



THE
Italic Way XXII 1994
The newsletter of the Italic Studies Institute

**Enemies
of the
State**

The persecution of
Italian-Americans on the
homefront in WW II

In This Issue:
Mancini & Warren: Prolific composers Roseto, PA: Your heritage and your health



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The Italic Way

XXII, 1994

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Letters

Address all letters to: LETTERS, The Italic Way, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001

HEROES & VILLAINS

I recoiled from the article entitled "1943: Liberation or Revolution?" by Mr. Cardone and the book review entitled "War in Italy: 1943 - 1945" by Mr. Iaconis. Essentially, both present the facts of history to make Mussolini and other Fascists appear as misunderstood heroes while real heroes like Marshal Badoglio and later Italian President Sandro Pertini are portrayed "in all their stupidity and brutality," according to the latter.

In my personal view, Mussolini is the most despicable Italian of the 20th century, if not all time. His actions alone were responsible for the virtual destruction of Italy by both sides during World War II. He deserves no praise whatsoever, only condemnation.

**Joseph Scafetta, Jr.,
Arlington, VA**

I was astonished by Alfred Cardone's piece in Issue XXI entitled "1943: Liberation or Revolution?" This blatant attempt to rewrite Italian history in order to legitimize Benito Mussolini's seizure of power and his subsequent dictatorship cannot go unanswered.

Mussolini used truncheons and bullets to create the chaos which paved his way to power. And when he finally

clenched it in his hands it became a death grip on the throat of Italian democracy and on the lives of hundreds of thousands, both Italian and non-Italian.

**Benjamin L. Palumbo,
Arlington, VA**



**Retribution: Italian Fascists paid for losing the war.
Tens of thousands were executed by partisans.**

AWARD TIME

I received your award this past May for my studies in Latin. I have had a great love for Greco-Roman culture, so your award was a great honor. Thank you.

**Anondo Abrafor,
Garden City, NY**

On June 7th, I was never more proud to be an Italian-American. In addition to

the glorious honor of being presented with the John D. Calandra Student Leadership Award (City University of New York), I was so grateful to the Italic Studies Institute for its generosity and thoughtfulness when I received a check

and the beautiful coin of Italy's unification. Mr. Mancini's speech allowed me to take pride once again in a heritage and nationality that has had much said about it. I will try to do all I can to maintain this pride and to share it with all who aren't fortunate enough to realize it yet.

**Theresa Marie
Esposito,
NY, NY**

COMMEDIA DI MAFIA

I read with interest an article in *The Italian Voice* of Denver, that Martin Scorsese and Nicholas Pileggi are working on a movie called *Casino*, another mafia movie.

I and many others are upset that people in their position can't channel

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UNA VOCE

their God-given talent to create a positive image of Italians.

**Mickie (Lava) Clayton,
Denver, CO**

The sports profile in the latest issue of *The Italic Way* reminded me of two recent articles in *Sports Illustrated*. The first was a piece on quarterback Dan Marino, the second a current profile on U.S. soccer team goalie Tony Meola. In both articles, the writers make mention of how each athlete "loves" the *Godfather* films.

Is Dan Marino going to point out to his beautiful sons one day, "Yep, *The Godfather*; great movie. It's all about us, son. Italians came to America and kicked ass!" Will Tony Meola, who is planning on an acting career after soccer (gulp!), go out of his way to be a "cool" bad guy like his "heroes" in *The Godfather*? Set these guys straight now, before the craziness is passed on to the next generation.

**Bill Dal Cerro,
Chicago, IL**

CRITIC PANNED

I write in response to a recent movie review entitled "A Bronx Cheer for a Bronx Tale." I share Mr. Masullo's apparent belief that Hollywood has stereotyped and maligned Italian Americans unmercifully. We part company sharply, however, when it comes to his critical perspective of *A Bronx Tale*. His superficial analysis misses the message of the movie that is profoundly positive for Italian Americans. Are there gangsters that happen to be Italian American; of course. But for Italian Americans, gangsterism is the aberration. The working man, his perseverance and single minded determination to create a better life for his children is the true profile of Italian Americana. A closer analysis of *A Bronx Tale* [shows that] the working man lives on, he has sculpted his son's life by imparting life's most important values, and he did so by never once compromising. Seen in this light, *A Bronx Tale* is an Italian American classic.

