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Italian Historical Society-Co.As.It.
304 Drummond Street, Carlton 3053.
Tel. (03) 347 3555 - Fax. (03) 347 8269

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FRONT COVER: *The Di Giglio Band, 1912 ca. Among the musicians: G. Cinquegrana; La Battaglia Bros.; A. Leone and R. Di Giglio. Most of them lived in Little Lonsdale Street in the 1890s.* (Courtesy A.M. Howard)

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PORT PIRIE'S ITALIANS AND FASCISM

by Desmond O'Connor

Desmond O'Connor is Senior Lecturer in the Italian Discipline at The Flinders University of South Australia. His present major research interest is the history of Italian settlement in South Australia from its beginnings to World War II. He recently edited, with Antonio Comin, the 'Proceedings of the First Conference on the Impact of Italians in South Australia'.

"Darkness, smallness, noisiness, fatness and smelliness formed an Australian stereotype of the Italians", wrote Bromley in 1955 in his thesis on the 'problem' of assimilation of the *molfettesi* in Port Pirie.¹ Bromley had in mind Southern rather than Northern Italians, for it was they who above all were perceived as the 'olive peril' for Anglo Australia in the first half of this century.² According to Lyng (1927), Southern Italians unfortunately possessed the wrong racial strains, having been "impoverished by an infusion of inferior African and Asiatic blood".³ Bromley himself claimed that Southern Italians had "made it more difficult for the North Italians to be assimilated in Australia" because they had a "passionate impulsiveness" (they used a knife in brawls) and were "clannish, illiterate".⁴ At the height of such xenophobia and racism - during World War II - the Molfettese community of Port Pirie bore the brunt, in South Australia, of the Australian Army's antagonism: though they made up only 12% of the South Australian Italian population (Table 1), at Loveday in May 1943 they accounted for half of the State's Italian internees.⁵

The community of settlers from Molfetta (prov. Bari, Puglia) began to establish itself in Port Pirie around the turn of the century. According to Gentilli and Corrieri, the first Italians settled in Port Pirie in the mid-1880s.⁶ But there is evidence that Italians, including Southern Italians, were in the area some time before this. Although Port Pirie (situated 227 km north of Adelaide on Spencer Gulf) was not incorporated as a town until 1876 and did not attract a large population until the Broken Hill Associated Smelters began operating there in 1889, it was, even in the 1860s, a busy port that was used for direct shipments overseas of the wheat and wool produced by hinterland pastoralists.⁷ By the 1880s, ships were bringing as many as two thousand sailors a year to the Port, and some of these jumped ship.⁸ The first South Australian census to record nationalities shows that in 1881 eight Italians were already residing in the area (Table 1).

Italian seamen and fisherman had been active along the South Australian coasts almost from the time of the colony's proclamation: Antonio

TABLE 1: *South Australia: Italian-Born Population in South Australia and in the Local Government Area of Port Pirie, 1881-1947 (for 1881-1911 Port Pirie is recorded as part of the SA County of 'Victoria'). Source: Australian Census.*

<i>South Australia</i>				<i>Port Pirie</i>		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
1881	133	8	141	8	-	8
1891	163	23	186	6	-	6
1901	293	34	327	18	4	22
1911	153	31	184	45	7	52
1921	296	48	344	44	18	62
1933	1203	286	1489	148	66	214
1947	1662	766	2428	168	109	277

Giannoni, from Rimini, left the *Recovery* at Port Adelaide in 1839 and in the 1840s was a whaler and a sealer at Victor Harbour and in St. Vincent's Gulf.⁹ Salvatore Cilento, from Naples, was a boat builder and sea trader who also plied the Gulf from the 1870s.¹⁰ In the same decade two sailors from Puglia were living in the colony: Antonio Angelinawich [sic], born in Lésina (Foggia), was given a certificate of service as master of a vessel in 1874 by the Marine Board of South Australia;¹¹ Francesco Ventura, born in Brindisi, arrived in South Australia in 1875 and is recorded as becoming naturalised in 1895, at which time he resided at Port Lincoln. Furthermore, the Adelaide Hospital admissions register shows that crewmen from Genoa, Venice, Trieste, Naples and Palermo were working in South Australia from the 1850s.¹² It seems certain that many of these sailors, on their return to Italian ports, would have told of the opportunities available in this 'respectable' Australian province.

The establishment of a colony of Molfettese fishermen at Port Pirie from the 1890s coincided with the expansion of the Port as an industrial centre. The town's population grew in this period from less than 1,000 in 1881, to 4,000 in 1891, to double this number in 1901. The demand for fish from the abundant local waters came not only from the inhabitants of Port Pirie but also from the growing population in inland Broken Hill. But as early as 1898 there is evidence of friction between the Anglo Australian fishermen and the new Italian arrivals. In that year a complaint was lodged with the Fisheries Department that the 'twelve or fourteen fishing boats' belonging to Italians at Port Pirie were fishing out the waters because their boats were carrying 'from 200 to 700 fathoms of nets'.¹³ The Molfettese fishermen, accustomed to being marginalised, even in their own country, continued to fish in their open 'plank boats', staying away from shore and their competitors for weeks at a time.¹⁴ Initially, as was their wont, they did not consider their migration to be permanent.¹⁵ Amongst the list of passengers departing from Adelaide for overseas in 1903-1904, fourteen common Molfettese names are recorded. Some fishermen subsequently returned to Port Pirie with their relatives, and these included a number of women, who joined the original four shown in the census of 1901. By 1947 the male:female ratio had reached 3:2 (Table 1).

Few Italians from other regions settled in Port Pirie. The only conspicuous group from another

region was initiated by Angelo Bassani who arrived with his wife towards the end of the 1880s and became a fish vendor.¹⁶ Bassani, from Rocca d'Arsiè (prov. Belluno), subsequently brought out other *paesani* who found work at the Smelters. An analysis of the Passenger Statements for the years 1927-1940 gives an idea of how closely knit the Port Pirie Italian community became: of the two and a half thousand Italian passengers who arrived in South Australia by ship from overseas in this period, 193 stated that their intended residence was Port Pirie. Of these 193 (113 males, 80 females), 171 (c.90%) were born in Molfetta, 7 more were from other towns in Puglia, and 10 were from Arsiè. Over one-fifth (41) of the 193 were returnees, having lived in Port Pirie previously, and 57 of the 97 adult males gave their profession as sailor or fisherman (18 were labourers or farm labourers, 4 were tailors, 3 carpenters, and 2 mechanics).

Once the Consular Agent for Italy in South Australia, Giuseppe Amerio, had set up the first Fascio in Adelaide in 1927, he realised that a unique opportunity awaited him to create a second branch at Port Pirie.¹⁷ Not only were these Italians all gathered in the one small locality, but almost all were from the same Italian town, many were inter-related, nearly all worked in the one industry (fishing), and there was frequent movement between Molfetta and Port Pirie. Furthermore, although the fishermen were absent from Port Pirie for weeks at a time, they always returned to shore to celebrate religious festivals especially the feast of the *Madonna dei Martiri*, which could easily be 'fascistised'.

The Port Pirie Fascio was formally established on the Easter weekend of 1929 when 170 Italians turned up at the parish hall of St Mark's Catholic Church and 107 membership subscriptions were paid. The following September, the festival of the *Madonna dei Martiri* became the occasion for the inauguration of the Fascio's banner, a celebration attended by the local priest, who spoke in Italian of the close bond between the Fascist regime and the Church, and by the Lord Mayor of Port Pirie, who acknowledged that the Italians of Port Pirie were good patriots and good citizens".¹⁸ By 1932 the participation of Fascio, Church and State in the festival of the *Madonna dei Martiri* was even more conspicuous: that year, 400 people, including the Chief of Police and local councillors, attended the Ball organised by the Fascio and held in the Catholic Church hall,



Commemoration on 5th of April, 1931 of the founding of the Port Pirie Fascio. Back row (left to right): Onofrio Caputo and Pasquale Catanzaro. Front row (left to right): Gaetano Mezzina, Francesca Caputo (leader of the women's section) and Francesco Camporeale (Secretary). (Courtesy Australian Archives)



Commemoration on the 5th of April, 1931 of the founding of the Port Pirie Fascio: Vanguard of the Italian children. Far left: Party Secretary, Francesco Camporeale. Middle row, second from the right: Pasquale Catanzaro. (Courtesy Australian Archives)

which was adorned with the Italian and Australian flags and the portraits of Mussolini and King George. Proceedings began with the grand entry of Vice-Consul Amerio, the Mayor of Port Pirie, and the secretary of the local Fascio, Francesco Camporeale, while the orchestra played 'Giovinezza' and 'God Save the King'.¹⁹ Such public support for the Italian community was a reflection of the respect that Fascist Italy still enjoyed abroad, as a peace-loving friend of Britain, as an anti-Bolshevik bulwark, and for its new Church-State relations after the signing of the Lateran Pacts. Many Italians saw such social gatherings and the formation of Fascist

women's groups, youth groups, an Italian School and a *Dopolavoro*, as tangible expressions of the interest of Fascist Italy in the plight of migrants far from their homeland and surrounded by an alien environment. The committee of the Port Pirie Fascio was less subtle in its political activities: in 1929 it sent a protest letter to the University of Melbourne requesting that Omero Schiassi be removed from his teaching post;²⁰ in the same year it successfully 'fascistised' the Italian members of the Port Pirie Fishermen's Association; in 1936 it organised the collection of gold wedding rings for Italy's depleted coffers;²¹ and it informed Rome of the existence of 'about

