Return to Index" to reach the link to connect to the rest of the scenic sites. <http://www.screanews.us/NewYork/BrooklynOld.htm>

Check out this web site. http://www.vpike.com/ Just type in your address or the address where you grew up and see the amazing display. It will bring up street pictures of the area unless you live out in the boonies. If it doesn't show the picture of the area it will at least give you a map.

Nota Bene streams live on www.livestream.com/italics the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 PM, featuring Fred Gardaphe of the Calandra Institute & Queens College.

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Annual Membership: Individual $22 per year;
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Newsletter is published 10 times a year.
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 column is usually dedicated to profiling a current member of our Italian Genealogical Group. This month, I would like to dedicate this column to a member of our group that recently passed. His name is **Joseph Gazza** and he had been a member of IGG since 1997 and hailed from Halesite, New York. I asked his daughter Jeannie to compose some thoughts about her father to share with our readers. Joseph was so proud of his Italian heritage and especially his parents and what they accomplished in their lifetime to make his life so fruitful. Here is what Jeannie composed about her father.

My Dad, Joseph Gazza

Joseph Gazza was born May 30, 1915 to parents Louis and Jennie who emigrated from Medesano, Italy an area near Parma. Louis (b. 1888) came to the US first, established himself and then returned for Jennie (b 1896). Joe was the first born of 3 sons, followed by Louis (b1923) and Eugene (b 1932).

The family moved to Huntington and eventually purchased the land at the corner of Route 110 and Jericho Turnpike. They were farmers during the Great Depression, first leasing and then owning the land which is now the Walt Whitman Mall. My father used to say he never really had time for sports or friends because after school, there was always work to be done. Farming was hard work, long hours and not too profitable.

Around 1940, he was drafted into the Army to serve in World War II. His training was in Camp Hood, Texas and the next move was overseas. He served with the 824th Tank Destroyer Battalion, landed in Marseilles, and went into combat in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France. Eventually he fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

After the War, he returned to Huntington and began buying into several different businesses. Ventures included building a bowling alley/ nightclub (adjacent to the farm property on Route 110) called Whitman Lanes and the Picture Lounge which was a huge attraction as it was one of the first bowling lanes on Long Island. He founded and operated Huntington Utilities Fuel Corp., a company that provided home heating oil for homes and businesses. The company was sold in 1990 after 50 years in business. He was also interested in airplanes as they became more plentiful during the war era. On weekends, (time permitting) he would go Republic Field (known as Seversky field) or to Roosevelt Field to watch planes. He learned to fly a Piper Cub by practicing at a dairy farm using the pastures as runways. Eventually he owned his own plane. He also invested in real estate in Huntington as well as properties on Eastern LI.

Joe Gazza and Family in Venice

He married Margaret Brazauskas, (another Huntington family) in 1953. They had 4 children; Jeanne (b 1956), Joseph (b1958) Robert (b1959) and Louis (b 1964). Margaret passed away in 1988.

As far as his Italian heritage, he did visit of northern Italy about 15 years ago where he reconnected with relatives and visited the local cemetery where his grandparents were buried. He was very proud of his parents who like many Italian immigrants came to this country with very little and who successfully built their lives, businesses and families through hard work and dedication.

Joe was very active in his community. He was a member of several organizations (some for over a half of a century) including the Huntington Crescent Club, American Legion, Elks Club, Knights of Columbus, Rotary Club of Huntington, St. Patrick's Church.

He passed away on June 28th and is buried at St. Patrick's cemetery in Huntington, NY. He is survived by his 4 children and 2 brothers.

(I would like to thank Jeanne for this tribute to her father and also express my condolences to her and the Gazza family.)

