



CO·AS·IT

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Laura Mecca, Maria Tence

The *Journal* aims to provide, to those interested in the history of Australian-Italian communities, an outlet for the circulation of news and reports, the exchange of information and the notification of future activities. We invite readers to contribute newsworthy articles and short notes. Guidelines for contributors are included.

The views expressed in the *Journal* are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Italian Historical Society. The illustrations not sourced are from the Italian Historical Society Collection.

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FRONT COVER:

Italians at a picnic at Aspendale in January, 1939.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

by Gaspare Sirianni

Chairman of the Italian Historical Society and Vice-President of COASIT.

These are difficult times for government funded organisations like COASIT. Many services and programs have been affected by cuts to funding. The Italian Historical Society has not been untouched by this environment. As such, the Society has been required to undertake a number of changes in order to overcome financial difficulties. The Society has become an integral part of the services provided by the Italian Resource Centre and is now located within the Centre (Ground Level, 185 Faraday St, Carlton). This move will give some security of tenure to the Society and will enable it to work more closely with the Italian Resource Centre in the development of culturally specific and historically relevant curriculum materials for both the primary and secondary educational sectors. The Society will also continue its fundamental work in research, collection and the provision of individual research assistance. However, in order to recover some of the non-administrative costs incurred by the Society, such as the provision of material from the collection for research and publication purposes, the Society has now implemented an access policy and scale of fees. It has also been necessary to increase the subscription fee for the *IHS Journal* to \$20 per annum which includes unlimited and unassisted use of the Library and assistance with family history enquiries. Enquiries are also welcome from our interstate subscribers. Please refer to page 31 for full details.

In order to satisfy the many requests from *Journal* subscribers and the general public for information on areas of Italy, the *Journal* has commenced a series of articles which will give some historical background on the various regions and provinces. This issue commences with an article on the Altopiano, an area in the region of Asiago, Northern Italy. We also encourage our readers, who may hold historical information on their ancestral towns and provinces to forward it to the Society for possible inclusion in future issues. We know there are many readers who seek out such details in order to have a more complete understanding of their cultural heritage.

It is very rewarding for me to have witnessed over the years the growth and development of the Italian Historical Society. It is unique and without peer in any other Italian community in Australia. There have been many who, over the years, have voluntarily given their time and expertise contributing to the gradual growth of material, knowledge and collective history held within the Society. It is highly regarded within academic circles and within both the wider community and the Italian community. This is evidenced by the number of requests for research assistance received and by the quality and amount of material emerging from individuals, families and groups who wish to have their material included as part of the Society's collections. This past six months has been particularly fruitful with the donation of some very significant material which contributes to the increasing knowledge of Italian settlement in Victoria. We encourage such contributions and continue our drive to ensure that our Italian heritage is preserved in order that future generations are able to study, understand and appreciate their cultural origins in Australia.

CAPUCHINS OR JESUITS

by Anthony Cappello

Anthony Cappello is currently on leave from a Masters of Arts in History at Victoria University. His thesis is entitled 'Italian Australians, the Church, War and Fascism in Melbourne, 1919 to 1945'.

The details of Italian religious life prior to 1921 in Melbourne are unclear. There were no Italian-born clergy in Melbourne, nor were there any masses specifically for the Italian community, so that their level of attendance at Mass is uncertain for this period.

Some insight into the nature of the religious situation for Italians in Australia may be gained from a report of a two months' visit by Fr Mambrini to the Italian settlement on the Herbert River in Queensland. There he documented the distressing situation concerning religious participation by the Italians.

The problem according to Mambrini revolved around a lack of sympathy between the

Italians and the Anglo-Celtic clergy.¹ Factors such as the dislike of money collections (which did not occur in Italy where goods such as clothing and food were donated instead); contact with Protestantism (largely absent in Italy), and a lack of education, all contributed to building a wall between the parish priest and the Italians. Mambrini's report concluded that, as a remedy, Italian priests of a religious order should be brought out from Italy for their care.² This solution was adopted in Melbourne by Archbishop Daniel Mannix, who persuaded the Jesuit order in Italy in 1920 to send out a newly ordained young Neapolitan Jesuit called Vincenzo DeFrancesco to work with the Italian community.



Fr DeFrancesco celebrates the wedding of Anne Rodriguez to Rosario Lombardo in Melbourne in 1932, shortly before his departure from Australia.

DeFrancesco arrived in Melbourne on 23 October 1920. He found a community of migrants who spoke little or no English, were not well educated, had no social welfare agency and were very much isolated from the larger community. At first, DeFrancesco's arrival was not well received by Melbourne's Italian community, who were quite resentful that a priest had been sent to remind them of 'those obligations... that they had neglected'.³ However, despite his early difficulties, the Italian community soon realised that DeFrancesco was an asset.

By 1922 DeFrancesco realised that the task of caring for the Italians was going to be extremely difficult. He estimated that the Italian community numbered approximately three hundred to four hundred families.⁴ Not only had he to care for them, he also had parish duties at St Ignatius, Richmond, such as being in charge of Bona Mors, the Apostelship of Prayer society and the altar boys' sodality.⁵ Nevertheless DeFrancesco was to have a large impact on the Italian community through his pastoral care and his cultural and social programs. His service to the Italian community and his ability to work with consular officials earned him in 1933, together with S. Pellegrini and D. Boffa, the award of Knighthood of the Italian Crown.⁶ However, in 1934 DeFrancesco was recalled to Naples to take up the office of Provincial of the Jesuits. At his farewell, organised by Frank Virgona, Archbishop Mannix praised DeFrancesco as one who knew every Italian family in Melbourne.⁷

After four years and numerous requests from Archbishop Daniel Mannix, a forty year old Friulan Jesuit, Ugo Modotti was commissioned to be chaplain of the Italian community in Melbourne. For the previous ten years Modotti had been vice-principal of St Aloysius College in Mangalore, India. It was Cardinal Pacelli, later to become Pope Pius XII, who as Secretary of State asked the Superior General of the Jesuits to appoint a priest for Melbourne.⁸ Modotti, it seems, was chosen because of his fluency in English.

To celebrate Modotti's arrival in 1938 a meeting was held at St. Ignatius hall in

Richmond. Amongst the gathering were the Italian consul, Ernesto Arrighi, James H. Scullin MHR, the Bishop of Hiroshima, Japan, Dr Ross and Archbishop Mannix.

Venice, India, Australia

Brilliant Jesuit Comes Among Us

Come to Australia to devote his services to his Order and to his fellow-Italians, Rev. Hugh Modotti, S.J., ~~Ph.D.~~, has been for a number of years in India. His experiences in that great country are of a most interesting kind for Australian readers.

(By "The Advocate's" Special Representative)

From the Advocate, 1st September 1938

With 90% of Italians not attending mass,⁹ the first task Modotti undertook was to publish a religious periodical called *L'Angelo della Famiglia*. It was to be a purely religious publication and Modotti stated this in his first editorial.¹⁰ It received the blessing of Archbishop Mannix thus making the periodical part of the Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action.¹¹

In the period prior to Italy's entry into World War II (September 1938 to May 1940), Modotti carried out the wishes of Archbishop Mannix. His work was purely religious. Mannix and Modotti were good friends and it was Mannix who had more influence on Modotti than any other person in Australia. Modotti was artistic and intellectual and his skill was not restricted to the Italian community. He led Ignatian retreats for non-Italian groups, such as the Professional Men's Sodality,¹² and presented lectures on Dante's Divine Comedy with lantern slides which included horrific illustrations of hell from William Blake.¹³

Opera Religiosa Italiana

"CASA del SACERDOTE"

ITALIANI D'AUSTRALIA!

LEGGETE - MEDITATE - CONTRIBUITE

Questo e' un appello che io vi lancio, o connazionali, ed e' l'appello della fede, e deve penetrarvi nel cuore, a stimolare quei sentimenti religiosi e sacri che furono ereditati da voi con la vita.

Noi siamo oggi raccolti nella massa compatta e salda di tutta la comunita' italiana d'Australia, per il raggiungimento di uno scopo che e' necessario alla nostra vita di cristiani, e che e' importante per la conservazione spirituale di questa nostra Colonia lontana.

Early in 1940, Modotti proposed a plan called 'Opera Religiosa Italiana'.¹⁴ The plan was to have several Jesuit priests imported from Italy to work in a house for the welfare of the Italian Catholic immigrants in Melbourne.¹⁵ A committee, comprising some well-known Italians, including B. A. Santamaria, G. Santamaria, G. Vaccari, S. DeMarco and Dr G. Santoro, was formed to oversee the plan.

On 18 May 1940, the plan was discussed at a meeting at St. George's Hall in Carlton. Gualtiero Vaccari at this meeting assured those making donations that if Fr Modotti was unsuccessful in purchasing a house or even in finding priests, then funds over £1 would be refunded.¹⁶ After the first night a total of £550 was collected with outstanding contributions by G. Vaccari, S. DeMarco, G. Santamaria and F. Virgona who donated £100 pounds each.¹⁷

Late in 1944 the plan was revived with the purchase of 182 Power Street, Hawthorn. The plan was to be carried out by Fr

Modotti under the direct influence of Archbishop Mannix. Mannix and Modotti's plan had only one obstacle, namely the Apostolic Delegate, John Panico who was later appointed Cardinal.

