ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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Volume 17, No. 9 **May, 2011**

A Mothers' Day Interview to Honor Mom

May is the month traditionally set aside to honor our mothers. I recently read an article by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack (*Interviewing Mom and Grandma: Oral History Tips,* Genealogy.com) suggesting a very unique Mothers' Day gift for Mom or Grandma. We who are fortunate enough to still have these special people in our lives might consider Sharon's tip to interview the women in our family to preserve their life stories. Sharon points out that women, traditionally, do not create as many public documents as men do, so interviewing women provides an important picture of their "private lives."

What is novel about Sharon's suggestion is that she advises us to bypass the questions that would elicit the facts of their lives, since these facts are obtainable through vital records. Instead, she suggests that we ask *who, how* and *what* questions that will require Mom or Grandma to think about the answers and will produce interesting information we won't find in any records. Pose questions that will reveal Mom or Grandma as a real person to your children or grandchildren. Here are some ideas:

✦*How did you meet Dad/Grandpa?*

✦*Where did he take you on your first date?*

✦*Describe your wedding day.*

✦*What is your fondest memory of your mother/ grandmother?*

✦*Tell me something about your mother/ grandmother that will show me what kind of woman she was.*

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Questions that reveal thoughts, feelings and motivations will tell future generations what made these particular women unique. Unless documented now, these precious revelations will follow our mothers and grandmothers to their graves.

I will always remember my mom's stories about shopping in Manhattan for the latest fashions with her sisters and the excitement in her eyes when she told me about the military balls she attended at the U.S. Naval Academy, the men she had dated in her youth, and the vacations she took with her friends. My mom, it seems, was a live wire as a young girl who learned to drive at age 18 and enjoyed cruising around Brooklyn in her family's car. When Mom recounted the story of my grandmother's hitching a ride on a laundry truck in a snowstorm so she wouldn't miss a card party, I realized that the apple did not fall far from the tree. All these details, which are important to preserve, would be gone now if I hadn't listened to her stories.

Plan ahead, and enjoy your interview with the assurance that you are not only creating an important record for your grandchildren, but are also providing those special women with an opportunity to reminisce and reflect upon past memories and events that were special in their lives.

Happy Mothers' Day!

Angela LaGiglia

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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

Profiles from the Four Corners

Michael S. Genovese

Our monthly profile focuses on a new member of IGG, **Rosalie Griffin** a resident of **Waterbury, Connecticut**. Rosalie and her husband Michael have been married for 48 years and they have five children. Rosalie is a retired public school teacher who is presently an adjunct professor of mathematics at Naugatuck Valley Community College. Her husband is a retired newspaper reporter for the *Waterbury Republican*. Rosalie has many fond memories of her maternal grandfather, Carmine Santoro. She was asked to share some of her documentation and memories about her grandfather.

Rosalie's memories go back to her elementary school days at Walsh School. She lived at the same address as PaPa Carmine in a typical three family house in Waterbury. Rosalie and her brother Joseph lived on the first floor with her mom, Victoria and her dad; her two aunts, Concetta and Rosa lived with PaPa and Grandma on the second floor, and the top floor was originally occupied by a Mary Moore, a single woman who lived alone. After Mary Moore died, PaPa and Grandma moved to the top floor.

Rosalie's grandfather, Carmine Santoro, was born on October 4, 1881 in the commune di Campobasso, Molise. His parents were Pasquale Santoro and Carmela Palange and his grandparents were Francesco Paolo Santoro and Maria Felicia DeSocio (born in Campobassso, Molise). Carmine had three brothers, Francesco, Domenico, Ventorino, and two sisters, Marianna and Giovannina. Papa Carmine immigrated to America at age 17 on the S.S. Ems. He traveled alone, paid passage himself and arrived in New York City at Ellis Island on September 24, 1898. He was met by his uncle Giovanni Santoro who owned a grocery store on East Main Street in Waterbury, Connecticut. This is where Papa Carmine eventually relocated.

