ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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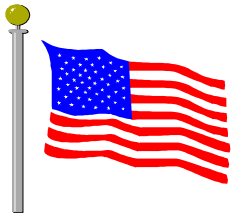
Volume 18, No. 7 **March, 2012**

President's Message



While many parts of the United States are experiencing extreme weather conditions, we in the Northeast are grateful that our winter has been mild, and we have been able to venture out to do our research and attend genealogy lectures. Hopefully, this spring-like weather will continue, and we will have a nice crowd at our March 10th meeting, when our own member, professional genealogy lecturer **Tony Lauriano** will give us hints on researching our female family members through their maiden names.

Speaking of meetings, I wish to thank the people who pitch in to make our monthly meetings a success. Thank you, **Joe Battagliese**, who each month uses his expert stenography skills to record meeting notes, which he transcribes into detailed accounts of our speakers' lectures. His articles are greatly appreciated by those who cannot attend meetings. In February, **Ann and Frank Chiappisi** worked tirelessly with **Louise Perrotta**, to arrange our hospitality table with coffee and snacks. We still need volunteers for this committee (especially during cleanup). We also need additional help to set up and break down our facilities before and after meetings. This job entails arranging flags, banners, badges, and audio-visual equipment (when necessary) and removing these items after meetings. Some of our current facilities people are snowbirds, while others are in ill health, unable to attend all meetings. If you are a regular at meetings and would like to give back to the group by joining our hospitality or facilities committees, please contact me at alagi10105@AOL.com or 631-587-5377. Thank you.

I look forward to seeing an enthusiastic group of researchers at our March 10th meeting.

Angela LaGiglia Co-President

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Computer Corner

More websites from **Anthony DiMarino and Barbara Florio.**

The New England Historic Genealogical Society has posted New York State, Albany County Deeds 1630-1894, online. Go to the website http://web1.americanancestors.org/home.html

One of our readers points out that "The article, "*Spotlight: Brooklyn, NY Cemeteries*" in the January 2012 newsletter was informative but did not give the web sites for the cemeteries." The reader was kind enough to email the websites: The Green-Wood Cemetery http://www.green-wood.com/burial_search/ and The Evergreen Cemetery http://www.theevergreenscemetery.com/records/

Barry J. Ewell has posted his Barry's Lunch 'n Learn Series. It's free and you can learn to search the internet like a genealogist. Join Barry at http://barrysblog.mygenshare.com/news/lunch_and_learn/latest

Anthony DiMarino reports that Kathy Kirkpatrick is planning for her March research trip to Italy, so her newest newsletter is online at www.gentracer.com/newsletter.html. Although it seems to be Italian-based it also contains German information. Also, when you click the link "POW Death Index in US," will bring you to an alphabetical listing of POW's. There are history links and much more.

This web site has many random pictures of Brooklyn. Once you select a photo, you can click on the photo for an enlargement, then click on Full Data for more information about the photo. http://brooklynhistory.pastperfect-online.com/35872cgi/mweb.exe?request=random

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ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL GROUP

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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

Finding Your Relatives in Italy

Gail Cinelli

Gail Cinelli

It all started out a few years ago when I learned of the Italian Genealogical Group in Bethpage and attended my first meeting as a guest. From the moment I came into the meeting, I was very warmly greeted by the members. It was then that I knew this is an organization I wanted to be a part of. The meeting started with an introduction of guests and new members, who were asked the family name they are researching and what town they are from. At the end of this first meeting, Angela LaGiglia, a member, mentioned to me that I should try researching the Italian white pages for my family name.

Anxious to know if I had any relatives still living in Sicily, I began searching the Italian white pages where I did find one person with our family name living in San Giuseppe Jato, the town where my great-grandfather, Giuseppe Giacona, came from. His name was Gianfranco Giacona. I wrote a letter to Gianfranco asking him if he was in any way related to the family I was looking for, and attaching to the letter the birth certificate and marriage certificate of my great-grandfather, Giuseppe Giacona. To do a more comprehensive search, I also wrote to every Giacona family living in Palermo. San Giuseppe Jato is just outside of Palermo, and in case any relatives had moved to the "big city," I wanted to cover all bases.

