

NEWSLETTER
of the
ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CO.AS.IT. - VICTORIA

MAY - JUNE, 1990

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THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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.

The Newsletter will be published four times each year, in November, February, May and August. Subscriptions are available at \$10 per year, (postage included).

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As well as the newsletter, the Italian Historical Society has a number of publications for sale. A list will be provided on request to the above address.

NEWS

VICTORIAN HEALTH PROMOTION FOUNDATION

The Historical Society has received a grant of \$80,000 from the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, in its recent round of grants under the Cultural Programme of the Foundation. The grant is for the touring of the Australia's Italians exhibition to regional and outer - metropolitan areas in Victoria. Under the grant, the exhibition is being sponsored by the Food and Nutrition Program, Deakin University, to promote the benefits of a healthy diet.

FURTHER TRAVELLING OF THE EXHIBITION

The first venue in the Victorian tour was the newly opened Springvale Heritage and Historical Centre, where the exhibition was on display from 12 to 26 May. At Springvale over 2000 people and school children visited the exhibition.

The exhibition was opened in Shepparton on 7 June before a gathering of 250 people at the Shepparton Art Gallery. The exhibition will be on display until 1 July, and will then travel to the Swan Hill Art Gallery, where it will be open from 13 to 30 July.



EXHIBITION DEPARTS FOR ITALY

Italiani d'Australia departed on 12 June for the tour of Italy, which will begin during Australia Week in the Veneto on 8 July at Asiago. The exhibition will then travel to Malfa, Isole Eolie, 20 July to 20 August, after which it will visit Lucca, Sondrio and other centres. The tour of Italy has very kindly been sponsored by the Australian Tourist Commission and Qantas.



50th ANNIVERSARY

This month marked the 50th anniversary of Italy's entry into World War II, and the consequent hostilities between Australia and Italy. A number of activities to mark the anniversary have taken place, or are planned during the coming months. In Sydney, Francesca Merenda arranged a reunion of ex-internees and ex-prisoners-of-war, which took place at Parliament House. The luncheon was addressed by the Premier of NSW, Mr Nick Greiner. In Perth, the University of Western Australia will host a conference in September, the first day of which will be devoted to the wartime experiences of the Italian community in Australia. The curator of our Society, Ilma, will deliver a paper at this conference. The Society has also published on June 10th a large advertisement in the Italian language paper Il Globo commemorating the events and inviting ex-internees to contact the Society. The ad was generously sponsored by Alex Rossi, who was interned at Loveday.

FAMILY HISTORY MEETING

Friends of the Italian Historical Society gathered at CO.AS.IT. on the afternoon of Sunday 20th of May for an informal meeting about Family History Research. About 30 people joined Bette Maiuto, Mark Donato and Society staff for a pleasant and successful afternoon.

CASA D'ITALIA

The official opening of some building extensions to the original Casa d'Italia, home of Co.As.It., was held on June 18. The Italian Ambassador, Dr. Francesco Cardi and the Federal Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Hon. Gerry Hand, unveiled a plaque to record the significant contribution of the members of Casa d'Italia. Among the guests were also a few original members of the Casa, who have contributed to the collection of the Society with interesting material which documents aspects of the life of the Italian Community in the pre-war period.

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

A Consultative Committee on Cultural Heritage in a Multicultural Australia has been established by the Ministry for the Arts, Tourism and Territories last March, with the task of coordinating the work of the institutions which reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian heritage.

The Curator of the Italian Historical Society, Dr Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien, has been appointed to the Committee, which is chaired by Mr Les Neilson from the Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories. The other members are: Dr Sneja Gunew from Deakin University; Ms Sophy Athan, Manager of the Public Libraries Branch of South Australia; Ms Morag Loh from the State Library of Victoria and Member of the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs; Ms Viv Szekeres, Director of the Migration Museum in South Australia; Ms Gwenda Davey, folklife; Mr Daniel Thomas, Director of the Art Gallery of South Australia; Dr Des Griffin, Australian Museum Directors Council; Mr Graham Hinton, Director of the Fairfield City Museum Village, NSW; Ms Kaye Dal Bon, Director of the National Museum of Australia; Mr Warren Horton, Director General of the National Library of Australia; Mr Des Stephens, Queensland State Librarian and Mr Jim Ramsay, Deputy Principal, Australian Institutes of Aboriginal Studies.

THE STORY OF LORENZO PENSINI Snr., HIS LIFE AND TIMES

By Emilia Giuditta Pensini

Delivered at the Meeting of the Innisfail and District Historical Society on 5 April, 1990.

In the north of Italy, in the picturesque alpine valley known as the Valtellina, lies the town of Tirano, just south of the Swiss border. It was here in 1866, in one of the "locali" (apartment house) surrounding the Piazza Parravicini, that my father-in-law, Lorenzo (Laurence) Pensini Snr. was born. He was the son of Stefano Pensini and Margherita Pensini (nee Delius).