He lived at 465 East Main Street with Theresa Santoro, his aunt. The City Directory of Waterbury reveals Carmine's employment and residence each year starting in 1902. He was employed as a power house engineer by the Scovill's Manufacturing Company, a company noted for its brass products. He was self-educated, and it is remarkable that he achieved such a high status of employment at that time. Eventually, he went to night school and obtained his U.S. citizenship.

A few years later, he met his future wife, Lucia Ciarlariello and married her at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Waterbury, Connecticut, on May 28, 1905. Carmine and Lucia had five daughters, Carmela, Concetta, Victoria, Giovannina and Rosa.

Papa Carmine was a skilled handyman and did all the plumbing, electrical and carpentry work in the large three family house, making sure that his extended family was secure. Papa Carmine even installed the heating system for all three floors with a unit that he bought from Sears and Roebuck. He loved his garden with fresh vegetables, herbs and flowers. He also loved to tend to his work in his cellar, where he kept all kinds of tools and utensils to jar the sauce made from fresh tomatoes from his backyard garden. Rosalie recalls that every Sunday he gathered all the children who lived in his house and read the comics to them. He had a wonderful personality, always smiling and soft-spoken. It is amazing that he was able to cope with an acute hearing impairment, which was the result of a flu epidemic in the early 1900s, never considering his loss of hearing as a disability to his family activities or his work.

He worked hard for his family and was one of few Italian immigrants who considered education of his daughters to be important. In fact, Victoria, Rosalie's mother, was the first female of the Santoro family to go to college.

Papa Carmine and his family attended monthly dances, dinners and outings at the local social club for those who immigrated from Campobasso. He was proud of his roots and passed on that pride to his family. He purchased a car for his family, another first for the Santoro family. The car was a black 1941 Oldsmobile and Rosalie's mother, Victoria was the designated family driver.

His kindness to others was a trait exemplified by his treatment of his early tenant, Mary Moore, a single woman living alone. She had fallen on hard times and could not afford to pay the rent, so Papa

Carmine reduced her monthly payments to $15 a month including utilities. He and Lucia brought home cooked meals to her from time to time.

Carmine died on January 29, 1972 at age 90 and is buried in Calvary Cemetery in Waterbury, Connecticut. Here are Rosalie's memories of her father.

Carmine Santaro and his five daughters. Seated: Victoria, Carmine and Rosa. Standing: Concetta, Giovannina and Carmella.

The Garden: I remember the garden on Welton Street in Waterbury, Connecticut. It was a rectangular plot of land, raised above the cemented area of the backyard where we played. The garden might have been 25 by 20 feet, but at the time it seemed huge to me. During the spring and into the fall, Papa's presence could be found tending to the garden. I can remember the rows of tomatoes, peppers, and even corn. I recall that PaPa gave my brother Joseph a whole ripe tomato on a regular basis, and my brother ate it like an apple.

In addition, the garden included an area of beautiful flowers including zinnias, gladiolus and roses that seemed to provide ongoing blooms throughout the summer. Carmine was a man ahead of his time. He protected the environment, never using pesticides and providing us with organic food. To fight off infestation of the Japanese beetles or the long, fat green caterpillars that invariably tried to feast on the plants, Papa would go from plant to plant removing each insect one at a time. The insects were tossed into an old coffee can where they met their demise in gasoline. We had our own herb garden as well, with an endless supply of basil, parsley and peppermint plants. The herbs that were not used up immediately would be hung in the pantry to dry and then be saved for future use. In the middle of the garden was the birdbath which was regularly filled with water for our feathered friends.

As the last tomatoes were gathered, I remember the ritual of making and canning sauce which took place in the cellar. My mother and aunts would assist, using huge pots to cook and simmer the tomatoes, cleaning and filling the jars and sealing everything for safe keeping. The process worked like clockwork with everyone completing his or her job with precision. I don't remember any jars being recalled for mistakes in the canning process. The jars were labeled, and my grandfather would stack them on shelves he had made in the cellar. His sense of organization was reflected in my mother's personality as well. Everything in its place, and a place for everything! Sadly the trait was not passed on to me!