25 subversives, all from the Veneto', who worked at the Smelters.²²

Many Italians felt a new sense of national pride following Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935-36, but the war also served to increase Britain's hostility towards Mussolini and to encourage racist elements in Australia, including South Australian Premier Butler, to be more outspoken in their condemnation of the continuing influx of Southern Europeans.²³ Following the signing by Mussolini of a military alliance with Hitler in May 1939 and the outbreak of war with Germany four months later, pro-Fascist Italians in Australia, both recent arrivals and long-term naturalised residents, were considered a security risk. At Port Pirie, as elsewhere, the police prepared dossiers on the most well-known Fascists. Port Pirie detective J. Slinger, who had some knowledge of Italian, was particularly imaginative in his sinister portrayal of those he identified. Of Party Secretary Pasquale Catanzaro he wrote: "This man is the holder of a Fishing Licence in Port Pirie and calls himself a Fisherman, but he has no boat and is never seen out fishing. [...] He is suspected of having plans of the town of Port Pirie with the layout of all vital spots, including the works of the Broken Hill Associated Smelters".²⁴ Furthermore, the leader of the Women's Section of the Fascio, Caterina Pasculli, was, according to Slinger, "suspected of having strong Communistic views."²⁵

When Italy declared war, Slinger immediately arrested the leading Fascists, including

Catanzaro, and raided the latter's house, especially the room he had identified some weeks before as the one that Catanzaro "keeps locked and will not allow even his wife to enter".²⁶ To his pleasant surprise, Slinger found there not only photos of Port Pirie's Fascists but also the Fascio's book of monthly members' payments dating from 1929 and containing 202 names. In the following months, as more Fascist sympathisers were rounded up, the register was produced at the hearings as indisputable evidence of involvement in the Fascio. Domenico Pasculli, when arrested, was notified of the additional charge that he was the husband of Caterina Pasculli, the leader of the Women's Section. Caterina, however, was neither arrested nor interned because being a woman, the mother of two children and the expectant mother of a third, she was not deemed a threat to the national security.²⁷

The Criminal Investigation Bureau also confiscated detailed records of the Fascio in Adelaide, but Adelaide Security, and in particular the local Italian-speaking Sergeant Sandford, had a more amicable relationship with the city's Fascist Sympathisers, many of whom were business people of Northern Italian origin. The result was that some of Adelaide's Italians were not arrested at all or were released after several months' detention. The *molfettesi* of Port Pirie, on the other hand - less educated, less competent in English, more dependent on each other in a close-knit community and, above all, fisherman who though naturalised were unrealistically considered a serious military



Inauguration of the Italian School at Port Pirie, 9th September, 1932. Centre: Party Secretary, Francesco Camporeale and on his right, Italian School teacher, Caterina Pasculli. (Courtesy Australian Archives).



Members of the Port Pirie Fascio celebrate Mussolini's victory in Abyssinia, May 1936. Back row (left to right): Antonio Mezzino, Vincenzo Caputo, Antonio Camporeale, Giacomo Mezzino and Giacomo Salvemini. Front row (left to right): Domenico Pasculli, Pasquale Catanzaro (Party Secretary) and Caterina Pasculli (leader of the Women's Section). (Courtesy Australian Archives).

threat because with their boats they might attempt to interfere with the important sea route from Whyalla - were not given this opportunity of early return to their families.²⁸ Almost all those who were interned remained in Loveday for most of 1943 and a few until 1944 (Catanzaro, who at his hearing in July 1940 impressed the National Security Advisory Committee for his 'honesty and candour' and his 'attractive personality', was nevertheless deprived of his British citizenship in 1942, and was the last of all the South Australian Italians to be released, in October 1944; other restrictions on his movements were not revoked until June 1945).²⁹

Some indication of the anguish felt by the internees and their families during these years of separation, as well as the camp administrators' ignorance of what Italians would consider normal social exchanges is apparent in a 'Report on Visitors' prepared at Loveday following a visit in 1942 by members of two Molfettese families from Port Pirie:

At the conclusion of the interview Salvatore Caputo, Vito Caputo and

Domenico Pasculli deliberately and defiantly kissed Miss Caputo, Mrs Caputo and Mrs De Giglio, in spite of having been repeatedly warned that this was not permissible. Mrs De Giglio said, "Why shouldn't they kiss, they are not criminals". They refused to stop when ordered and the guard was called. [...] After the visitors had been removed, the internees were held pending Camp Commandant's decision as to whether the latter should be put under arrest. [...] The episode was provoked by Mrs De Giglio, who deliberately gave her hand to Pasculli and offered to kiss him at the end of the interview; though she had been repeatedly warned that personal contact was forbidden. She also shook hands with one of the other internees, the man sitting next to Pasculli.³⁰

NOTES

¹ J.E. Bromley, *The Italians Of Port Pirie*, dissertation presented for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the Australian National University, 1955, pp. 1, 12, 212.

- ² Roslyn Pesman Cooper, 'Italian views of Australia in the first half of the Twentieth Century', in Gaetano Rando & Michael Arrighi (eds), *Italians in Australia: Historical and Social Perspectives*, Department of Modern Languages, University of Wollongong, 1993, p. 167.
- ³ J. Lyng, *Non-Britishers in Australia. Influence on Population and Progress*, Melbourne University Press, 1935 (first ed. 1927), p. 93. See also other examples of prejudice quoted in J. Wilton and R Bosworth, *Old Worlds and New Australia*, Penguin Books Australia, 1984.
- ⁴ Bromley, p. 13.
- ⁵ Australian Archives (hereafter AA): D1920/0 Item 6. From a list of 129 SA Italian internees at that date, 61 can be identified as residents of Port Pirie.
- ⁶ Gentili suggests that the overseas (Austrian) barque *Honor* might have brought the first *molfettesi* to South Australia in 1885 (J. Gentili, *Italian Roots in Australian Soil*, Italo-Australian Welfare Centre, Marangaroo WA, 1983. p 26). For Corrieri the first recorded Italian to arrive in Port Pirie was, in 1885. Vito Caputo, who jumped ship in Sydney in 1883 (M. Corrieri, *Italians of Port Pirie. A Social History*, Our Lady of Martyrs, Port Pirie Community, 1992, pp. 23, 35).
- ⁷ For the history of Port Pirie see N. Robinson, *Reluctant Harbour. The Romance of Pirie*, Nadjuri Australia, Jamestown SA, 1976, and K. Bullock, *Port Pirie, The Friendly City. The Undaunted Years*, Peacock Publications, Norwood SA, 1988.
- ⁸ Robinson, p 198, Bullock, p. 17.
- ⁹ For his biography see my 'From Crewman to Cabbie: A Profile of the First Italian Settler in South Australia', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 19, 1991, pp. 8-25.
- ¹⁰ *The Adelaide Chronicle*, 17 Oct. 1914 p. 39. See also my essay 'Italians in South Australia: the first hundred years', in D. O'Connor and A. Comin (eds), *Proceedings of the First Conference on the Impact of Italians in South Australia*, Italian Congress Inc. and Italian Discipline. Flinders University of South Australia, 1993, pp. 15-32.
- ¹¹ State Records (SA): GRG 51/120, 276.
- ¹² Ibid.: GRG 78/49.
- ¹³ Ibid: GRG 81, Series 1, 594 (1898). See also Robinson, p. 273 And Bromley, p. 25.
- ¹⁴ Corrieri p. 50.
- ¹⁵ R & M Bosworth, *Fremantle's Italy*, Gruppo Editoriale Internazionale, Roma, 1993, p. 52 and pp. 24-27. This volume, for its approach to the whole issue of migration, beyond what is suggested by the title, should be essential reading for all those interested in the history of Italians in Australia.
- ¹⁶ Corrieri, p. 35; Bromley, pp. 26, 29.
- ¹⁷ For a fuller account of Amerio's activities in South Australia, see my 'Viva il Duce: The Influence of Fascism on Italians in South Australia in the 1920s and 1930s', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 21, 1993, pp. 5-24.
- ¹⁸ AA: AP501/2, 'Cronistoria del Fascio di Port Pirie'.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 'Festeggiamenti della Colonia Italiana di Port Pirie'.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 'Cronistoria del Fascio di Port Pirie'.
- ²¹ The distribution of replacement steel rings was organised to coincide with the 1936 Port Pirie festival of the *Madonna dei Martiri*. At the 'thanksgiving Mass for the victory in East Africa' the Bishop of Port Augusta Norman Gilroy (subsequently Sydney archbishop and cardinal) blessed the steel rings and gave a sermon in Italian 'full of love and Catholic faith and patriotism' (AA: D1915 SA2625) .
- ²² AA: AP501/2 (various).
- ²³ "Southern Europeans are extremely difficult to absorb into the social structure of the country, for their temperament and their method of living is so different from that of Australians" (Premier Butler, *The Advertiser*. 19 August 1937, p.17)
- ²⁴ AA: D1915 SA2559, 'Secret Information', 7 September 1939.
- ²⁵ AA: D1915 SA2625, 'Recommendation for Detention of Domenico Pasculli', p. 7.
- ²⁶ AA: D1915 SA2559, Report of Slinger to Sergeant Virgo, Port Pirie, 29 May 1940.
- ²⁷ AA: D1915 SA2625, 'Report of the National Security Advisory Committee concerning Domenico Pasculli', 15 August 1940.
- ²⁸ AA: AP501/2, Lieut, Sexton, *A brief history of the activities of the Fascio of Port Pirie*, (November 1941).
- ²⁹ AA: D1915 SA2559, 'Report of the National Security Advisory Committee concerning Pasquale Catanzaro'. Though Catanzaro had originally been naturalised in 1930, he had to wait until 1953 before he was granted permission to be naturalised once again.
- ³⁰ AA: D1915 SA2625, 'Report on Visitors to Internees, week-ending 26 June 1942'. For a description of camp life see M. Bevege, *Behind Barbed Wire. Internment in Australia during World War II*, University of Queensland Press 1993, especially Ch. 8.

BONEGILLA REBELLIONS

A FIRST-HAND VIEW

by Maria Triaca

Maria Triaca is a third generation Italian Australian. She was the Melbourne Sun News-Pictorial's first ethnic affairs reporter in the early 1980s. She is author of Amelia A Long Journey, the biography of her maternal grandmother who came to Australia from Italy in 1904. She contributed to Growing Up Italian in Australia, published by the New South Wales Library Council.