Within a week of mailing my letters, I received a response on my Facebook account from Gianfranco. He wrote to me that we were definitely related, that he had the documents to prove it. I was so elated that I immediately wrote back to him, asking him how we were related. From what I knew from family stories, my great-grandfather Giuseppe was the only Giacona left in San Giuseppe Jato when he left there in 1906. We thought that there were no other relatives who had stayed there. After hearing from Gianfranco that we were related, I reached out to my American family members, asking if anyone knew if we still had any relatives in Sicily.

The only response I received was from my mom's cousin Joyce, who lived in the same house with her grandfather (my great-grandfather, Giuseppe), as a young girl. She told me that when she was eight years old, she once heard someone mention that her grandfather, Giuseppe, traveled across Italy with his brother, but there was no mention of his brother's name. She said that because she was so young, to this day she was not sure if she had heard correctly. Otherwise, no one ever mentioned family that remained behind in Sicily. I did more research trying to find out if my great-grandfather did indeed have a brother, and if so, if he was younger or older, or if maybe there was a sister. In the meantime I again e-mailed Gianfranco and asked him how we were related. I received no response. Determined to get to the bottom of this family mystery, I wrote again asking him, "How are were related?" Again, no response. All of this correspondence was written in Italian with the help of a friend, and I was worried that maybe I just wasn't communicating clearly.

The summer of 2011 was coming to an end and I had no vacation plans. I knew, as part of my bucket list, that I had to make a trip to investigate my family's history, so I booked a tour that would take me all through Sicily.

Accompanied by a good friend, I left New York on October 6, 2011. The week before, I again e-mailed Gianfranco to let him know my plans and request a meeting. To my relief, he wrote back giving me his home and cell phone numbers. He also suggested that before I leave, I should call his Aunt Lucy and Uncle Giovanni, who live in Ontario, Canada, as they, too, were Giaconas, who might know more of the family history.

I made that call to Ontario and had a wonderful conversation with more of my supposed Giacona family. Aunt Lucy, who did not know how we were related, asked if I spoke Italian(I don't) and advised me to have a translator, since Gianfranco speaks no English.

Upon our arrival at Catania Airport, my friend and I waited together for our tour guide to bring us to the bus and then to our hotel in Taormina. I could tell right away that this was a lively tour group! The next day on the tour bus, a man from our group named Richie asked if we would be going to Santa Margherita. Santa Margherita di

Belice, a town outside of Agrigento, s was the town my great grandmother Giaccone's family came from. I discovered that Richie also had family there, and their name was Giaccone, too. For the next few days, we laughingly tried to figure out if and how we were possibly related.

My Giacona Family-First Meeting

Monday afternoon, the plan was to have my supposed cousin Gianfranco meet me in the lobby of our hotel in Palermo at 4:30 p.m. There we were, sitting in the lobby facing the front door anxiously waiting, my friend with camera in hand, ready to photograph this possible family reunion. I was nervous. Finally, at 4:50 p.m. Gianfranco arrived. He walked through the front door with his son in his arms, his wife, daughter, brother, mother and father. I was speechless, excited and emotional, all at the same time. Who would have ever thought that through all of my research I would ever find relatives still living in Sicily, who our family didn't even know existed, and that I was able to bring this all back to my family in the States.

At the same time Gianfranco and his family walked through the door, so did my possible Giaccone cousin, Richie, with his wife Joanne. They had just finished taking an early evening walk and were on their way to a lecture being held in the hotel. Knowing I didn't have someone there to translate, I asked Richie's wife Joanne to sit with us and translate, since she speaks fluent Italian. She kindly translated for the next two hours!

She found out from Gianfranco how we were related and translated legal documents that were signed by my great grandfather and his family. As it turned out, my great-grandfather did have a brother, Antonino. Antonino had two sons, and Gianfranco and his dad are decendents of one of his sons. My great-grandfather Giuseppe and his brother Antonino's father had passed, and Giuseppe sold his half of their home to Antonino. Antonino stayed in Sicily with their mother. At this meeting, Gianfranco and I exchanged photographs and family trees, and many hugs and kisses. What an exciting night.