More about the cellar: The cellar itself was spotless—his work again—with tools, sauce, and other utensils neatly organized. It also served as the laundry room, as the wringer type washer was alongside a huge sink used for drainage and hand washing. I can remember PaPa setting up a huge frame upon which we pinned starched curtains to dry. The pins had to be pushed into the wooden frame, resulting in sore fingers. I always dreaded the job. Everything was kept in tip top shape and running order by Papa. He could solve any problem that arose.

Jack of all trades: Although Papa did not have a formal education, he was an excellent carpenter and electrician. I can remember him always fixing things and taking pride in keeping the house in excellent shape. The beautiful woodwork was stained regularly and was shiny as could be. As we all got older, he would visit the homes of children and grandchildren to fix whatever he could. Some years ago I visited the house on Welton Street to get a stained glass window that was in the hallway to the second floor from the current owner. It was sad to look at the place—neglected and broken down.

The Cat: We had an angora cat which was a favorite of my brother and Papa as well. PaPa made

sure the cat was feed at mealtimes. The cat's favorite meal was macaroni with sauce. It was common to see the contented cat after a meal with whiskers covered with tomato sauce. When new kittens arrived, my grandfather made sure they had a warm, safe and comfortable spot.

Holidays: As with most Italian families, being together during the holidays was most important and memorable. Papa would sit at the head of the table during dinner and would always stand to give a toast before the meal. In addition to the toast, he would give a short speech. He spoke about the importance of family and he would recap the events of the last few months. Although he was a quiet and soft-spoken man, he delivered his words in a firm, but loving manner and seemed to have the ability to address peoples shortcomings and weaknesses in a non-threatening manner. Everyone knew what part of the speech pertained to himself and vowed to be a better person. It was not necessary for anyone to add to PaPa's words –we were brought up with a deep sense of respect for the wisdom and experience of our elders. How sad that these qualities have somehow disappeared in this day and age.

Rosalie Griffin

(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)

Phil Aievoli, Linda Carco, Bill Hennigan and Nick Rossi (l-r) at the IGG Help Desk, at the April IGG meeting

Election of Officers

Nominated Officers for 2011-2012

Co-Presidents:	Anthony DiBartolo & Angela LaGiglia
VP Programs	Barbara Florio
VP Public Relations	Anthony DiBartolo
VP Publicity	Ann Holland
VP Special Projects	John Martino
Recording Secretary	Joseph Battagliese
Corresponding Sec.	Marilyn Verna
Treasurer	**Open**

As of the printing of this newsletter, no one has volunteered to assume the office of treasurer. Without volunteers stepping up to the plate, our group can not exist. We need a person with computer experience and knowledge of the Quicken program.

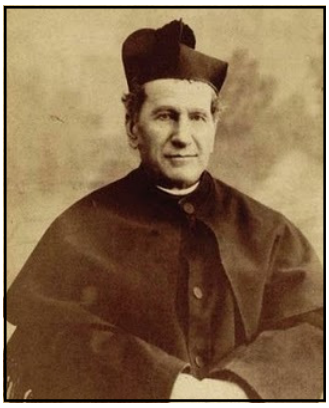
Please call Bill Gimello at: 516-887-8623 or Angela LaGiglia at: 631-587-5377

Voting will be taken at the June 11th meeting. Open nominations from the floor will be entertained.

