



NEWSLETTER

of the

ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CO.AS.IT - VICTORIA

NOVEMBER, 1989

VOL. 1, NO. 1

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About the newsletter

The newsletter aims to provide, to those who are interested in the history of the Australian-Italian communities, an outlet for the circulation of news, the exchange of information and the notification of future activities.

We welcome your suggestions for items to include in this newsletter, and invite readers to contribute newsworthy articles and short notes.

In each issue we will endeavour to publish news from the Italian Historical Societies in other states, and other items of interest to those involved with the history of Italian-Australians.

As well as news, each issue will include a Family History page, with suggestions for genealogical research, in response to the many inquiries we have from people asking advice and assistance with their family research.

There will be a section on new material which has been received by the Society and added to the collection, and brief descriptions of some of the main holdings of the Society.

Recent publications received by the Society will be listed in the newsletter. When supplying publications to the Society for coverage in the newsletter, please provide information on where the publications may be obtained, and the price. Brief reviews will be published from time to time.

The Italian Historical Society plans to produce four issues each year, to appear in November, February, May and August. The first issue is free, but from February, 1990, subscriptions will be available at \$10 per year (postage included).

Please make subscriptions payable to:

Italian Historical Society, Co.As.It.,
304 Drummond Street,
Carlton, Vic, 3053.

Telephone: (03) 347 3555
Telefax: (03) 347 8269

THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN: Sir James Gobbo
 CURATOR: Dr. Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien
 CO-ORDINATOR: Mrs. Laura Mecca

ADVISORY PANEL: Professor Graeme Davidson, Professor Greg Denning, Dr. John Lack, Dr. Andrew Marcus, Professor John Salmond and Ms Jacqui Templeton.

The Society's aim is to foster the study of the Australian - Italian experience, by collecting, recording and documenting material on the immigrants and their descendants, and by presenting this history to the general public. The Society seeks to realise its public education role by operating as a resource centre, and by bringing to the general public, including the Italian speaking community, the story of the immigrant experience in Australia, through the preparation of exhibitions, educational materials, videos and books.

HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY: The Society was formed in 1980 as part of Co.As.It., which is the official welfare organisation of the Italian community in Victoria. The Society is organised as an integral part of Co.As.It., and exists as a sub-committee of the Co.As.It. committee, to which it reports. It was the inspiration of Sir James Gobbo, the President of Co.As.It. Early activities included a survey of the resources held in public libraries and archives and a programme of oral history interviews.

In 1983 an arrangement with the State Library was commenced, whereby the material collected by the Society was deposited in the State library. This work culminated in the sesquicentennial exhibition, **Victoria's Italians, 1900-1945**, held at the State Library of Victoria in 1985. This was soon followed by a project to collect material on the post-war immigrants. In the bicentenary year, 1988, the Society's work expanded with the **Australia's Italians, 1788-1988** exhibition which was produced by the Society and the State Library of Victoria. The exhibition has toured the national capitals, and the tour is still in progress.

The Society, in its relationship with the State Library, has pioneered a major initiative in a mainstream public institution. Believing that the history of Italian (and other) immigrants is an essential part of the history of the development of Australian society, and realising that the mainstream public repositories did not adequately represent this, the Society entered an arrangement with the State Library of Victoria by which the State Library was to receive the material collected by the Society as part of its permanent collection. This arrangement, to which the Society was strongly committed, has not yet developed in a way both parties had hoped. The State Library, because of cutbacks in funding and staff, was unable to cope with the large volume of material coming forward. Consequently only a fraction of the Society's present collection is housed in the State Library. We look forward to the resolution of the Library's difficulties.

THE COLLECTION: The Society's collection policy commits it to the selection of items of significance relating to the shared and individual experiences of Australians of Italian background. Emphasis is placed on material which reflects the processes of cultural and social accommodation and transformation in the new environment. Care is taken to ensure that the collection reflects the diversity of gender, class, occupation and regional origin.