My Giaccone Cousins, Richie and Bob

In the meantime, during Joanne's translation of my meeting with Gianfranco, her husband Richie was busily looking through my family tree, which I didn't have with me the day we were discussing the fact that his grandmother and my great grandmother were both Gianccones from the same town. As he was looking through the family tree, however, he realized that they were, in fact, sisters! So while I was busily meeting up with my grandfather's side of the family through Gianfranco, Richie was frantically waving at me from behind his wife Joanne, having realized that we were, in fact, cousins on my grandmother's side of the family!

Unbelievably, there is more to this story! The next evening at dinner, Richie's brother, Bob, asked my friend what type of work her husband does, and she responded that he was in aircraft. Bob then went on to mention how he had worked for both Republic Aviation and Grumman on Long Island. I told Bob that quite a few of my Giacona relatives

also worked at Republic and Grumman, that my aunt was the Executive Assistant to the President of both companies. He asked me if her name was Frieda Giacona, that Frieda was his cousin. I told him that Frieda was my mom's sister. We all couldn't believe what just had happened! I go all the way to Sicily to meet with my Giacona relatives that I found while researching, and now find out that I have two new-found cousins from the Giaccone side of the family, on the same tour with me!

And, there's even more!

Upon my return home I decided that I wanted my new-found second cousins, Bob and Marie, and Richie and Joanne, to meet their first cousins, so I invited them to my house. When Richie and his wife Joanne walked in and saw my cousin Marilyn and her husband Dickie, they asked them what they were doing in my home. These two couples had coincidentally met in physical rehabilitation and had become friends, never realizing until I introduced them to each other again, that they were first cousins! As they were all talking, Joann realized that her cousin, Sal, is Marilyn and Dickie's good friend and next-door neighbor!

Talk about a small world…

The moral of the story is, you never know who you are related to unless you do a little research. Stay at it with determination, and your family, like mine, can come full circle.

Gail

Linda Carco and Vito LaBarca at the IGG Help Desk at the February Meeting

Staten Island Update

Tony Di Bartolo

From the moment I gave my first presentation on Staten Island three years ago, I have dedicated myself to establishing a chapter of IGG on the island. On February 4, 2012, I made a presentation at the Richmondtown branch of the New York Public Library. With the encouragement of Ms. Gail Pantone and Ms. Bridget Salvato, who are directors of community relations for their respective branches of the New York Public Library on SI, we publicized this program as the inaugural meeting of the Staten Island chapter of IGG. I didn't get the number of attendees for which I had hoped, but the enthusiasm of those present allows me to believe that we have taken a major step in fulfilling the vision of IGG on SI. My presentation was entitled "Genealogy 101." I distributed our brochure and explained the advantages of a membership in IGG at the beginning of the program. I asked the audience to consider joining our group. I was given one completed application which brings our total membership on the SI to 3. I was also promised that more applications would be sent to our P.O. Box in Bethpage. At this moment, we are ¾ of the way to the minimum number of members needed to begin a chapter on SI. Ms. Salvato and I will be discussing another program in the spring. Hopefully, we will have the necessary number of members to declare ourselves the Staten Island chapter of IGG at that time.

On a personal note, I took the opportunity during the program to announce that Gail Pantone and I are engaged to be married on June 2, 2012. Three years ago I responded to an invitation from Ms. Pantone to do a presentation at the Dongan Hills branch of the NYPL. When she asked me how much I charged for the presentation, I told her that I have no fee since I would be doing the presentation in service to IGG. She hired me, and the rest is history.

Our Italian Heritage

Toni Anastasio McKeen

St. Joseph, Patron of Fathers

In the flood of green ink and shamrocks for the feast of St. Patrick, St. Joseph, whose feast day is March 19, is often overlooked. For Italians though, St Joseph is a very special saint and very close to their hearts.

Joseph came from royal lineage, descending from David, the greatest king of Israel. Indeed, the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also from Jesus. Despite his heritage, St. Joseph is described in the Bible as a just man, a humble carpenter, a working man. Because of his humble work and means, when he took Jesus to the temple to be circumcised, he offered the sacrifice of two turtledoves, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb.