The history of the man, remarkable in many ways, is interwoven with that of his wife's relations, the Anulli and Tonta families of Silkwood and El Arish who were pioneers also. From his experiences, as told to me by my father-in-law himself and by his own sons, and from information gathered from surviving relations, one of whom (Mrs Caterina Fomiatti, nee Tonta) is one hundred and three years old, I have written this account of the life and times of Lorenzo Pensini Snr. I have also obtained information from official documents, where available, in order to verify the facts.

Dad Pensini arrived in Australia in 1890 when he was a young man. He first went to the Herbert River District (now known as the Ingham District). Later on he went to Mossman looking for work. He decided to return to the Herbert River District but, being short of money at the time, could not afford the boat fare, so he walked the distance. Walking long distances was never a problem for this hardy Alpine race. Mr Anulli, himself, with another man, had walked all the way from Gympie to North Queensland, carrying as foodstuff tea-leaves, flour etc. With the flour the pioneers made damper which took the place of bread.

In 1895, Dad Pensini obtained two leases from the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd., Goondi Mill, one in partnership with Mr Giuseppe Bassanelli and the other in partnership with Mr Lorenzo Cocchetti. Mr James McRobbie and Mr Moses Ellis obtained leases at the same time.

Dad Pensini again returned to the Herbert River District, settling as farmer in Macknade. On the 19th May, 1900, he married Maria Anulli. Maria, twenty years of age, was the daughter of Antonio Anulli and Caterine Anulli (nee Bombardieri). Maria's birthplace was Barrufini, a village on the mountain above the town of Tirano. Her father had come to Australia and was established as farmer in Macknade. Laurence and Maria were married according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church by Father Patrick Mulligan in the house of Charles Lacaze at Macknade. Witnesses were Giovanni Beccaris and Teresa Catrastellero.

Nine children were born to Dad and Mum Pensini. They were Stefano (Stefan), Giovanni (Johnny), Antonio (Tony), Margherita, Michele (Mick), Lorenzo (Laurence/Laurie), Luigi (Louis), Maria Caterina and Giuseppe (Joe). All were born in Macknade.



The Pensini family

In late 1906 or early 1907 Mr Antonio Tonta Snr. arrived in the Ingham District from Italy with his eldest son, Matteo. Antonio Tonta was Mr Anulli's half-brother. Besides, the Tonta family and the Pensini family had occupied the same apartment house in Tirano, Italy. The Bombardieri family also occupied or owned a row of apartment houses on one side of Piazza Parravicini. Antonio Tonta had been to Australia before. In 1896 he was involved in the mining industry in Western Australia, then had moved to Rutherglen, Victoria and cut timber for the mines at Ballarat before returning to Italy in 1905. In 1907, after approximately one year in Ingham he came to Innisfail and acquired from the Mourilyan Syndicate a sugar farm in the Moresby District, south-east of where the present old Martyville Road passes over the Moresby Creek. It was a scrub farm in those days. In fact it was the first sugar cane farm in the Moresby District. It is now owned by Mr A. Conatrino & family. Antonio Tonta's son, Matteo arrived from Ingham in 1908. Antonio and Caterina Anulli also left Macknade and came to the Moresby farm. Antonio Tonta, meanwhile, had sent for his wife and family to come to Australia. Communication being bad at the time, when Mrs Tonta, with her son Antonio jnr. and daughter Caterina, arrived at Mourilyan Harbour on the 1st of January, 1910, there was no one there to meet them, Mr Tonta being unaware that they had already arrived. The harbour master was very kind to them and allowed them to stay in a coal shed at Mourilyan Harbour and even gave them food, but after three days they decided not to wait any longer and to walk to the farm. To do this they had to walk along the tramline all the way from the Harbour to the Mill and then, after receiving directions, walk approximately another three miles to the farmhouse. Antonio Tonta, his son Matteo, Antonio Anulli and his wife, Caterina, were already there and one can imagine the joy of the reunion and the relief that everyone was safe.

In 1911 the Tonta family moved to Ingham where Caterina later married Mr Fomiatti. Mr Anulli remained on the farm and eventually bought it. He was joined by Laurence and Maria Pensini and family after they sold their farm in Macknade. Records indicate that Lorenzo Pensini was a resident of the Mourilyan area in 1914-15. It appears from the records that in 1917-1918 Dad Pensini became partner on the farm. The road was just a bush track at the time. The children attended first the Mourilyan State School then the Moresby State School when it opened in 1915.

Dad Pensini always had marvellous rapport with his neighbours. Some of the earliest settlers at Moresby (known then as the Italian settlement) were the Martinuzzi family, the Davanzo family, the Dalla Vecchia family, the Guglielmi family, the Squarci family, the Beccaris family and the Reguitti brothers and later the Cao brothers. Some of these Dad Pensini knew from the time he was living at Macknade. One of his closest friends was Carlo (Charlie) Dalla Vecchia. He had arrived in Australia (Herbert River District) in 1890 with his father Basilio Dalla Vecchia. On the same ship and also going to the Herbert River District were Mr Beccaris Snr. and Mr Eugenio Carello, though the Carello family went to Home Hill before coming to the Innisfail District. The Beccaris family were also good friends from his days in the Herbert river District. Giovanni Beccaris was Best Man at his wedding and Mrs L. Beccaris was present at the birth of his youngest child, Joe.