Over 200 interviews, 7000 photographs, various documents and newspapers comprise the collection and we are in the process of cataloguing it on computer. Recorded oral histories and photographs represent the main strength of the collection, and while we wish to continue to build on this strength, more emphasis will be placed on the collection of documents: letters, diaries, and the records of organisations and businesses.

ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS: Below are some of the current activities and projects of the Society:

- Further touring of the exhibition: to Italy; to the Art Gallery and Museum of Tasmania; to regional and outer-metropolitan centres in Victoria;
- Activities with schools, such as visits, talks, preparation of materials;
- Providing research assistance and materials to organisations, researchers, students.
- Preparation of newsletter; book on World War II; a second educational video; genealogical kit

NEWS

"AUSTRALIA'S ITALIANS" EXHIBITION CONTINUES TO TRAVEL

A tour of regional centres in Queensland began in August in Cairns, at the Cairns Museum and Historical Society. After being displayed in the Johnstone Shire Council Library in Innisfail during September and the Shire Hall at Ingham in October, the exhibition travelled to Townsville, to be followed by Ayr, Bundaberg and Stanthorpe. This tour will be completed in February, 1990. In April and May of this year, the exhibition was shown at the State Library of Western Australia in the main exhibition area of the Alexander Library building in Perth, where it was warmly received by the community in Western Australia.

LAUNCHING OF VIDEO

**HARD WORK
AND
HOPE**
Australia's Italians



**EQUALITY
PRESS**

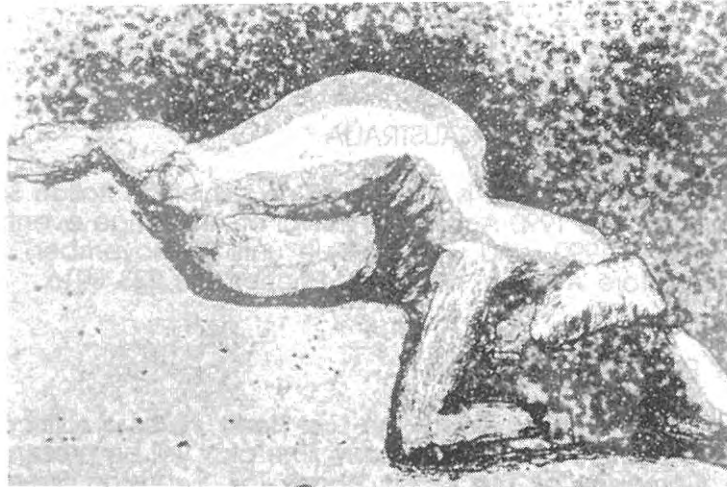
The Society launched the video **HARD WORK and HOPE: AUSTRALIA'S ITALIANS** at the Society on 20 October. The video was produced by the Society in collaboration with Equality Press, and sponsored by the Commonwealth Bank. Made for use in upper secondary schools, the video explores the experiences and contributions of Italian migrants to Australia through their work. Details and order form are included at the end of this newsletter.

PUBLIC MEETING

The next meeting will be on 6 February at 304 Drummond Street, Carlton at 8 pm. The evening will be devoted to Family History. Bette Maiuto and Mark Donato will each talk briefly about their family history research, and will illustrate their discussion with slides. Both are descendants of musicians who came from the Viggiano area in the last century. At this meeting the Society will set up a register of the early Viggiano immigrants together with contact persons today.

EXHIBITION

An exhibition of etchings, paintings and drawings by Eros Anceschi will be held at the Society on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th March, 1990 from 10 am to 6 pm. The works displayed in the exhibition will be for sale, and will financially assist the Society. Anceschi, one of a number of young practising artists of Italian background, came to Australia as a young child. His migration was atypical in that four generations of the family came together, and the Historical Society will assemble a display of photos of the Anceschi family's migration experiences.



STATE BY STATE

Since 1988, Italian Historical Societies have been formed in three other states. Below is a description of the aims and up-coming activities of each, and the names of contact persons.