**Philip F. Foglia,
White Plains, NY**

The Italian Connection

by Virginia M. Piazza

Piazza is my name and Italian is my game. My name has been Piazza, through marriage, for twenty-eight years. I married at the tender age of eighteen and, come to think of it, I've written Mrs. Piazza more times in my life than my maiden name.

I am not Italian. I am of German/Irish descent and grew up with a very simple taste of Sunday roast beef dinners. Mom cooked up spaghetti sauce from a tomato soup can and we feasted on salad made with mayonnaise dressing (oh, to think!). So marrying an Italian, excuse me — a Sicilian, I'm sure I don't have to explain — was a challenge for me.

My parents weren't surprised by my choice because my brother and two sisters married Italians. I guess the Brooklyn melting pot I grew up in, which was predominantly Italian, had a lot to do with our choices.

We lived with my father-in-law and sister-in-law the first six months of our marriage and let me tell you it was an introduction into what I thought at the time were the Sicilians from hell. I had never been around people who had such *lively discussions* and most of their conversations involved food with names which had to

be explained to me. Scungilli, calamari, baccala, you know, seafood. The only fish that I had ever eaten was the Friday night flounder that my uncle had caught that day and grandma fried and served with corn fritters.

Beside food facts, I've come to realize many other things about Italians over the years. The foremost, my children Antonio and Gina (nice Irish names, don't you think?), now have a heritage to carry on and pass on to their children. Traditions such as naming a son after his grandfather. Christmas,

Easter, birthdays, any excuse to spend with family and yes eat, eat, eat. If you asked my children what's the best thing about being Italian they will answer, "Sicilian" (brainwashed) but I really don't mind, because after all the years of such a culture you can't help being proud of the true love that is projected. My children respected their grandparents but most of all loved them. Grandpa gave them stories of the past and there were many, but most of all he gave them a glimpse into a special world they may never have otherwise known.

This past Father's Day I had the chance to see the results of the Italian connection. My son invited us to dinner at his new home and on the menu were antipasto, rigatoni, chianti, accompanied by semolina bread, the meal ending with black coffee and cannoli.

He proudly escorted us through his vegetable garden which sprouted tomatoes, basil, oregano, and of course, eggplant.

The Italian garden, the repast, but most of all the family unit is what I enjoyed. Grandpa is no longer with us, but Mr. P will be a grandpa one day and the Piazza family heritage, intact, will continue.

(Virginia Piazza is the wife of Fundraising Committee Chairman Tom Piazza)

**Beside food facts,
I've come to realize
many other
things about
Italians over the
years.**



All'Italiana

PASSING GENERATIONS

• Long Island lost one of its oldest citizens in August. **Clementina Rossi**, 108, was 10 years old when she arrived at Ellis Island in 1896. Her memories of Ellis Island were not the stuff of souvenir shops. She was held in a holding pen for two days and jostled around by surly guards. Her personal secret for longevity was a "shot of cognac or brandy in the morning."



Volare!

• **Dr. Joseph Di Leo**, 91 years old. Internationally renowned for his development of theories on childhood drawings, Dr. Di Leo published four books on the subject and held the position of director at New York Foundling Hospital's Developmental Clinic for 33 years. He wrote that there is a "universality of childhood" reflected in children's first drawings whether drawn in 1885 or today, in this country or elsewhere. Dr. Di Leo received his M.D. and advanced degrees in Italy before the Second World War.

• **Domenico Modugno**, 66 years old. The composer and singer of "*Nel Blu DiPinto di Blu*" the 1958 international hit better known as "*Volare*" died of a heart attack in Rome. The song was inspired by a Chagall painting ("Flying in the blue (sky) painted blue").