According to B.A. Santamaria, Panico's 'real objective [in Australia] was to end the influence of Mannix and his closest associates'.¹⁸ Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration during 1943 to 1946, recalls that Panico and Mannix 'harboured a long-standing animosity towards each other'.¹⁹ This led to Panico's role in ensuring that Norman Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney, who was far younger and less experienced, be made Cardinal rather than Mannix. Calwell in fact issued a press statement on the 24 of December 1945, arguing that the honour should have gone to the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Mannix. Calwell also stated that the appointment was due to 'a representative [Panico] whose limited ability and equally limited knowledge of Australia...



La 'Casa del Sacerdote' at 182 Power Street, Hawthorn.

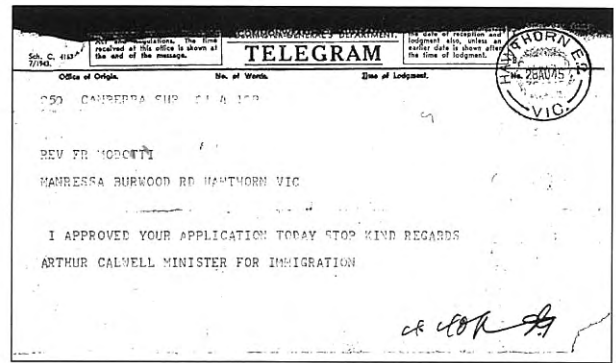
has ill-fitted him to influence the destinies of the Australian church²⁰ and that Panico would be best sent home. The church authorities in Rome believed that this statement was inspired by Modotti and in 1946 Pope Pius XII sought an explanation from Modotti.²¹

It is interesting to note that this Roman policy of decentralisation dates back to the early 19th Century. The first Australian Catholic prelate, Bede Polding, who was himself an Englishman, wrote to Rome saying that 'to bring out all Irish Bishops would insult the Australian Church... for the good of religion and the unity of all peoples it would be an advantage if some bishops were of different origins'.²² On this occasion, Rome intervened by appointing Italian prelates to Australia: Bishop Cani in 1875 and Bishop Torreggiani in 1879.

Prior to Calwell's statement, Panico had attended a bishops' meeting in Adelaide on 29 September 1944, where Modotti, a close ally of Mannix, proposed the idea of an Italian house of priests. Modotti had been in Adelaide for the previous four weeks working closely with the Archbishop of Adelaide, Mons. Beovich, on an Italian mission. All the bishops agreed except for Panico, who argued that it 'encroached on his jurisdiction and reflected on his efficiency'.²³

The real reason for his objection was the mere fact that the idea was proposed by Mannix and Modotti. His refusal coincided chronologically with another significant circumstance: the Capuchins were invited to start work amongst the Italians, thanks to the 'enthusiasm and encouragement of His Excellency John Panico'.²⁴ In 1944 'he [Panico] had approached the Archbishop of Brisbane, Sir James Duhig, and had suggested to him to ask the Capuchins to send some Italian priests'.²⁵ Instead of having Mannix and Modotti running Jesuits, Panico made alternative arrangements by inviting the Capuchins.

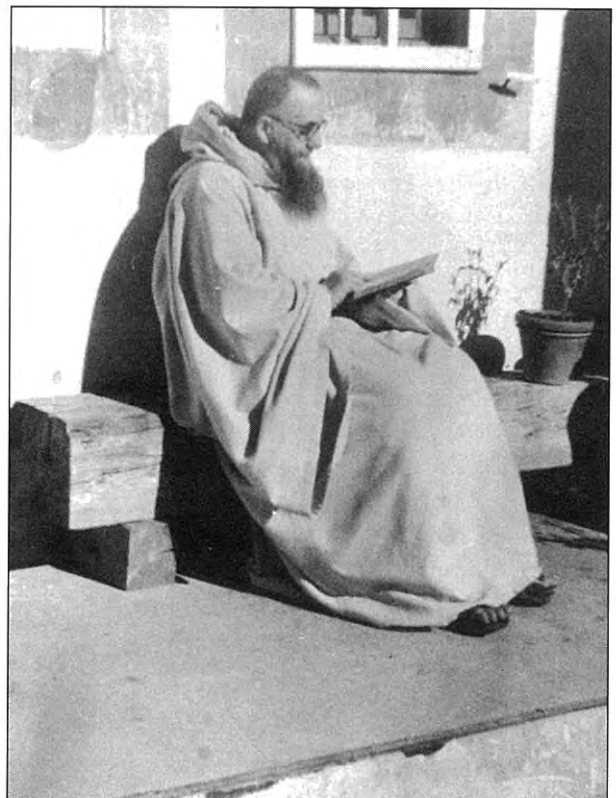
Meanwhile, in Melbourne, the Jesuits were trying to get Modotti organised and plans were made to send him overseas for the sole purpose of fetching Italian priests. On 16 October, 1944, Mannix called in Fr



Fr Modotti was granted Australian citizenship a few months before his departure from Australia.

Meagher, Provincial of the Jesuits in Australia, and informed him that the time had come to find three or four Jesuit fathers from Italy needed to work with Modotti and the Italian community.²⁶ Mannix also wrote to Dr Evatt, Attorney General, asking permission for Modotti to travel to Rome for this purpose of finding priests.²⁷

Fr Meagher, however, began to find some opposition in the Apostolic Delegate, who according to Meagher, 'completely misunderstands Modotti',²⁸ and who would actually have been 'pleased'²⁹ if the plan failed to find priests. With Panico demonstrating animosity towards Mannix, and with J.C.



Fr Ugo Modotti at the Camaldoli Monastery in 1953.



The cell at the 'Eremo' of Camaldoli in Italy where Fr Modotti spent many months in total isolation.

McFarlane, Deputy Director of Security, Victoria, highly suspicious of Modotti, it was conceivable the two would unite to stop Modotti becoming settled in Australia.

Late in 1944, McFarlane informed W.B. Simpson, Director General of Security, that Panico was 'critical of Fr Modotti's activities and would assuredly veto Modotti's impending departure'.³⁰ When the authorities learned of Modotti's desire to be naturalised, McFarlane once again intervened, arguing that 'he [Modotti] is not loyal to the British Empire, nor is he, in my judgement a fit person to receive the benefits and privileges of British citizenship'.³¹ McFarlane's problem was Fr Tim McCarthy, Chaplain General, who according to McFarlane would 'uphold Fr Modotti and would get him out of trouble'.³²

Panico did eventually meet W.B. Simpson in December 1945. It is not sure what was discussed at the meeting, only that Modotti was the subject.³³ One can only guess that this discussion concerned a veto on Modotti's departure. Panico could also have

informed Simpson on Modotti's position within the Vatican. Before Modotti left Australia, he cleverly placed the house, 182 Power St Hawthorn, in the hands of Giuseppe Romanin, and his family. The Romanins like Modotti were Friuliani and Modotti trusted them. The house was blessed and named 'Villa Gonzaga', only to be changed by the Capuchins in 1949 to 'Riva Torto'.

Modotti, on the other hand, never returned to Australia and ended working on Vatican Radio before joining a contemplative order in Rome. He died in 1971 in California.

Endnotes:

¹ Mambrini, Fr 'Report of a Two Months visit to the Italian settlement on the Herbert River'. *Migrants or Mates*, ed. Cresciani, G. Sydney, 1988, p. 104.

² Ibid.

³ Santamaria, B.A., *Against the Tide*, Melbourne, 1981 p 93 DeFrancesco, V. to R.P. Provincial, 2nd July 1923

- ⁴ Ibid, p 94
- ⁵ Profile of Fr Vincenzo DeFrancesco. Jesuit Provincial Archives, Melbourne. The Bona Mors society was a devotional group that met and prayed for a good death.
- ⁶ *Advocate*, 29 March 1928, p. 13.
- ⁷ *Advocate*, June 21st 1934, p. 14.
- ⁸ Modotti, Ugo, Statement, 15 April 1943, Jesuit Provincial Archives, Melbourne
- ⁹ Modotti, Ugo, to Provincial, 31 December 1945. Jesuit Provincial Archives, Melbourne
- ¹⁰ *L'Angelo della Famiglia*, January 1939, p. 1
- ¹¹ Ibid, p. 2
- ¹² *Advocate*, 6 April 1939, p. 25
- ¹³ Gobbo, James, Italians in Victoria and the Second World War: An Address given on behalf of the Italian Historical Society, COASIT Melbourne, 19 May, 1988
- ¹⁴ Modotti U., *Church Flyer, St. Ignatius, Richmond*, May 1940, Jesuit Archives, Melbourne
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ *Italo-Australian*, 25 May 1940
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Santamaria, B.A., *Daniel Mannix: A Biography*, Melbourne 1984, p. 182
- ¹⁹ Calwell A.A., *Be Just and Fear Not*, Hawthorn, 1973, p. 131
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Ibid. pp 128-129
- ²² de Boynes Fr. R.P.N. (Superior General of the Jesuits, worldwide) to Calwell A.A. 22 October 1946, Calwell papers, ACT, copy provided to the author by M.E. Calwell.
- ²³ O'Farrell, P., *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History*, Sydney 1985, p. 1.
- ²⁴ Boland T.P., James Duhig, St Lucia, 1985, pp. 305-306.
- ²⁵ 'Celebrating 50 Years of Capuchin Presence in Australia: 1945-1955', Sandal Prints (September 1995), p.1.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Meagher, SJ, to R. P N. de Boynes, 27 October 1944, Australian Archives, ACT, Series A367/1, Item C62490.
- ²⁸ Meagher, SJ, to Rev. Dugre, SJ, 22 January 1945, A.A. ACT, Ibid.

- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ J.C. McFarlane, Deputy Director of Security, Vic., to WB Simpson, Director General of Security, 11 December 1945, A.A. ACT, Ibid.
- ³¹ J.C., McFarlane to W.B. Simpson, 11 August 1945, A.A. ACT, Ibid.
- ³² J.C., McFarlane to WB Simpson, 11 December 1944, A.A. ACT, Ibid.
- ³³ W.B., Simpson to Apostolic Delegate, Dr Giovanni Panico, 11 April, 1945. A.A. ACT, Ibid.

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
ARCHBISHOP'S ITALIAN COMMITTEE
In the presence of
His Grace the Archbishop
Most Reverend D. MANNIX, D.D., LL.D.
and
The Hon. A. A. CALWELL, M.H.R.
MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND IMMIGRATION

. . .

**MUSICAL
ENTERTAINMENT
AND
PRESENTATION**

*A Tribute
from the Italian Community to
Rev. H. MODOTTI, S.J.
in Recognition of His Magnificent Work*

. . .

Cathedral Hall
Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

Sunday, 9th December, 1945
at 7.45 p.m.

The Society holds copies of Fr DeFrancesco's published letters relating to his pastoral work in Australia from 1921 to 1930. The Society also holds a comprehensive collection of photos, documents and ephemera relating to Fr Modotti's activities in Victoria, together with his original sketchbook.

TO HONOUR A NOTED BOTANIST

by Ruth Dwyer

Ruth Dwyer is a free-lance researcher. She has contributed to a number of publications, notably A History of Hawthorn, the suburb in which she lives. The areas of research generally undertaken include work on the non-British in nineteenth century Victoria, and the documentation of silver, jewellery, furniture and dwellings of that period. She is at present contributing to a number of publications including the 'von Mueller Project'. She also has a particular interest in agricultural and viticultural research using early Victorian records, including material pertaining to the various sections of the Land Acts of the 1860s.

Paolo Dattari was one of the original members of The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, formed in June 1880, the objective being to collect, document and name the flora and fauna of Australia. Many members undertook field trips collecting specimens. Over the months Dattari exhibited a number of specimens, including the King Stag Beetle, at the meetings which followed the establishment of the club. Another member of the Field Naturalists' Club was the august Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, at that time the Government Botanist of Victoria. Between 1857 and 1873 the German-born von Mueller was also the Director of Melbourne's magnificent Royal Botanic Garden in South Yarra. On 10 October 1896, Baron von Mueller departed this earth. The centenary of his passing has been celebrated by many events held in Melbourne, and elsewhere in the world during the past year, 1996. The following article celebrates the relationship which developed between Dattari and von Mueller. It has been reprinted, with kind permission, from the special commemorative issue of *The Victorian Naturalist*, Volume 113(4) August 1996.

Baron Ferdinand von Mueller was honoured in many ways, with noble titles, decorations and through certain living species being named after him. Most of these were botanical, but there were also fossils and insects. One of the more spectacular is the King Stag Beetle, *Phalacrognathus muelleri*. On 14 June 1886, The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria held their monthly meetings, as usual, at the Royal Society's hall. A paper was read by Mr Paolo Dattari titled

'Notes on the new Australian beetle' which outlined the history of 'this splendid insect'.¹ In distributing the paper, illustrated with enlarged coloured drawings, Dattari expressed an opinion that the specimens exhibited would probably be found to be more than one species. Lithographic plates of the beetle were also distributed. It was found to be a new genus, and was named *Phalacrognathus muelleri* in honour of his friend and mentor, the Government Botanist, Baron Sir Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich von Mueller. A copy of the paper, with coloured plate, was presented to the library of The Field Naturalists Club.² It cannot now be found. However another copy is held by the Museum of Victoria.

Paolo Dattari, a cultured Italian gentleman, had emigrated from London in 1877 as an unassisted passenger aboard the *Somersetshire*.³ Dattari, born c1850 in Leghorn near Florence, the son of Luigi Dattari, gentleman, and Enrichetta, formerly Maneschit, was an architect by profession.⁴ Unfortunately no buildings in Victoria can be attributed to him, but there is evidence of his involvement in associated disciplines. He contributed two pen-and-ink drawings to the Adelaide Exhibition of 1881, one being an allegory for *Punch*, the other a frontispiece for a scientific publication. Both were well designed and delicately executed.⁵ The handsome and costly gold and silver presentation casket of 1880 for Captain Standish, Chief Commissioner of Police in Victoria, was one of Dattari's manufacture⁶ and showed a distinct Italianate influence. Dattari also applied for the registration of at least two patents in Victoria,

the first in 1882 for a Parallel Ruler combining ruler, protractor and scale, and the other in 1883, in conjunction with J.E. Edwards for an Electro 'Control'.⁷ His interest in scientific matters is further evidenced by the existence of a letter from Professor McCoy of 7 August 1886 identifying a species of fish found locally.⁸

In June 1880, Dattari had been elected to The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria as one of the original members, and remained as such until 1886, after which time there is an inexplicable absence until his re-admission on 13 July 1891.⁹ A letter from Mueller of 7 September 1886 enclosed a map of New Guinea, possibly indicating a field trip by Dattari to that northern area.¹⁰ The birth of a son, Paolo, to Dattari and his wife, the former Margaret Elizabeth Victoria Yeomans, indicates a presumed residence in Carlton in 1887.¹¹ The last Sands and McDougall directory entry is for Station Street, North Carlton in 1888. It is believed that Dattari returned to the Florentine area some time after 1891.

Baron von Mueller had presented to Dattari a copy of his *Description and illustrations of the myoporinous plants of Australia*, Vol. 2, inscribed 'To P. Dattari Esqr & c. with regardful remembrance from his sincere friend Ferd. von Mueller. Sept. 1886'.¹² Other relevant correspondence, including advice on the terminology to be used when documenting botanical specimens,¹³ is held at the library of the National Herbarium of Victoria and by The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria.

Acknowledgments:

Dr. Thomas A. Darragh, National Museum of Victoria, for assistance including the location of the McCoy letter. Sara Maroske, Joint Editor of The von Mueller Project, for provision of transcripts of letters from *The Correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller*.

Endnotes:

¹ *Argus*, 15 June 1886 p.6. Collection State Library of Victoria.

² *The Victorian Naturalist*, July 1886 p.26, August 1886, p.37.

³ P.R.O.V. V.P.R.S 7666 Unit 358

⁴ Index to Marriages in Victoria, 1881, Certificate No.2513.

⁵ M. Lewis, *Australian Architectural Index* Edn 2; *Argus*, 20 July 1881 p.5. Collection State Library of Victoria.

⁶ *The Australasian Sketcher*, 28 May 1881, in J.B. Hawkins, *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, 1990, Vol. 1, p.258.

⁷ Index to Patents Registered in Victoria, 1856-1904. Collection State Library of Victoria.

⁸ National Museum of Victoria, letter book No. 7, p.430.

⁹ Personal communication, Sheila Houghton to Ruth Dwyer, 17 August 1995.

¹⁰ Mueller to Dattari, 7 September 1886, copy National Herbarium of Victoria.

¹¹ Index to Births in Victoria, 1887, Certificate No.18015.

¹² Library of The Huntington, San Marino, California.

¹³ Mueller to Dattari, 14 April 1886, copy National Herbarium of Victoria.