THE QUEENSLAND ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society was inaugurated in May, 1988 under the auspices of Co.As.It. in Brisbane. The co-ordinator is Cesare Marletta, and the secretary is Francesco Pascalis. A library is being set up, and members of the Society are generously donating books and articles to the collection. The Society is keen to establish co-operation with other Historical Societies in Queensland, and is organising contacts with north Queensland.

A major project planned is an exhibition on the life and work of architect Stombuco in March, 1990, to be held at Stombuco's Brisbane home, Palma Rosa, at Hamilton, which is now the headquarters of the English Speaking Union.

The previous meeting was held on 26 October, 1989 at the Society's headquarters, 50 Water Street, Spring Hill, Brisbane, phone (07) 832 2125.

THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NSW

The Society was formed in July, 1989, with Fr Adrian Pittarello as president and Mario Di Lizio as secretary. The Society has begun the work of collecting material with the active involvement of staff of the State Library of NSW, and the Co.As.It. youth group, EUROYOUTH. Material collected will be deposited in the State Library of NSW. The formal launching of the Society by the Premier, Mr Nick Greiner, and a display of the initial material collected, will take place at the State Library of NSW on 23 November. The Society is located at Co.As.It. Sydney, 2 Holden St, Ashfield, 2131, phone (02) 798 7222.

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN ITALIAN ARTS AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Italo-Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre, following its hosting of the **Australia's Italians 1788-1988** exhibition at the Alexander Library in Perth in April and May, which attracted an estimated 156,000 visitors, has recently formed the West Australian Italian Arts and Historical Society. The contact person is Mr. Enzo Sima, Italo-Australian Welfare Centre Inc, 34 Bagot Rd, Subiaco, WA, 3411, phone (09) 382 3411.

OTHER NEWS

EXHIBITION AT MIGRATION MUSEUM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Migration Museum of South Australia is presenting an exhibition **Italian South Australians - Il Cammino Continua** as part of the 1990 Adelaide Festival of Arts Fringe events. The exhibition will be launched on 23 February, 1990, and will continue until 30 November, 1990. The Migration Museum is located at 82 Kintore Avenue, Adelaide. Phone: (08) 223 8916.

NINO RANDAZZO'S NEW PLAY

A new play by Nino Randazzo, **L'Ultima Flotta (The Last Fleet)**, takes a satirical look at Australia's immigration policies and the future of multiculturalism. The play will be presented in Italian by the Italo-Australian Theatre Company at **The Open Stage**, 757 Swanston Street, Carlton, from 22 November to 2 December (excluding 26 and 27 November) at 8 pm. Enquiries and bookings phone (03) 435 6394.

NEW ITALY MUSEUM, WOODBURN, NSW

The New Italy Museum, located at New Italy, near Woodburn, NSW, announces the finalisation of the second stage of the museum complex, a replica of the original wineshop, which will be used as a residence and restaurant. The official opening was on 29 October, 1989. During the next twelve months the new Italian pavilion will be completed, and this will house a permanent display of the history of Italian migration to Australia.



FAMILY HISTORY

Family history is an absorbing and rewarding undertaking. There is an increasing and enthusiastic interest from people of all ages compiling their family trees. Yet for the descendants of immigrants of a non-British background there are few aids for this type of research. Early in 1990 we will issue an **Italian Family History Research Kit** to assist people with their research in Italy and Australia. We invite readers who have already begun their family histories to share their experiences and findings with us and with readers.

OBTAINING FAMILY RECORDS FROM ITALY: Two places to begin research are the relevant Italian comune, and the local parish.

Comune (Council) Records:

Since the unification of Italy, each comune has kept records of births, deaths and marriages. The local comune is a most accessible and useful starting point, although in some comunes the records were destroyed during World War II. Your request should be in Italian and addressed to: Ufficio Stato Civile, Comune di.....(name of town, e.g. Teglio) (.....Province capital, e.g. Sondrio). The comune will issue a certificate providing basic information, similar to those illustrated below:



CIVITAS TEMPLI

COMUNE DI TEMPIO PAUSANIA
PROVINCIA DI SASSARI

UFFICIO STATO CIVILE

Certificato di Nascita

IL SOTTOSCRITTO UFFICIALE DELLO STATO CIVILE
CERTIFICA

Che Cossu Simona

nacque in TEMPIO PAUSANIA (frazione)
il giorno 2 del mese di dicembre
dell'anno 1886
come risulta dal relativo registro al N. d'ordine 204 parte I
serie - Ufficio I
atto trascritto a Tempio Pausania - Anno N. parte
per uso di
Tempio Pausania, li 1962

L'UFFICIALE DELLO STATO CIVILE

TIPOGRAFIA TORTU - TEMPIO PAUSANIA

Birth Certificate



N. 3215

CITTÀ DI LA MADDALENA
PROVINCIA DI SASSARI

UFFICIO DELLO STATO CIVILE

Certificato di Morte

L'Ufficiale dello Stato Civile sottoscritto
CERTIFICA

Che Cossu Simona
nato il 2 Dicembre 1886 Atto N. 204 p. I.
in Tempio residente in La Maddalena
e che era vedova di VIGGIANI Antonio
è deceduto in questo Comune il giorno quattordici
del mese di giugno dell'anno 1971
come risulta dai registri dei morti dell'indicato anno millenovecento
settantuno al N. d'ordine 32 Parte I
Si rilascia in carta libera da valere per uso Amministrativo.

La Maddalena, li 12 Novembre 1971

Ufficiale dello Stato Civile DEL.
Rosanna DIANA

G.O.

Death certificate

Parish Records:

The most fruitful source of information in Italy is to be found in parish registers. Many of these date back as far as the 15th century. These records are kept in the priest's house, which is adjacent to the church in most villages and towns. Details of all the births, deaths and marriages in the village or town over the generations are recorded, and kept here. If you have the opportunity it is likely to be more successful to visit in person than to request information by post, as the parish priest usually does not have many resources for answering correspondence. The Society's Curator well remembers her last year's visit to Monte Magre, a very small village on a hill-top near Schio in Vicenza. The priest ushered her into a room lined with massive old book cases, crammed with registers of different shapes and sizes, some going back to 1450, all carefully arranged in chronological order. After locating the birth record of her great-grandmother, Maria Dalla Vecchia, the priest transcribed the information by hand. Many parish priests have photocopying machines in the presbytery, and are happy to provide a copy of the relevant pages. Of the six parishes visited by the Curator, all had a photocopier except Monte Magre, which was too small to require one.

It is essential to have accurate dates and names, as the priest has his usual duties which leave limited time to search through endless entries for the correct one. If you request information from the parish priest in writing, it would be advisable to send your letter in Italian, addressed to: Reverendo Parroco, Parrocchia di.....(town e.g. Teglio), (.....Province capital, e.g. Sondrio). As a gesture, a small donation to the church could be considered.

A sample of the type of information recorded in parish registers is given below. It is part of a page from a baptism register from Codogne in Treviso.

Il 7° Giugno 1844

7 - Antonio Battiston di Bortolo di Domenico, e di Paola Zaia di Pietro, conjugi domiciliati in q^{ta} Parrocchia, e' nato ieri alle ore 5: pom^e, ed oggi fu batt^o dall'avejo d^o cur^o Barbini, recando al sacro Fonte Gregoria Moret.

It reads:

The 7th June 1844

Antonio Battiston of Bortolo (father) of Domenico (paternal grandfather) and of Paola Zaia (mother) of Pietro (maternal grandfather), married couple residents of this parish, was born yesterday at 5 pm and was today baptised by the dean, Fr. Antonio Barbini, carried to the holy water font by Gregoria Moret.