Nominating Committee
Barbara Florio and William Gimello

The Salesians and New York City's Italian Immigrants, 1914

Pat McNamara



St. John Bosco

Salesians of Don Bosco Introduced into the United States in 1898

On January 31, 1888, Italy was mourning over the death of Don Giovanni Bosco, the great philanthropist and apostle of charity, sometimes called "the Nineteenth Century Guardian Angel of Youth." Born at Castelnuovo d'Asti in August, 1815, he became a priest, directing his best efforts to good works for young people. He founded, in rapid succession, churches, hospices, oratories, as well as day and night schools. As his fame spread abroad, he received calls from France, Spain, Switzerland, and England, even from America, to assist in the direction of young persons. He died at the age of seventy-three, after having founded more than 130 institutions of education, and having gathered into his various homes about 150,000 young people.

We cannot attempt here to review all the work accomplished by the Salesians (so called from the name of the first chapel opened by them, under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales), but must content ourselves with speaking of the good they have done in this country. Foreign missions, particularly those to America, had been the strongest inspiration to Don Bosco's great soul. One of the first cities in the United States where Italians settled in large numbers was San Francisco; as early as 1860 many of them were established there. The first Italian church in San Francisco was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. In 1896, after many urgent requests from Archbishop Patrick Riordan, the Salesians assumed control of the parish, and took charge of all Italian Catholics in San Francisco.

In 1882 Cardinal McCloskey, archbishop of New York, asked the Salesians to take charge of the Italian emigrants in his archdiocese. But owing to lack of priests, Don Bosco could not grant the request. Not until 1898, under Archbishop Corrigan did the Salesian Fathers began their noble work in New York City. The Salesians in New York were under the leadership of the Rev. Ernesto Coppo, now rector of the church of the Transfiguration. They reached this city on November 26, 1898, and on December 25th of the same year began a splendid work in the church of St. Brigid, 8th Street and Avenue B. They rented a house at 315 East 12th Street, where they lived until May 1, 1902 when, the archbishop having given them charge of the parish of the Transfiguration, they moved to the rectory at 29 Mott Street.

This parish has had an important place in the history of the Catholic church in New York, as it was the fourth to be founded, the others being St. Peter's on Barclay Street (1786), St. Patrick's on Mott Street (1809), and St. Mary's on Grand Street (1827). The original building was an old Protestant church, the congregation was ministered to by the holy Cuban priest, Father Felix Varela; it was dedicated on July 15, 1827. Parochial schools for boys and girls were opened in 1852, and in 1856 important additions were made to the church itself; completed in 1868.

Near the end of the nineteenth century the English-speaking portion of the parish was becoming less, while the Italians were rapidly increasing in number, finally taking complete possession of Mulberry Street and its vicinity. For this reason it became necessary to send for priests who could speak the language of their people, and, during several years, Italian services were held in the basement of the church; but in 1901 a terrible fire in the basement sadly interrupted this work. However, in May, 1902, services for the Italian congregation were resumed, the priests being the Salesians of Don Bosco.

While working among the Italians in the lower part, the Salesians had not neglected the work begun among the Italians belonging to the parishes of St. Brigid and St. Ann, as well as in other districts in the central and upper parts of the city. A secular priest was placed there to care for the sick and look after urgent needs during the week; but every Sunday the Salesians attended to the spiritual comfort of these people. A home for the fathers near the church of St. Brigid became a very urgent necessity; one was first rented at 299 East 8th

Street, but on June 15, 1906, the Salesians bought a house at 431 East 12th Street, and on September 17th Mgr. J. Edwards blessed their new chapel, giving it the name of Mary Help of Christians.

Fr. Ernesto Coppo

Few persons can conceive what a great social as well as religious work has been accomplished by the Salesians in so brief a time and with the scant means at their disposal. They have not only been spiritual guides to their parishioners, but they have educated them; organized them into societies for the old as well as the young. To them is due the issue of a Catholic weekly paper, the Italiano in America, largely read in the Italian colony. Besides this they have opened an excellent Italian free library, and an office where the poor can be provided for; they have initiated and developed a Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which visits and cares for, when necessary, poor Italian emigrant families.

