ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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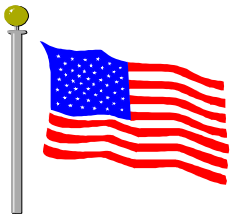
President's Message



For March, I am filling in for our co-presidents. It has been a grueling winter, and hopefully it will be spring very soon. Let's hope it brings some warm weather with it. Before spring we have St. Patrick's Day on March 17th. I will be heading out to Montauk that weekend for the parade, which is said to be one of the largest in the state. If you ever get the chance, you should make the trip. Last year, 50,000 people packed into the town for the parade. I found it amazing that by 9 PM, the town is like a ghost town. I don't know how they get that many people out of there so quickly.

March 19th is St. Joseph's Day, no ordinary feast. It is a solemnity, the highest ranking of any feast in the Catholic liturgical calendar. Many celebrate the feast with a traditional Italian meal for Saint Joseph's Day, such as Saint Joseph's pasta or legume soup, both of which are meatless because, traditionally, Catholics abstained from meat during Lent. For dessert, try some zeppole di San Giuseppe. Enjoy.

Scholarship applications for high school seniors are now on available for download, on our website. Be sure to print all four pages of instructions and application and pay full attention to the deadline. A $1000 scholarship will be awarded. If funds are available, an additional scholarship of $500 will be awarded to the runner-up.

Tony Sasso

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Computer Corner

More websites from **Tony Sasso** and **Barbara Florio.**

Anthony DiMarino writes, most genealogists may already know of this site. For those new to research, this military grave search is very easy to use. It also includes many good links at the top of the home page concerning veterans services, history of the VA, VA locations and many more useful links. Go to <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1>

Pro-Genealogists has listed the 50 most popular genealogy websites for 2011 go to <http://www.progenealogists.com/top50genealogy2011.htm>. The list is as measured by four major ranking companies and is explained in an article in *Digital Genealogy*.

This will be a good site not only for genealogy but also for almost any reference we come across in general reading. Find out what any acronym, abbreviation, or initial stands for at <http://www.acronymfinder.com/>

This site is compiled by hundreds of people who write short paragraphs about where they were from in Brooklyn. Go to <http://www.brooklyn.net/index.html>

There are added links at the bottom of the main web page. There is enough here to interest everybody. The tab entitled Neighborhoods has a number of links to the history of some areas in Brooklyn.

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Profiles from the Four Corners

Michael S. Genovese

This month we feature **Tara Trentalange Leopold,** who hails from Lakewood Ranch, Florida, but is originally a New Yorker from Staten Island. She is married to Arthur Leopold and both are real estate brokers. Tara writes a great story of her paternal grandmother, which includes a episode at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in 1911. This month marks the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. Here is an engaging story about her grandmother's connection to that infamous fire.

From Naples to the New York

My paternal grandmother is the focus of my story. Her name is Fortunata Adele Erminia Troise, but everybody called her "Fanny." She was born at Via Nuova Santa Maria Ognibene # 29 in the Monte de Calvario quarter of Naples, on October 14, 1890, to Pasquale Troise and Anna Esposito Troise.

Fanny was the fifth of ten children, born from 1881 to 1902. Their names were: Concetta, Gennaro, Consiglia, Alfredo, Fortunata, Raffaele, Maria, Vincenzo, Erminia, and Armando.

Fanny's father, Pasquale Troise, was born in Naples in 1861 to Guiseppe and Josephine (Milone) Troise. He married Anna, born in 1859 to Bartholomew and Concetta (De Angeles) Esposito.

Pasquale Troise was a coal merchant in Naples as confirmed on ship records. "He owned coal mines and had money," his grandson, Pat Troise, 89 years old, recently told me. Our family historian, Aunt Anita, writes in her notes, "Pasquale, was a coal distributor and business man who also dabbled in real estate." She added, "Anna Esposito Troise came from a fairly well-to-do family and inherited a small fortune from one of her aunts." They were prosperous enough to journey with ten children from Naples to America in 1902.