Unfortunately, he is often shown as an old man. Most probably, while Mary was a young teen, Joseph was probably in his twenties, typical of married couples at that time. We know that Joseph was a man of faith, obedient to whatever God asked of him without knowing the outcome. He faithfully protected Mary and her child, first by finding a place to give birth, then from Herod when he threatened to kill the newborn children. He immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby by taking them to Egypt. We are told that he took his family to Jerusalem every year for Passover, something that could not have been easy for a working man. This is my favorite picture of St. Joseph, and a very unusual one. He is depicted holding Mary's newborn son as she sleeps. It is a picture perfect for today's families, and I find it especially moving and devotional.

St. Joseph is the patron of carpenters, fathers, cart makers, and orphans. He is the patron of the dying because he died with Jesus and Mary close to him. He is the patron of the Universal Church and is also the patron saint for the countries of Canada and of Peru. Did you know that in Italy, March 19 is also celebrated as Father's Day?

I guess because St. Joseph was looking for a place for Mary to have her baby, St. Joseph is known as the patron saint of home sellers. People trying to sell their homes will bury a statue of St. Joseph in their backyard hoping the buyers will find their house.

Because if his importance, St. Joseph is the only saint honored in the Church with two feast days. March 19th is the feast of St. Joseph, as the husband of Mary, and the patron saint of fathers. On May 1st he is honored as the patron saint of all workers.

Why is St. Joseph so special to Italians? Festivities vary throughout Italy, but nowhere is the day so characteristically commemorated as in Sicily. According to one legend that I found, St Joseph answered the prayer of Italians in need. During the Middle Ages, there was a terrible drought in Sicily. The people turned to St. Joseph and asked him to end the drought. If he would answer their prayers, they promised to hold a giant feast in his honor. St. Joseph answered their prayers and the people of Sicily kept their word.

Weeks in advance, every village selects an orphan boy, a poor young girl, and an old carpenter to portray the Holy Family. St. Joseph's Day begins with morning Mass, followed by a parade of the "Holy Family." They mount mules and parade through the village, where they are cheered and given gifts of money and food, then proceed onto the *banquetto.* The food is blessed by a local priest, and the meal begins to the cheers of *"Viva San Giuseppe."* Traditional foods are orange slices, fresh fennel, a special San Giuseppe soup, pasta, vegetables and fruits and sweets. Typical *sfinge and zeppole,* the special desserts for St. Joseph are served. *Sfinge*, ricotta-filled pastry puffs, are found

during the two-week period before and after the feast day.

La Tavola (Table) di San Giuseppe is another St. Joseph tradition. This is also a meatless feast table (since this feast occurs during Lent) prepared and given to those in need: orphans, widows, infirm and beggars. Originally 19 people were invited to the banquet in keeping with the fact that the holiday is celebrated on the 19th, but now many more are included. Everyone in the village contributes what he can: money, food, flowers, candles. In small villages, the banquet is given outdoors. In large cities, feast tables are prepared indoors. Customarily, many people make the rounds visiting several feast tables the morning of the feast to admire the culinary artistry and table decorations. In southern Italy, altars are built in the piazzas, where a statue of the saint is placed, then surrounded by flowers and food. Typically, breads baked in the shape of a staff or a beard, symbols of the saint are added. Finally, *zeppole di San Giuseppe*, a fried ring pastry made from a dough that has been mixed with wine.

2012 Genealogy Events

Tony Lauriano will present his *Beginning Genealogy* lecture, on Thursday, **March 1**, at 12:30 PM, at Iona College, LIRIC Program. Contact Linda Whetzel to register, 718-324-1120.

Also, Tony will present his *Beginning Research Summary, Finding Female Maiden Names and Military Records Research*, on Tuesdays, **March 6, 13, 20, and 27**, from 7:00 to 9:00 PM, at US Columbarium, 61-40 Mt. Olivet Crescent, Middle Village, Queens, NY 11379. Call Joseph DiTroia at 718-821-9700 to register.

Tony will present *Finding Female Secondary Records and Navigating Key Genealogy Websites*, on Thursdays, **March 22, and April 5**, at 3:30 PM, at Westchester Community College Italian Club, 75 Grasslands Ave., Valhalla, NY. Call 914-606-6790 to register.

On Tuesday, **March 13**, at 8:00 PM, Hofstra University in celebration of Women's History Month presents Rabbi Barbara Aiello, Italy's first female Rabbi. Her lecture is entitled *The Jews of Southern Italy: A Lost History Rediscovered*. Rabbi Aiello extends the hand of Jewish welcome to Italians and Italian-Americans who want to know more about their Jewish heritage. Tickets are $5, for more information contact the Hofstra Cultural Center at 516-463-5669.