New Member updates

I also would like to give our membership an update on new members and where they reside. I do this to indicate to all that our membership spans the globe. The more members and the more diversity of residents and surnames, Italian towns of origin and the like…the better the chance that our members have something in common and that means that information can be shared via our surname database but also on a one-to-one basis. With this in mind, let's welcome and greet the new members: ***Alison Yount from Danville, California*** researching family surnames of Cella, Barbieri, Basso, Cosagrande and Orengo with ancestral origins in Genova, Liguria; ***John and Ruth Caldarelli from Northport, New York*** researching surnames of Caldarelli and Scotto di Appolonia with family origins in San Giuseppe Vesuviano and Procida in Napoli, Campania; ***Mary Pasi from Annandale, New Jersey*** researching family names of Gregori and Sartori with roots in Bettola, Farini and Punta dell'Olio in Piacenza, Emilia-Romagna and Pasi from Trentino-Alto Adige region; ***Laurie Alexander from West Linn, Oregon*** researching family names of Feliu, Crifo, Mischol, DiPerno and Langellotti from Napoli, Campania and Finizio from Roma, Lazio and Tanzillo from Bari, Apulia; ***Roy Tringali from Hicksville, New York*** researching surnames of Tringali with roots in Augusta located in Siracusa, Sicily and Fiore with family ties from Altofonte in Palermo, Sicily***; Cece Camara from Sugar Land, Texas*** researching family names of Patrizio, Santoro, D'Amico, Marwi, Pomponio, Colella and Fontana from the commune of San Benedetto in Perillis located in L'Aquila, Abruzzo and many more surnames as well. Cecere has a website for the entire town of San Benedetto in Perillis where she has posted her family tree. These records go back to 1612. Check out www.ed4all.tribalpages.com

(You may send articles by mail or electronically in WORD format. 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)

Update on Salerno Records

Barbara Florio

The website for the state archives of Salerno is <http:www.archiviodistatosalerno.beniculturali.it/ricerche-anagrafiche.htm> This site is only displayed in Italian and basically it reports that the vital and military records from 1809-1865 are held in Salerno and they are being transcribed into a real-time index. Records made later are in each town and the local Tribunale.

I have translated the new database portion of the web page on the on ***Google Translate*** as follows: *The State Archives of Salerno annually receives numerous requests for investigation of Italian citizenship by descendants of Italian emigrants abroad, or simply requests for genealogical research. The complexity of the investigation and the need to provide answers to real-time applicants have required the indexing of different sets of documents:*

Playlists lever matricolari roles, marital status The database is still being completed, was made by an official of the Institute, and the data were entered by staff. Currently consists of 200,000 records, about half of the estimated material.

Lists of military (starting from 1857, thus providing information on births since 1837, and arrive until the early decades of the twentieth century) have significant importance in searching for his ancestors, as his military service was compulsory, and all males twenty years were to lend their military service. The lists, which are organized by year and municipalities are therefore recorded all residents in the province of men. In addition to the name shall indicate the name of parents, date and place of birth. 200,000 records

The Roles matricolari are special records that relate to the position of every citizen in terms of military service.

The registers are registers in which are reported acts of Civil Status - births, deaths, marriages - in a given municipality. The State Archives keeps records of Salerno Status of all municipalities in the province of Salerno from 1809 to 1865. For subsequent years must apply directly to municipalities.

Ferramonti di Tarsia: Calabria's Forgotten Interment Camp

Stanislo G Pugliese

A Hofstra University professor rediscovers the region's World War II history

When the A-3 Autostrada between Salerno and Reggio Calabria was constructed in the 1960s, engineers decided to build the highway directly through a forgotten fascist internment camp from World War II - with the result that today, millions of Italians and thousands of tourists rush right past an important historical site literally divided by modernity and historical amnesia.

Just north of Cosenza, during the dark days of World War II, this camp, named Ferramonti, was located near the tiny town of Tarsia. To their credit, the Italians can justly claim that until the Nazi occupation of the country in 1943, not one Jew – Italian or foreign - was deported to the far more lethal extermination camps in Germany or Poland.

I was in Calabria on vacation this summer with my wife and two children, and brought with me the manuscript for a volume of collected essays on Holocaust survivor Primo Levi. I have never been to Auschwitz or the other Nazi death camps, wary of the flourishing "Holocaust tourism" industry, but in far-off Calabria I recalled reading about a nearby Italian, internment camp. I convinced my children to join me in investigating this forgotten site and Italy's World War II history.