Their destination was to, visit Pasquale's sister, named "Anna," 74 Baxter Street, NYC. Years later, Fanny would tell her daughter Norma that they were met at the pier by her aunt. What she remembered most was that her aunt gave her a banana. It was the first time she had ever seen or tasted one.

Pasquale and family must have settled in little Italy. I have a record that Fanny attended and graduated from PS 23 on Mulberry and Bayard Streets. She learned to speak English fluently and, to my amazement, had no accent at all. Today,

In 1902, when my grandmother's family arrived, my future grandfather, Michael Trentalange, had already been living in America for six years. Born August 8, 1884, he arrived in 1898 from Campobasso, Italy and was living at 71 Mulberry Street with his father, three sisters and a younger brother. Unlike Fanny, who was privileged to come to America with her entire family of 12, Giovanni Trentalange arrived alone in March 1891. After seven and a half years, he was finally able to send for his family, during which time his wife Rosa had died in Italy.

Michael was handsome and soft-spoken with fair complexion, black hair and pale blue eyes. In 1905, according to his Petition for Naturalization, he was apprenticing as a tailor and living with his older sister Marietta and his brother-in-law, Peter Palladino at 17 Main Street Brooklyn.

The Troise and Trentalange families moved several times between Manhattan and Brooklyn, but their paths would eventually meet.

In 1911, Fanny who was only 20 was working at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on the corner of Greene Street and Washington Place in Manhattan. She had just met my grandfather at a social function in Brooklyn. She was a beautiful young woman with a sweet and kind disposition.

One day, as a youngster I overheard my aunts and mother talking in the kitchen in hushed voices. They were talking about a terrible, terrible fire in a sewing factory that somehow had involved my grandmother. I remember hearing the word, "triangle." In my mind, I envisioned a fire in a building shaped like a triangle. I thought if I looked hard enough I'd be able to see the odd shaped

building and fire in the distance. Years later, I learned the facts.

A shirtwaist, was a white tailored blouse, often with tucks and a collar, worn with a tailored dark skirt, popular among women as a result of artist Charles Dana Gibson's *Gibson girls*.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Company had moved its business into the ninth floor of a new, ten-story, "fireproof" Asch Building. By 1911, the company was one of the largest blouse makers in New York City, employing 1,000 workers, mostly Italian and Yiddish immigrant women who worked long hours, six days a week, for low pay in cramped quarters. Many of them were young, some only 13 or 14 years old.

The factory was open Mondays to Fridays from 7 AM to 9 PM, but on Saturdays it closed at 4:30 PM. A little over half their employees were at work on that fateful Saturday afternoon working overtime to fill back orders caused by a previous strike. The rest of the building was nearly empty, all the other firms occupying the building having closed at three o'clock. The girls on the 8th, 9th and 10th floors had put in some overtime to supplement their normal salary of $6 a week.

The windows facing south and east were open to catch the breezes of spring, and the girls were eager to get out and enjoy the last hour or so of a fine day. Chattering gaily in several languages, they left the cluttered sewing room and headed for the dressing rooms and washrooms. They couldn't move fast, as the tables were so close together and chairs were touching back to back in between the rows.

As most of the workers were gathering their belongings and their paychecks, a cutter noticed that a small fire had started in his scrap bin. No one is sure what exactly started the fire, but a fire marshal thought a cigarette butt had possibly been tossed into the bin. Nearly everything in the room was flammable, hundreds of pounds of cotton scraps, tissue paper patterns, and wooden tables.

The employees were locked in their workrooms, unable to flee to safety when the fire broke out. Fire trucks arrived within minutes, but there were already many bodies lying on the street blocking their efforts. Tragically, when the firemen raised the ladders, they could only reach the 7th floor.