It is well known that Don Bosco attached great importance to the teaching of Catechism, and this spirit has been inherited by all his priests throughout the world. Nor has this been neglected in the parish of the Transfiguration, New York, where, every Sunday, almost 2000 children receive instruction, according to the Salesian system. It is also worthy of note that the confraternity of Christian doctrine has been canonically erected in Transfiguration parish, with a teaching staff of sixty, thus perpetuating the traditional spirit of the Salesian Society.

NOTE

In 1851, there were only 74 Italians in the entire city. Fifty years later, it was estimated that New York had a larger Italian population then Venice, Genoa and Florence combined. Under Archbishop Corrigan, new parishes were founded for Italians throughout the city, and several Italian-based religious communities came to minister to the immigrants. Besides the Salesians, these included the Scalabrinians, founded in in Italy in 1887 to minister specifically to Italian immigrants around the world. A year before Corrigan took control of the Archdiocese the Pallottines, founded in early 1800's Italy, founded Our Lady of Mount Carmel on 115th Street in East Harlem.

In 1889, St. Frances X. Cabrini arrived in New York with her Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Archdiocesan historian Monsignor Thomas J. Shelley writes: "They were active in the Italian community as teachers, nurses, social workers and counselors even ministering to prisoners on death row in the prisons." In 1946, Mother Cabrini was canonized, the first American citizen to receive this honor. (In 1975, Elizabeth Ann Seton became the first American-born saint.)

*Be sure to go online to visit **McNamara's Blog** for the "Musings of a Catholic Church Historian from Queens, New York."*

Our Lady of Loreto Church Update

The Catholic Church finally issued a press release with respect to the saving of Our Lady of Loreto Church from being demolished. There is not one single mention of our campaign of Italian Americans who fought so hard to convince the Catholic Church not to demolish this treasured church.

I have sent copies of the press release to others who feel as I do and I know you will feel the same. We fought hard to save the architecturally gorgeous church from being destroyed, and we won.

My best to you and your family.

Charles Piazza 1-917-513-2777

Irish Family History Forum

John Martino has asked that the Newsletter acknowledge the contributions of the Irish Family History Forum to the website databases. The IFHF is based on Long Island and supports Irish Family research. The organization has provided volunteer help and monetary contributions since the project's inception.

In addition, at its annual Christmas party members made a generous contribution to the special projects funding.

April Speaker: Toni McKeen

Joe Battagliese

Toni DiSanto McKeen

Toni McKeen, spoke about researching military records. The title of her lecture was *Serving Our Country, Various 20th Century Military Records in the USA and Helpful Genealogy Sites*. Toni emphasized that, when searching for military records, the researcher should seek every document, including relatives' brothers and sisters. There are new databases on-line every day. Be persistent.

Toni's father served as an Army Air Force officer in WWII, and during the lecture Toni proudly wore his WWII uniform to set the mood. She started the lecture with a Power Point, musical presentation of antique military recruitment posters.

Toni divided her presentation into eight categories as follows:

1. General Military Records-consists of internet websites that are easily available:

a. Military Medals-this site is a UK site and it includes *Orders, Decorations and Medals of the USA*, listed on a world medal index. Toni displayed web pages that included the photos and history of a US Distinguished Service Cross and a US Purple Heart. Go to <www.medals.org.uk>.

b. To obtain Army serial numbers, go to <www.archives.gov/aad>, a NARA site.

c. To request military documents on-line, go to <Vetrecs.archives.gov> also a NARA site.

d. For US Veterans Gravesites (1775-2006), go to <Ancestry.com> and search through their Military Records databases. This is a paid provider site. From this site Toni was able to locate the grave sites of her McKeon relatives who died in 1884, 1996 (WWII), and 2004 (Korea).