The oral history component of this article has been left unedited to allow the natural form of the interview.

They were angry days. The conditions were rough: Army huts converted into rooms, stifling hot in summer, freezing in winter. It was 1952. The Commonwealth Immigration Centre at Bonegilla, near Albury, was Australia's largest migrant centre. More than 200,000 people passed through Bonegilla from its opening in 1947 until the doors finally shut in 1971.

But in 1952, among the immigrants who filled the converted Army barracks were close to 3,000 Italian men. They were agitated. They had come to Australia on two-year contracts with the promise of work. But two months after arriving at the camp there were still no jobs -- and no money.

Albino Papagno walked into Bonegilla in June 1952. Recently arrived from Italy, where he had learnt English while working in a British Airforce base near Naples, the 22 year old Papagno bore the title of Liaison Officer for the Italian migrants. Although Canberra paid his salary, he was working directly with the Italian Consul in Melbourne, Dr Luca Dainelli. His job: to pacify the increasingly angry Italians.

Mr Papagno recently recalled his first impressions of Bonegilla.

I travelled up on the 'Spirit of Progress'. I arrived late at night, it was about eight o'clock, and I was picked up at the Albury station. Travelling through the night through these vast fields and farms, it was very deserted. There were very few houses. They were expecting me. I was allocated to Staff Block 19. The supervisor handed me the blankets and sheets and pillows and told me to go to a hut. The staff huts were lined with canite -- a terrible thing, made from sugar cane



*Albino Papagno at the entrance of the Camp in 1952.
(Courtesy A. Papagno)*

stuck together. It was a single room -- very, very small -- just enough to fit a single bed and a cupboard. It was not a cupboard, just a rod on the wall with a curtain around it.

All the facilities -- toilets, showers were outside in different blocks. Block 19 was a staff block. The managers and directors had a different staff block. We were in what they called the clerical staff and then there was the working staff block.

Bonegilla was divided into two areas with a road in between, which was actually the main road from Wodonga going out to the Hume Weir. The migrants' blocks were on the other side. The camp was fenced by barbed wire, but very low. It did give you a shock, especially because I had worked for the British forces in a camp. I thought, 'Oh what have I done? I've left one camp and gone into another one'.

Albino Papagno remembers that he was warmly welcomed by the Director of the Employment Office, Mr Dobbins, who said "Thank God, we've got an interpreter who can speak fluently in two languages. We need you badly".

There were about 3,000 Italian migrants who had arrived since April, all single men. They occupied six or seven blocks. They had been unemployed for two or three months. They were agitated, emotional and upset. The Consul, before he left me at the (Spencer Street) station said, 'Try to keep them calm -- things will work out, be patient'. The Italians were very agitated. They wanted to go back (to Italy). They were receiving two pounds five shillings a week, which barely paid for cigarettes. And there was no prospect of employment.

While the Director of Employment and his superior were saying there was nothing they could do because there was a recession, the Italians were demanding that their work contracts be honoured.

A committee of Italians was formed. They protested several times in front of the Employment Office -- probably 800 or 1,000. They said, 'we can't help it -- we want jobs'.

Mr Papagno said the Italians used to ring the Italian Consul demanding to be repatriated.

The Consul kept on ringing me saying, 'Keep them calm -- jobs will come, jobs will come'.

A deputation of Italians to Melbourne to see Dr Dainelli, announced on return that they were going to march on Canberra. As the official interpreter, Mr Papagno was asked what he thought would happen. His advice was that the Italians would not go ahead and march on the national capital.

But the Australian authorities were frightened and they rang up the Army Camp at Bandiana, which was very close to Bonegilla, and they surrounded the camp with armoured vehicles. The soldiers were not armed -- I must stress this -- but there were soldiers in the armoured vehicles. You could not see them from the camp. The migrants could walk in and out of the camp freely. A lot of Italians used to go rabbiting in the fields there and they saw these vehicles standing there on the outskirts of the camp, a long way behind the hills, sometimes in farms... They came back and the rumour went around, 'They have surrounded the Camp... they do not want to let us march'. The Italians got very upset and the committee got together and another rumour started that they were going to burn Bonegilla. I was called late at night from my staff block by the directors and they said, 'Look, we've heard they're going to burn Bonegilla because we've surrounded the camp'. I said, 'I think it wasn't the right idea to surround it'. In the meantime I was in touch with the Consul and he said, 'Do what you can', but he wasn't going to come.

Migrants in "rebellion": Army called

From The Sun's reporter

ALBURY, Fri. — More than 200 armed servicemen in convoys, five armored cars and police units were called today to Bonegilla Migrant camp when 2000 Italians threatened to riot.

Tension mounted during the day at Albury and Bonegilla as first the police, and then the Army were called in.

All through Thursday, five police from Wodonga stood guard at the camp.

Early today, 10 police—from Wangaratta, 45 miles, and Chiltern, 22 miles—reinforced Wodonga and Albury police stations to help guard the camp.

By noon, Army Command in Melbourne ordered the officer in charge at Bandiana (Col. J. T. Simpson) to send two infantry companies to the camp. Police "riot" vans were also sent out.

The migrants had threatened to burn down camp buildings and march on Albury and Wodonga unless work was found for them.

The Sun, 9th July 1952.

The Camp director's assistant then gave the young interpreter 24 hours to find out if a match would be put to Bonegilla. Having befriended the Italians and used to eating with them at weekends, Mr Papagno went back to the Italian blocks and discovered that indeed they had several tins of kerosene hidden under the huts which they were intending to use to burn down the camp.

When I told that to Mr Dawson and the other officers they immediately wanted to do something.

Mr Papagno tried to calm them, saying: "*Italians threaten a lot.*" It was Thursday, July 17, 1952.

According to a diary of events leading up to July 17, based on information from the Camp director, Russell Dawson, there had been a series of demonstrations in the days leading up to the 'riot'.

Monday, July 7: By this date there existed in Bonegilla Camp a body known as the Italian deputation, which had been formed by taking two migrants from each of the seven blocks holding Italian migrants. During the late afternoon a demonstration was carried on outside the main office to the effect that the meat served with the meal was too fat to eat...

Tuesday, July 8: The Italian deputation approached Mr Dawson and requested that the Consul should be asked to attend the camp. The deputation also stated that the boots of many of the migrants were nearly worn out.

Thursday, July 10: The Italian deputation was informed that the Consul for Italy in Victoria (Dr Dainelli) would arrive at the camp on July 11.

Friday, July 11: The Italian Consul visited Bonegilla camp and had audiences with the migrants during most of the day. It is understood that a form of submission to the Minister of Immigration was partly prepared, and that the Italian deputation accompanied Mr Dainelli back to Melbourne so as to assist him in the final preparation of this submission.

Monday, July 14: Migrants in Block 2 appeared to be very excitable.

Thursday, July 17: Shortly after lunch, Mr Dawson received information from several sources, including his patrolmen, that groups were forming in the blocks, were moving around

the blocks collecting supporters and a procession arrived at the office at approximately 1430 hours. It is believed that the number of migrants taking part in this procession was about 1,000 -- i.e. about half of those in the camp.

*Mr Dawson promptly rang Inspector Boyd of the police station at Wodonga ... and the crowd who were now beginning to demonstrate noisily demanded Mr Dawson ... demonstration and noise continued for another half an hour with the demonstrators remaining adamant. By the end of this time, Mr Dawson considered the situation was getting dangerous and accordingly he then decided to go out and face the men. He told them that the subjects in dispute were being referred to Mr Holt [then Immigration Minister and later Prime Minister]. Mr Dawson noticed at this point there was a hard core of some 20 or 30 Italians who shouted together repeatedly that, failing a satisfactory answer to their demands by 1630 hours on the 18th, the camp would be burnt down. Mr Dawson informed them that no guarantees of an answer by any specified time could be given. By about 1600 hours the crowd began to break up."*¹

After telephone calls between Mr Dawson, the Immigration Department in Canberra, Dr Dainelli in Melbourne and the Italian delegation, it was decided a deputation would see Mr Holt the next day in Albury.

Albino Papagno recalled the fiery July 17 meeting.

They all arrived, shouting and screaming that the Italian Consul wouldn't come near them. Mr Dawson retorted, 'We know you're going to burn the place down'. I practically sank through the floor, because I was in it. Naturally an uproar and nearly a riot started. I was trying to explain in Italian what was happening. I was called traitor and all sorts of things. The authorities walked off the stage and left me on my own. I walked among the crowd trying to pacify them and reason with them. I was prepared to accept the fact that the Italians are temperamental and I had a feeling that nothing was going to happen.

The Italians then announced they were going to hold Mr Papagno hostage until the Consul came. Mr Dawson was poised to call the police but decided against it after Mr Papagno persuaded him to call Dr Dainelli. That night Mr Papagno



Migrant's quarters - Bonegilla 1952.

slept in the Italian migrant quarters. The next day the Consul and Vice-Consul duly arrived at Bonegilla, only to be met by a crowd of angry Italian men who proceeded to rock and shake their car, almost turning it over.

"The Consul and his Vice-Consul were abused and called all sorts of names," Mr Papagno said. Among the Italian migrants' demands was that three empty ships be sent from Italy to take them home. The ships never arrived but Mr Holt came to Albury where he met with the consular staff and a delegation of Italians from the camp.

Mr Papagno recalled:

At this meeting, Holt announced that they had the money to create temporary jobs with two months' guaranteed employment. You can imagine the uproar in the camp. But the migrants said they wouldn't accept them until they saw the men working, so the Vice-Consul had to stay there until the jobs came through.

Within a few days the Italians were leaving Bonegilla for jobs.

The interview with Mr Dawson notes in his diary of events:

Tuesday, July 22: "During the afternoon it was

*broadcast over the public address system that the Commonwealth Government was taking special measures to ensure the finding of early employment for the Italian migrants now in Bonegilla. Following on the announcement, the situation in the camp rapidly improved ... together with the visible evidence of the Government's intentions, shown in the moving of 400 Italians to work during this week, has resulted in the situation gradually coming back to normal."*²

According to Mr Papagno, food was also a source of perennial problems. He remembered a Sunday when angry Italian men protested about the spaghetti they had been served.