In less than 30 minutes, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire had spent itself. In its wake, it left 146 dead garment workers, who either died from the fire or jumped to their deaths. The tragedy and the working conditions it revealed shocked the nation and led to reform of working conditions for women and children. It also fueled the union movement, adding impetus to the organization of the International Garment Workers Union. It was the worst workplace disaster in New York City until September 11.

What Happened to Grandmother?

Grandmother left early to go on a date with my grandfather. With thanks to Aunt Claudia, I learned the factual story about what I had first overheard decades ago as a young child.

Ten years ago, on the 90th anniversary of the Fire, I called Aunt Claudia to ask her what actually had happened to her mother that day. She told me, *"Mama went to work the day of the fire, but she left just a little bit early because she had a date with papa."*

Aunt Claudia said, "Mama witnessed it…. Mama and Papa were standing across the street from the building when the fire broke out and witnessed the whole thing." She further confirmed, "I know because I wrote it in our family history, just exactly as Mama told me." I remember thinking how horrible it must have been for my grandmother seeing the building engulfed in flames and smoke and seeing the women she knew and worked with jumping to their deaths.

By the end of 1911, Fanny and her family moved to 224 High Street, Brooklyn. During this time, Michael Trentalange's oldest sister, Marietta had seen an advertisement for the sale of lots on Staten Island and decided it was time to move out of crowded Little Italy. She bought a lot and built a two-story home at 60 Brighton Avenue, to raise her family. Her father, Giovanni and younger sisters, Gertrude and Susie also moved to Staten Island. My grandfather, Michael lived with his sister Marietta for a short time before he and Fanny married. All of this unfolded less than a year after the Triangle Fire. My grandparents were married in St Michael's Church in Brooklyn.

My grandparents honeymooned in Waterbury, CT., where my grandfather's younger brother, Joe Trentalange had settled when he married Mariana Santoro. Michael took a job and lived there a year, residing at 95 East Farm Street, where my father John Patrick, the first of twelve children, was born on September 2, 1912**.**

On behalf of the members of IGG, I would like to thank Tara Trentalange Leopold for sharing her story and a bit of important history with us.

*For further information about the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire see Joseph Berger's New York Times report of (Monday, February 21, 2011) "**A Century Later, the Roll of the Dead In a Factory Fire Now has All 146 Names**."*

(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

IGG Pittsburgh Chapter

William S. Gimello

The plans have been finalized for the Italian Genealogy Seminar sponsored by our Pittsburgh Chapter. Ruth Merriman, from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, will be presenting four lectures regarding Italian Research, on Saturday, June 18, 2011 in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh, PA. Please go to the website http://www.Rootsinthe boot.org to find the lecture topics and a registration form.

A block of rooms have been reserved at the Holiday Inn Pittsburgh University Center, 100 Lytton Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA. 15213, Phone 412-682-6200, Fax 412-681-4749

***Kathy Rosella**, Secretary/Treasurer PIP Chapter 20/IGG Pittsburgh Chapter, PO Box 422, Turtle Creek, PA 15145.*

Tidbits

Anthony DiBartolo will be at the Elmont Public Library on Saturday, March 19, 2011 (St. Josephs Day). The program starts at 1:00 PM! The topic is *Ritorna a Me-My Quest for Dual Citizenship.*