2. Viet Nam War

a. The Vietnam Veterans Virtual Wall duplicates the Memorial in Washington DC and includes search capabilities, go to <www.virtualwall.org>. Toni was able to locate a memorial page for her cousin John DeAngelis, which includes his service record and indicates the exact location of his name on the wall.

b. Viet Nam War, Awards and Decorations of Honor (1965-1972); Viet Nam War, Casualties Returned Alive, (1962-1979); Viet Nam War, US Military Casualties, (1956-1998), these are Ancesrty.com Military Records databases.

3. Korean War

Korean War Casualties (1950-1957); Korean War Prisoners of War (1950-1954) both of these databases are available at Ancestry.com.

4. World War II

a. WWII Draft Registration Cards, this record was made in 1942 and it was called the "Old Man's Draft" because it was for men born from 1877-1897. All men were required to report, whether or not they were US citizens. This is another Ancestry.com database. From it, you are able to print a copy of the actual registration. Toni says that this document is often useful in locating an immigrant's town of origin.

b. US Army Enlistment Records (1938-1946); WWII Prisoners of War (1941-1946); WWII Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Casualties (1941-1945); and WWII Navy Aircraft Carrier Muster Rolls (1939-1949). These databases also can also be found at Ancestry.com.

5. World War I

WWI Draft Registration Cards (1917-1918). There were three registration dates with 3 different forms, 5 June 1917, 5 July 1918 and 12 September 1919. This is another Ancestry.com database from which you are able to print a copy of the actual registration.

6. Civil War

a. Civil War Pension Index (1861-1934). This is another Ancestry.com database. From it, Toni was able to copy of the actual pension record of a relative O'Neil, Giles E. He was a member of the NY 69th Division. It listed his wife as Mary O'Neil, a new line of information for Toni.

b. In addition, Ancestry.com maintains a database of Civil War Soldiers (1861-1865).

7. Modern Military Records

Next, Toni took the group through a photo display of the offices of the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. This office contains many military records, especially military medical records. The office is located at 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, Maryland, and the phone number is 866-272-6272. Toni said to call ahead and tell them what you are looking for.

She showed us an old restricted document that contained a set of General Orders Number 49, Headquarters 71st Infantry dated 29 December 1944. This document contained a list of enlisted men who were awarded the Combat Infantry Man's Badge. Included in the list was one of Toni's relatives.

8. WWII Memorial Washington DC

a. Last but not least, Toni took through the website of the new WWII memorial in Washington DC at <www.wwiimemorial.com>. This site is maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission. It allows interested parties to open an account to register a WWII veteran and to develop a Registry of Remembrances for any World War II honoree.

Toni has developed an impressive honoree page for her father Alfonso J. Anastasio, a veteran who served in the US Army Air Force. She urged all who can to register their family members.

b. The American Battle Monuments Commission website also includes a list of the Dead from WWII, WWI, Korean and Viet Nam, buried in foreign cemeteries. Go to <www.abmc.gov>.

In closing Toni says, "Remember to go to Ancestry, click on the map of your particular state, and check their lists such as various National Guard Registries and various State Militia. Also, you can look for histories of various battles, regiments, etc. on Google, and check your local libraries, town halls, and historical societies for military records."