A car picked me up and took me to Dawson's hut. When I arrived there were more than 600 angry men each holding a plate of spaghetti, demanding that Dawson come out. 'Is this the kind of food you expect us to eat?' they chanted. Amid the ensuing uproar, Dawson yelled back: 'I don't like spaghetti -- I never eat it and I will never eat it'. With that the angry 600 hurled their spaghetti to the ground in front of the director's house. There was always trouble because of the food and finally Dawson agreed they should employ Italians as other cooks resigned.

NOTES

¹ Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office. Series A6122XRI, Item 384, pp. 59-62.

² Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office. Series A6122XRI op.cit.

Maria Triaca is researching material on the Immigration Centre at Bonegilla. Any information that may help this project can be sent to her, care of the Italian Historical Society.

'LITTLE LON'

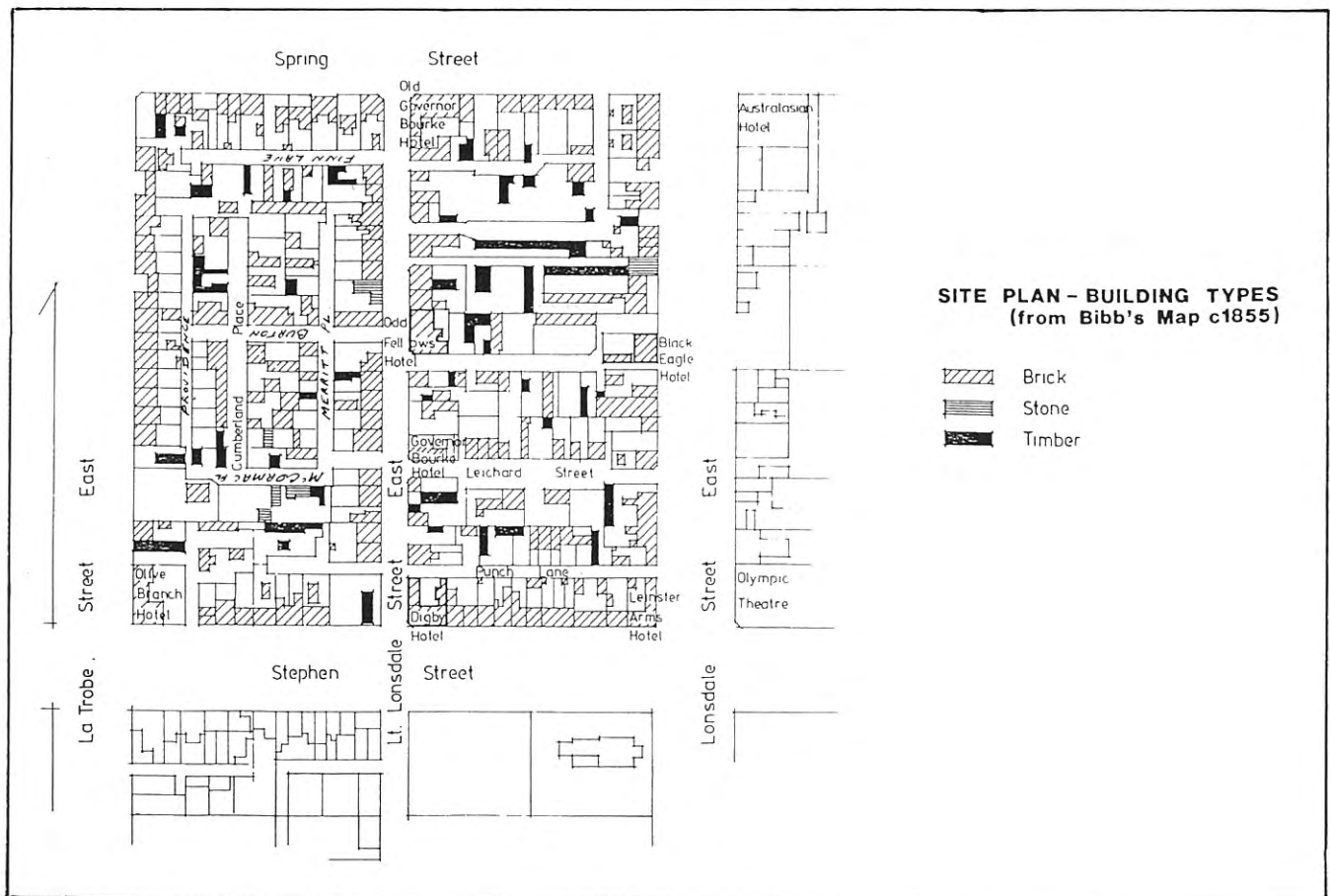
by Mark Donato

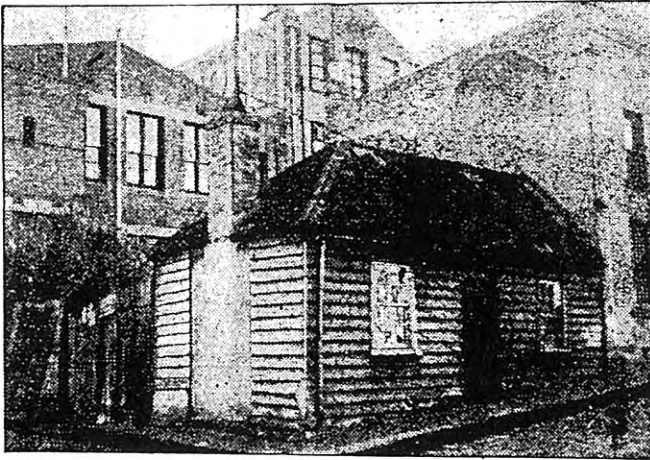
Mark Donato is a member of the Italian Historical Society and a secondary school teacher. His great grandparents settled in 'Little Lon' in the 1880s. Mark's interest in the area derives from stories told by his family, the Bracchi and the Cerbasi.

'Little Lon' is today just a memory to people born before 1940. It was a notorious working class area and although little trace of it is left today it is a significant part of the early fabric of Melbourne life. As a poor working man's area it attracted migrants as their first stepping off point and as such has strong links with the early Italian immigrants. In 1913, Constable George Scott, of the Victoria Police, described the area to a Joint Select Committee:

That quarter of the city ... is occupied by Assyrians, Italians, Indians and Chinese; there are no Europeans there. The men mostly work as ice-cream vendors, street musicians and hawkers, and the Assyrian women follow the occupation of white workers.¹

'Little Lon' was of course Little Lonsdale Street. It is one of those narrow streets that run across Melbourne like an afterthought far removed from Hoddle's broad city streets, thirty metres wide. Much more than a single street, it was the area bounded by Spring, Lonsdale, La Trobe and Stephen (Exhibition) Streets. Extending further west it took in other lanes crossing Little Lonsdale, such as the exotic sounding 'Celestial Lane' and 'Exploration Lane'. The area was a maze of lanes, alleys and small 'right of ways' between buildings. Apart from this area, Melbourne has lost forever many of these lanes as high rise buildings have been erected over the space below. As the following map shows, the area was a concentration of small housing blocks separated by small alleys, some only wide enough for one person to walk through at a time².





Tess and Mary Hayes' house.

The area underwent a number of phases of development. Prior to 1847, there is no recorded settlement, but in that year the land was subdivided into 20 lots and sold at public auction. The first buildings date from 1848, and include small two roomed cottages, stables and workshops. Between 1855 and 1880 the area was completely built up with many existing buildings being improved. The small lanes behind the main street frontages were lined with small cottages and shops, many of them with only two rooms³. An example of this pre-brick housing is shown above. At the time of compulsory acquisition this was one of the oldest timber houses in Melbourne dating back to the first subdivision of the area.

During the period 1880 to the 1920s, the area underwent a change as small industry developed, consisting of food processing, furniture making and metal working shops. A number of new buildings were also erected, brick structures of two and three storeys.

It was during this time that Carlo Bracchi, an Italian immigrant, built an ice-cream factory and family home in Cumberland Place.

In the early 1900s there were two schools in the area but by 1936 the Catholic School closed due to lack of numbers and the advanced years of Sister Veronica, the Head Teacher.

In 1930 the Church of England school, Hornbrook, was closed due to lack of numbers and became a squat for young people, who made and sold crumpets on a small stove. During the depression the Melbourne City Mission fed and housed men in the building on the corner of 'Little Lon' and Exhibition Street, which later became the Post Office. Another mission on the corner of McCormack Place had a stained glass window with the inscription 'need not creed'. During the 30s and 40s more factories took over.

On the 10th of June 1948, the Commonwealth Government compulsorily acquired the site. Although the area was said to be a slum and the houses small, the acquisition of the site in the 1940s deprived Melbourne of the last of its inner



The following children were photographed in the boys yard of St. Joseph's College in 1910: Nata Palermo; Anita Bracchi; Vicki Amad; Adele Haddad; Vera Dearsley; Bella Argenzio; Brightie LaGruta; Alma Bacash; Effie Attalah; Maudie Malouf; Joe Amad; Alec Calill; Waddie Amad; George Bell; Freddie Lutchens; Reg Bradley; ... Amad; Katie Lutchens.

residential areas. There is some irony in this when we consider that today an attempt is being made to rekindle the vitality and vigour the city lost since it became just a commercial and employment area. Recently the State Government and Inner Melbourne Councils have attempted to re-populate the City. The stated aim is to "*restore the cities population of early this century ... and stop Melbourne becoming a wasteland at the end of the week*"⁴. In 1921, 103,200 people lived in central Melbourne.