THE ALTOPIANO: A Historical Outline

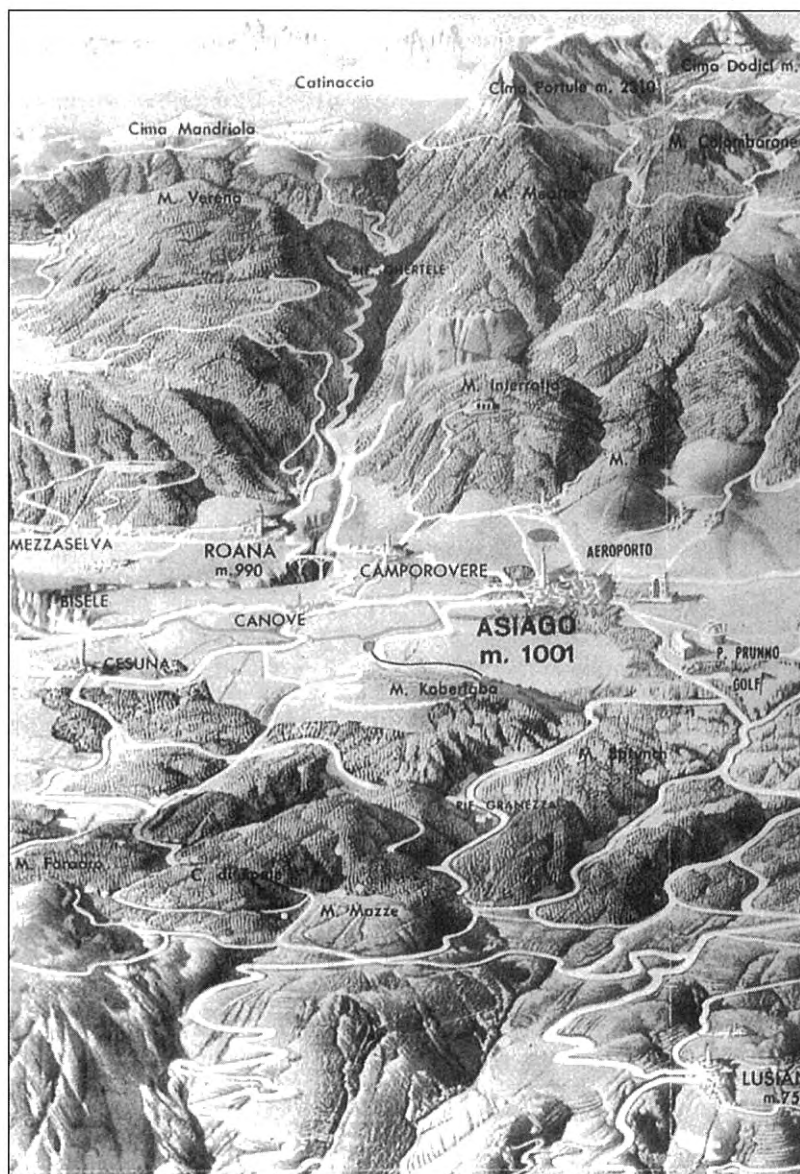
by Patrizio Rigoni

The following is an edited version of an article published in the Italian regional magazine Asiago: Ieri, Oggi, Domani, No 45/46 Dec. 1993. This article will be of interest to the many Cimbri descendants who now live in Australia. The Society wishes to thank the author for his permission to reprint it.

The Altopiano (plateau) of Asiago, also known as the 'Altopiano dei Sette Comuni', is located between the rivers Brenta and Astico, 55 km north of Vicenza and comprises seven municipalities (*comuni*): Asiago, Eneo, Foza, Gallio, Lusiana, Roana and Rotzo. The most evident proof of the Germanic origins of the people of the Altopiano is their language - a mixture of Danish and German words - which is still spoken by many of the old people and which continues to be taught in some schools of the Altopiano. Today Asiago is the main comune and is a popular summer and winter holiday resort.

The stone flints and the graffiti found in the Valdassa region bear witness to a prehistoric human presence on the Altopiano. This presence was probably temporary and seasonal and related to both hunting and to the search for flints (found in large quantities here) useful for the production of tools. The finding of a pre-historic village at Bostel, near Rotzo, brought to light traces of a population, perhaps the first, which resided on these mountains. The small but significant finds were small mud huts, remnants of kitchenware, iron and bronze artifacts, silver coins and animal bones. Other pre-Christian settlement traces were found at Lusiana (Corgon) and at Eneo.

Who do the people descend from who still today use words like *rach* (musk), *rasette* (swallow), *loch* (hole), *tanna* (pine tree),



slenca (slingshot), *tal* (valley), *pach* (small stream), *zaur* (acidic), etc.? The Altopiano, once isolated, was a refuge to small tribes which crossed the Alps after the decline of the Roman Empire. This immigration was chiefly Germanic and later around the year 1000 AD, families of Bavarian settlers in search of land to deforest and to cultivate began to populate the region. On the plateau they felt secure and thus were able

to make a living and keep up their language and traditions. The Cimbro language of this region is therefore related to a Bavarian dialect.¹

The first immigrants settled at the two opposite points of the plateau, west and east, thus forming the two oldest villages, Rotzo and Enego, and in this way began the colonisation of the Altopiano inwards from its borders. The settlers moved eventually towards the centre of the plateau giving origin to Gallio, Foza, Roana, Lusiana and Asiago.

The 7 villages soon became *comuni* (small administrative districts) protected first by the Ezzelini and then by the Scaligeri and since 1400 by the Visconti, from whom they obtained special economic privileges necessary to survive in a mountain zone. During this period the union of the 7 villages grew stronger until the *Reggenza* (Federation) Pact of 1310 which allowed them administrative and political autonomy, and the possibility of constituting their own military force.

In 1404 the Federation of the 7 *Comuni* allied themselves voluntarily with the Republic of Venice. The loyalty of the *Comuni* to the Serenissima lasted four centuries until 1807. Venice granted the *Reggenza* many privileges and in exchange requested from them the defence of the northern borders, which were strategically important. This endeavour cost the *Comuni* plundering and devastation in 1487 and in 1508 at the hands of the Germans and in 1805 at the hands of the French. Nonetheless the inhabitants of the Altopiano defended their land tenaciously and were often victorious.

In 1613 the plague which contaminated northern Italy arrived at Asiago, causing the death of 1500 people. With the French revolution and Napoleon, Venice lost its power and was thus unable to protect the Federation any longer. Then in 1815, with the fall of Napoleon, the whole region was annexed by the Austrian Empire; as a consequence all the benefits which had been granted the *Reggenza* were revoked and substituted by a rigid taxation system which reduced the Altopiano to a purely

subsistence economy. All this compelled many inhabitants of the Altopiano to migrate towards other more prosperous European and overseas nations.

Notwithstanding many difficulties, modernisation stimulated economic recovery: public works, the first hotels, banks and new roads were built. The Cimbrica Region, which was 800 soldiers strong and was constituted in 1848, helped to restrain the Austrian advance, thus demonstrating the participation of the Altopiano in the unification of Italy in the Risorgimento. Moreover many volunteers took part in the Second War of Independence in 1859 and in Garibaldi's famous *Spedizione dei Mille* in 1860 to free Sicily from Bourbon domination. Then in 1866, during the Third War of Independence, the Altopiano was annexed by the Kingdom of Italy.

The construction of the Valdassa bridge in 1906 and of the railroad in 1909 contributed to faster communication between the 7 *Comuni* of the plateau and with the plain. Emigration still continued even though new industries such as mining and the distillation of liquors began. World War I was the most tragic event in the history of the Altopiano. The war caused the destruction of the towns and forests of the plateau and a further exodus of its people. This dispersal of the various families caused a cultural and emotional estrangement with almost irreversible consequences.

In the post-war years, reconstruction created new towns, even if they were less characteristic of the region. Unemployment and emigration continued even after World War II because the traditional occupations were insufficient to secure growth corresponding to the new needs. In the 1960s the rapid growth of tourism created new jobs: it was necessary to build new houses, hotels and sporting facilities, infrastructure that the tourism industry required. This has produced a profound economic, social and cultural transformation of the region which requires a commitment in matching the expectations of modern standards of living with the need to protect the natural environment and preserve the cultural identity inherited from past generations.

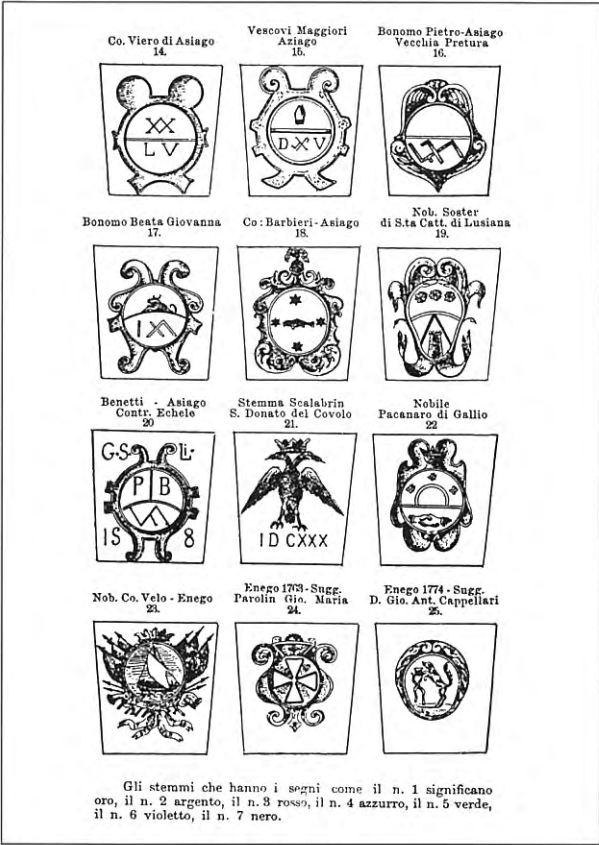
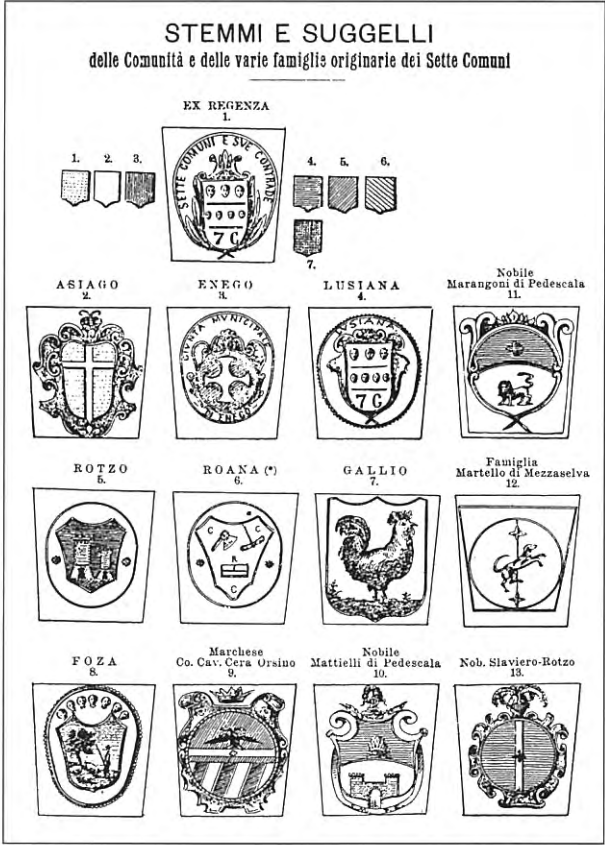
Endnotes:

¹ Some anthropologists claim that the connection of the Altopiano with the Cimbri people goes back to 101 BC, when the Roman Consul Caius Mario defeated the Cimbri at the Campi Raudii battle near Verona in 101 B.C. More than 140,000 Cimbri perished and 60,000 were taken prisoners. Some of those who managed to survive the slaughter sought refuge in the mountainous region of Vicenza, thus forming the first Cimbro settlement in the Altopiano. (Source: Consiglio 'Terra Cimbria', Mario De Nale, C.S.E.P. Tambre, 1984.)

Some family names of Cimbro origin:

Azzolini	Loser	Rech
Benetti	Maltauro	Rigoni
Bonato/Bonatto	Martello	Sartori
Fabris	Mecenero	Sbabo
Fraccaro	Mosele	Slaviero
Frigo	Pojer	Soster
Gandin	Pertelli	Stefani
Graser	Pretto	Sterchele
	Rebeschini	Vellar

Town seals and family crests from the Cimbro district



NEWS

Move to the Italian Resource Centre

The Society has now become an integral part of the Italian Resource Centre of COASIT which is situated on the ground floor of 185 Faraday Street, Carlton. The move will allow the Society more visibility and will enable the Society to make direct contact with teachers and students who use the language resources. The street level position will also mean better physical access for our visitors, especially the elderly, who will no longer be required to negotiate two flights of stairs.

The move will also enable the Society to benefit from the Resource Centre's library expertise ensuring that our collection of books and articles will be catalogued according to modern library standards. This task is long term as the Society's collection of texts and articles has been amassed over a period spanning nearly thirty years. The move will allow the Society and the Resource Centre to develop co-operative educational programs focussing on the various curriculum frameworks for both primary and secondary sectors.

Increase in the Subscription to the IHS Journal for 1997

Due to an increase in printing and postage costs over the years, it has been necessary to increase the subscription to the IHS Journal to \$20.00 per annum. We believe this is a modest increase considering there has been no increase in price since the Journal's first publication in 1989.

Because of large funding cut-backs to our governing body, COASIT, which fully subsidises the Society's ongoing activities, the Society has also reviewed the level and quality of service it provides. It has been decided to implement a scale of fees in order to recover some costs, especially those not related to the collection program and to day-to-day administration. The Scale of Fees and Access Policy are printed in this issue.

Grants

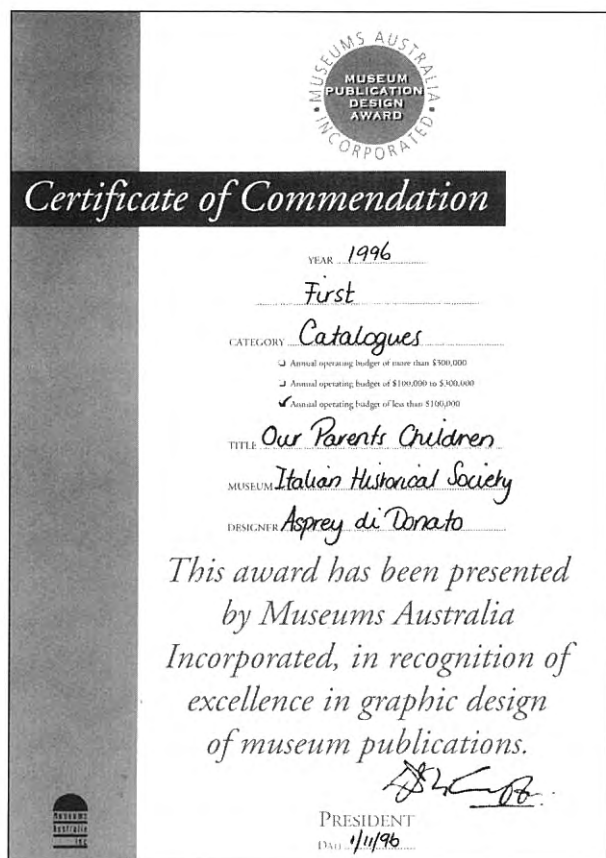
The Society has been the beneficiary of 40 acid-free archival conservation storage boxes and manilla folders which were granted by the Australian Council of Archives (ACA) under their Archival Support Program. The Society was the first 'ethnic' and one of eleven Victorian Historical Societies to receive the grant. These boxes will be used to store the recently received Santospirito and Borsari collections.



Ross Gibbs, President of ACA and director of the Victorian Public Records Office presenting the archival boxes to staff and committee members of the Society.

Under the Victorian Government's Arts Touring grants the Society has received a grant of \$5,000. The funds will allow us to purchase a 'portable and user-friendly' display system and to copy selected material from the Society's collection for the purpose of meeting the demand for display material from regional libraries and community museums. In the past these requests have been unable to be fulfilled due to high freight costs and display difficulties. We will also be able to reproduce the most popularly requested themes from the collection and to add items from recently acquired material. As a result our collection will be more accessible to rural communities and organisations which are usually financially constrained and handicapped by distance and are often unable to gain access to educational and cultural material.

Museums Australia Award



In November 1996 at the annual Museums Australia Conference, held in Sydney, the Italian Historical Society was winner of the Publication award 'for excellence in graphic design of a museum publication' under the category of 'organisations with an annual operating budget under \$100,000'. The commendation was received for the catalogue produced for the exhibition *Our Parents Children*, which was curated by Giacomina Pradolin, a member of the IHS Committee. The exhibition was a display of contemporary pieces of art produced by Italian Australians. The works reflected the impact of the migration experience on the artists and their parents. The exhibition was presented by the Society and held at the National Gallery of Victoria during November 1995. Congratulations to Giacomina for her vision and to Asprey Di Donato Design for their innovative and refreshing approach to museum catalogues.

Awards 'Shine' on Jan Sardi

The Society would like to extend its heartiest congratulations to Jan Sardi, script writer for the award-winning film *Shine*. Already achieving the highest accolades within the Australian film and television industry, *Shine* has also been recognised by world-wide audiences with the recent Golden Globe Award for best Actor. It has also been nominated in seven categories for the Academy Awards.

Jan has been a member of the Society for a number of years. His grandfather, Manilo, immigrated to Australia from Capoliveri (on the Isle of Elba) leaving his grandmother Isabella pregnant with Jan's father. Gualberto Sardi met his father for the first time in 1935 when he was seven years old, on a small railway platform in far north Queensland. Jan has researched aspects of his family history and has deposited some of his material with the Society. The Society wishes Jan all the best for a 'shining' and successful future. Bravo Jan!



This photo of 'nonna' Isabella with son Gualberto was sent to her husband in Australia 1931.

Book Release

On 12 December 1996 the Society launched *By Proxy: A Study of Italian Proxy Brides in Australia* by Susi Bella Wardrop who is a member of the Society's Committee. The book was the culmination of years of research undertaken by Susi who joined the Society in 1990.

The book discusses the phenomenon of proxy marriages during the height of Italian mass migration to Australia in the 1950s and early 60s. A proxy marriage occurs

when the spouse cannot be present at the ceremony and is represented by a substitute known as a proxy. The stories collected for the book are told by the women and men who chose to marry by proxy.

The book was launched by Sir James Gobbo at a function and was attended by 120 people. Most of those who participated in the study attended together with children, relatives and friends. The book can be obtained by contacting the Society or placing an order through the enclosed mail order form.



Susi Bella Wardrop (top row, 1st right) at the launch of the book with a number of proxy brides who participated in the study.

NEW MATERIAL

During the last six months the Italian Historical Society acquired by means of donation a large number of items of significant material which adds another chapter to the history and settlement of Italian migrants in Australia.