After the 1918 cyclone the area of land along Boogan Road was subdivided and considering the farm at Moresby to be too small to support such a large family, Dad Pensini and his father-in-law, now a widower, sold the Moresby farm. Dad Pensini bought a large farm on what is now Boogan Road, which was just a dirt road then. The farm is now owned by the Sciacca family. In approximately 1921-1922, part of the farm was given up when the North Coast Railway and then the extension of Kate Boylan Road divided the property. In 1923, at the age of forty-three years, Mrs Pensini, beloved wife of Laurence Pensini passed away.

In 1925 I married Louis. I had arrived in Australia in 1921 with my parents, Carlo and Luigia Fremondi and my younger sister Luigia Rosa (Mrs Gina/Jean Lissa). We first went to the Herbert River District where we stayed a few weeks, as my father had friends there from his early cane cutting days. In early 1922, January was the slack season there, Dad decided to come to the Innisfail district where there was work to be found felling scrub and clearing land. We left Lucinda Point and disembarked at Mourilyan Harbour. From the Harbour we travelled to Mourilyan along the tramline by means of an open carriage with seats. I can remember being hit by grasshoppers which frightened me at first until Dad said they were harmless. We had to wait at the Mourilyan Hotel for transport, to carry us and our luggage to Maifredi's farm at Boogan, which was sold to Mr Alfio Borzi and which is now the property of the Russo family of Cowley.

At the Mourilyan Hotel were several farmers and workers from the Mourilyan area, including the man Lorenzo Pensini, who eventually became my father-in-law. While in the hotel lounge, my father asked me to sing for some of his friends who were at the hotel. Mum and I sang several duets and I also sang solo items. The lounge quickly filled with people. Lorenzo Pensini, who himself was a musical, apparently was impressed because, although he did not introduce himself at the time, he went home and raved about me to his wife and family. That was what my husband told me after we were married.

I first met Lorenzo's son at Mr Maifredi's residence. We moved to Moresby as Dad soon got work on the farm adjacent to the Beccaris farm, which was owned by Mr Miskovic, Mr Martinac and another partner and is now owned by Mr Livio Croatto and family. Then we moved to the farm close by (now the Cali farm), which was at the time owned by the Cao brothers. One day Mr Alberto Cao asked me and my sister to go for a walk to visit the Pensini family at Boogan. I then met Mrs Pensini for the first time and also met other members of the family. I still had not been introduced to Lorenzo Pensini Snr. as he was not there at the time.



Emilia and her sister Gina taking smoko to the cane-cutters

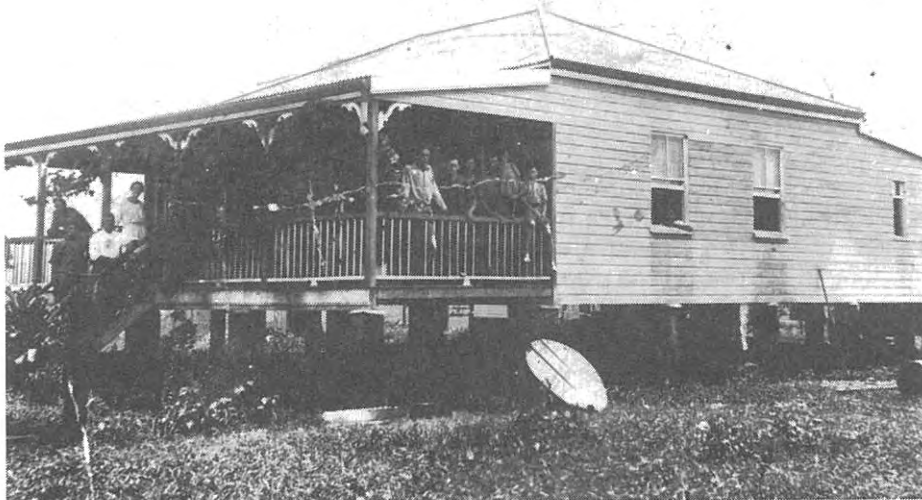
I was introduced to him later, when his sons had decided to give him a party for his birthday and all the neighbours were invited. The Pensinis were marvellous hosts and we all enjoyed the party, especially since the sons all played music very well and could play several instruments. They had only one button accordion and all took turns with that, while the others played other instruments. At the time they were all members of the Mourilyan Town Band (a brass band), but Louis, who later became my husband, was playing the violin mostly and the accordion when it was his turn, though he played the cornet with the brass band.

The Fremondi family and the Pensini family met after that on occasions such as weddings and christenings and also at social functions which were held at the Mourilyan School of Arts building on the Mill Site, Mourilyan.