While anti-Semitism has a long and ignoble history in Italy, Jews were often spared the worst excesses that unfolded in Eastern Europe. In fact, Jews came to Italy, even under the fascist regime, because they had been told that conditions were relatively mild. Until 1938, Benito Mussolini had kept the vicious anti-Semites in his regime on a short leash; but that year the regime published the so-called "Manifesto of the Racial Scientists," a document which purported to "prove" that Italians were "Aryans" and that Jews weren't; therefore .Jews could not be Italians. Most people, to their credit, dismissed this as fascist propaganda. What could not be dismissed so easily were the Racial Laws, modeled on the Nazi Nuremberg Laws, promulgated in the fall of 1938.

Even so, as war clouds gathered over Europe in the late 1930s, European Jews came to Italy. When war broke out in September 1939, fascist Italy, as liberal Italy had done in 1914, stayed out of the war. But, as in 1915, Italy entered the war in June 1940 as the fall of France was imminent. Italian participation in the Second World War was an unmitigated disaster; defeat followed defeat on land, in the air, and on sea. After Mussolini insisted on sending an army, there were reports of cannibalism among Italian troops on the Russian front. At home, Italy was subject to indiscriminate and unchallenged bombings, causing much civilian suffering. Once the Allies had crossed the Mediterranean and landed in Sicily, Mussolini's days were numbered.

And in fact, in July 1943, the Fascist Grand Council met as a majority, including Mussolini's son -in-law Count Galeazzo Ciano, and voted in favor of a motion of no confidence. *Il Duce* was removed from power the next day and arrested. For 45 days, Italy was in limbo between the Allies and the Nazis. On September 8, 1943, an armistice was announced and Italy became a "co-belligerent" alongside the Allies. The country itself was split in two with the Allies controlling the south and the German Wehrmacht and Nazi security forces, including the SS and Gestapo, controlling Rome and the north.

Italian and foreign Jews found themselves in a precarious situation. Unlike most Italians who adopted a "wait-and-see" attitude, and unlike a small minority that joined the armed Resistance, Italian and foreign Jews were often rounded up and placed in internment camps. When these camps were administered by Italian officials, conditions were relatively benign; when the Germans occupied the north, inmates were transported to Nazi death Camps Primo Levi, author of "Survival in Anuschwitz," was an inmate at the Fossoli camp near Modena. When captured by an Italian fascist militia, he was told to identify himself as a Jew rather than a partisan; as a Jew, he would be interned in the Fossoli camp; as a partisan, he would have been summarily executed, Another experience awaited foreign Jews interned in that forgotten camp in Calabria, Ferramonti.

In May 1940, construction of 92 barracks began on what was to be the Ferramonti camp and by June

20, it was operational. For most of its existence, it held approximately 2,000 inmates with a high of 2,700 in the summer of 1943. There, under the watchful eye of a humane Calabrian state official, inmates were permitted to write letters, receive packages from loved ones, study the Torah, conduct religious services and even get married.

"Ferramonti was its own small town, with people doing everything you do in a town," Max Kempin, a former inmate, told author Elizabeth Bettina during an interview for "It Happened in Italy," her recent book about the Italy's treatment of Jews during World War II. "There were doctors, dentists, bakers, teachers, rabbis. They even had their own form of government in the camp,"

Kempin's father had read Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in 1933 and immediately decided to leave Germany; the decision saved his family's life. When war broke out, his father was sent from Milan, where they lived, to Ferramonti and his mother to another internment camp in Calabria, near Spezzano della Silla. Max and his mother were able to visit his father at Ferramonti. Speaking to Bettina, Kempin showed her a photo album of people at a picnic, playing music together, children in the camps school, wedding photos and even a bris. More than twenty children were born in the camp.

While no one was deported to the infamous death camps in northern Europe, life was not easy at Ferramonti. Inmates suffered from malaria because of the surrounding marshes. Roll call was three times a day and inmates could not leave the barracks before 7 a.m. or after 9 p.m. They could not discuss politics and required special permission to read certain books or foreign publications,

Cameras, radios and even playing cards were prohibited. But no one was required to work and those who did not receive financial support from families received a small stipend from the regime.

In an effort of democratic self-governance, each barrack elected a representative; once a week all representatives met in an assembly which voted for a leader. The fascist officials in charge of the camp recognized their position and worked together to mitigate the worst aspects of internment.