Nino Borsari Collection

Five archival boxes of letters, documents, ledgers, photographs and memorabilia documenting the business, sports achievements and community activities of the late Nino Borsari were donated to the Society by his son Nino. Borsari was a well known figure within Melbourne Italian community and within Australian sporting circles. Two years after winning a gold medal in cycling at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, Borsari was invited to Australia to contest the Victorian Centenary 1000 road race, which was won by Ted Stubenrauch from Bairnsdale, Victoria. He had returned to Australia as a guest of the Australian Cycling Federation when the Second World War broke out. He became an 'enemy alien',

but was not interned. However he was banned from racing.

When the war ended he decided to settle in Melbourne. With the help of some influential Australian friends, including Sidney Myer, Borsari set up a bicycle repair shop in Lygon Street, Carlton which was later expanded to include sports and household goods. Borsari's famous Emporium was synonymous with Carlton's Little Italy and his name in neon lights still sits above the shop which has since its closure in 1992 become a restaurant. In the 1950s Borsari brought out some of Italy's top boxers and cyclists. Among his papers are the records of his time as president of the Juventus Soccer Club of which he was a founding member. Borsari was also a founding member of the Casa d'Italia which is now the head office of COASIT, the umbrella organisation of the Italian Historical Society.

From the 1950s to the 1970s he was actively involved in the organisation of important fund-raising activities for the assistance of



Nino with members of a Victorian cycling team sponsored by him in the 1950s.



Nino Borsari with members of the Melbourne Italian community at a function at the San Remo Ballroom in the early 1970s.



Borsari and his wife Fanny enjoy Christmas drinks at their Emporium with friends and staff members in the 1960s.

Italian migrants. Many of these memorable functions were held in his elegant home in Ivanhoe where, with the help of his wife Fanny, Borsari entertained the guests with music and food equivalent to a five-star restaurant. The records, which are in the process of being sorted and computer cata-

logued, will be made available to historians and researchers by appointment only.

Nina Spiller Collection

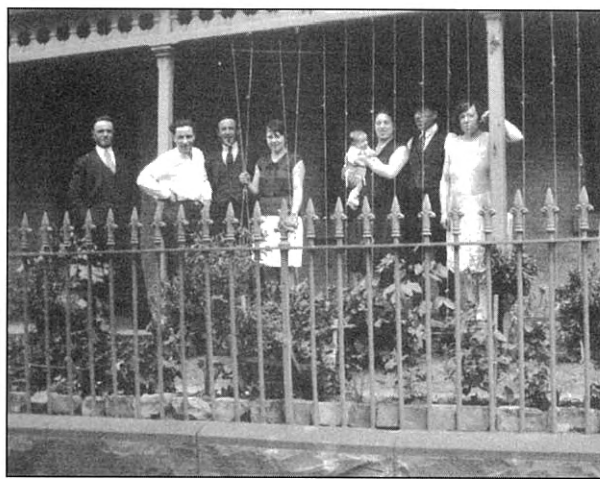
Nina Spiller nee Sterchele was a well known figure in the Melbourne Italian community from the 1930s to the 1960s. She was an accomplished pianist, singer and music teacher. Lina was born in Vienna. She was a teenager when she migrated to Australia c.1928 with her parents. Lina's parents originated from Cesuna, a small town in the Valli del Pasubio, near Vicenza. Her father, Giovanni Sterchele, after some years as an officer in the Royal Police Force of the Kingdom of Italy, migrated early this century with his newly wed wife Antonia Valente to Vienna to work for an uncle as a foreman in the building industry. Towards the end of last century and early this century, Austria was a popular destination for many Veneti from the province of Vicenza, most of whom were of Germanic descent

(see article p.13). Their settlement thus was facilitated by the language and strong historical links with that country.

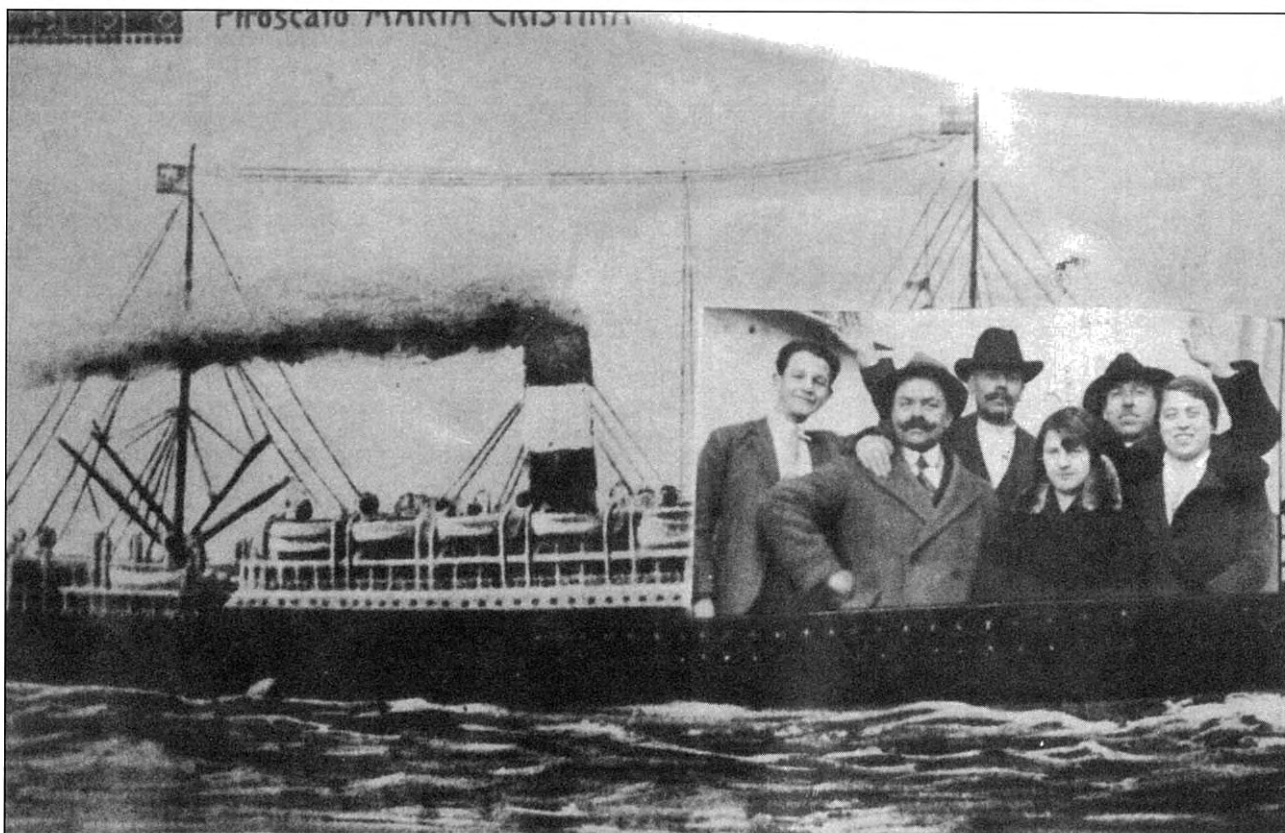
In Vienna Lina attended music classes and singing lessons with renowned teachers. After the First World War they migrated to Australia, where Antonia had a brother, Antonio Valente. As was the case with most migrants, Giovanni's qualifications and skills were not recognised in Australia. To support the family he worked as a cook in restaurants around Melbourne for a number of years. Soon after their arrival, his wife Antonia found employment for a year in the house of Dame Nellie Melba, assisting the famous singer with her choice of clothes, jewellery and make-up. In 1929 they moved to 29 Hannover Street, Fitzroy where they set up a boarding house, managed by Lina's mother. Years later they moved to Grattan Street Carlton, where Lina's mother continued to run a large boarding house at Nos 62, 64 and 66.

Lina's skills as a singer, pianist, organist and accordion player were put to good use as she pursued a career in this field, working mainly for the Melbourne Italian com-

munity. Lina played and sang at weddings, community balls, religious functions and at clubs and private parties. With her husband Jack Spiller, whom she met soon after her arrival in Melbourne, they played for the Hoyts Cinema Circuit and at functions within the Italian community. In the 1950s they formed an orchestra which for two years played at the Fitzroy Town Hall and later at St George's Hall in Carlton. Lina was also a well-known piano teacher, a profession which she practised until the 1980s.



Nina's family with friends on the veranda of their boarding house in Fitzroy in 1929



A souvenir postcard of the Sterchele family's trip to Australia on the Maria Cristina in 1928



Jack and Nina Spiller as young musicians in Melbourne, 1935

The photographs in the collection, which were donated to the Society after Lina's death in 1996, document the various phases in her life, from her childhood to the years at the peak of her career as an artist in Australia. They also provide a valuable

insight into the interaction between fellow Italians who, by forming close-knit groups within their community, have replaced the extended family whom most migrants left behind when they came to Australia.



Lina Spiller with a group of Italian girls who sang at St. George's Sunday Mass in the 1950s



Lina and Gisella Migliorini show their elegance at the Regatta held in Melbourne in 1935

Lest We Forget

It is not uncommon for the Italian Society to receive unusual calls. When Mr Jack McLeod called to ask if we were interested in an Italian flag with some military memorabilia attached to it, we did not expect to be offered a very special treasure, of great significance to the Italians who fought in the Second World War. The person who kept the flag for the past fifty years, Mr J.T. Tate, had recently passed away and Mr McLeod felt that the flag should return to Italian hands, as a sign of respect for all the soldiers who fought and died in the war.