When Louis and I were married we lived for the first few months with my father-in-law and those of his sons who were still single at the time. Unfortunately, as my mother-in-law had passed away two years previously, I did not have the pleasure of her company. At the time I was very young and almost afraid of my father-in-law, who appeared to be so serious and stern. Later I got to know him better and realized that, though he was an intelligent man, he had a good sense of humour and enjoyed jokes. He loved good music - he actually played the accordion by ear - and he enjoyed good company. At times he was short tempered, but I never heard him use bad language or blasphemy. One incident which occurred stays in my mind. He was having difficulty in starting the motor of his car. He accidentally bumped his head on the radiator and in anger threw the crank handle into the cane. He was already dressed to go to Innisfail, so he had to go down to the boys who were working in the shed to ask them to find the crank handle

for him. It took the boys about half an hour to find it and they couldn't help laughing when the car started instantly. Dad himself burst into laughter and, in good humour again, went on his way. Dad used to go to Innisfail on business, but was always pleased if he happened to meet old friends like Mr Revelchione or Mr Dalla Vecchia and he would talk happily about it when he came home. Also, I became less afraid of him when I heard from other people that my father-in-law was praising me whenever he talked to his friends. He liked my cooking and he praised my housekeeping ability. There was never any argument or disagreement between my father-in-law and me or my family. We always enjoyed perfect harmony. After a few months my husband began cutting cane at Messrs. Cantoni and Ramponi's farm on the South Johnstone Road (now owned by the Calleja family), so we moved to the barracks there. The Pensini brothers all played in both the brass band and their own orchestra for functions, so we still kept in touch.

The next year my father-in-law gave the cane-cutting contract to my husband and we moved into the Pensini barracks. When the cane-cutting season was over my father-in-law came to the barracks and asked would we be willing to shift back into his home and would I resume the duties of cook and housekeeper. As well as free board and lodging for Louis, me and little Iole, he then paid me good wages for my work. I was kept very busy, as single men employed by Dad Pensini also ate their meals with the family in the dining room. My father-in-law and all his sons were very industrious and did all their own repairs to farm implements. The work in the fields in these earlier days was done by horse drawn-ploughs and scarifiers, etc. My father-in-law owned several draught horses, also one horse to pull the dray and two saddle horses, one chestnut and one piebald. All the horses had pet names. Dad Pensini and his sons were good riders. Dad did all the work on the harnesses and saddlery himself. He enjoyed helping me in the kitchen sometimes also. He was quite a good cook and he even taught me a few dishes which were part of the cuisine of the Valtellina. We often ate mushrooms which he collected from his own horse and cow paddock. Every year for the festive season he took it upon himself to prepare two huge plum puddings each in a large linen cloth, which he boiled in a large cast iron boiler on the stove. One was for Christmas Day and the other was for the New Year celebrations. For these plum puddings he would get fresh suet from the butcher. The puddings were really delicious, with all the sultanas, dried fruits, nuts and spices. He always made a great fuss on New Year's Eve, spending a fortune on fireworks.



At the Pensini's Boogan residence, no-one ever went short of food. We had an abundance of good fresh milk from Dad's own cows and eggs from his own poultry. He also had a sty where he kept domestic pigs, which were slaughtered in winter in order to make salami (sausages) etc. His friend, Alfredo Guerra of Babinda (now 102 years old and resident in Cairns) who was an expert in this field, used to come and help him with the smallgoods. Later on, when Mr Guerra moved to Cairns, my father-in-law asked Celino Ghiatti to give him a hand with the smallgoods. Dad had both a beautiful front garden and also a very good vegetable plot, which he tended with the help of his sons. He had lots of fruit trees established (mainly citrus) and

also managed to grow figs and a grapevine which he had trailed along the front verandah. A grapevine in the Innisfail District was probably unique in those days. He even had a pepper tree, though I never used pepper from it. Water was plentiful, supplied by his windmill. He also had a tank to collect rain water. His store-room and his cool cellar were always well-stocked, as he had quite a large family and also entertained a lot. His cool cellar was under the bungalow style house and was particularly well made, with concrete top, walls and floor and with concrete steps leading down to the floor. Access to the cellar was obtained through a doorway near the bottom of the steps. As there were no refrigerators in those days, items such as butter, smallgoods and drinks were kept in the cellar.

Neighbours flocked to the Pensini residence, particularly attracted because of their love for music. People came on week-ends from the Mourilyan Mill seated on forms in an open wagon pulled by a locomotive, just to hear the music and admire little lole dancing. I recall that among the friends of the Pensini family from outside the area were the Tenni family of the Cairns area and the Poggioli family, the Grindes family and the Savier family of the Atherton area. The Pensini family and these families visited each other whenever the opportunity arose.