Ancestry.com and the New England Historic Society are co-sponsoring *Family History Day 2012* in Tarrytown, NY. Classes will be held on Saturday, **March 17th**, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Westchester Marriott Hotel, Tarrytown, NY. The cost is $44 and you must register in advance at info@familyhistoryday.com or conferences@ancestry.com

The Huntington Historical Society will sponsor a research trip to the *Family History Library in Salt Lake City,* on Sunday, **May 20-27**. Contact Arthur F. Sniffin, SLC Tour Leader at 631-271-3140 for an application.

A conference for the nation's genealogists, will be presented by the Federation of Genealogical Societies on **29 August-1 September 2012** in Birmingham, Alabama. Included are 148 lectures. Register online at www.fgs.org or request a registration form from: FGS/AGS 2012 Conference, PO Box 200940, Austin, TX 78720-0940, E-mail: office@fgs.org, Fax 1-866-347-1350

New Members for January/February 2012

Violet Lutz	**Hempstead, NY**
MaryLee Kearney	**Staten Island, NY**
Patrick Montiary	**New York, NY**
John Martello	**Bethpage, NY**
Parma Brewer	**Chapin, SC**
Mary Ann Andrews	**Staten Island, NY**
Dorothy Trupiano	**Kings Park, NY**
Diane Haberstroh	**Oakdale, NY**
Margaret Rauschenbach	**Parker, CO**

February Meeting-Arthur Sniffin

Joe Battagliese

At the February meeting, our guest speaker was Arthur Sniffin of the Huntington Historical Society and the LI Federation of Genealogical Societies. Art

is a long time family history researcher and regularly organizes group trips to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. His lecture was entitled *Breaking Through Brick Walls*. Art's steps to open doors are based upon his own experiences, and he uses the information and family documents he has collected in his presentation. Here is a summary of his presentation:

1. Go Back and Look

Art say's you should take the time to review the material you have collected and revisit research facilities. You may find information that was missed the first time around, and they may have received new collections.

Art was having trouble locating his grand-mother in the 1905 NY State Census. He needed an address. He found an old picture post card from Coney Island, Brooklyn. The post card not only had a photo of his grandmother and grandfather, but it also had her address.

2. Timelines

He says to help get your research going again, develop a milestone timeline to fill in the gaps of an ancestor's life. Art was developing timelines before computers and Excel spread sheets. He displayed a timeline with addresses for his grandfather, Anton A. Skantz, from 1878 to 1906, and another with his milestones, starting with his birth in Sweden in 1845.

3. Research by Other Family Members

If other family members are working on family research, ask them for assistance or opinions. His relatives gave him copies of an 1899 LIRR Employment Record, a 1793-1866 LDS church record, from Vilpuri, Finland and a 1905 Baptismal Certificate from Finland. His son, on a trip to Finland, found a map of the Russian/Finland border that was revised after WWII, affecting his town's records that included a Status of Family going back to 1856.

4. "To Do" List

Always prepare a "to do" list whenever you visit the Family History Library and check their online or current published finding aids. The LDS has hundreds of personnel filming records around the world.

Art displayed a print-out with 20 matching places, from the Family History Library Catalog for a Huntington place search. Also, organize your records and keep up with filing your documents. Keep your research logs up to date so as not to repeat previous research.

5. Join Local Genealogical/Historical Societies

Locate and join a local historical or genealogical society in an area where your ancestors lived. They may have left a variety of official and unofficial records. Local historical societies can often be helpful. Also, a surname society or ethnic society may sponsor seminars, newsletter with query columns, field trips and even DNA studies.