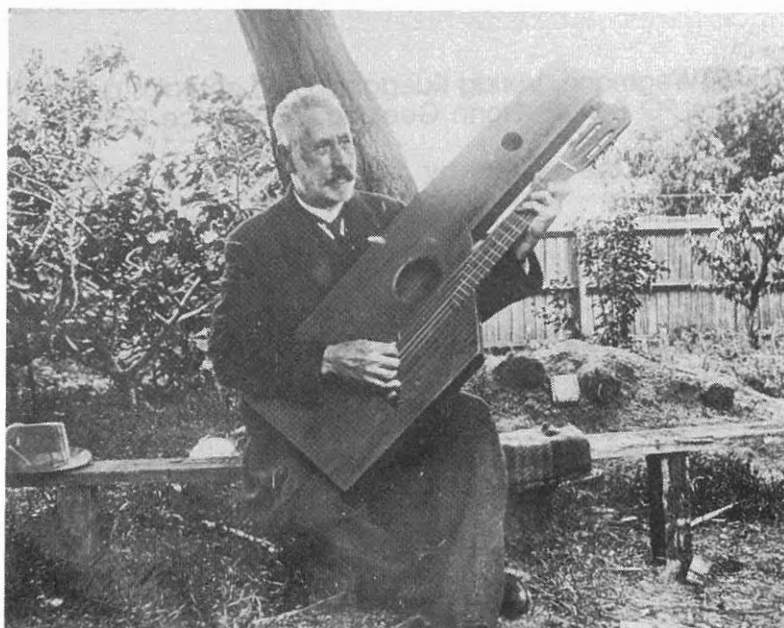
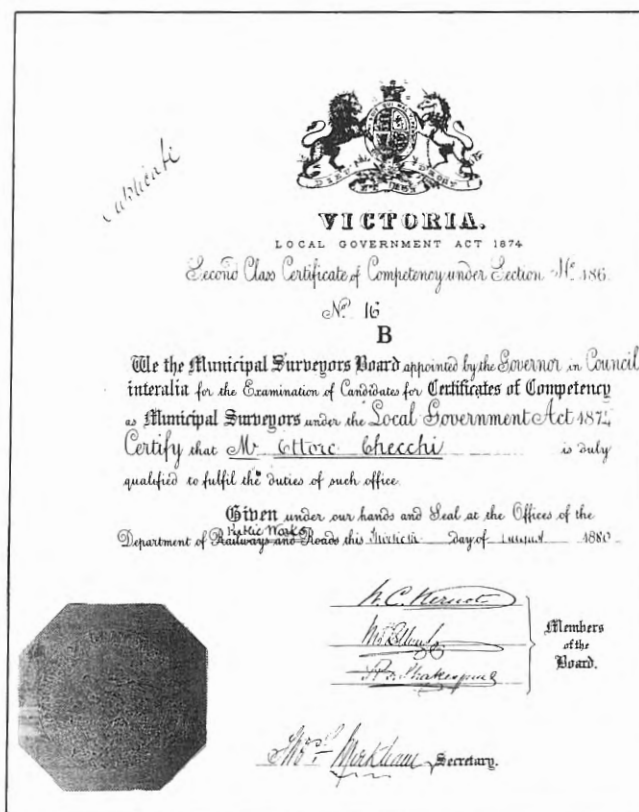
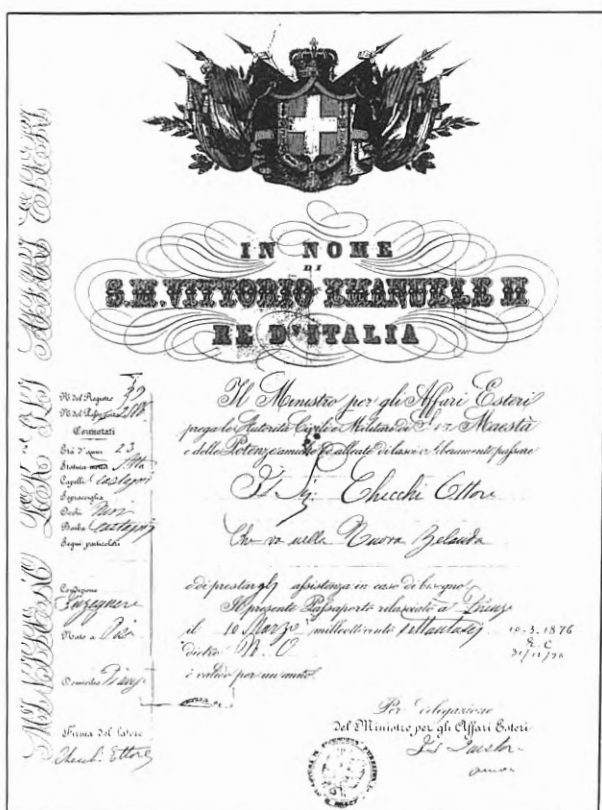
Before you contact authorities in Italy, collect as much specific information, especially dates, as possible. Much information can be found in family papers in Australia. Australian Birth, Death and Marriage certificates, and where applicable, Naturalisation documents will help you estimate birth dates and places in Italy. In later issues we will discuss Australian records.