Dad Pensini also had a bocce rink. Dad and the boys enjoyed playing cards or draughts during the slack season and when it was raining. In the evenings Dad often played cards or draughts with his employees. He was a wizard at draughts. He also was considered a fair snooker player. When the paddock became less necessary, with tractors replacing horses, Dad Pensini allowed the paddock to be used for recreational purposes. He had kept a grove of trees at the North-Western corner of the paddock which had for some time been used as a picnic ground by the people of Boogan. The Southern part of the paddock was turned into a soccer field. Also, the saddle horses were replaced by a Fiat car which was one of the first four cars in the Mourilyan area. The other cars were owned by Mr Dillon, Mr Castor and Mr De Giovanni.

As well as being intelligent and talented musically, the boys were very athletic. They were good riders and good swimmers and I remember Lawrence stacking lager cases to quite a height, then moving the stacks backwards and forward until the stack tilted back far enough for him to land on the ground with a backward somersault. They used to compete in racing and jumping. They enjoyed lively discussions about which was the best horse, which was the best make of cars, etc. There was always good natured banter and competitions of all sorts, "brain-teasers", as they were called in those days. The boys all got on well with each other and enjoyed friendly competition.

It was during that time that Dad Pensini showed me personal mementos, such as his wife's medical certificates from Italy and from Australia and her badges. He spoke a lot about his wife. She must have been a wonderful person, a very quiet and intelligent lady, who submitted without a complaint to roughing it as a pioneer in a new country. Both she and her mother, who was also qualified, worked as midwives, both in the Herbert River District and the Innisfail District. Among the babies delivered by them were those of the Beccaris family, the Cataldo family, the Parella family, Rita Vardanega (now Mrs Laurie Ring), Alfredo (Fred) Pagano and Eleonora Pagano (now Mrs Micale). He also spoke often of the sad loss of his children. Giovanni, Margherita and Maria Caterina all died at an early age. He also told me of the time he walked from Mossman to Macknade. For part of the way he used the newly formed telegraph line as a guide, walking south along the crest of the Basilisk Range. When on the Cardwell Range just before it starts to slope down toward the Ingham area he was surrounded by natives who formed a circle around him and started dancing and chanting. He thought the end of his days had come, but suddenly one native started talking vociferously to the others in a strange language and then he said in English to Dad "You Laurie! You good man! You go!". Dad never knew who he was, as all were painted and looked alike to him.

My husband and his brothers told me about the 1918 cyclone. When the winds started to get strong the boys at first thought it was great fun. They had made a groove in the ground and used it as starting line. Each had an empty kerosene tin and one of the boys stood at the side acting as a starter. At the word "Go!" they would release the tins and the boy whose tin reached the finishing line first was declared the winner. They could smell curry from the kitchen, as their mother was cooking curry and rice at the time. They were called inside to have tea, but the winds were continuously getting worse and the top part of the two storey house was blown down, taking with it a man who worked for the family and lived with them and who had decided to get

under the blankets. He later emerged, miraculously unharmed. After the top storey blew off, things started to fly around so they all took shelter under the table. Then a beam or rafter fell down and the force broke one of the legs of the table, so the family members held on to each other and went into a cutting in front of the house where there were some wagons and they sheltered to some extent from the strong winds beside the wagons. When the strong winds stopped, Dad Pensini went up to the house. Before shifting to the cutting he had had the presence of mind to put bread and a box of matches in the oven to keep them dry. He managed to make a light and wave it to signal the rest of the family to come up to the house. Not having experienced a cyclone before, they did not know that the calm was due to the eye of the cyclone passing over. Then the wind came back from the opposite direction stronger than before. It was just as well, however, that they had not remained there as they could have been killed. After the cyclone the boys walked to Silkwood to make sure the Tonta family was safe and to render assistance if necessary.

To give an insight into the nature of the man who was my father-in-law I will tell you that the tramway that connects with the tramway beside Enchong Road was built with Dad's permission on his own land. Other farmers had not agreed to give up any of their land, but took advantage of this tramway to send their own cane in once it had been established. Being good-natured and friendly toward his neighbours, Dad did not mind.

When the Boogan State School was established in 1929 there was no residence for the school teacher, who had to board at the Castor Hotel in Mourilyan. Dad therefore built a house opposite the Boogan School to accomodate the teacher and his family.

In 1930 Louis and I bought the Boogan Store. We still saw Dad when he came to buy goods or to visit. He would usually stay with us for lunch and I would make sure I would cook one of his favourite dishes.



At the age of seventy-six years old Dad Pensini decided to retire and sold the farm to three of his sons, Stefan, Laurence and Louis. He went to live in one of his houses in Mill Street Mourilyan. He cooked for himself and occasionally visited us and stayed for a meal. He enjoyed his meals with us. He would not have any sweets, however. He used to say sadly that in his youth he loved ice-cream and could not afford it and now that he could afford it he could not have it because of his diabetes problem.

Dad remained at his Mourilyan home until December, 1949, when he was taken to the Innisfail Hospital, where he passed away on the 31st December, 1949. He was eighty-one years of age.