New members include: **Roger C. Carro** who resides in Woodbridge, VA, his family surname of *Carro* has origins in Motta d'Afferno in Messina; **Gail P. Cinelli** from Carle Place, NY researching family names of *Giacona* with roots in San Giuseppe Jato and *Sanfilippo* with roots in Santa Margherita di Belice, both in Palermo; **Jeanne Icolari** from Fishkill, NY researching surnames of *Icolari, Giovelli, Sarno* and *Farino* with origins in Avellino, Benevento and Monteforte Irpino in the region of Campania; **Frank Maurice** from Rockaway, NJ researching surnames of *Maurici* from Villafrati in Palermo, and *Mangino* with roots in Giffoni sei Casali in Salerno, as well as *Massa* from the commune of Pietracatella in Campobasso, Molise; **Jaqueline R. Martine** who resides in Florence, NJ and is doing research of family names of *Zuccarello* from Monreale in Palermo, and *Esposito* from Casteltermini in Agrigento; **Susan J. Baretta and Bruce A. Hamilton** from Redondo Beach, CA researching surnames of *Barretta* with roots in Napoli, and *DeSantis* with roots in Bari; **Ronald J. Nigro** from NY City researching family names of *Aglira* with roots in Reggio Calabria and Gerale, Calabria as well as *Nigro* and *Muscillo* from Accadia in Foggia, and *Tortorelli* with origins in Matera, Basilicata; **Julia Mann** who lives in Vienna, VA and is researching her family surnames of *Esposito, Assante and Ambosini(a)* with roots in Procida in Napoli; **John Trentalange** from Waterbury, CT researching surnames of *Trentalange* with roots in Campobasso, Molise and *Troise* with ties in Napoli; **Chris Gandolfo** from Melville, NY who is researching surnames of *Gandolfo* and *Arnone* from Palermo and Marineo; **James Carpenito** from Huntington, NY; **Linda Gallo-Lamar** from LaMesa, CA who is doing research of surnames of *Gallo and Mastracchio* with roots in San Salvatore Telesino in Benevento, and also the surname of *Esposito.*

Avoiding Assumptions

Michael John Neill

There are times when we create our own genealogy "brick walls." They are created unintentionally, in some cases slowly over time, but one brick at a time we have made them ourselves. There are several ways one can create a family history problems, one of the easiest ways is to make erroneous assumptions.

You know your ancestors lived. You know they reproduced at least once. You know the mother was present at the birth of any children and that (with potentially a few exceptions) your ancestors are deceased. Virtually everything else you know about your ancestors came from either a piece of paper, someone's mind, or both.

The problem is that sometimes we might have gotten information about our long-deceased ancestors from our own mind. I'm not talking about channeling or talking to spirits. What I am talking about are assumptions we might have made about our ancestor's lives even though we never actually met the ancestor. Our assumptions may be completely correct, or they may be completely wrong. If they are completely wrong, they are hindering our research and may be why additional information cannot be located.

This week I am including some assumptions that could be hampering your research. Do not assume the list is complete. Assume that the suggestions listed here may need to be tweaked to fit your own family.

* The couple was married before the birth of a child.
* My ancestors never divorced.
* My ancestor only had one spouse.
* Great-grandpa knew when he was born.
* My ancestor cared about leaving behind accurate information on his overseas origins.
* The husband and wife in the census were the parents of all of the children in the household.
* My ancestor was alive at the time of the census.
* My immigrant ancestor immediately settled in the place where he died. He didn't live anywhere else.
* Grandma would never have moved after Grandpa died.
* A couple in their sixties would never have migrated or immigrated.
* Great-grandpa and great-grandma always acted in a way "consistent" with their ethnic group, social class, etc.
* Great-grandpa cared about giving correct and precise information to the records clerk.
* The adults in the household actually answered the census taker's questions.
* My ancestor understood the questions the census taker was asking.
* My ancestor wanted to become a naturalized citizen.
* My ancestor never lied on a government record.
* My transcription of a record is correct.
* I have a copy of the complete record.
* My ancestor never traveled back to his homeland.
* My ancestors were married near where their first child was born.
* I know how to spell my great-grandmother's maiden name.
* I know how my great-great-grandfather pronounced his name.
* I know where my ancestors were living at the time of the 1850 census.
* I am certain my family had enough money to require an estate settlement.
* The census enumeration, birth certificate, etc. is completely correct.
* The family immigrated together.
* No other family members moved "out west."
* The family tradition is correct.
* The family tradition is incorrect.

It is necessary to make assumptions in genealogical research, if for no other reason than to give our research a place from which to start. However, we need to make sure that our assumptions stay in the "land of assumptions" and do not cross over into the "land of fact." Once an assumption becomes a fact it is difficult to go back.