In 1992, the figure had slumped to 60,400. Of course in the 1920s the city population was quite large compared to the overall population of the state at that time. Many of the Italian immigrants of the 1880s settled first in the 'Little Lon' area and then moved out to areas like Carlton, Fitzroy and Middle Park. A survey of Post Office Directories, Sands and McDougal directories and the early electoral rolls show a range of occupations - fruiterer, cooper, tailor, wine house keeper, sculptor, labourer, musician, manufacturer and ice cream vendor.⁵

Post Office Directories, 1892 :

Carlo Pescia	110 Spring Street	Winehall.
G. Bonetti	207 Spring Street	Cooper
W. Galetio	1 Cumberland Place	Icecream.
Gagar Bros.	McCormack Place	
Punaro Bros.		
G. Cinquegrana	78 Lt. Lonsdale Street	Music string importers.
Di Giglio Bros.	113-115 Lt. Lonsdale Street	Musicians.
P. Melfi & Co.	115 Lt. Lonsdale Street	Music Company.
F. Francisco	Exploration Lane	
P. Arcaro	Exploration Lane	
F. De Modena	Exploration Lane	

Post Office Directories, 1895 :

S. Raffaello	Cumberland Place.
G. Goarallo	Cumberland Place.
D. Vietto	Cumberland Place.
C. Clerico	McGrath Place.
V. Galito	McGrath Place
C. Bracchi	McCormack Lane.
J. Capana	McCormack Lane.
E. Curcio	McCormack Lane.
D. Miglionico	McCormack Lane.
Gargaro Bros.	McCormack Lane.
V. Lapintina	28 Exploration Lane.
F. Trinchinella	28 Exploration Lane.
A. Leone	28 Exploration Lane.

Electoral Roll, 1903 :

Ambrosio Edward	159 Lonsdale Street	Bootmaker.
Bonetti Antonio	110 Lonsdale Street	Independent means.
Fasoli Vincent	110 Lonsdale Street	Winemerchant.
Zanardi Mary	45 Lonsdale Street	Restaurant Keeper.
Valli Antonio	55 Lonsdale Street	Fruitseller.
Rinaldi John	55 Lonsdale Street	Winesellers.
Lazzarino Carlo	110 Lonsdale Street	Contractor.
Cavallaro Hannah	115 LaTrobe Street	Home duties.
Muschialli Hannah	117 LaTrobe Street	Home duties.
Dedini Joseph	177 LaTrobe Street	Labourer.
Battiani Charles	350 LaTrobe Street	Letter Carrier.
Bracchi Carlo,	Cumberland Place	Manufacturer.
Argenzio Antonio	20 McGrath Place	Musician.
Clerico Maddalena	102 Little Flinders Lane	Home duties.
Perugia George	308 Elizabeth Street	Artist.
Perugia Paul	308 Elizabeth Street	Sculptor.
Monigatti Fedele	171 Exhibition Street	Winemerchant.
Bruni Antonio,	206 Exhibition Street	Wine House Keeper.
Russo Felix	28 Guildford Street	Fruitseller.
Virgona Giuseppe	28 Guildford Street	Fruitseller.
Sartori Constance	11 Punch's Lane	Housekeeper.

The area at the turn of the century was a concentration of diverse activities, and a diverse cultural mix and yet this group appear to have coexisted in harmony. During the archaeological excavations at the Commonwealth redevelopment site in 1990, a small leather bound note book was found in the remains of the Odd Fellows Hotel. The diary detailed the feelings of a Chinese man, possibly called Wah Way, for an Italian woman named Franca who lived at 38 Cumberland Place. The entry shows Mr Wah had trouble with English, he wrote "*I love you Franca. Give us a Ghiss*"⁶.

Naturally, the Italians and their neighbours had families, a fact which is often forgotten or ignored as most commentaries examine the poverty and the fact that 'Little Lon' was Melbourne's red light district until the late 1930s.

There were enough children in the area to warrant two schools and as the following photo shows, the children and their families must have mixed socially. Present at the party were the offspring of Australian born, German, Italian, Lebanese, Chinese and Irish.



Mamie Bracchi, one of the guests at the party, identified the following people: Billy Argenzio; Bertie Dearsley; Phillip Torbey; Edna Dearsley; Brightie Lagruta; Mamie Bracchi; Bella Argenzio; Nata Palermo; Marza Amad; Vicki Amad; Maudie Amad; Arthur Dearsley; Henrietta Argenzio; Emily Sedewei; Anita Bracchi; Amadeo Argenzio; Joseph Argenzio; Kate McDonald (Gye); John ...; Winnie Lee; Peter Bracchi; Maria ...; Waddie Amad; Minnie Haddad; John Gye; Nellie Lee.

The photo is of John Gyes birthday party on the 17th March 1913. The party appears to be a grand affair. The white table cloth and cake-stands do not agree with the image of poverty that is often associated with the area. Also of note are the patriotic flags and bunting.

Photographs of children during this time are fairly rare, especially compared to the videotapes and photographs we have of our families today. The fact that photographs of children are rare is all the more sad when you consider that many children did not survive childhood. Life expectancy was shorter compared with today, but especially for mothers and children. In the 1850s life expectancy was 50 years, by 1871 things had not changed all that much, male life

expectancy was 50 years and female 52 years. Infant mortality in the 1850s was 140 deaths per 1000 live births. Maternal mortality was high and associated with the numerous pregnancies women had (the average was 6.8 births per life time). The result of this was that often a wife would die and a husband would return to Italy, remarry and start a second family. For example, Carlo Bracchi married twice, his first wife died twelve months after childbirth aged 20 years. His second wife died aged 42 years having had four children. Tom Cerbasi's father died when they lived in America. His mother returned to Italy and married Joseph Vignola. They came to Australia and had three children. Frank Curcio married Josephine Evangelista and had six children. When Josephine died, Frank returned

children. When Josephine died, Frank returned to Italy and married Filomena Germino and started a younger family of three children. The Curcio, Cerbasi and Bracchi families intermarried.

The deaths of mother and child, the lack of fluency in English and the cultural isolation of these people must have created stress for their families and forced them to rely upon each other. A survey of Births, Deaths and Marriages indicates the extent that these early families intermarried.

Children and babies suffered from a variety of illnesses, infantile cholera, inflammatory diarrhoea. Every summer many Australians suffered from typhoid but the greatest killers in Melbourne's urban area were tuberculosis and diphtheria. Other causes of death were measles, whooping cough and small pox. In 1874 the Victorian Compulsory Vaccination Act was passed but disease still ravaged Victoria with small pox epidemics in 1882 and 1884-5.⁷

In 1882 there was a Royal Commission to fully examine Melbourne's sanitation. An outcome, after much debate, was the establishment of the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1891.

Melbourne's citizens understood the relationship between disease and sanitation and concluded the solution lay in government control of a health infrastructure.

*We are of the opinion that, as the metropolitan district is divided into a large number of self governing municipalities no general scheme of deep drainage can be successfully executed except under the control of the Board of Works.*⁸

It is interesting to note that one hundred years ago only a government body could undertake and coordinate such works, whereas today government instrumentalities are being exposed to private consortiums and competition.

Prior to the establishment of the Board and the construction of underground sewerage, Melbourne had a series of gutters that took away the raw sewerage which ended up in the Yarra.

These gutters are crossed by little wooden bridges every fifty yards. When it rains, they rise to the proportion of small torrents, and have on several occasions

*proved fatal to drunken men.*⁹

The 'Little Lon' area was not serviced by underground sewerage but by cess pits and night soil collections, both not up to the task, particularly when heavy rain moved raw sewerage from cess pits across yards and down alleys and streets.

*In many of the suburbs a large proportion of the channels are still unmade; the liquid sewerage from the houses passes sluggishly along natural channels in the ground, here and there accumulating and stagnating, and everywhere soaking into and polluting the soil ...*¹⁰

Melbourne did come to grips with its sanitary problems due to the Metropolitan Board of Works, the creation of health departments and the development of a human and physical infrastructure to coordinate and control the problem. As the following certificate indicates, the Melbourne City Council was regulating health conditions in the Bracchi ice cream factory, by 1913. Documents show that the Council concerned itself with health regulations, worker safety, the quality of the product and the registration of the premises for food preparation.

So by 1914, when the photograph of the children was taken, Melbourne had in place many of the health standards we consider essential today. It should be remembered that it took some time to develop an infrastructure, standards and to set in place the mechanism to police them.

<i>Health Department</i> <i>Town of Melbourne</i> 16th Nov 1914 10 1-14	
The Officer of Health. Sir, I have the honor to submit for your information the result of the analysis by F. Dunn of a sample of Mixed Ice Cream No 1. This sample was purchased on the 2nd inst from B. Carlo at his factory in Cumberland Place, City.	
I have the honor to be, Sir, Your obedient servant <i>Alfred J. Curcio</i> Inspector.	
<i>The Chairman</i> <i>Sample complied with Standard</i> <i>J. J. S. S. S.</i> 16 NOV 1914	

Carlo Bracchi arrived in Melbourne in 1881. He sold ice creams from a handcart walking Melbourne's streets. Early Post Office directories show him living in 'Little Lon' from 1883. He established himself quickly and by the 1890s owned an ice cream manufacturing business. He also built a two storey home in Cumberland Place. Although he came to Australia on his own, he subsequently brought out his brother Costantino, and after the Great War, the six children of his sister Agata Maggi.

During this time street vendors were unpopular with the authorities and equated with buskers. However, it must have been profitable since Carlo quickly built the factory and also operated food and entertainment stalls at the Eastern Hill market (site of the Southern Cross Hotel).

The factory was a far cry from the mechanised food factories of today. It was mechanised but there is a great gap in the chemicals and machinery used then and now. For example the freezer room had walls twelve inches thick made from cork and sawdust insulation. The chemical used to freeze and cool the liquids was ammonia, which was quite dangerous. If a leak occurred, as it often did, it was necessary to soak a handkerchief in vinegar and put it around one's face before attempting repairs.