• The Father of American Psychiatry is dead. **Dr. John Romano**, who

founded the University of Rochester's department of psychiatry and in 1946 guided the creation of one of the nation's first psychiatric centers, helped shape modern psychiatry in America. He was lauded by his peers both for his pioneering work and his humanity. Dr. Romano stressed the importance of cultural and spiritual beliefs and believed that an effective physician should be cognizant of his patients' personal concerns. Dr. Romano also devised the concept of post-doctoral psychiatric training for physicians and community mental-health services. He was 85.

• Born in Italy on the island of Filicudi, off Messina, Sicily, **Dr. John J. Bonica** arrived in New York City at the age of 10. He became a pioneer in the field of anesthesia and wrote the landmark two-volume work *The Management of Pain* that is still being used by students and doctors around the world. He also wrote the equally instructive tome *Principles and Practice of Obstetric and Analgesic Anesthesia*. Dr. Bonica founded the Multidisciplinary Pain Center at the University of Washington Medical Center in Seattle. He died at the age of 77.

• **Luigi Chinetti Sr.**, who remade American automotive history by introducing Ferrari automobiles into North America, died at the age of 93 in Greenwich, Conn. In 1932, Chinetti was a member of the Alfa racing team that won the 24-hour race in LeMans, France. He was born in Milan, Italy.

VICTORY DIET

The battle against disease has been joined. Bolstered by more than a millenia of evidence, physicians around the globe are touting the salutary effects of the Italian or Mediterranean diet. This diet *all'italiana* has been shown to stave off the risk of both heart disease and cancer. In fact, Dr. Walter Willett, chairman of the nutrition department at the Harvard School of Public Health, has helped

develop a Mediterranean Diet Pyramid that might render the U.S. Department of Agriculture Pyramid obsolete. The Mediterranean diet favors monounsaturated olive oil, which works to reduce the "LDL" or bad cholesterol, but not the "HDL" or good cholesterol. In addition, this diet places great emphasis on the consumption of fruits, legumes and vegetables.

Dr. Bruce Ames, a biochemist and molecular biologist at the University of California at Berkeley, is a strong pro-



The Isthrian peninsula (across the Adriatic from Ravenna) was part of Roman Italy.

ponent of the Italian diet. He sees the diet's emphasis on fiber and olive oil as a bulwark against cancer and has made it a part of his daily life: "I never smoked, and when I married my Italian wife 34 years ago, I switched my diet from Jewish cooking to Italian cooking and never looked back." (see *Perspectives*, p.19, for a related story.)

ONWARD TO ISTRIA

The Isthrian question continues to haunt Europe. With the Balkans in flames and atrocities abounding, this strip of land between Italy and the former Yugoslavia may become hotly contested by Italy, Germany and Croatia before the end of the millenium. This was underscored recently at a conference about Istria held in Trieste, Italy, by the Green (ecological) Party. Much was

All'Italiana

made of the region as a crossroads of the Latin, Teutonic and Slavic worlds. All the participants paid lip service to improving the area's economic condition. And they all averred that ethnic distinctions should not predominate. A gesture acknowledging the dislocations suffered by the Italian citizens of Trieste was also made manifest. However, what the conference ignored was Italy's overriding claims to the Istrian peninsula that date back to the Roman Empire. Istria is an ancestral Italian region. No one expects a D'Annunzio-like march on Istria, but the other regional powers should be prepared for an Italian diplomatic offensive—at the



**Dr. John Romano,
Father of American Psychiatry**

very least.

ITALY'S HI-TECH INFANTS

In one of the more controversial of Italian medical advances, a 62-year-old woman gave birth to a 7-pound, 4-ounce boy named Riccardo. Rosanna Della Corte has Dr. Severino Antinori and his hormone treatments to thank for the birth of her child. The good doctor used a donor's egg and sperm from Rosanna's husband to artificially inseminate the woman. After the birth, by Caesarian, Dr. Antinori hailed the event: "Today is a great day in Italy for women, for individual liberty." That may be so but Italy still suffers from the lowest birthrate in the world.