Some of the published Family Histories held at the Society include those of the following families: De Piazza, Filippini, Maffescioni, Villa and Rossi, Tomasetti and Raffa.

We are keen to build up our collection of family histories, whether published or not, and invite your assistance.

NEW MATERIAL IN THE SOCIETY'S COLLECTION

Dr Cyril Checchi, to mark his 97th birthday, donated to the Society a number of original documents concerning the work of his father, Ettore Checchi. Checchi came to Australia in 1876 with Baracchi and Catani, and the three had distinguished careers in Victoria. An engineer, Ettore Checchi, through his work in the Water Supply Department of Victoria, (later to become the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission), which he joined in 1888, laid the scientific foundation of water conservation policy in Victoria. Major water conservation projects with which he was intimately connected include the Murray River Commission, which he advised on the distribution of water to the three states concerned, the Hume Reservoir and the Eildon Reservoir.



CAN YOU HELP US?

We appeal to the public for letters, diaries, records, documents and photos. One of the projects we are currently working on is an account of the experiences of Australians of Italian background during World War II. Please contact us if you have letters, diaries and other records written during this time.

We remind you that we continue to collect photographs and documents on all aspects of the Italian presence in Australia. If you do not wish to donate the original, we are happy to make a copy and return the original to you. However, original objects will be preserved for posterity in the society. If you donate the original, we will provide you with copies.

We welcome volunteers to help with the following tasks:

- entering data on the computer- no previous experience needed, but help is required on a regular basis
- transcribing tapes- Italian language required
- librarianship skills for cataloguing-help is needed on an on-going, regular basis

RECENT PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

On God's Command: Italian Missionaries in Australia, by Pino Bosi, CIRC, 1989. This book, in both Italian and English, traces the presence of Italian missionaries in Australia, and was commissioned to commemorate the visit of the Patriarch of Venice in honour of the Bicentenary. It is available from CIRC, 27 Alexander Parade, North Fitzroy, 3068, phone 4812144, for \$15.

Give Me Strength: Italian Australian Women Speak, by Anna Maria Kahan-Guidi and Elizabeth Weiss (eds), Women's Redress Press, 1989. In English and Italian, eight women share the stories of their migrant experiences, which the Italian-Australian Women's Association collected for the ADIA/Alitalia competition. Available from Women's Redress Press, PO Box 655 Broadway, NSW, 2007, price \$13.95.

The Shoe in my Cheese: an immigrant family experience, by R.A.Baggio, published by the author, Melbourne, 1989. Contains an account of the author's childhood, young adulthood and maturity, together with anecdotes and comments on many issues including those relating to the identity of the second generation. Available at some bookshops.

Blue Murder: Two thousand doomed to die - the shocking truth about Wittenoom's deadly dust, by Ben Hills, Sun Books, 1989, tells the story of the asbestos miners of Wittenoom, their hazardous working conditions, and their fight to obtain compensation from the CSR company. Available at bookshops.

The Swiss in Australia, by S. Wegmann, Verlag Ruegger, 1989, contains a chapter on Italian-Swiss gold-diggers. Available from PO Box 49, North Geelong, 3215, price \$25 plus \$3 postage.

The Snowy: the people behind the power, by Siobahn McHugh, Heinemann, price \$39.95. Available at bookshops.

Voices from the Snowy, by Margaret Unger, NSW University Press, price \$39.95. Available at bookshops.