Ask yourself the question:
"What do I think I know that I cannot prove?"
What you cannot prove may be correct, but it should not run counter to the facts. If it violates common practices and tendencies, make sure you make a note of the cause for that deviation. And

remember, if the laws of physics or biology have to be violated for the details to fit, something is wrong somewhere.

Your assumptions may be tying you up. Cut a few loose and see where your research goes.

Have assumptions derailed your research at one point or another? How did you get around the problem? Share your story in the Comments section on the blog.

Michael John Neill is a genealogical writer and speaker he maintains a personal website at: http://www.rootdig.com

A $25 Million Museum for Italian Heritage

William S. Gimello

According to a press release in the *New York Times* a proposed third-generation Italian-American plans to construct a $25 million museum honoring Italian heritage. The museum will be built on a 124 year-old Victorian pier under renovation in Lower Manhattan. The person sponsoring the museum is Joseph J. Grano. Mr. Grano enlisted in the Army in 1967 and fought with Special Forces in Vietnam and received a Bronze Star for valor. He was a stockbroker and a Chief Executive of Paine Webber. He bankrolled an investment composed by his friend Bob Gaudio which became "Jersey Boys." He is also a successful fund raiser and plans to line up prominent persons to contribute at least $1 Million each.

The location of the museum will be Pier A, at the northern edge of Battery Park in cooperation with the National Park Service to share the database of the Ellis Island Museum which is led by another Italian-American, Lee Iacocca.

Mr. Grano wants to capture the experience of the throngs of Italian immigrants who passed through Ellis Island as well as showcasing artists such as da Vinci and Michelangelo and composers such as Puccini and Verdi. He is familiar with Joseph V. Scelsa Italian-American Museum in Little Italy which features documents of Italian Immigrants and will work closely with Mr. Scelsa whose museum is on Mulberry Street.

I'll keep you informed about this great idea to honor Italian heritage and Italian immigrants.

Culinary Review Eataly

Are you looking for an Italian culinary experience? Then head for Eataly located at 200 Fifth Avenue, between 23rd and 24th streets in Manhattan. (646-398-5100, Eataly.com)

Eataly has established itself as a culinary center, complete with a school with classes where the famous TV chef Lidia acts as dean. There is a library, and there are book signings by famous chefs, as well as places to shop and eat.

The center includes the following areas: gelato, coffee and pastries, candies and cakes, fresh produce, wines and beers, oils and imported products, cheese, a mozzarella station, bread making, focaccia, and a rosticerria. It has five dining areas: La Piazza (food and drinks), IL Pesce (fish and wine bar), Le Verdure (soups and veggies), La Pizza and Pasta, and Manzo (meat dishes).

My choice when I visited Eatly during the holidays was the Pizza and Pasta Station and it did not disappoint me. The pizza margherita was authentic and thin. I closed my eyes, and I visualized the pizza I had eaten in Rome. They tasted almost the same! The Penne Napoli with tomato, basil and mozzarella was very "al dente." It was a reasonably priced meal. Later I visited the café, and had an espresso with a freshly baked cookie. The coffee was strong! Mama mia!

Then it was time to shop. I bought some bread, the largest rigatoni pasta I have ever seen, apricot jam (for that Italian breakfast toast) and some miniature chocolates di "nocciolato."

Benedetto

February Speaker: Prof. Stanislao Pugliese

Angela LaGiglia

Our February speaker, Prof. Stanislao Pugliese, is a professor of European and Italian-American Studies. His field of expertise is the Italian anti-Fascist Resistance and the role of Italian Jews in the movement. The topic of Prof. Pugliese's lecture was "Primo Levi and the Holocaust in Italy."