0n May 22, 1941, the camp was visited by the papal nuncio Monsignor Francesco Borgoncini-Duca. The Chief Rabbi of' Genoa, Riccardo Pacifici visited the camp several times and performed religious services there. An orchestra was created and performed, soccer tournaments were organized and chess competitions held. Even with the presence of dozens of doctors, hunger, malnutrition and disease were ever-present. In the summer of 1943, the Jews were joined by anti-fascist partisans. I was further surprised to learn that a forgotten contingent of Chinese prisoners of war was also in Ferramonti.

Fortuitously, on the very day (July 25,1943) that camp inmates were to be transferred north to another camp in Bolzano, dangerously close to the border, Mussolini was deposed and camp authorities disregarded the order. On September 14, just 51 days later, tanks of the British Eighth Army appeared on the road and the inmates were freed.

Today, one wanders the site of the abandoned camp with more questions than answers.

The only sign indicating the presence of the camp has fallen off a signpost. Entrance to the locked camp is only possible by driving up the narrow, winding road to the nearest town, Tarsia, and having a local official bring a key and escort you around. Many of the original 92 barracks have been destroyed. The few that were remaining were either in a state of disrepair or being restored by the Fondazione Museo Internazionale della Memoria Ferramonti di Tarsia; they measured no more than 5 meters by 10 meters. One small building has been converted by the Fondazione into a museum that collects and displays documents and photos. One senses the presence of ghosts in a haunted landscape.

"People don't want to remember what happened here," a local resident told author and journalist Paul Paolicelli when he came across Ferramonti in 2002. Restoration of the camp, though, indicates that perhaps some people do want to remember what happened here after all.

On April 25, 2004 - *il giorno della liberazione,* the national holiday in Italy commemorating the end of World War II - with financing from the commune of Tarsia, the Museum of Ferramonti was officially opened. It was a small but noble attempt to fight the forces of oblivion and historical amnesia.

References: In Italian, see Francesco Folino, "Ferramonti, un lager di Mussolini." Paul Paolicelli, devotes a chapter to Ferramonti in his wonderful book "Under the Southern Sun " See also Elizabeth Bettina's recent book, "It Happened in *Italy," which focuses on the camps* in *the town Campagna near Naples and Ferramonti. For a memoir* in *English of a camp survivor, see Walter* Wolff's *"Bad Times, Good People." For further information about Ferramonti's museum, contact the Fondazione Museo Internazionale della Memoria Ferramonti di Tarsia. Visit www.comune.tarsia.cs.it/storia/ferramonti.htm and www.fondazioneferramonti.it*

Source: NIAF Ambassador Magazine

Upcoming Events

St. Joseph's College, Patchogue, NY Campus is offering "Who Are You? An Introduction to Genealogy". The 4 classes will meet Wednesday evenings, Oct. 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2010, from 7:00-8:30 P.M. Cost is $48.00. Contact JoAnne Petrone at 631-687-1244 for more information.

Tony Di Bartolo will be the guest speaker at our October 9 IGG Meeting. Tony is IGG Vice President, Public Relations and a retired high school social studies teacher. His topic is *Building a Family Tree From Scratch.* He will describe how he began the process of building a family tree, what he thought he knew before he started genealogy and what he learned from his work in genealogy.

Also on Saturday, October 9, at 11:00 AM **Tony Lauriano** presents "Writing Your Family History" at the Hudson County Community College, the Culinary Confrence Center, 161 Newkirk Street, Jersey City, NJ

And on Saturday, October 16, at 3:00 PM, **Tony DiBartolo** will be making his presentation *"Ritorna A Me" My Quest for Dual-Citizenship* at the Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Road, Staten Island, NY. Phone 718-351-1444.

Light refreshments will follow the presentation.

ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2010 - 12:30 TO 4:30 PM

FILOMENA'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT
1034 HEMPSTEAD TURNPIKE
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516-437-4919

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CHICKEN PARM
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EGGPLANT PARM

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$30.00 PER PERSON
Please Pay Before December 3, 2010

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259 NORTH BEECH STREET
NORTH MASSAPEQUA, N.Y. 11758
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A Taste of Old Lucania

Luisa Potenza

A Brief Overview

"Christ did stop at Eboli, where the road and the railway leave the coast of Salerno and turn into the desolate reaches of Lucania. Christ never came this far, nor did time, nor the individual soul, nor hope, nor the relation of cause to effect, nor reason nor history." Excerpt from "Christ Stopped At Eboli," by Carlo Levi.