He was laid to rest in the Innisfail Cemetery with his dear wife. A concrete tomb with granite headstone marks their grave. They were both pioneers. They had both worked very hard and, in so doing had, like others of their kind and of their day, made a vital contribution to the development of this great country of ours, the benefits of which are being enjoyed by the present generation. Yes, ours is their legacy. May they rest in peace.

I wish to thank all those, too numerous to mention individually, who helped my daughter, Iole, to collect the historical information required.

FAMILY HISTORY

Bette Maiuto has provided the following pages to assist people beginning their family history research.

HOW WILL A CERTIFICATE HELP MY FAMILY RESEARCH?

A VICTORIAN BIRTH CERTIFICATE will tell you :

- the exact date of birth
- place of birth, which in earlier times would be the family home
- full name of child
- name, age and occupation of father
- his place of birth
- date and place of marriage to mother of child
- name and age of all previous children of the marriage
- name, age and maiden name of mother
- her place of birth
- signature and residence of the person giving the information
- when and where registered.

A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE will tell you :

- exact date of marriage
- place, usually a church, and religious denomination of the parties
- full name of each of the parties
- place of birth of each person
- whether either party was previously married and if so details of death of previous spouse and any children of that marriage
- rank or profession of each party
- usual address of each party
- full name of father of each person and his profession
- full name and maiden name of mother and profession
- signatures of both parties being married
- signatures of two witnesses, usually family or good friends.

A VICTORIAN DEATH CERTIFICATE will tell you :

- date and place of death
- age, full name and profession
- cause of death, name of doctor and duration of last illness
- full name of both parents including maiden name of mother
- signature of person giving the information and relationship
- date and place of burial and name of witnesses
- religion of minister in attendance
- place of birth and how long the person resided in Australia,
which in the case of certificates in the 1800's gives a clue to the year the person arrived in Australia
- place, age and date when married
- name of spouse
- names of all children in order of birth and giving their ages at the time of death of the deceased

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A CERTIFICATE ?

Application for Birth, Death or Marriage Certificates in Victoria are made at the Registry of Birth, Death and Marriages at 290 Queens Street, Melbourne.

Application forms are available at all Post Offices and are free of charge, you can apply in person or by mail. There is a recorded information service on (03) 603 5888 which explains the different types of certificates which are available and the charge for each one. For family research it is best to apply for full certificates and although they cost more, you can save money by doing a little research yourself.

Most Libraries now have Birth, Death and Marriage records on microfiche and will book the machines for an hour at a time to the public. They are easy to use and by looking for the Registration Number of the certificate you require, you will be able to acquire it for half price, which is at present \$ 11,50 instead of \$ 23,00.

My own Nunawading Library also has records from all other Australian States, as well as the Assisted Migrants 1839-1873 (Anglo-Saxon), so in some cases you may even locate the particular ship which brought your ancestors here, without having to go further than your local library.

Some libraries have the Registration Records from other Australian States also, which will help if your family entered Australia in another State before settling in Victoria.

INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE BOOKS

TELECOM AUSTRALIA has a Telephone Book Library at 190 Queen St, Melbourne, which is open to the public during working hours on weekdays. They provide a library of telephone books from all over Australia as well as all countries of the world. You are free to browse as much as you wish and there is a photocopy machine available so that you may copy the particular pages you require.

Italian telephone books are divided into Regions then Provinces, when you find the particular book which you require, you will find the system a little different from our Australian indexing. The cities, towns, villages etc. are listed alphabetically with the subscribers immediately following the name of their town. So if your family came from a small town, it is likely that the subscriber listing is only two or three pages long. It would be a good idea to make use of the photocopier, so that you would then have quite a lot of information about the area.

For example, addresses of :

the Comune where all births etc. are registered;

the Church is also a good source of baptisms, marriages, burials;

the accomodation available should you wish to visit.

Most importantly, look for Family Surnames remembering that Italian women retain their maiden name, so take note of any name which looks familiar. The number of subscribers and their profession will give you an idea of the size of the place and the main industries, etc.

NEW MATERIAL

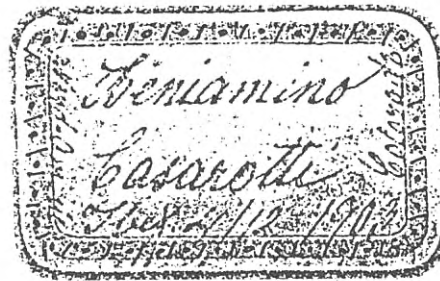
BENIAMINO CASAROTTI left Cogolo near Peio in Trentino in April 1888 and came to Australia, where he worked as woodcutter in Victoria.

He returned to Italy after 7 years, but in 1901 he left again, this time for America, where he worked for 4 years before going permanently back to Italy.

His granddaughter, Sister Antonietta Casarotti, came to Australia in the 80s as a missionary and stayed in Queensland. She also spent 7 years in this country like her "nonno".

The material here published was donated by her to the I.H.S.