GUTTERFATHER III

Dr. Richard Gambino of Stony Brook University on Long Island has written an explosive article called *Italian-Americans, Today's Immigrants, Multiculturalism and the Mark of Cain*. In this piece, he cites a shocking article excoriating southern Italians penned by James Q. Wilson in the June 1993 issue of *Commentary*. Wilson states that the southern Italian family system is not only socially and politically dysfunctional but amoral as well. As such, it is a model that Americans should avoid at all costs (emphasis added). Gambino then documents how other "deep" thinkers such as Francis Fukuyama and Peter Brimelow concur. Brimelow even compares the Italian immigrants of yesteryear to the Iraqi Christians, Mexicans and other non-European immigrants of today.

This sort of cultural assassination may serve as an object lesson to all those Italo-Americans who apologize for the media and encourage us to "laugh at ourselves." The Italian-American family may not just be the butt of TV sit-com but also the object of scorn among some elitists. Dr. Gambino has observed that the denigration of Italic culture is well underway.



"The southern Italian family is a model that Americans should avoid at all costs."

DESERT TRIBUTE

In what probably was a first in post-war Italian politics, a government party journeyed to Egypt to pay tribute to Italy's battle dead at El Alamein.

The delegation of the National Alliance Party, Italy's political Right, led by Gianfranco Fini visited the historic battle ground where 4,800 Italians died fighting against overwhelming British and Empire forces during the Second World War.

Over 20,000 Italian troops perished during the North African campaign. (In comparison, the Germans and British lost 13,000 each.) Some Italian politicians want them to be remembered.



The Italic Way



World Notes

HIT THE ROAD, JACQUES

Following in the footsteps of Cardinal Richelieu and Napoleon Bonaparte, Jacques Toubon, France's culture minister, sought to purify the French language. Like his predecessors, Toubon used the precedent set by the *Academie Francaise* to cleanse French of odious English words. In emulating Napoleon, who obliterated regional languages and dialects, the culture minister thought he was upholding French tradition. Instead, the country's Constitutional Council overturned Toubon's dictum, saying it violated freedom of expression. According to the Council, the government has no right to tell French citizens what words to use. This is certainly a victory for freedom of speech. However dubious his methods, Toubon's heart was in the right place. Does Italy have a Toubon to uphold the honor and tradition of the Italian language? *Speriamo*.

THE OLD BOOT

"In 1994, Italy became the first country in the world with more people over the age of 65 than young people under the age of 15." So announced Italian Family Minister Antonio Guidi to the delegates at last September's population conference in Cairo. More ominous is the Italian birthrate of 1.21, the lowest in the world.

What it all means is Italians are on the decline. They are not producing enough *bambini* to replace themselves. And because it is a wealthy and highly educated nation, menial jobs go unfilled creating a demand for immigrant labor. Indeed, one million residents are non-Italians (nearly 2% of the population), mostly all unskilled immigrants. Such an influx of foreigners hasn't been seen since the days of the Roman Empire.

Wouldn't it make more sense to repatriate Italian-Americans to fill the labor pool? Italy offers universal health

care, great vacation benefits, and good chow.

NAUGHTY NORDICS

"The Swedes did a great public relations job when they came to New York. [The Italian] Captain Calamai became the scapegoat." So says Capt. Robert Meurn of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy about the sinking of the Italian luxury liner *Andrea Doria* off Nantucket in 1956.