To make ice cream, the mixture was placed in a large container resembling a concrete mixer. The container was enveloped in cooling coils, connected to the ammonia pumps. As the mixture was freezing the container was rotated by a series of overhead pulleys and leather belts. Patents for this system were granted to Carlo Bracchi on the 2nd August, 1922. Today the power applications have changed but the process is very similar.

Prior to the introduction of domestic electric refrigeration, homes used ice boxes and Carlo's supplied block ice. To make this ice, large metal buckets, covered in pitch were filled with water which had been filtered by allowing sediment to settle in a tank using alum. The buckets, which were grouped in bundles of either 3 cwt or 6 1/2 cwt, were then taken through a brine solution and kept at -6° C. As the liquid froze they were pulled along the tanks by a 1/2 ton electric hoist, then pulled out of the solution and quickly upended. The large blocks of ice were then sent to a storage room.

Carlo Bracchi had a number of horse drawn carts, hand carts and petrol driven trucks. The

horses and hand carts were not housed at Cumberland Place but on a vacant block in McCormack Place. This area doubled as a wood yard in winter. The hand carts and horse carts were ornate and brightly coloured, painted and varnished. The horse drawn carts were 6'x 4', and the horses had tassels around their necks.



Carlo Bracchi's Ice Truck.



A Motley Ice-cream cart, similar to those used by C.A. Bracchi.

The factory underwent a number of changes. Apart from ice, ice-cream and gelati, the factory also made butter and margarine, known as 'coco butter'. When war broke out Carlo's sold the rights to the ice cream factory to Sennits. The combined effects of the 1930s depression, the loss of markets during the war, the death of Carlo Bracchi and subsequent payment of probate all weakened the business.

The compulsory acquisition of the site by the Commonwealth government finished the

business. The ice cream equipment was sold to Stan Baker of Bulla, makers of dairy products, and the vacated factory and house were used by Kans Foods until the demolition of the site.¹¹

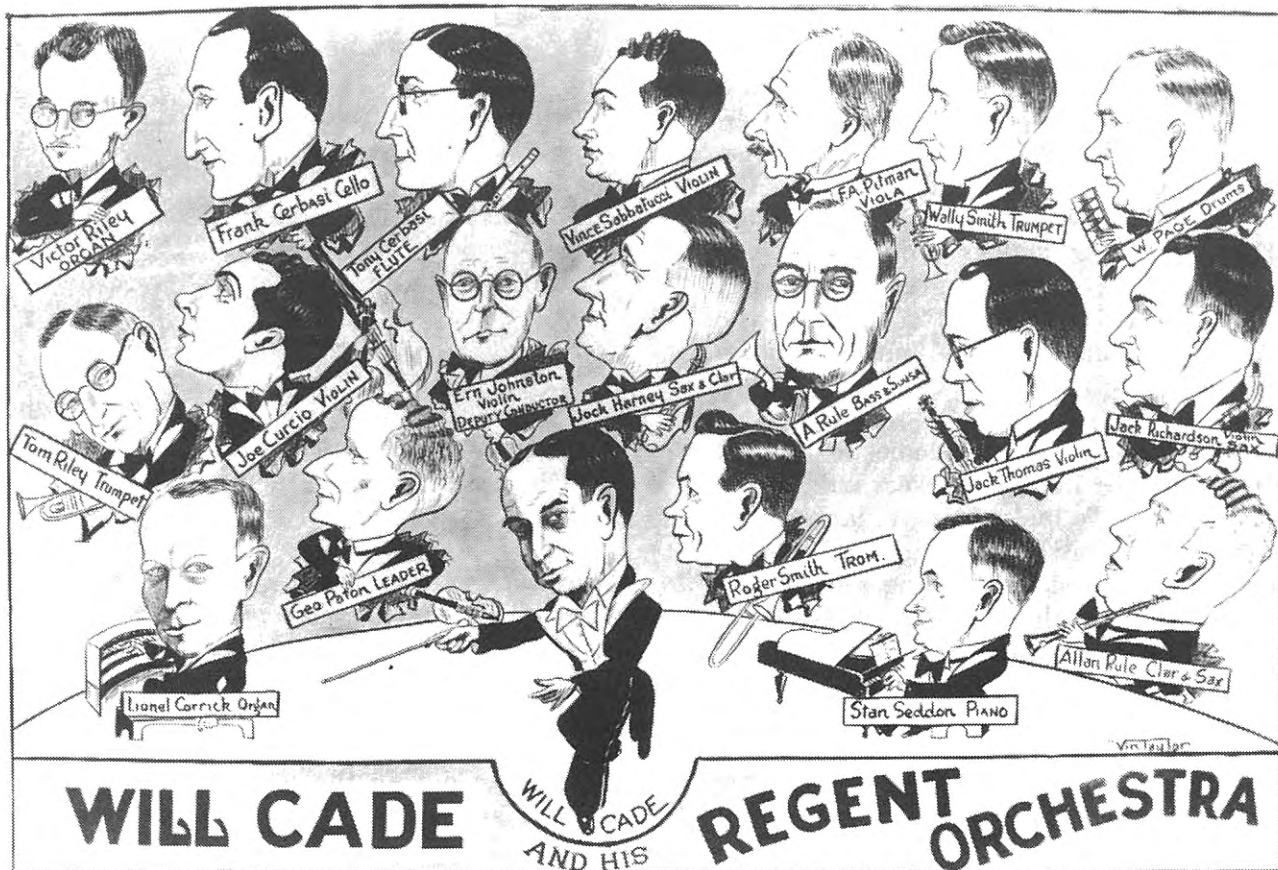


Carlo Bracchi's house and stables in Cumberland Place.

In 1881 there were just 947 'Italians' in Victoria, all but 59 of them were males. In 1901 the number had only increased to 1525.¹² Although little is known about this group, their lives can be traced through official records (naturalization, births, deaths and marriages) and advertisements in newspapers (musicians, wine and food vendors), and through official reports.

A contemporary police report clearly demonstrates that the buskers were a source of concern.¹³

Many of the musicians came from Viggiano (prov. Basilicata). Some worked as buskers, others played music on Melbourne's Bay steamers and inter-colonial shipping. They travelled widely, playing in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand. The following list of Italian musicians were well known in Melbourne and some of them also lived in 'Little Lon': Di Giglio (also worked as agents for others); Leone; Briglia; Barille; Cinquegrana; Cerbasi; Gagliardi; LaGrutta; La Battaglia; Ricco & Vignola. A review of marriage records shows that many of these families intermarried. Often the children of these musicians went on to play in orchestras and bands in the 1920s and 1930s.





In interviews with the children of *viggianesi* musicians, a common memory is watching a parent playing in the silent picture theatres and in the orchestra pits of theatres in the 1920s and 1930s.

These were the days of The Regent, The State Theatre, Capitol, Plaza, Athenaeum, Victory and Bijou theatres. Many of the *viggianesi* and their children played in such bands as Cecil Bois' Metro Salon Orchestra, with Will Cade, Daniel Mas, Ned Tyrell and Henry Penn at the Victory, and G. Vignola at The Eclipse in Port Melbourne. Some like Vincenzo Ricco and Ezio Kost had their own orchestras.

Today busking is licensed and acceptable and seen as part of a process of livening and humanising our city; however great attempts were made in the past to rid the city of buskers, spruikers and hawkers thought to be lowering the tone of the city. When Frank Curcio first came to Melbourne he sold balloons in the street. His grand daughter Emilia recalls that they would not talk of 'those days'. Clearly hawking helped the family establish itself but it was an activity the children outgrew and wanted to forget.

It would seem that Melbourne has always had something of a struggle with orderliness or respectability and the less orderly elements. There is an intolerance of the loud and less respectable but at the same time a recognition that a city lacks vitality without acceptance of all the dimensions of human activity.

Today Southbank and the Yarra developments are seen as a success. They are clean, controlled, new and they attract visitors. Swanston walk, however is less of a 'success' with council about to ban spruikers and sandwich boards because they lower the tone of Swanston Street.¹⁴ It will be illegal for spruikers in doorways to entice people inside and broadcast information into the street. The display of boards will be permitted only under special circumstances. According to an article in *The Age*, Commissioners want to turn Swanston Walk into a "*promenade of upmarket cafes, bookshops, boutiques and other quality retail outlets*"¹⁵

This is not new. Melbourne wrestled with this problem last century. Of course having made the city very orderly and 'proper', the city was considered characterless and lacking in life in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In the 1880s,

busking was equated with begging and discouraged: however it was, for some Italian musicians, a means of establishing themselves when they first arrived in the colony.

There were vigorous attempts to stop busking, hawking, displaying goods on pavements and loitering, and to tighten up liquor licensing laws. This was partly a response to the gangs of larrikins that roamed the streets at the turn of the century and also due to the lack of security people felt when they travelled on foot.

It was not until Melbourne installed lighting and people began to travel by car or public transport, and people moved out from the city to the suburbs, that the city began to change its character and people felt more secure.

By 1924 lanes which had once hidden a 'criminal class' were lined by factories rather than cottages. Shopkeepers who had once been outraged by Collingwood larrikins or by city prostitutes had fled to the new suburbs across the river. Fewer Hotels stood at street corners. Melbournians moved about by tram, train or car rather than on foot¹⁶.

Prior to these changes Melbourne did have a threatening side to it. 'Little Lon' evolved as an area and had by the late 1920s begun to change from housing to factories.

The seamy and more threatening side to 'Little Lon' is captured in the 1880s Australian detective story, *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab* by Fergus Hume. Much of the plot and background deal with the brothels and sordid parts of Melbourne. Hume takes the reader through the dark alleys, gambling dens and sly grog joints. In the following extract a detective takes a client through the back lanes of Melbourne.