6. Internet Research

Utilize the resources of the internet, a great place for information about sources and collections. As time goes by, more and more primary sources are becoming available online. Art recommends the following genealogy websites:

National Archives Web Resources

Genealogists/Family Historians
www.archives.gov/genealogy/

Starting your Genealogy Research
www.archives.gov/genealogy/about-research.html

ARC Guide for Genealogists
www.archives.gov/researcb/arc/topics/genealogy/

Articles from *Prologue* www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/genealogy-notes.html

Genealogy Online Tutorial www.archives.gov/genealogy/tutorial/begining-research-2008.ppt

Research Topics of Genealogical Interest www.archlves.gov/genealogy/topics/

Partner Sites *(subscription-based services; free at certain locations)*

Ancestry.com www.ancestry.com

Footnote.com www.footnote.com

Genealogical Sites of Note

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services: www.uscis.gov

United States Census Bureau www.census.gov

New York City Department of Records www.nyc.gov/html/records/

Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation www.ellisisland.org

Castle Garden Records www.castlegarden.org

Cyndi's List of Genealogical Sites www.cyndislist.com

One-Step Webpages by Stephen P. Morse www.stevemorse.org

The German Genealogy Group www.theggg.org

The Italian Genealogical Group www.italiangen.org

JewishGen: The Home of Jewish Genealogy www.jewishgein.org

Interpreting Passenger List Annotations: www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/Manifests/

Library of Congress www.loc.gov

RootsWeb Community www.rootsweb.com

National Park Service Civil War Soldier and Sailor Database www.civilwar.nps.gov

The USGenWeb Project www.usgenweb.com

Art also mentioned that if you do not know the comune of your ancestors, note the saints' or feast days that pop-up in your research. Then search for the saints names at www.catholic-forum.com/saints/patron00.htm or www.catholic.org/saints/patron.php. Both sites list the patron saints by groups. This could lead you to your ancestral village.

7. Professional Consultant

When all of your efforts have failed, consider hiring a professional genealogist. Find someone who specializes in a particular geographic area or source of unique records. Art says that the following organizations should be considered:

The Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG) www.bcgcertification.org

The Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) www.apgen.org

The International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists (lCAPGEN) www.icapgen.org

Art says there will come a time when you have reached the end of your diligent search. Take the time to read a good genealogy book, Art provided a good bibliography with his lecture.

LDS Family History Center Online Film Ordering

On Wed, Feb 8, 2012 at 6:15 PM, Marc Shelton queensfhc@gmail.com wrote:

Dear Patrons,

We have been notified by Family Search Support that there will be increases in the cost of film loans. This is due to increases in the price of raw microfilm stock and the decreasing availability of this product on the market, and the increasing costs to ship microfilm. The cost changes will begin 15 February 2012 and are as follows:

Short-term film loan	$7.50
Short-term film loan extension	$7.50
Extended film loan	$18.75
Microfiche loan	$4.75

Any films currently on short term can still be extended at the old rate until Feb. 15th.

Thank you for your understanding and continued patronage.

Cheryl Bourdet

Palermo, The Pearl of Sicily

William S. Gimello

Since the Italian Genealogical Group has a large number of Sicilian members, I thought it appropriate to write an article on Sicily, concentrating on or two of its cities. This article focuses on both the city of Palermo as well as its region.

Early Settlements

The settlement of Palermo dates back to the Pliestocene Epoch to 8,000 BC, as evidenced by the cave drawings found in the ancient Sicaiani cave art at Addaura. By 734 BC, the Phoenicians had built a small settlement on the harbor of Palermo. The Greeks soon established a dominant City-state in Syracuse, also settling in Palermus which means 'always fit for landing in,' referring to its great port. Palermo and the remaining part of Sicily would occupied by the Romans, Arabs, Normans, Vandals, Ostrogoths, Carthaginians, and more recently, by the Austrians and the Spanish. Following the Norman Conquest, it became part of the Kingdom of Sicily in 1130-1816. It later became the Two Sicilys under the Kingdom of Naples, and later united with Italy under Italian unification in 1860 when Garibaldi entered the region with his troops, "the thousand," on May 27, 1860.

The Cultural and Economy of Palermo

Palermo as a city and as a region has a rich history and culture in art, music, and of course, great Sicilian food. Unfortunately, its economy depends upon heavy tourist trade as well as international trade. The city has a great airport, which facilitates tourism, business and entrepreneurial opportunities. My sister Margaret, who has visited Sicily several times, tells me you can be overwhelmed by its great buildings and churches such as the Palermo Cathedral, the Piazza Pretoria, the Palazzo dei Normanni, which is seat of the Sicilian Regional Assembly, the Teatro Massimo Opera House and, of course, the beautiful views of the Palermo Harbor.