Basing his opinion on earlier research by an engineer friend, Capt. Meurn states that it was an officer on the Swedish freighter *Stockholm* who was negligent

in reading a radar screen. The *Stockholm's* course recorder revealed that the officer mistakenly thought the *Andrea Doria* was 12 miles away in the foggy night when it was only 4 miles distant. Worse still, the officer changed course as an avoidance maneuver only to head his ship directly into the flank of the Italian ship. Capt. Calamai's last minute attempt to turn his vessel away was unsuccessful. The *Andrea Doria* went to the bottom ten hours later. Fifty-one lives were lost.

teria, including the flesh-eating strain that disfigures its victim. With some 80 different varieties of strep throughout the world, finding a vaccine is elusive. Enter Dr. Vincent Fischetti of Rockefeller University in New York. Dr. Fischetti and his colleagues have developed an oral vaccine using genetically engineered bacteria. Having succeeded in tests on mice, Fischetti's team plans to begin human testing in Mexico where the incidence of strep infections is high. If his vaccine works, Dr. Fischetti hopes to inoculate all children to prevent strep.



In 1956, the pride of Italy's luxury fleet was the victim of nautical errors and a cover-up.

in reading a radar screen. The *Stockholm's* course recorder revealed that the officer mistakenly thought the *Andrea Doria* was 12 miles away in the foggy night when it was only 4 miles distant. Worse still, the officer changed course as an avoidance maneuver only to head his ship directly into the flank of the Italian ship. Capt. Calamai's last minute attempt to turn his vessel away was unsuccessful. The *Andrea Doria* went to the bottom ten hours later. Fifty-one lives were lost.

STREP BY STREP

This decade has witnessed the growing health menace of *Streptococcus bac-*

LORENZO'S OIL UPDATE

Well, you may have seen the movie *Lorenzo's Oil*, about Agosto and Michaela Odone's discovery of an elixir that slowed down a progressively debilitating disease in their only son Lorenzo. The magic oil has moved from a curiosity to a scientific possibility in the eyes of some scientists. Skeptics are beginning to acknowledge that the Italian banker turned chemist may have something to teach the medical establishment. Studies of children with Lorenzo's nerve disorder responded favorably to the special oil preparation



World Notes



Dejected hero Robert Baggio: Italy's fate decided by a kick.



Latin France sometimes has an identity crisis. Behold France's favorite Gaul.

taken internally. Fifty-six percent of the patients showed improvement or a slowing down of the disease.

Maybe Hollywood got one right this time - a real Italian story.

ROMAN FRANCE

The French have a multi-ethnic origin. The original Gauls were a Celtic people, the Franks were Germanic, and the Romans, of course, were Italic. And it was the Romans who first introduced the cultivation of the grape into conquered Gaul. So, it is with deep reverence that the Durand family of Provence



Modern French vintner and a former resident of Provence.

in southern France is restoring the ancient Roman estate that was recently discovered beneath their property.

Herve Durand, looking eerily akin to the bearded Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius who sprang from Italic settlers in Provence, is devoting time and money

to recreating the wines of ancient Provence. Even the authentic vessels, amphoras (pointed bottom jugs with two handles), that held Roman wines are being manufactured on the Durand estate.

Guided by Latin agricultural texts, Monsieur Durand is following Roman recipes to blend and flavor his wines. The end products bear labels that proclaim the wine was made by "Lucius Columella, Wine Maker of the First Century after Christ, and Herve Durand, wine maker-archeologist."

Italic civilization is surely the gift that keeps on giving!

HOWARD BEACH HOOLIGAN

Remember Howard Beach? The big news story of 1986 made Italian-Americans the focal point of white racist hate and inspired filmmaker Spike Lee to make *Do The Right Thing*, which pitted blacks against Italian-Americans.

The reality of Howard Beach is that the ringleader of the multi-ethnic mob that chased a black man to his death on a busy highway was an English lad named Jon Lester. Now 24-years old and remorseful in his prison cell, Lester blamed his association with the "wrong crowd" when he came from the Scepted Isle.

Blymie! Ain't we the dainty one.