Turning off Little Bourke Street, the detective led the way down a dark alley, which felt like a furnace, owing to the heat of the night ... keep close to me whispered Kilslip ... we may meet some nasty characters here ... they kepted [sic] for safety in the middle of the alley, so that no one could spring upon them unaware, and they could see sometimes on the one side, a man cowering back into the black shadow, or on the other, a woman with disordered hair and bare bosom leaning out of a window trying to get a breath of fresh air. There

were also some children playing in the dried up gutter, and their shrill young voices came echoing strangely through the gloom, mingling with a bacchanalian sort of song a man was singing, as he slouched along unsteadily over the rough stones. Now and then a mild looking string of Chinamen stole along, clad in their dull blue hued blouses .. here and there comes a stream of warm light through an open door, and within, the Mongols were gathered around the gambling tables, playing fan tan, or else leaving the seductions of their favourite pastime (smoking opium), and gliding soft footed to the many cookshops, where enticing looking fowls and turkeys already cooked were awaiting purchasers. ... led down another and still narrower lane, the darkness and gloom of which made the lawyer shudder, as he wondered how human beings could live in them.¹⁷

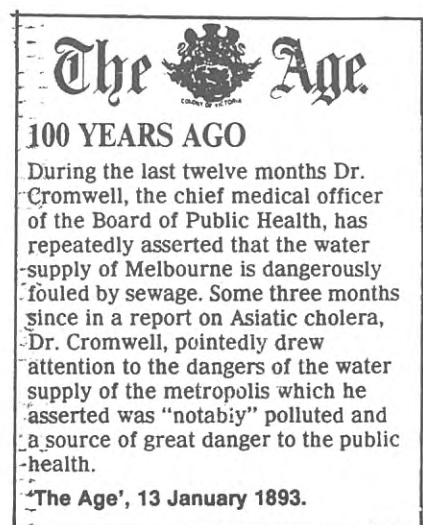
An Italian is described in the story but the description is not a positive one:

... in the centre of the room was a round deal table, upon which stood a guttering tallow candle, which but faintly illuminated the scene, and a half empty bottle of Schnapps, with a broken cap beside it ... in front sat an old woman with a pack of cards spread out before her, and from which she had evidently been telling the fortune of a villainous looking young man ... he was dressed in a greasy brown velvet coat, much patched, and a black wide -a- wake hat, which was pulled down over his eyes. He looked like one of those Italians who retail ice-cream on the street, or carry round organs with monkeys on them, and his expression was so menacing and scowling.¹⁸ It seems that it is not just post war migrants that have suffered from stereotyping.

Even in the 1920s 'Little Lon' was not completely safe. Mr Jack Murphy, an employee of the Carlo Bracchi ice cream factory, was set upon in an alley off Burton Street, and had his eye kicked out, the thieves ending up with only one shilling. Interviews with people who lived in the area from the 1920s to 1940s balance this image of the area with many warm memories and friendships. Although the housing was small and cramped, one resident recalls that the backyard was ample and had a large fig tree growing in it. Much is made of the prostitutes who lived in the area, most had moved out by the 1930s but a few remained until the war. In

1941 Mary 'Picford' was still on the East side of Cumberland Place and 'Lady Mary Doody' was still on the corner of 'Little Lon' and Burton Street. The area was notorious as Melbourne's 'Red Light' district but this was just one dimension to the character of 'Little Lon'. Residents were aware of these activities but did not see it as pervasive.

For many people the area was home and many of the problems associated with it were problems of the times. When interviewed in the late 1940s, Tess and Mary Hayes, owners of the timber cottage in Cumberland Place, said: "*This area used to have a bad name ... some of these streets were not pleasant; but everyone has always been kind to us. No one ever molested us, or made us feel afraid*". Melbourne has grown and changed and a suburban sprawl has developed which has brought with it its own problems.



NOTES

¹ N. Abjorensen, "The city's wicked past", *The Age*, Tuesday 5 June 1990.

² Recollections of M. Owen and G. Donato, interview with M. Donato 4 September 1992.

³ A. J. Ryan in association with K. C. Edmonds, *Historical and architectural development of the Commonwealth Centre Site*, Department of Administrative Services, 1979, pp 6-7.

⁴ *The Age*, 21 January 1993.

⁵ I am indebted to Bette Leone Maiuto for compiling this source and making it available.

⁶ N. Abjorensen, *The Age*, 1 June 1990.

⁷ Source of Statistics: V.H. Arnold, *Yearbook 1973 Centenary Edition*, No. 87, CBCS Victorian Office, Melbourne, 1973.

⁸ *Progress Report Royal Commission on Sanitary Conditions of Melbourne, 1889*, Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1989, Vol. 11, ppv 111-xv.

⁹ R. E. N. Twopenny, *Townlife in Australia*, p. 5.

¹⁰ Grant & Serle, *The Melbourne Scene, 1803-1956*, Hale & Ironmonger, p 187.

¹¹ I am indebted to G. E. Donato & C. A. Bracchi for their recollections.

¹² R. Broome, *The Victorians: Arriving*, Fairfax Syme, 1984.

¹³ A report to the Chief Commissioner of Police, August 1888. Public Records of Laverton, Victoria. (A copy of this report and others can be viewed at the Italian Historical Society.

¹⁴ *The Age*, 13 April 1994, p 5.

¹⁵ *The Age*, 13 April 1994, p 5.

¹⁶ G. Dunstan et al. (Ed), *Outcasts of Melbourne*, Allen & Unwin, 1985.

¹⁷ Fergus Hume, *Mystery of Hansom Cab*, Hogarth Press, 1985. pp 102-103.

¹⁸ Ibid. p 102.

I am indebted to A. May for giving me the documents concerning Carlo Bracchi and the M.C.C. Health Department.

NEWS

MUSEUM ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

The Italian Historical Society has been successful in attaining Registration under the Museum Accreditation Program (MAP) which is administered by Museums Australia Incorporated.

The formal announcement and presentation of the Certificate of Registration was made during the celebration of International Museums Day at Scienceworks, Spotswood on the 18th of May.

The Italian Historical Society fulfilled the standards set by the first stage of the program, which demanded a high level of policy documentation and program activity and is now working towards full accreditation.

Other organisations to receive registration together with the Society were: Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum; Benalla Costume & Pioneer Museum; Castlemaine Art Gallery & Castlemaine Historical Museum; Creswick Historical Museum; Jewish Holocaust Museum & Research Centre; Moorabbin Air Museum; Scienceworks Museum of Victoria and South Gippsland Shire Historical Society.

MICROFILMING OF ITALIAN DIPLOMATIC ARCHIVES

For the first time in Australia, scholars and researchers will soon have the possibility of viewing on microfilm, the incoming and outgoing correspondence of Italian Consular agents, Consuls and Ambassadors based in Australia, during the period 1855 to 1940.

With the cooperation of the Italian Diplomatic Authorities, the Society has commissioned a company in Rome to microfilm this valuable archival material (which is deposited in the Diplomatic Archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The material includes political and economic reports, correspondence from and to the Ministry in Rome, correspondence relating to Italians residing in Australia, Ministerial gazettes, letter-books and correspondence registers.

The microfilms are due to arrive at the end of July and will be located at the Italian Historical Society. Conditions for access will apply.

GOLDFIELDS FAMILY HISTORY EXPO '94

This event is a fund-raising effort between the Bendigo Regional Genealogical Society, the Bendigo branch of the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies and the Bendigo City Library. The Expo will open at 10.00 am on the **1st and 2nd of October**, 1994 and will be held at the Bendigo Town Hall and Bendigo City Library. The cost is \$15.00 per day or \$25.00 for two days.

Guest Speakers in attendance include Janet Reakes and Nick Vine-Hall and extensive research facilities will be available. Bookings are advisable and further information can be obtained by contacting:

Goldfields Family History Expo,
P.O. Box 887, Bendigo, Victoria, 3550.

REUNIONS

Did you work on the Snowy River Scheme? A reunion is being planned for all those who worked on the Snowy scheme. If you are interested, you can write to the following address for further details:

'Snowy',
P.O. Box 666, Cooma, N.S.W., 2630.

VICTORIAN FAMILY HISTORY STATE CONFERENCE 29 - 30 APRIL, 1995

"DIGGING DEEPER DOWN UNDER"

Jointly sponsored by the
State Library of Victoria,
The Genealogical Society of Victoria
and the
Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies.

Make a note in your diary now!

All correspondence to:

Mrs. Frances Brown
State Library of Victoria
128 Swanston St., Melbourne.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES AT THE SOCIETY

VCE EXPO '94

The Italian Historical Society and the Italian Language Resource Centre, took part in this three day Expo during the 4th, 5th and 6th March, at the Camberwell Civic Centre in Melbourne.

Over 70 other organisations, including the Board of Studies, publishers, software distributors, booksellers, government and community organisations, subject associations, and education service providers were all there to assist VCE students with material for their studies and career choices. An extensive program of seminars for students and parents also took place during the Expo. The Expo was a great success. Over 2,500 visitors stopped at the Society's stand for information.

SWISS ITALIAN FESTA IN HEPBURN SPRINGS

During the weekend of the 28th and 29th of May, the Hepburn Springs region held its second 'People's Festa' to celebrate their origins, namely the Italian-speaking Swiss who migrated to the Jim Crow Diggings to seek their fortunes in gold. Many of these pioneers remained in the area to establish farms or businesses.

The Society was invited to participate and Borsa Hall was the venue for a display of photographs of Swiss-Italians, shipping records, a map of Switzerland, and an 1876 Roll of Ratepaying electors of Creswick - Daylesford.

Many people enquired about family research, and our collection of published family histories proved to be very popular. A selection of publications produced by the Society were also available for sale and consultation. Volunteers and Staff members of the Society were on site assisting the general public. The Festa was a huge success with over 1200 people viewing the exhibition alone.