Prof. Pugliese began by describing the nature of Mussolini's brand of Fascism, which initially was not anti-Semitic. Until 1938, Jews in Italy were an important ingredient in Italian politics. In mid-1930's, however, Mussolini began to copy more and more of Hitler's policies, including Nazi anti-Semitism. In August, 1938, the Fascist newspaper, *Giornale d'Italia,* published the "Manifesto of the Racist Scientist," a proclamation that Italians were part of the Aryan race and Jews, being Semites, do not belong to the Italian race. A series of laws was passed deeming public schools off-limits to Jews. Jews were expelled from all professions, and many Italian-Jewish intellectuals fled to the safety of America.

Italian Jew Primo Levi, however, was allowed to complete his degree at the university. Levi joined the anti-Fascist underground group, Justice and Liberty, but in 1940, after Italy had aligned itself with Hitler in the war, Mussolini ordered Italian Jews to be rounded up and placed into internment camps. Among the detainees was Primo Levi. In December, 1943, Mussolini surrendered to the Allies, and the Nazis assumed control of the internment camps. Within months, the interned Jews were shipped to Auschwitz.

Levi attributed his survival of Auschwitz to his broad university education. He knew German (the language of his chemistry textbooks), and his knowledge of chemistry made him a valuable commodity to the Germans, who were attempting to develop a synthetic rubber for its wartime needs. At Auschwitz, Levi became ill, confined to the infirmary, and therefore was not forced on the prisoners' death march to western Germany as the Russians approached Auschwitz. He was at Auschwitz when the Russians arrived to free the prisoners in January, 1945.

After the war, Levi returned to Torino, his birthplace, working as a chemist and, as a witness/accuser, writing poetry and essays which expressed his outrage against the Nazis. His writings appeared regularly in the widely-read Torino newspaper, *La Stampa,* but his most famous work, *If This Is a Man,* the personal story of his imprisonment at Auschwitz, made him one of the most important writers of the twentieth century. Levi died in April, 1987, in Torino, Italy.

When Prof. Pugliese read the last two paragraphs from his recently published book, *Legacy of Primo Levi,* his audience at IGG, clearly moved by Pugliese's sentiments, was silent.

Carol Simone Galgano at the New IGG Help Desk

March Meeting

The guest speaker will be Dr. Rhoda Miller, certified genealogist and immediate past president of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Long Island. Dr. Miller will speak on "Using Word and Excel to Mine Your Data." Dr. Miller will explain how to break through brick walls by understanding our research through technological organization. She will show us how to use these organizational techniques to "see" what we have and discover more information about our ancestors.

Interesting History

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot and then once a day it was taken and sold to the tannery. If you had to do this to survive you were "Piss Poor." But worse than that were the really poor folk who couldn't even afford to buy a pot. They "didn't have a pot to piss in" and were the lowest of the low.

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s.

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence we have the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water. Then all the men, the women and finally the children had their chance. Last of all were the babies. By then, the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!"

Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. The roof was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained, it became slippery, and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof . Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence came the saying, "Dirt poor." The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh. When you opened the door, the thresh would start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway, a thresh hold.

In those olden days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day, they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme: Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old. Sometimes people could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat.

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning or death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would Sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up, hence the custom of holding a wake.

England is old and small, and the local folks started running out of places to bury people, so they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins was found to have scratch marks on the inside, and they realized they had been burying people alive. They began to tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift.) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be, saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer.

And that's the truth! Now, whoever said history was boring!!!

Finding our Ancestors Naturalization Papers

Anthony Lauriano

Procuring the naturalization papers of our ancestors is important for showing our children and grandchildren the steps our family took to earn the precious designation of American citizen. The naturalization papers could also provide us with the name of the town in Italy our ancestors left. Most family stories mentioned Palermo or Napoli. Knowing the actual town is crucial to obtaining records in Italy. In addition, by the 1930's naturalization papers included a photo of the applicant.

Important Timeframes

Steps to naturalization

Prior to 1906, those who wish to naturalize could register in any state court. The daughter of a friend of mine indicated that her ancestor filed his first papers in Paterson, New Jersey. We were able to obtain a certified copy of his naturalization papers by writing to the Passaic County Clerk's Office in Paterson.