PASQUA'S FAUX PAS

Charles Pasqua, the feisty French Interior Minister with the Italian name, fears foreigners. While barnstorming through France in what most observers agree is a dry run for the presidency of the Fifth Republic, the burly ex-liquor salesman bemoaned the lack of Gallic indoctrination. Fulminating in a thick Provencal accent, the

southern Frenchman castigated recent immigrants for not learning about "our ancestors the Gauls." Though such cultural balderdash is nothing new in a land known for legislating xenophobia, it speaks volumes about the insecurity of a nation. And it highlights Pasqua's ignorance of history. Rather than promulgating a comforting but overly romanticized past, Pasqua should read Julius Caesar's *The Conquest of Gaul*. He might then come to understand his own Italic roots and how Rome transformed a rag-tag band of tribes into a civilized Latin nation.

ALMOST ONE

The last issue of *The Italic Way* was focused on sports in anticipation of the Soccer World Cup. After such a terrific build-up chronicling Italian victories in every sports endeavor, our staff grimaced at Italy's shocking loss to Ireland. But Italy came through. Led by unorthodox coach Arrigo Sacchi, who rotated his players' positions in search of just the right formula, the Italians knocked off every opponent after the Irish debacle despite shortages of players and chronic injuries.

Their star, Roberto Baggio, saved the team from infamy against Nigeria and then against Spain. His skill and luck ran out in the final match with Brazil. The Italians played Brazil to an overtime standstill. The contest ended with penalty kicks, one of which Baggio missed. The rest is history. ****



Editorial

AN ACT OF ATONEMENT

Now that the facts about the mistreatment of thousands of Italian-Americans in World War II are coming to light, let us reflect for a moment on what it should mean to us 50 years later.

First, American history reveals much distrust, abuse, or plain neglect of Italian-Americans. How many other Euro-Americans were lynched and murdered by other whites in greater numbers than Italian-Americans beginning with the mass lynching in 1891 New Orleans and culminating in the state execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927? Less violent but equally despicable was the uprooting of Italian families on the California coast in 1942, and more recently the ransacking by police of Italian social clubs in New York City in the 1980's.

Second, if we want to be remembered as a people of dignity after assimilation engulfs us, this generation must document the story of an earlier struggle. Historical amnesia may allow us to fit into the American mainstream more easily but it is a betrayal of those who suffered before us, and revisionism of the worst sort. Few, if any, other ethnic groups in this country have not documented their suffering. Why are Italian-Americans so quick to bury their past yet so permissive in perpetuating the legends of the Mafia?

What we need, what America must do, is to document the madness of 1942. As an act of atonement, the Federal government must be lobbied to provide funds to produce the story of that injustice. Not one penny should be solicited from Italian-Americans for such a film. At an estimated cost of \$750,000, Congress can easily appropriate these funds. Once produced (better by filmmaker Ken Burns than Coppola/Scorsese), the film can be shown to the American public and be used in schools to bear witness to the stress of wartime America.

This is but a small token to pay when compared to the largesse funneled to other groups. Certainly, the victims deserve it.

- JLM

ANOTHER NAIL IN OUR COFFIN

It is not a little disturbing to hear that some prominent sociologists have taken the time out of their busy schedules to pass negative judgement on the Italic way of life, specifically, our upbringing. Briefly, we are informed that the southern Italian family is dysfunctional and amoral. (see page 5, "Gutterfather III")

Perfect we ain't. And I can think of areas in which the traditional Italic family falls short of the mark: not enough reverence for books, a general aversion to our intellectual heritage, just to name two that bother me personally. But to state that our extended family tradition must be avoided by all good Americans is incredibly irresponsible.

Could it be that these tinhorn sociologists have confused real Italic families with *Godfather* and *Saturday Night Fever* movie images? At the risk of rolling some eyes among the "think positive" crowd, I would suggest that even eggheads have succumbed to Mafia-madness. After all, what do these 'medicans really know about us?

Any family structure that has survived, nay, thrived throughout the past 2,500 years, being the foundation of Roman civilization and of the modern Italian nation, should be made a model for, not a pariah of, American society. It also begs the question: what group has a better family value system than Italians? Statistics on the breakdown of American society leave us less than impressed with the alternatives.

Lamentably, like the bashing of Columbus, denigrating the centerpiece of our heritage — our family — is intended to be just another nail in our ethnic coffin.