New Members for May

Suzette Aprea from San Diego, CA and who is researching the surnames of Aprea and Gargiulo with roots in Santa Maria La Carita and Gragnano in the province and region of Napoli, Campania. Suzette has more surnames of Bandini from Dovadola in Foril, Emilia-Romagna, Apollo and Rizzo from Augusta in Siracusa, Sicily and Samblich with roots in Trieste, Friuli-Venezia Giulia; **Christopher Renz** from Oakland, CA with family surnames of Ceru, Domenici, Tori and Triglia with roots in Gombitelli di Camaiore in Lucca, Toscana; **Geraldine Baluch** from Rancho Palos Verdes, CA who is researching the surnames of Dramis with roots in San Giorgio Albanese in Cosenza, Calabria and Picciano with roots in Isernia, Molise; **Peter Valentine** from Parkton, MD with family surnames of Sforza, Paccione and Florio with roots in Toritto in Bari, Apulia and DeRosa with roots in Grumo Appula in Bari, Apulia. Peter has other surnames of Vastano with origins in Piedimonte d'Alife in Caserta, Campania and Cardillo with roots in Campochiaro in Campobasso, Molise as well as Bastone from Cosenza, Calabria; **Christine Bucci** from Providence, RI who is researching family names of Bucci from Conca Casale in Isernia, Molise and Lombardi with roots in Pico, Frosinone in Lazio; **Louis Piezzo** from Valley Stream, NY researching surnames of Piezzo from Santa Severina in Crotone, Calabria as well as Curcio, Aprigliano and Tallarico from; Casabona in Crotone, Calabria; **Paul Granick** from Jackson, NJ researching surnames of Saladini from Ascoli Piceno, Marche and Calvelli and Petrucci from Arquata del Tronto in Ascoli Piceno, Marche as well as Torsiello and Frino in the region of Marche; **Tricia Stipo** from Massapequa, NY; **Vito LaBarca** from Plainview, NY with surnames of *LaBarca* from San Giuseppe Jato in Palermo, Sicily and Talamo from Partanna in Trapani, Sicily; **William Hennigan** from Rosedale, NY researching family names of Giordano and Anzalone with roots in Forchia in Benevento, Campania; **Paul Evangelista** from Spring, TX with family names of Virgilio and Milio from Napoli, Campania and Evangelista with roots in Coldragone in Frosinone, Lazio.

Letter to the Editor

Hi Joe,

I just finished reading the article titled "Immigrants" in the April 2011 *Newsletter"* and wanted to make a comment on statements that appeared in the article. One said "Many people's names were changed." leading the reader to believe that names were changed at Ellis Island. If any mis-spelling of the name appeared on the passenger manifest it happened at the port of departure not Ellis Island.

The Immigration Service employees matched the name of the immigrant to the name that appeared on the manifest. They did not make changes. Among the Immigration Service employees were translators who could help with non-English speaking immigrants.

If the articles is referring to the immigrants who arrived in the late 1870's they did not come through Ellis Island but through Castle Garden. It wasn't until January 1892 that Ellis Island was opened to immigrant arrivals.

There is an excellent article by Marian L Smith titled "Overview of INS History to 1998" on the USCIS website. It's listed as # Home > # ABOUT US > # USCIS History, Library and Genealogy > # USCIS History.

Sincerely,

Marie

Marie Varrelman Melchiori, CG, CGL
Melchiori Research Services, L.L.C.

Our Next Meeting

Our May 14th meeting will feature Toni Raptis who will speak about the wealth of research material at the Patchogue-Medford Library. Ms. Raptis is a reference librarian and genealogist. The library has a special genealogy department.

56: Joe DiMaggio and the Last Magic Number in Sports

The March 31th issue of The Italian Tribune, Off the Book Shelf, published a review of Kostya Kennedy's new book on Joe DiMaggio. Here are some excerpts from that review:

Author Kostya Kennedy, senior editor at *Sports Illustrated,* tells the remarkable story of how, as an apprehensive country steeled itself for the war, the 56 homerun streak of Joe DiMaggio found its way into countless lives. *56: Joe DiMaggio and the Last Magic Number in Sports* captures the transformation of 26-year-old Joe DiMaggio into Joltin' Joe, an Italian American hero whose name is set to song, and whose ability to succeed beneath the glare of daily expectations became a defining act.

In a crisp, evocative narrative, Kennedy takes the reader along with DiMaggio as his hitting record evolves into an event that commands the national spotlight, drawing crowds to the ballparks and to radios on city stoops. He shows what DiMaggio's streak meant in the Italian kitchens of Newark, on the San Francisco streets of North Beach, in the Oval Office of FDR and in the Upper West Side apartment where Joe's wife Dorothy was expecting a child.