Unfortunately, the city has a high unemployment rate, high corruption, a significant black market and high crime in certain districts. Uncontrolled, poor construction by speculators and lax government regulation have caused some of the population to flee the city for the farm areas. Residents complain about the lack of schools, parks and new public buildings. The mafia played a huge role in the so-called "Sack of Palermo." Fortunately, efforts by the Carabinieri, under General Carlo Alberto Della Chiesa, President Piersanti Mattarella, Padre Pino Puglisi and the courageous investigations by Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino have now pointed Palermo in the right direction.

The next article on Palermo will cover the following topics: Sicilian Foods, the Catholic religion, Fashion, World War II and Palermo today.

Source: Best of Sicily Magazine, January 14, 2012

50/50 Winner Anthony DiBartolo

Profiles from the Four Corners

Michael S. Genovese

Carol Proven and her husband have 4 daughters and five grandchildren. She is a retired business owner and is still very active in the Patchogue Chamber of Commerce on Long Island, NY. About 18 years ago, she decided that she wanted to write her family history in story form, and ever since that time she has been pursuing this venture. She is also offering a course in genealogy at Saint Joseph College at the Patchogue branch. This is a program sponsored by the School of Professional and Graduate Studies, the Office of Continuing Education. The course is entitled "Who Are You? An Introduction in Genealogy" The class will show you how to begin your family research; inform you of records that are available; give hints on how to organize your genealogical findings; suggest ways to link with other researchers. There will be 4 classes, which will meet on Tuesday evenings, on March 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2012 from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Please contact JoAnne Petrone at 631-687-1244 for more information. Now for Carol's short story.

Looking for Grandpa

We had several great experiences while visiting Italy in 2004. One took place in *Comune di Potenza*, in the region of Basilicata. After checking into our hotel, the manager, Domenic, politely asked what brought my husband and me to Potenza. Fortunately, he spoke English, as in southern Italy little English is spoken. I replied that I was seeking records pertaining to my maternal grandfather. He quickly offered to escort us to the historical records building the following day. The next morning, Domenic called *Archivio Storico*, the archive records building, in an attempt to locate the birth records from 1890. Potenza is an industrial town with lots of traffic, narrow and hilly streets with plenty of pedestrians. We got into his car and off we went. Simple enough?

We were surprised to find out that the records were not at this anticipated location. They had been transferred elsewhere years earlier, so we went back into the car and off to another site. Upon arrival, we were told this was also the wrong place. The manager spoke in Italian to the office staff, and we were directed to a third location. Can you imagine trying to find this on our own? Finally, Domenic said we were going to a third site in the Municipale di Potenza. This time he could not go in with us, as there was no place to park and he had to take care of something back at the hotel. He showed us a place where we could get some lunch and told us he would return for us.

We entered the *Archivo comunale di Municipale di Potenza* and walked up to the window. I told the lady behind the counter that I would like to get *mio nonno certificate di nascita*, my grandfather's birth certificate. At least that is what I thought I said in Italian. She did not understand me. Oh no! Now what do we do? Finally, another lady with dark brown hair about 45 years old came into the room. She appeared to want to help, but spoke only in Italian. At that time, I could speak and understand only a little Italian. She pulled out a large book, laid it down and searched. She spoke again. I didn't understand. Should I cry? Why didn't my parents teach me Italian? After another long pause, I realized what she was saying. The date of birth that I gave her was off by one day. She showed me the book. Oh my goodness! There he was, Nicola Perillo.

He was real, he was born here and there was the correct spelling of my maternal great-grandmother's name. The lady sat down at her desk and typed the information onto a certificate, stamped it and handed it to me. She refused any money. I said *grazie* and we left and went to lunch. The manager came back as promised, and I had my grandfather's birth certificate with the correct date. Soon we would be off to Grumo Appula, Italy for another adventure. Simple enough!

On behalf of the members of IGG, I would like to thank Carol Prove. for sharing her story with us.

(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

Future Meeting Dates for the Italian Genealogical Group

March 10, April 14, and May 12, 2012
The Library opens at 9:00 AM, the meeting starts at 10:30 AM
Join us on Facebook

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.