Basilicata, home of my ancestors, was once called Lucania by the Romans and Basilikos by the Greeks and is located at the instep of the Italian boot, south of Naples in the Lucano Appennian mountain range. It is an ancient territorial division of Southern Italy, bordered by Puglia to the north and east, Campania to the west and Calabria to the south.

Basilicata carries the imprint of the many cultures that once inhabited this land. First came the Lucanians who conquered the region in the middle of the 5th century BC, followed by the Greeks, the Spaniards, the Goths, the Normans, the Longobards, the Swabians and the Oscan-Samnites (a tribal people), the Saracens and the Byzantines.

The central government in Rome chose to ignore the needs of these people for years, considering them backward and primitive. As a result, the isolation and lack of economic growth fostered poverty and hardship. The daily struggle for survival in the absence of outside help, spawned suspicion and tribal attitudes. But in the face of adversity, insular traditions and customs were born, sparked by an indomitable spirit for survival.

In days long since gone, the people of Basilicata lived a totally insular life. Cars were unheard of and transportation was by mule or horse because on1y these reliable animals could travel the treacherous winding mountain paths that passed for roads. During the harsh winter months, heavy snows, made these paths impassable. Life was hard; there was no time and no means of socializing. Each Village was a small world unto itself.

The region, otherwise known as "IL Mezzogiorno," is described in Carlo Levi's classic book, "Christ Stopped At Eboli," as an unyielding, harsh, forgotten land. Levi, a noted doctor and writer was exiled in the 30s to the village of Aliano for his anti-fascist writings. In his book, he gives Aliano the fictitious name of Gagliano, recounting tales of the peasantry and their day-to-day struggles with poverty and disease. The hardships suffered by its inhabitants, in the form of earthquakes and floods, are etched in the faces of the elders.

The courage and fortitude displayed by these villagers in the face of adversity, so inspired Levi that he asked, upon his death, to be interred in the town cemetery along with the people he had forged an enduring bond. A simple monument bearing his name, dates of his birth and death mark his burial plot.

For visitors who make the journey to Italia Romantica, most of their time and money is spent along well-traveled roads--to Rome, Venice, Florence and the Amalfi coast. Basilicata is described by travel writers today as a land "Sconosciuto," unknown. And yet its history and landscapes are as grandiose as that of the preferred North.

Greek ruins are visible in Metaponto, Herac1ea, and Siri, the costal area of Basilicata. They are testimony to the once prosperous towns of Magna Grecia colonized by the Greeks in the 7th century BC. In Rionero Del Vulture, north of Potenza, the capital city, the grapevines, which the Greeks carried with them on their journey across the Ionian Sea, endure. The vines are still producing one of Italy's finest wines, Aglianico Del Vulture.

Beyond the beautiful landscapes lie other small medieval villages situated on the crest of the majestic Apennino-Lucano mountain range, dominated by the ruins of baronial castles, cathedrals and archaeological ruins. From a distance, they appear like mystical dwellings.

In Venosa, birthplace of the Latin poet, Oratius Flaccus, a Roman castle stands, and a monument in the city square pays homage to the Roman orator. To the south, a short distance from Potenza, the abandoned villages of Campomaggiore Vecchio, Turso and Craco, devastated by landslides and earthquakes, sit atop the mountains, silent sentinels to the past.

The city of Matera, whose history dates back to the Paleolithic period is identified mainly for "I Sassi," massive cave dwellings formed in the late Middle Ages. In the 1950s, the inhabitants of the "Sassi" were forced to relocate. A few families remain. The interiors of their modest dwellings are equipped with modern-day appliances and TV sets, providing an incongruous sight.

The villages of Barile and San Costantino Albanese are home to the original Albanian settlers. Their ethnic characteristics, dialect and folklore are still in evidence. The majestic Lucanian dolomites, is home to the villages or Castelmezzano, Pietrapertosa, once a Saracen fortress, Accettura, Oliveto, Lucano and Calciano. From a distance they appear to be mystical dwellings.