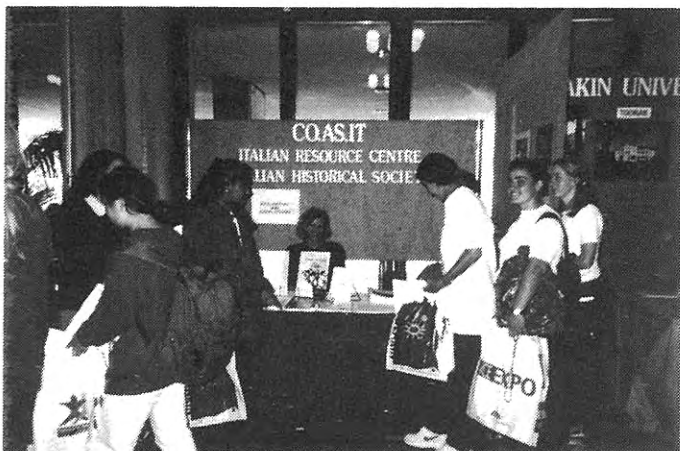
To cater for Swiss Italian family history researchers, the Society has produced a guide on tracing archival material in the Tessin and Grisons Cantons of Switzerland, which is available at the Society for \$3.00 plus postage.

EDUCATION '94

The Royal Exhibition Buildings of Melbourne hosted 'Education '94', a successful four day exhibition which was held on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th of June, to coincide with 'Education Week 1994'.

The Italian Historical Society, together with the Italian Language Resource Centre, were present with their own stand, displaying educational material for schools and students.

The material catered for subjects such as History and Australian Studies. A wide range of resources available for the teaching of the Italian language were also promoted.



The Society's displays at the VCE Expo and Hepburn Springs.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

This list records the books received by the Society in the last six months by gift or purchase.

Proceedings of the First Conference on the Impact of Italians in South Australia. Edited by Desmond O'Connor and Antonio Comin. Published by Italian Congress Inc. and the Italian Discipline, Flinders University of South Australia. 16-17 July, 1993. \$22.50.

This attractive volume of 200 pages, is the first major publication to evaluate the contribution made by Italians to the cultural, social and economic life of South Australia. The topics explore aspects of the themes that were allocated to the four Conference sessions: 'Italians in South Australia- past and future'; 'Cultural Impact'; 'Leisure and lifestyle'; 'Italians in the economy'. A full summary of the discussions that followed each session is included and all papers are in English.

The Young Italians. By Amanda Prantera. Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd., London 1993, \$34.95.

An intriguing drama about an English girl who travels to Italy to visit an aunt. The book is set in Florence in the 1930s when Italy was shadowed by the threat of Fascism but was also a country where passions thrived and the appetite for love was strong.

Capua to Creswick: The Capuano Family in Australia. By Norma Jean Capuano, 1993.

The book contains the history and family tree of the Capuano family. It was compiled and researched by Norma Jean, of Bendigo, a great, great-granddaughter of Antonio Capuano who arrived in Creswick in 1854.

Studio sulla Vita e sui Viaggi di James Cook. By Carla Polpettini. Edizioni Ivaldi Editore, Genova, 1993.

Carla Polpettini under the guidance of Professor Emilio Scarin of the University of Genova completed a study in 1959 of the life and voyages of Captain James Cook. This book is a summarised history of the life and achievements of Captain James Cook.

Log of Logs, Volume Two. By Ian Nicholson. Roebuck Society Publication No. 47. Qld, 1993. \$50.00

The title page reads 'A catalogue of logs, journals, shipboard diaries, letters and all forms of voyage

narratives, 1788 to 1993 for Australia and New Zealand and surrounding oceans'. This book contains 607 pages of ships' names in alphabetical order, with the year of voyage, details of logs and where to find them and several illustrations of some of the ships.

How to Trace Your Italian Ancestors for Australians and New Zealanders. By Bette Leone, Hale & Iremonger Pty. Ltd., N.S.W., 1994. \$14.95.

In this publication Bette Leone has provided useful suggestions as to where to find those first vital clues to your origins. There are sections on the Italian language and names; letters in Italian (with English translation) and tips for researchers travelling to Italy. The book also includes lists of Australian and New Zealand addresses of major government departments, libraries, archives, genealogical and historical societies.

Storia Dimenticata. By Villa Deliso. A.D.V.E. Editrice, Vicenza, 1991.

The book covers the history of the Scalabrinian order and evolves around the turmoils of Italy in the late 1800s when more than 27 million Italians migrated.

Lucky City - The First Generation at Ballarat: 1851 - 1901. By Weston Bate. Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1978. \$37.95.

This publication explores the interaction of people with the environment and shows how the mining activities helped sustain Ballarat as a regional market-place and industrial centre. The book also charts the rivalry between Ballarat and Bendigo and the resentment of Melbourne's dominance.

Life After Gold: Twentieth Century Ballarat. By Weston Bate. Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1993. \$37.95.

This is the second instalment of Weston Bate's history of Ballarat. The book explores a sombre story of coping with decline. Like other Victorian gold towns, Ballarat suffered a significant loss of population between 1901 and 1921 as mines were played out and workers were attracted to new factory jobs in Melbourne and Geelong.

FOR SALE AT THE SOCIETY

BOOKS

Australia's Italians 1788-1988. Second Edition. By Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien. Melbourne: Italian Historical Society & State Library of Victoria, 1989. \$10.00 (plus postage).

An illustrated history of the Italian contribution to the development of Australian Society over a period of 200 years. Bilingual text.

Bridging Two Worlds : Jews, Italians and Carlton - Arnold Zable ... [et al]. Melbourne: Jewish Museum of Australia, Italian Historical Society and the Museum of Victoria, 1992. \$5.00 (plus postage)

A guide to the exhibition by the same title held at the Museum of Victoria.

The Italian Heritage of Victoria. By James Gobbo. Melbourne: CO.AS.IT., 1985. \$5.00 (plus postage)

A short history of early Italian settlement in Victoria. Bilingual text.

A Profile of the Italian Community in Australia. By Helen Ware. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs and CO.AS.IT., 1981. \$ 6.50 (plus postage)

A statistical analysis of social and economic conditions of the Italian community - Based on data from the 1976 Australian Census.

Victoria's Italians. Compiled by Ivano Ercole and Maria Tence. Melbourne: CO.AS.IT., 1985. \$6.50 (plus postage)

Illustrated catalogue of the Exhibition by the same title held at the State Library of Victoria in 1985. Bilingual text.

Now and Then : The Sicilian Farming Community at Werribee Park 1929-49. By Maria Mantello. Melbourne: Il Globo, 1986. \$6.50 (plus postage)

An account of the settlement of Sicilian migrants in the Werribee district and their contribution to the development of market-gardening.

Quadretti di un Italiano in Australia. By Alessandro Faini. Melbourne: CO.AS.IT., 1984. \$5.00 (plus postage)

Humorous short stories based on the author's every-day experiences as a migrant in Australia.

Swiss-Italian Family History Research. Compiled and published by the Italian Historical Society, 1994. \$3.00 (plus postage)

A family history kit for tracing archival material in the Tessin and Grisons Cantons of Switzerland.

Tracing Your Italian Ancestors For Victorians. By Bette Maiuto. Melbourne: Italian Historical Society-CO.AS.IT., 1993. \$6.50 (plus postage)

A guide for people intending to research their family history.

Victoria Market. By Nino Randazzo. CO.AS.IT. Italian Historical Society, Melbourne, 1992. \$10.00 (plus postage)

A drama based on events that took place at Melbourne's Victoria Market in the 1960s and the invention of the Mafia myth in Australia.

AUDIO-VISUAL

Hard Work & Hope [video-recording] : Australia's Italians - Prahran, Vic.: Equality Press, 1989. (23 minutes). VHS. \$65.00 (plus postage)

An educational video on the contribution of Italian migrants to the development of Australia. An excellent resource for students of Australian Studies and History. Teacher's Notes with suggested activities accompany the video.

New Heroes, New Myths [video-recording] : Australia's Italians - Melbourne: Arthur D'Aprano and Elvira Vacirca for the Italian Historical Society, 1993. (60 minutes). VHS. \$60 (plus postage)

Six families tell the story of their migration and settlement, in six self-contained segments of approximately 10 minutes each. The video provides an insight into the values and beliefs which are passed on from one generation to another, and the way they develop and change over time. Suitable for secondary school teachers and students of History, Australian Studies, Social Studies and Italian Language classes. Teacher's Notes in English and in Italian with suggested activities accompany the video.

I.H.S. Journal - Guidelines for Contributors

1. The Journal of the Society is produced for a general readership and preference will be given to articles which increase an understanding of the history of Italians in Australia and the Italian Community.
2. The Italian Historical Society Journal is published twice yearly. The deadline dates for articles for each issue are:
 - June issue - 30th April.
 - December issue - 30th October.
3. The Italian Historical Society Journal accepts unsolicited articles but may decline publication for various reasons. Articles are equally welcome from both professional and amateur historians and writers.
4. The Italian Historical Society Journal does not pay for contributions.
5. All materials submitted may be subject to editing.
6. Articles should normally be submitted on white A4 paper, typed with double spacing on one side. Alternatively, work may be submitted on disk on WordPerfect 5.1. In general articles should not exceed 3000 words and should ideally be 1500-2000 words.
7. Articles should be accompanied by appropriate and clearly captioned illustrative material wherever possible. This may include clear photographs, maps, diagrams, drawings, or other materials such as advertisements, programs, tickets etc.
8. All material submitted for publication must be accompanied by permission to publish and must meet copyright requirements. This includes both textual and illustrative materials. Unless otherwise stated, the author/s of the material provided will be credited with copyright.
9. All articles should give sources and references and this additional material will be published where appropriate. These footnotes/endnotes should be grouped at the end of the article and may refer to sources or amplify material in the main body of the article. The reference numbers for endnotes should appear in the text at the end of sentences.
10. The bibliographic style favoured for citing books, based on the *Style Manual* of the AGPS is: (name of author), (name of book in italics or underlined), (name of publisher), (place of publication), (year of publication).
For citing journals: (name of author), (title of article), (name of journal in italics or underlined), (volume number and year), (page number/s).
11. Contributors should retain copies of all materials submitted. Illustrative material will be returned if requested.
12. Contributors should provide a very short personal description outlining current interests.