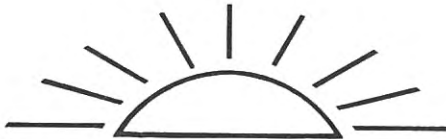
Understanding Italy: Language, Culture, Commerce - An Australian Perspective by Camilla Bettoni and Joseph Lo Bianco, May Foundation For Italian Studies, 1989. Available from Frederick May Foundation, University of Sydney, NSW, 2006, price \$20.

Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia, 1914-1920 by Gerhard Fischer, Queensland University Press, price \$34.95. Available at bookshops.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT THE SOCIETY

- AUSTRALIA'S ITALIANS 1788-1988 \$10.00
by Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien (Second edition, 1989)
(Paperback, in English and Italian)
- A WALK THROUGH ITALIAN CARLTON \$2.00
by Celestina Segazio (National Trust Victoria)
(1988) (Booklet, in English)
- NOW AND THEN \$6.50
The Sicilian farming community at Werribee Park 1929-49
by Maria Mantello (1986)
(Paperback, in English)
- VICTORIA'S ITALIANS, 1900-1945 \$6.50
An Exhibition of photographs and documents
edited by Ivano Ercole and Maria Tence (1986)
(Paperback, in English and Italian)
- THE ITALIAN HERITAGE OF VICTORIA \$5.00
A short history of Early Italian Settlement
by James Gobbo (1985)
(Paperback, in English and Italian)
- AN ITALIAN HERITAGE \$6.50
(Family history of Francesco Villa and Italo Rossi)
by Yvonne McBurney and Gina Twigg (1985)
(Paperback, in English)
- QUADRETTI DI UN ITALIANO IN AUSTRALIA \$4.00
by Alessandro Faini (1984)
(Paperback)
- A PROFILE OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA \$6.50
by Helen Ware - (1981)
(Based on data from the 1976 Australian census)
(Paperback - in English)
- ITALIANS IN AUSTRALIA - A Bibliography \$4.50
Compiled by the State Library of Victoria in
conjunction with the Italian Historical Society
(1985) (Paper, spiral bound)
- LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS \$4.50
IN RELATION TO ITALIAN MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA
DURING THE INTER-WAR YEARS
by Livia Jacovino (1983)
(Paper, spiral bound)
- ARCHIVAL AND OTHER MATERIALS ON ITALIAN \$4.50
IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA
by Livia Jacovino
(Paper, spiral bound)
- INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON WORKS AND SOURCES \$4.50
REGARDING ITALIAN SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA
by Livia Jacovino
(Paper, spiral bound)

LATEST RELEASE: AN EDUCATIONAL VIDEO



HARD WORK AND HOPE

Australia's Italians

YEARS 10 -12

Work is one of the most important aspects of our society and culture. This video focuses on the theme of work as experienced by many thousands of Italians who have migrated to Australia over the last one hundred years.

Before World War 2 the future for Australia was believed to lie in farming and mining, and many of the Italian immigrants found work in the rural areas - as farmers, labourers, construction workers or miners. Others became shop-keepers, restaurant owners, scientists or fishermen. All of them battled through the difficult years of establishing themselves in a new land with hard work and enterprise.

After World War 2 Australia needed factory workers and people with different skills and professions - to create new industries, and work on huge engineering projects like the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric scheme. Many of the Italian immigrants who came to work and settle in Australia brought other skills with them, and later were able to set themselves up in various kinds of family businesses. Some of these have now become large companies - familiar to us all.



This video uses photographs and moving footage from the Italian Historical Society, as well as newsreel footage, to tell the story of Australia's Italians and the contribution they made to the community through their work.

"Hard Work and Hope: Australia's Italians" is an excellent resource for students in Australian Studies and Australian History courses.

Detailed Teacher's Notes accompany the video.

Price: Video (23 mins) \$60.00 (plus postage)

Produced in Australia by Equality Press
in association with The Italian Historical Society.

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**COMMONWEALTH
BANK.**