Potenza, the regional capitol, is now a Mecca of modern-day living. Hi-rise dwellings, chic boutiques and all of the trappings associated with progress are here. But amidst all of this advancement the traditions of the past endure.

Clusters of "pensionieri," old men, engaged in animated conversation fill the central piazza, obviously enjoying' their liberation from the drudgery of farm life. Women are noticeably absent. It is still the custom to leave the women at home to tend to household chores, at least for the older generation. Strolling through the piazza, it is as though one were trapped in an ever-changing time warp-catapulted into the past one moment and then abruptly returned to the present.

It is said here that the ancient days are over and the new have yet to begin.

Luisa Potenza Muniz has visited and traveled through Basilicata many times, She has attended the Culinary Institute of America and has Written food articles for Newsday, Inc., The New York Times, as well as several out-of-town publications.

This article is an excerpt from Luisa Potenza's new cookbook, "A Taste of Old Lucania, Italy's Unexplored Region." Luisa has a unique writing style as she inserts interesting genealogical stories along with some recipes. Luisa is also is host of "Italia Mia," a radio show in East Patchogue, NY and in October, Luisa will be hosting a tour to Basilicata.

Anyone interested in purchasing her cookbook or joining her Basilicata tour should contact Luisa at 631-475-5200 ext 452 or at <LUPOT11796@aol.com> for more information.

Summer Feasts

Feast of Maria Santissima del Buoncammino, Buoncammino Park, North Bergen , NJ 85th Anniversary August 2010

Changes-June Newsletter

Page 4 left column, second paragraph from the bottom: change nacita and not nascita. Also change atti di morte to atto di morte.

The information in the **last paragraph** should read:"This is a document prepared by the Anagrafe from your request using census records on file for the person and his family in question". They do not prepare these Stato di Famiglio regularly but only by request and therefore sometimes charge a bit of money for it. Some places do not charge at all.

Fraud! Recount!

By Meldon J. Wolfgang III

A startling reminder in our census year of 2010 is that New York City underwent an unprecedented experience in 1870: a second federal census.

General George H. Sharpe, the former head of the Union Army's Bureau of Military Information, was under heavy enemy fire again-but this time the shots aimed at him were verbal, and came not from rebel troops but from scores of New York City residents, some of the city's newspaper editors, and even the mayor.

General Sharpe, in his new position as United States marshal for the Southern District of New York, was responsible for taking the federal census of 1870 in New York City. As his census takers compiled their ward-by-ward statistics and word of their head counts leaked out, it appeared that the city's actual population was going to be much smaller than had been predicted by the city's boosters, perhaps by as many as 100,000 people.

How could that be? In the minds of many New Yorkers, there was only one explanation: it was a swindle, a census fraud perpetrated by President Ulysses S. Grant's radical administration. New York was being robbed.

All over the city, people complained to newspaper editors that their house or their street had been overlooked. Some writers, including the mayor, observed that a large number of New York's well-to-do citizens and their house servants usually left the city for the summer and therefore would not have been counted when the census takers made their rounds in June. Others put much of the blame on the assistant marshal's who had been hired to collect the census information, saying that they were careless, incompetent, or too lazy to climb to the upper floors of the tenements that housed the poorest and largest families. They were vilified as being in league with the federal politicians who wanted to keep New York City's population numbers low and thus rob the city of its fair share of representatives in Congress.

On September 14, 1870, the *New York Herald* published a short letter signed only with the initials "C.L.S.," in which the writer complained about being overlooked by the federal census taker. "No census has been taken at 257 East Forty-Eighth Street," he wrote. "We are between twenty and twenty-five persons. Please remind the Marshal through your columns, and oblige yours, &c." Three days later, Assistant Marshal Kennedy, the enumerator in charge of C.L.S.'s specific area, responded to the assertion with indignation, and in the process identified the letter writer. Certain that the residents of the house had been enumerated, he stated, "There can be no mistake about the house, as the said C.L. Sicher, who keeps a gin shop, lives there."

Still, the city fathers, led by Mayor A. Oakey Hall, demanded a recount of the city's population. At first, Hall suggested a "test" census be conducted in some· key election districts by the city's police department to assess the potential undercount. As September slipped into October, the word "census" rarely appeared in print without the words "swindle" and "fraud" close by.