In *56*, Kennedy discloses, the extremely complicated relationship DiMaggio had with his first wife Dorothy Arnold, a movie star who gave up her career for him, and the eating disorder with which she was afflicted. Also brought to life is DiMaggio's equally complex relationship with his manager Joe McCarthy and teammates like pitching great Lefty Gomez, as well as with family members, including his once-adoring brother Dominic, himself a professional baseball player with the Red Sox, on-the-field opponents, Italian Americans, and American society at large.

Reflecting on his own 44-game hitting streak in 1978, Pete Rose tells *56* author Kostya Kennedy, "That was the hardest thing I ever did in baseball. That really was the only time in my career that I felt pressure. DiMaggio's is a number that just doesn't seem like it can be explained."

Another Case Study

Anthony Lauriano

Problem: Finding any information about my cousin's natural mother, who left her in an orphanage and whom she never met. Only the woman's first name is known – Raymonde.

Information Known: Raymonde only lived in Manhattan after coming to America as a child. She married a Henry Tron, my cousin's natural father in the early 1930's. Raymonde married at least two more times after her marriage to Henry Tron.

Solution: The US census would not help as the 1940 Census, the one after the first marriage, will not be released until April, 2012. The date of her first marriage was necessary to proceed. Using the Italian Genealogical Group website <italiangen.org> a site for Vital and Naturalization records for all nationalities in New York City, I found on the Marriage Index a marriage of a Henry Tron to a Raymonde Bedat on April 1, 1933. Therefore, Raymonde's subsequent marriages occurred after 1933.

Using the Social Security Death Index website <ssdi.rootsweb.ancestry.com> and putting in only the given name – Raymonde, the index listed 486 women with that name. Only one however, was from New York City. That index for a Raymonde indicated she was born on March 20, 1915, deceased November, 1974. Both within the possible timeframe.

Upon receipt of the SS-5 application form she had filled out on July 9, 1942 to obtain a Social Security number, I discovered that she had listed the name Raymonde Tron, with her maiden name as Rebetez and her mother's maiden name as Bedat. The form also listed her address as 178 West 76 Street, New York City. We had the correct person to continue to gather information for her daughter.

With the death date, birth date and death location I could write for the death certificate using the New York City Archives website <nyc.gov>. Upon receipt of the certificate, I found the cemetery of burial, place of death, funeral director, person making the arrangements (not her husband), occupation and last address.

I called the Maple Grove Cemetery as listed, and they sent a letter indicating the gravesite.

With the maiden name, I was able to use the <ancestry.com> website to obtain a US Census, the ship's manifest of her passage to America and her Naturalization papers. The ship's manifest recorded her nationality as French, but the family came to America from Fontennis, Switzerland on the ship – La Lorraine.

My cousin now had some information which answered questions haunting her since childhood.

Pittsburgh Chapter News

The chapter members are researching the following names:

Russo and Spinelli from Grottotella, Avellino
Granata from Caserta in Campania
Villani from Santa Maria
Cirone from Abruzzo

Marilyn Holt, speaker for the February meeting, presented useful websites, including *Ancestry, Footnote, Family Search, Wiki and Family Search Forums.*

At the March meeting, members celebrated the Feast of St. Joseph with samplings of sfingi, zeppoli, lemon cookies, panettone, cream puffs, quiche, orange and olive salad, and St. Joseph Fava Bean soup.

The topic of the day was Creating Family History Books. Rita Licnerski used the Shutterbug Program from Kodak in illustrate images of family documents and family photos with narratives. John and Nancy Zappia published a mini book on stories from students in his English as a second language class in Ostuni, Italy, where he volunteer for a year.

The April meeting was held at the Western Pennsylvania Genealogy Society's Spring Seminar on April 16. Richard Sayre presented "GoogleEarth, Genealogy and More." On June 18th Ruth Merriman from Salt Lake City will present four lectures in Pittsburgh.

Future Meeting Dates for the Italian Genealogical Group

May 14, June 11, and September 10, 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.