The flag was from the Royal Italian Navy. It was taken at Bengasi in Libya by the Australian Field Ambulance stretcher bearers of the 2/2nd Battalion serving in North Africa. The House of Savoy, symbol of the Italian monarchy, is embroidered in the centre of the flag. Victor Emmanuel III was King of Italy during that period. The military emblems attached to the flag represent various Italian military forces, from the Artillery to the Bersaglieri and Carabinieri. The Australians who sewed the emblems were not familiar with the flag. This is obvious by the fact that they attached the memorabilia on the reverse side. From the handwriting on the flag, it appears that the emblems were collected over a number of months and in different parts of Egypt and Libya. The order of the locations is indicated by a progressive number next to them. They are: Sidi Barrani, Sollum, Fort Capuzzo, Bardia, Tobruk, Derna, Giovanni Berta, Tobra and Bengasi. The central panel of the flag is individually signed by the Australian Field Ambulance soldiers and among them there is an Italian name: S/Sgt. S Villani, Vx2532. It is not clear if the emblems were taken from the uniforms and head gear of Italian soldiers found on the battlefields or in camp hospitals, or whether they were given to the stretcher bearers as a souvenir by Italian or other Australian soldiers.

The flag, which was displayed at a number of public events within the Italian community, was admired by many Italian returned soldiers who migrated to Australia after the

war. Among them there were some who had served in North Africa and were taken as prisoners to Australia. The flag has brought back in all of us the memory of a war in which many thousands of young men from all over the world perished. Lest we forget!



Jack McLeod displaying the Italian Navy flag donated to the Society

Anyone with further information about the events concerning the making of this special flag is invited to contact Maria Tence or Laura Mecca at the Society on (03) 9349 1144.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Educational

The Society's role in the education sector is becoming more relevant and necessary. As V.C.E. Australian History and Australian studies include study units on migration, empowerment of minority groups, working life, citizenship, etc. the Society's collections of photographs, documents and oral histories attract much attention. As the number of people with living memory of phases of Australian history such as pioneering migration, the Depression and World War II decrease, our collection of oral histories supported with photographic images becomes a very precious resource. As such, requests to the Society to deliver lectures on various aspects of Australian history and immigration, increase year by year. In the last six months the Society has delivered a series of lectures and presentations focussing on the cultural contribution of Italians to Australian cultural life for the Year 12 LOTE, CAT 3. Over 300 students attended this program and were given material that would provide them with appropriate background information to allow them to more than adequately answer their exam question.

The Society also presented talks on aspects of the history of Italian immigration to over 450 secondary students and various groups of tertiary students from Melbourne universities.



A lecture to Year 12 students

The Society's reputation as a unique repository of historical sources is recognised

world-wide. This is evident by the number of foreign University students who apply to undertake research based on our collections. This year the Society hosted students from Minnesota University (USA), the Menzies Institute for Australian Studies in London, the University of Pavia (Milan), the UIILM University (Milan) and the University of Amsterdam. The Society is collaborating with the State University of Milan on a major immigration research project. Assistance was also provided to academics and students from RMIT, the University of Queensland, the University of Sydney and LaTrobe, Melbourne and Victoria universities.

Public Programs

The family history group of the Society has been very active. Individual members continue to give advice to the many who ring or write for assistance with tracing their Italian ancestry.

A number of invitations have been received to present talks to interested genealogical societies and it is with the good will and commitment from members of the Society's family history group that this year talks were given to the Melton Family History Group, the 1850s Settlers Group, The Central Highlands Historical Society's Family History Open Day and the Mormon Family's History Day at Ballarat.

The Society has also become involved in the Moreland City Council's 'Friends of Bonegilla' Group which is attempting to foster interest in the preservation of the site of Block 19 at Bonegilla, the former Migrant Reception and Training Centre, in preparation for the 50th anniversary of Bonegilla's conversion to a migrant holding centre - a period which marked a significant change to the previous century of British influence on Australian culture.

The Society wishes to hear from readers who went through Bonegilla as we would like to expand our knowledge and collection on the Bonegilla Migrant Centre.

In May this year COASIT hosted a welcome presentation for the Princess Elettra Marconi, daughter of Count Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of the radiotelegraph. The Society presented the Princess with a scrapbook of various articles extracted from the Society's Diplomatic Archives and from Australian newspapers at the State Library of Victoria which detailed the radio contacts Guglielmo Marconi made with Sydney and Portland in Victoria.



Sir James Gobbo welcomes Princess Elettra Marconi

Visit to Bendigo with Into-Art Group

An excursion to Bendigo was organised in conjunction with Into-Art (an art, heritage and cultural interest group) in November 1996. A bus load of 45 was welcomed to Bendigo by Russell Jack, President of the Golden Dragon Museum and the Bendigo Australian-Chinese Association. He took the group through a guided tour of the \$3 million museum and Chinese gardens. The group was amazed at the quality of the museum's displays and collection which dates back to the district's gold rush period and also contains some rare cultural items from China. After a picnic lunch at the Botanical Gardens, the group took a guided tour of the Bendigo Art Gallery, recognised for its collection of early Australian paintings, but which also holds a fine collection of Italian marble sculptures. Before leaving, the group paid a short visit to the Sacred Heart Cathedral which was commenced in 1896 and completed in 1977. Many Italian stonemasons were involved in its construction. It was the last church built in Gothic style. Enquiries as to the 1997 calendar of Into-Art activities may be directed to Mrs Delfina Sartori, c/- the Italian Historical Society.



An impressive introduction to the Golden Dragon Museum in Bendigo built by the community

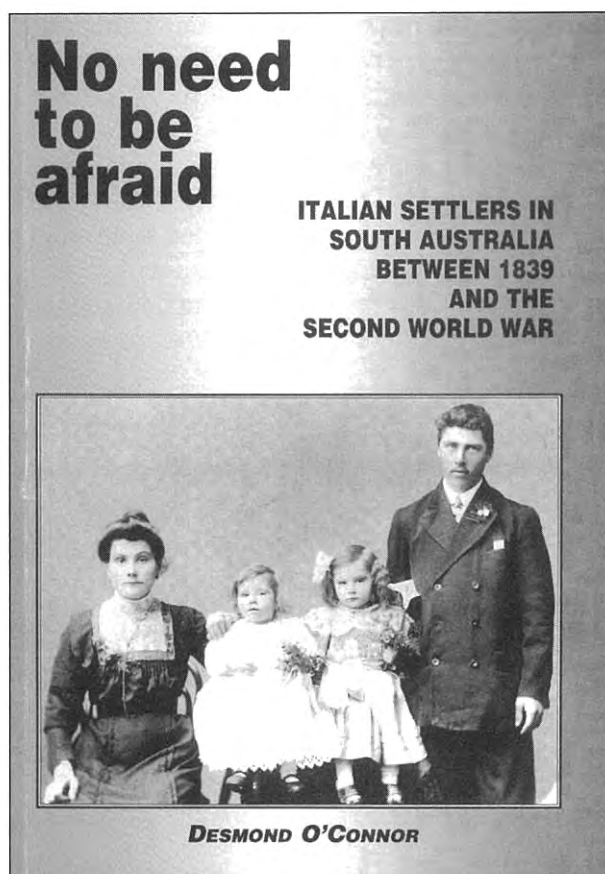
BOOK REVIEW

NO NEED TO BE AFRAID:

Italian settlers in South Australia between 1839 and the Second World War

By Desmond O'Connor, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, South Australia.

Reviewer: Dr Rosario Lampugnani



There is little doubt that there exists a paucity of historical research regarding Italian settlement in South Australia. Indeed, any current historical analysis of Italians in South Australia is virtually non-existent. This book, apart from documenting the arrival of the first Italians to South Australia, brings to light the contribution made by early Italian settlers to the economic and social development of that State.

The book begins by detailing the arrival of the first Italian in South Australia, a Mr Antonio Giannoni (aka Antonio Gannonio, aka Antonio Jannoni) who apparently fled his native Rimini in 1838 because of political turmoil, and went to England from where he made his way to Australia. The

account tells of Giannoni's life in Australia till his death. Giannoni was followed by other political exiles, particularly Salvatore Cilento and Giovanni Ferrero.

The author then proceeds to describe the arrival of other Italians. Among them were musicians, priests of the Passionist order and a papal consul. The musicians or pianists as the author defines them, seem to be those who had a major musical impact on the colony at the time. However, Italian immigrants during this period were very few indeed, and since figures were essentially unavailable, it is difficult to present a definite number. The main point made in the book, nonetheless, is that these were persons who arrived as individual settlers to South Australia for a variety of reasons, namely political, religious or business. They were certainly not the 'poverty-stricken' immigrants that followed. The first arrivals were the refugee, the missionary, the musician, and the mariner. These were 'scouts' who eventually were followed by small groups of impoverished fishermen and farm labourers. They were the genesis of the Italian community in South Australia.