Sensitive to the charges of political corruption and malfeasance that were flying about, President Grant signed an unprecedented executive order in late October that authorized a second census enumeration in the City of New York. Philadelphia, where similar fraud charges had been leveled, would also be recounted. Columbus Delano, President Grant's secretary of the interior-the cabinet officer ultimately responsible for census matters nationwide- rejected Mayor Hall's new demand that a city police officer be assigned to accompany each census taker to insure the accuracy of the second census.

By mid-December, General Sharpe's assistant marshals were back on the streets of New York, armed with blank census forms and with instructions to ask residents only three questions: name, age, and place of birth. Census takers also noted most residents' occupations and their street addresses. The results indicated that the city had indeed been undercounted in June, but not by nearly as much as the critics had claimed. In the second enumeration that stretched into January of 1871 and became known as the Winter Census, the city gained only 18,348 more people.

For genealogists, this second enumeration of New York City presents a unique research opportunity, as well as an occasional challenge,

especially when the information in one of the censuses conflicts with the other. For example, many people who worked as domestic servants in the city's "silk stocking" wards seem to have been missed in the first census, but were listed in the second. In his mansion on Fifth Avenue, financier Jay Gould had three live-in servants listed in the first census, and eight servants listed in the second six months later.

Similarly, despite his protestations to the contrary, the complaining letter writer C.L. Sicher indeed findable in the first June census, Assistant Marshal Kennedy claimed, along with eight other people who lived in his building on Forty-Eighth Street. However, in the second census six months later, his building had a total of nineteen inhabitants. Moreover, his nativity was given as “Bohemia" in the December census, not "Poland," as in the June enumeration, further underscoring the fact that census research is not always neat and simple.

All the nasty verbal mud-slinging that led to New York City's Winter Census of 1870 has faded from memory, but luckily for researchers, the census takers' hard work –the manuscript versions of both the summer and winter enumerations-is still housed at the National Archives in Washington. Microfilm copies are also widely available at many research facilities, including regional National Archives branches and the State Library in Albany.

Source: New York archives-Summer 2010

Why We Should Celebrate Columbus Day

• Columbus Day recognizes the achievements of a great Renaissance explorer who founded the first permanent European settlement in the New World. The arrival of Columbus in 1492 marks the beginning of recorded history in America.

• Columbus Day celebrates the beginning of cultural exchange between America and Europe. After Columbus, came millions of European immigrants who brought their art, music, science, medicine, philosophy and religious principles to America. These contributions have helped shape the United States and include Greek democracy, Roman law, Judeo-Christian ethics and the tenet that all

men are created equal.

• Columbus Day is one of America s oldest holidays. The tradition of observing Columbus Day dates back to the 18th century. It was first celebrated on October 12, 1792, when the New York Society of Tammany honored Columbus on the 300th anniversary of his first voyage.

• Columbus Day is a patriotic holiday. In fact, the Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 in honor of the 400th anniversary of his first voyage. That year, President Benjamin Harrison declared Columbus Day a legal holiday.

• The United States has long admired Columbus. America has more monuments to Columbus than any nation in the world, according to the Christopher Columbus Encyclopedia. These include a Columbus statue in Providence, R.I., cast by Frederic Auguste Bertholdi, who created the Statue of Liberty, and one in New York City, created by one of the six Italian American brothers who carved the Lincoln Memorial.

• The United States has a significant collection of Columbus memorabilia, including his desk, papers, and the cross he used to claim the New World for Spain. These are in the Columbus Chapel in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania.

• In 1971 Columbus Day became a federal holiday in all 50 states after Congress passed a law declaring the second Monday in October Columbus Day.

• Columbus Day also commemorates the arrival on these shores of more than 5 million Italians a century ago. Today, their children and grandchildren constitute the nation s fifth largest ethnic group, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

• Columbus Day is the only day on which the nation recognizes the heritage of an estimated 26 million Italian Americans.

Prepared by: The Order Sons of Italy in America in Washington, D.C. Telephone: 202/547-2900 Web: www.osia.org

Future Meeting Dates for the Italian Genealogical Group

October 9, and November 13, 2010

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.