The Memoirs of Beniamino Casarotti

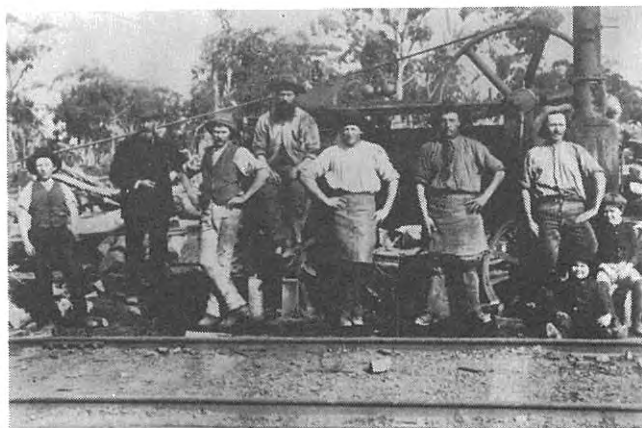


*della Victoria in Australia,
il 6 giugno; per cui impiegato 35
giorni di mare, e molti dei
questi giorni sono per il mare
sofferiti. Sul battente
fui ammesso con un giovane
di Sondrio, il quale mi disse che
aveva diretti di altri suoi
padani che lavoravano al bosco,
così che andai insieme con lui.
Ci siamo fermati la sera a
Melbourne, e la mattina seguente
siamo partiti in treno alla
volta di Bacchus Marsh. 32 miglia
distanza, dove si ritrovano suoi
padani; ma poveri noi. Solo il
matino fino alle 5 di sera siamo*

translation of the excerpts from his diary.
"MEMORANDUM"

Extract 1

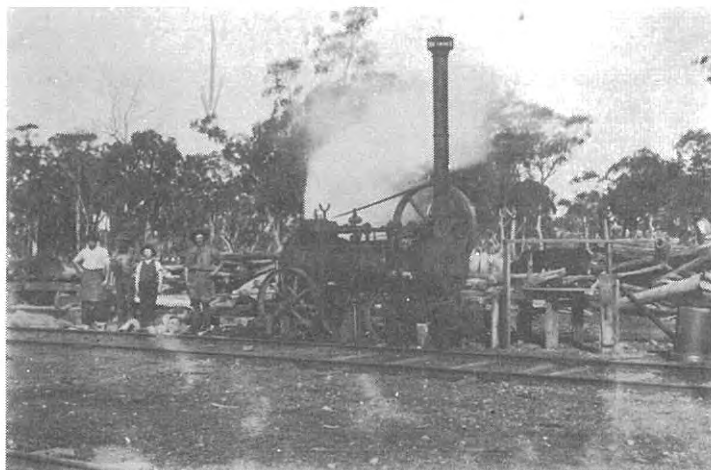
/..... of Victoria in Australia on the 6th of June;
so that we travelled by sea for 35 days, many of which
were not so good, because I was seasick. On the vessel
I became friend with a young fellow from Sondrio, who
told me he had the address of some people from his
hometown that were working in the wood, so that I joined
him. We stayed overnight in Melbourne and the next
morning we got on a train on the way to Bacchus Marsh,
32 miles away, where his fellow-townsmen were;
but...poor us. From 8 in the morning till 5 at night



restati in questo paese, senza poter ritrovare uno che parlasse Italiano, mi scioi di angoscia, l'inglese non ne sapevamo; meno io qualche parola, che appena ci abbiamo fatto capire che eravamo ma niente da mangiare, finalmente la sera ci capitò uno, che il mio amico lo conobbe, e ci diede la strada dove lavoravano nel bosco, in quella notte ci diede da allegria due uovo all'uovo e uovo che avevo, io mi rammento che non ho potuto dormire niente in quella notte; giacché il giorno lo avevo passato molto malinconico per non potermi esprimere colla lingua;	Dopo poi fare rimare che la economia fu molto in ogni rapporto; così ho dire, l'antico della Ostia, compagne e da qualcuno divertimenti. E' così il ricordo della mia vita giovanile trascorsa in Ostia. Più però di dare termini, appunto ancora quel che era, non ricordo prima, e che molte volte io videro, quando lavoravo in boschi al quinto caldo, io bevevo l'acqua scurita, ed appunto cattiva; appena mi rammento che molto velta che anche più volte dovetti bere sporca, calda;	piena d'insetti, dovendo più volte mettere il foglietto del naso sopra l'imboccatura del contenitore l'acqua per non bere solo insetti; Un'cosa in questi 7 anni, fu in una tenda per circa 5 anni, il dormire in più luoghi fu barbaro, nelle quantità di Pulei, abbinche il padre il macello ogni mattina non meno di 50, appena il giorno addorchiato ero molto malinconico la soldatesca pronta nelle quantità di prima, preparata al servizio al lavoro lavorante al bosco. Feci stato anche in giudizio che è venuto prima inondazione; per
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Extract 2