The Molfettesi are certainly the better known of the Italian settlers to arrive in South Australia. These were a community of poverty-stricken fishermen from Molfetta in Southern Italy, who established themselves in Port Pirie in the 1880s in search of fishing grounds that would have allowed them to survive and hopefully prosper. Indeed, a number of them were able to save money to travel to Italy and bring back to Australia brides, wives and children. Another group of Molfettesi established themselves in Port Adelaide. Although somewhat numerically smaller than the one in Port Pirie, this group was equally important. As a result of the settlement of this community an Italian club was established in Port Adelaide. Most importantly, all these Molfettesi contributed significantly to the development of the fishing industry in South Australia.

Meanwhile, other Italian immigrants settled in South Australia and contributed substantially to the development of the South Australian economy. They imported and grew olive trees for the production of olive oil. They established grapevines for the production of wine, and imported the Ligurian bee for the production of honey.

It is not possible here to refer to all the individual names cited by the author in this book. It is clear though that many Italians have, individually, contributed to the development of the South Australian colony and gained a certain esteem among the Anglo-Saxon community.

Although they were not a large community at that stage, their settlement pattern was quite noticeable. Apart from Port Pirie, Italians settled mostly around and in the city of Adelaide where they established market gardens. While the majority of Italians remained in the environs of the city of Adelaide, some of them moved more inland to work in the forestry industry and in mining.

Over time, from the initial few dozen, Italian immigrants in South Australia grew to several thousands. In 1881, Italians numbered 141. By 1947 they were 2428. Despite the fact that the Italian community in South Australia remained overall rather small until after the Second World War, the settlement pattern of these immigrants made them highly visible. As a consequence, Britishers began to demonstrate antagonism towards these immigrants who were considered exploiters of local resources, paupers, violent and prone to use knives, and thought to be tax evaders. They were seen as a race apart, as inferior and illiterate. They were regarded as scabs taking away jobs from Australians. These resentments eventually resulted in open violence towards Italians in the workplace, in the streets and other public places.

By the time of the outbreak of the First World War, a number of Italian immigrants had become shop owners and small business proprietors, and others had set up small factories making ice-cream, clothing and pasta, eventually establishing a major margarine factory in the 1930s, the Adelaide Margarine Ltd.

Some Italian schools were established, as well as various Italian clubs, for example the Vittorio Veneto Club, the Italia-Australia Club, the Italian Club, the Venezia Club and the Savoia Club. Newspapers in Italian language, such as *Il Risveglio* were also published during that period.

During the Fascist period, a number of Italians in Australia got involved in local Italian politics, and this contributed to increased animosity by Australians towards Italians who were then considered as unasimilable, being members of secret societies and anarchists.

All these hostilities forced the South Australian government to introduce various pieces of legislation, such as the Fisheries Bill 1909, which restricted activities carried out by Italians. Then the Education Act of 1916 was enacted which specifically required that all educational instruction in schools had to be given in English only. Eventually the Language Test (otherwise known as the White Australia policy) was introduced in the 1920s in South Australia which made it difficult for Italians to land as immigrants in that state, and during the Second World War many Italians were interned since by then Italians were seen as enemies and a threat to national security irrespective of whether they were naturalised or not or first or second generation.

These hostilities towards Italians did not dissipate at the end of the war, nor during the time of mass migration in the 1950s and 1960s. It took a long time after this for the animosities held by Australians towards Italians to fade.

Overall the book is sound. A number of sources of information have major limitations in providing accurate information particularly as it relates to past records which are somewhat inaccurate and distorted.. This is the case with Census data for the most part of the 1800s and with the various documents found in archives. Credit goes to the author Mr Desmond O'Connor for his contribution with this work, and his recognition of Italian immigrants and their contribution to the socio-economic development of South Australia.

However, it is important to point out that most of the issues presented in this book are not different from those which have been explored by other scholars. The discrimination and the enmity experienced by Italians in South Australia are essentially the same as those experienced by Italians across Australia in general. Italians had the same background in that they were mostly uneducated poverty-stricken labourers and the employment pattern was essentially the same as all others. Similarly they all settled in clusters in and around major cities, except perhaps in Queensland. The political involvement of Italians during the Fascist

era has been well documented by others such as Cresciani. So has the internment of Italians during the Second World War by Dr Martinuzzi-O'Brien. To this extent the account becomes rather repetitive.

I believe the book, nonetheless, helps society at large to understand the role that immigrants have played in the past and the role that they play at present. This is important particularly since one of the most controversial of all aspects of immigration in Australia, as well as overseas, is its impact on social cohesion and the potential which immigration might create for conflict.



Some Italian women at work in a mica factory from No Need to be Afraid

FAMILY HISTORY

Both the Society and the Society's family history expert, Bette Leone-Maiuto, have received an increasing number of family history enquiries. This is obviously a growing area of interest not only from descendants tracing their Italian pioneering ancestry but also from Post World War II immigrants.

The following is a list of family surnames for which the Society has received enquiries in the last six months:

Arcaro	Ferrari
Balsarini	Gervasoni
Bargolia	Gobbi
Betti	Grabrovazi
Bertino	Janner
Bennedick	Leone
Cometti	Leoni
Corpaccioli	Marchetti
Danelli	Merlo
Delmenico	Pascale
Ella	

The family history group not only gave assistance with personal enquiries but has also provided information to various councils and municipalities who have searched for evidence of early Italian settlers in their regions. Enquiries were received from the Councils of Oakleigh, Brunswick, Eaglehawk and the Porcupine Township in Maldon.

Genealogy Book

At last a publication which unravels the mysteries surrounding Italian genealogical records! The Society has acquired a copy of the American publication *Italian Genealogical Records: How to Use Italian Civil, Ecclesiastical, & Other Records in Family History Research* by Trafford R. Cole, Ancestry Incorporated, Salt Lake City, Utah. The author covers Italian records comprehensively which only a genealogist of his extensive experience could provide. The book discusses the history and development of Italian record keeping and describes the records themselves - the vital civil records,

ecclesiastical records, and others, such as notary and military records - that can be found in repositories throughout Italy, providing reproductions of typical records and a complete translation and thorough explanation of each example.

Cole also discusses the unique aspects of research using Italian sources: how to approach the task of obtaining information, wherever it may be found. Sample letters for obtaining records through correspondence allow you to go directly to the sources of the information you need. The significance of Italian names and the relevance of Italian noble families in the search for family history are also covered in this detailed guide.

Italian Genealogical Records is a comprehensive guide into the complexities and nuances of what is many times a daunting task. The book is filled with practical advice that can help anyone obtain the information they seek through Italian records and record sources.

The book may be consulted at our premises or ordered at \$49.50 (plus postage) from:

Library of Australian History
PO Box 795
North Sydney NSW 2059
Ph. (02) 9929 5087

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

This list outlines the books received by the Society in the last six months by gift or purchase. The books may not necessarily be recent releases. The recommended retail price is indicated where available.

A Shop Full of Dreams. By Jock Collins, Katherine Gibson, Caroline Alcorso, Stephen Castles and David Tait, Pluto Press Australia Ltd., Leichhardt NSW, 1995. \$24.95.

At last a book on the experiences of Australian immigrants involved in small business, whose story has been until now largely ignored. This study is the result of six years of collaborative, interdisciplinary research by five leading Australian academics in the field of multiculturalism and ethnic studies.

Intermarriage. By Janet Penny and Siew-Ean Khoo, Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, AGPS, 1996.

Forty-five couples from six migrant communities who have 'married out' of their birth-place group tell of the dual influences which have coloured their approach to family life. This study also examines the individual outcomes of intermarriage and the outcomes for the wider society.

No need to be afraid: Italian Settlers in South Australia between 1839 and the Second World War. By Desmond O'Connor, Wakefield Press, Kent Town SA, 1996.

This well researched and well written book tells the story of how South Australia's Italians struggled to earn the right to live and work in the midst of an Anglo-Saxon society. A review is published on page 26.

Italian Genealogical Records: How to Use Italian Civil, Ecclesiastical, & Other Records in Family History Research. By Trafford R. Cole, Ancestry Incorporated, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1995. Available from: Library of Australian History, P.O. Box 795, North Sydney 2059 at \$49.50 + \$5 handling and postage. (Reviewed in Family History, p.29).

This well illustrated book of 264 pages covers Italian records in extensive detail and provides valuable guidance to the complexities and nuances of what could otherwise be a daunting task. A must for serious Family History researchers!

Crespanesi in Australia. By Leonildo Torresan, Asolo, 1995.

An interesting account in English and Italian on the history and settlement of Italians from the town of Crespano who migrated to Australia. Crespano del Grappa is located near Treviso, in the Veneto region.

La Visione Italiana dell'Australia: Immaginario Utopia e Realta'. By Guerrino Lorenzato. ConVivio, Monographs No. 1, Minerva E & S, St Lucia Qld., 4067. Available from Minerva E & S, PO Box 98, St Lucia Qld 4067.

A well presented and informative collection of 'views' of Australia through the eyes of Italian writers and travellers, from Dante Alighieri to Gino Nibbi. In Italian only.

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