After 1906, the process was now under the regulations of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. A Declaration of Intention was filed, sometimes called the "first papers." Then a Petition for Naturalization, was filed after the applicant resided in the US for at least 5 years and in the state for 6 months.

Many aliens who originally entered the United States without proper authorization had to re-enter to start the naturalization process. Sometimes this was many years after first arriving in America. Keep all the above in mind when searching for Naturalization Papers.

Military Naturalizations

Many men, joined the military during World War I and were able to speed the Naturalization process. An alien 21 years or over in the US military and honorably discharged could become a citizen by filing the Petition without filing the Declaration of Intention. A military applicant was not required to prove more than one year's residency in the United States.

It is important to note that members of the armed forces were naturalized at the military post or nearby courts where they were stationed rather than at their legal residence. This sometimes makes finding their papers tricky.

Female Naturalizations

Prior to September 22, 1922, a women automatically became a citizen by virtue of being married to a citizen, but they had to file for citizenship separately. No Declaration of Intent was required, however when she filed for citizenship.

A naturalized female citizen who married an alien, who was not eligible to become a citizen would cease to be a citizen, even if she was born in the US. By 1931 this changed so that women could not lose citizenship by marriage.

Key Information Found on Naturalization Papers After 1906

- residence of applicant
- when and from where migrated to America
- birth date
- data on spouse and children if applicable
- name of passenger ship
- by 1930's photo of applicant

Where to Obtain Naturalization Papers

archives.gov -National archives website Free to research index, fee to order copy

italiangen.org -Italian Genealogical Group which lists names of NYC applicants. All nationalities.

jgsny.org/kingsintro2.htm -name index of military who lived in Brooklyn, NY but received naturalization in military post.

Anthony DiBartolo (L) and Bill Gimello (R) introduce John Misso of the East Nortport AOSI

Tip of the Day

Micheal John Neill

Grandma Is Human & So Are You

Remember that any relative, even the most well-meaning and reliable one, can occasionally tell you something that is incorrect. Verify everything Grandma (or Uncle Herman, etc.) tells you, using other sources as much as possible. Well-intentioned informants can be incorrect and the very process of verifying what they tell you may cause you to locate information you never dreamed of.

People tell me that "I didn't look at that record because I already knew what was on it." You don't know what is on it until you actually look at it. You may think you know and you may be correct. But there's always the chance that you were wrong.

A Louisiana Saint Joseph's Day Alter

Cooking? Cleaning? I'd Rather do Genealogy!

Mel Oshins

They think that I should cook and clean,
and be a model wife.
I tell them it's more interesting
to study Grandpa's life.
They simply do not understand
why I hate to go to bed ...
I'd rather do two hundred years
of research work instead.
Why waste the time we have on earth
just snoring and asleep?
When we can learn of ancestors
that sailed upon the deep?
There are priests, Rabbis, lawmen, soldiers,
more than just a few.
And yes, there's many scoundrels,
and a bootlegger or two.
How can a person find this life
an awful drudge or bore?
When we can live the lives of all
those folks who came before?
A hundred years from now of course,
no one will ever know
Whether I did laundry,
but they'll see our Tree aglow ...
'Cause their dear old cousin left for them,
for all posterity,
not clean hankies and the like,
but a finished family tree.
My home may be untidy,
'cause I've better things to do ...
I'm checking all the records
to provide us with a clue.
This cousin's pulling roots
and branches out with glee,
Her clothes ain't hanging out to dry,
she's hung up on the Family Tree!!

Submitted by Margaret Leone Morphew, whose family hails from Salandra, Matera. Margaret manages a Genealogical Library in Sun City Arizona.

Future Meeting Dates for the Italian Genealogical Group

March 12, April 9, and May 14, 2011

All meetings start at 10:30 AM

Directions to the Bethpage Library, 47 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.