/.....we stayed in this village without being able to find anyone who could speak Italian, my mate was crying, we didn't speak English at all; I put together a few words, enough to have some beer, but nothing to eat, at night eventually we met a man that my mate used to know and he gave us the address where about the people were working in the wood, he gave us shelter on that night with other 2 mates, I remember I couldn't sleep at all; because all the previous day I was melancholy at not being able to express myself;...
I must then say that I saved money in every possible way; it is to say, far from pubs, companions and any sort of entertainment. This is the short story of my youthful life in Australia. Before coming to the end, I still add few more things which I didn't remember before and which deserve to be known. Having worked in fairly hot places, the water was lacking during summer, and it was quite bad anyway; but I remember that when the thirst was unbearable, I had to drink it dirty, warm, full of insects, having to put the hanky over the container with the water for not drinking the insects too; the shelter in those 7 years was a tent, certainly for 5 years, to sleep in such a barbarian place for the quantities of fleas, in fact I used to slaughter them every morning, not less than 50 at a time, but the following day the same army was ready in the same number as before, prepared for the blood of the poor labourer of the Saw Mill. I also happened to be there during a little flood...../



BOOK REVIEW

ON GOD'S COMMAND: Italian Missionaries in Australia

MANDATI DA DIO: Missionari Italiani in Australia

by Pino Bosi, 225 pp, a Vaccari Village publication in conjunction with Kurunda Publications, 1989. Available from CIRC, 27 Alexandra Parade, North Fitzroy, 3068, ph. 481 2144, for \$15.

Pino Bosi's readable account of Italian missionaries in Australia makes a significant and much needed contribution to redress the imbalance in official histories which have tended to present the historical Australian Catholic Church as a wholly derived Irish institution.

Furthermore a consideration of the neglected role of the Italian clergy is a worthy subject given that most Italo-Australian studies to date have focused on the economic success story of the Italian migrant community.

While the text is aimed at the upper secondary school, the broad account would be of interest to a wider audience particularly as it is written in both English and Italian.

Chapters are short and complete and interspersed with an interesting collection of black and white photographs.

Bosi chronologically traces the activities of Italian missionaries from the first fruitless attempts to catholicize the Aborigines in the 1840 to the suburban missions to post-war Italians which have responded to the changing needs of uprooted communities through the provision of Masses in Italian to the villages for the aged.

The author makes an effort to develop a context for the roles and attitudes of the Italian clergy through reference to Australian government policy and the direction of the mainstream Australian Catholic Church. However it would have to be said that at times the book reads like a succession of names and dates and the reader is left with little indication as to where the initiative for the many missions lay. Perhaps we are simply to draw this conclusion from the title: "On God's Command" - the missionaries responded to what they believed was their vocation.

Maria Mantello.

RECENT PUBLICATION RECEIVED

ITALIAN CRAFTSMANSHIP AND BUILDING IN VICTORIA, by Dr.Celestina Sagazio, published by the National Trust of Australia, Victoria, was launched on the 26th April, by the Italian Consul General, Dr Longo.

This book, which was partly funded by a State Government grant, discusses Italian influences on architecture, building and art in Victoria. It contains interesting biographical information on leading Italian craftsmen and women and gives specific examples of the work of architects, engineers, interior designers, builders, terrazzo contractors, craftsmen in plaster, wood, metal, glass and mosaics, painters, sculptors, potters, experts in traditional domestic crafts etc.

Available from Dr. C.Sagazio, National Trust, Tasma Terrace, 4 Parliament Place, East Melbourne 3002, phone 654 4711, price \$ 9.95 (plus \$ 2.80 postage if ordered by mail).

AROUND CARLTON

March is traditionally grape harvest month in the wine growing areas, such as the Barossa Valley, Yarra Valley, Hunters Valley and...Carlton! Giovanni Cera's backyard looked quite spectacular with its deep burgundy mature grapes hanging from the orderly shaped vines. The scenery was quite unique and one could easily imagine it to be in a typical Italian village, with its vegetable garden in a corner, flowers pots here and there, an aviary full of canaries twittering happily undisturbed by the activities and a restless small dog. The concrete paving and the distant noise of the Lygon Street traffic were the only reminders of the reality of city life.

Many will remember Giovanni, and his now deceased brother Rino, skilfully playing stirring Neapolitan tunes on violas, mandolins and guitars hand-crafted by them at Mario's Restaurant and at many civic receptions in the 1950s. In the 1930s Giovanni played in the Tango Orchestra with Angelo Candela, Ezio Giannaccini, Domenico Caffaro and Pietro Piccini for radio station 3LO.

Mario Costa helped his brother-in-law with the harvesting. Mario, who came to Australia in 1950 (27 years after the Cera brothers) from the same area - Valle del Pasubio, near Vicenza - is a retired Cordon Bleu chef and worked for many years for Mario's and McClures Restaurants, Menzies and Australia Hotels, Royal Women's and Queen Victoria Hospitals.