- JLM

The Italic Way™

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Forum of the People



(The following is reprinted from an article by Geoffrey Dunn in the Metro Section of the San Jose Mercury News on July 7, 1994.)

Injustice Cannot Be Quantified. To Commemorate Italians Is No Betrayal of Japanese

Earlier this year, a few days before Ruth Asawa's powerful sculpture commemorating Japanese American internment was to be dedicated at the federal building, *San Jose Mercury News* editorial board member Sharon Noguchi penned an opinion piece criticizing requests from Italian and German heritage groups for similar recognition of sanctions against Italian and German Americans during World War II.

Noguchi's column, which was riddled with historical inaccuracies, posited that "compared to the Japanese Americans, Europeans were mostly spared during the war."

"Look at the numbers, the scope and nature of World War II internment," Noguchi argues. To remember the European Americans to "an equal extent" [as was requested] would be to equate the experiences. "They were not equal."

No, of course, they were not "equal." For anyone to argue as much would be absurd. But does the fact that the Japanese internment was not "equal" in scope and horror to the Jewish holocaust mean that the former is not deserving of commemoration? I think not.

Injustice cannot be quantified. It is absolute. So is the violation of one's civil rights. All such violations are intolerable and must be condemned by history.

There is a troubling tone of dismissal, even condescension, throughout Noguchi's piece to the experiences of Italian and Germans during the war. She is not alone. Many other writers have dismissed them as well. A current exhibit, for instance, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art of Japanese American internment photos declares boldly, "No German or Italians received comparable treatment." This, of course, is a lie.

The newly recognized plight of Italians and Germans during World War II muddies the waters of racial indignity. It points to a recurrent nativism in American history — one that transcends racial boundaries to include ethnic groups from all continents of the globe, including Europe.

It forces us to look at history more closely and to disregard commonly held assumptions. It forces us to break down stereotypes.

It also helps us to heal old wounds — and to build new bridges.

According to historian Rose Scherini, the curator of *Una Storia Segreta* (A Secret Story), which chronicles the plight of Italian Americans during World War II, many Japanese Americans have attended the exhibit in a show of support for their Italian American counterparts. They have shared stories and explored their commonalities. And together they have shed tears.

It was on an evening in February 1942 that my great grandmother, Celestina Loero, then 70 years old, was accosted by agents of the Department of Justice and forced to move from her home in Santa Cruz. Other members of my family, who made their livelihoods by fishing the waters of Monterey Bay, had their boats confiscated and were not allowed to go to sea. A distant cousin was interned at Fort Missoula. Many more were subjected to curfews and travel restrictions.

Their lives were forever scarred by these experiences, and their pride in their heritage forced into the closet. As a result, my life was scarred as well.

It has been a bit too easy to sweep under the rug of history the experiences of Italian and German Americans during World War II. Their tragedy should not be forgotten.



Fisherman Giuseppe Spadaro with family and friends at the launching of his vessel. Spadaro's boat was impounded in 1942 and he and his fellow Italian-American fishermen were banned from the coast.

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REVIEW

Angie

A video review
By Rosario A. Iaconis

Bensonhurst is fast becoming the stuff of legends. It is Brooklyn's Brooklyn and as much a part of American folklore as the O.K. Corral, Hollywood and Tara. But for all the wrong reasons. Whereas other cinematic locales evoke images of dashing movie stars, rugged cowboys and swashbuckling Confederates, Bensonhurst calls to mind brainless hulks, tasteless tarts and gnome-like, superstitious elders. Bensonhurst is where directors, producers, screenwriters and actors have a rendezvous with bigotry. Now that blacks, Asians, gays and Hispanics are off-limits, it feels sooo good to find a safe stereotype. And in this regard, the Bensonhurst neighborhood in *Angie* delivers the goods.

Devotees of Italians-as-urban-neanderthals will revel in the outrageously surreal accents adopted by the master thespians in the film. Though not as puerile as Cher's Brooklynese in *Moonstruck*, the crude English spoken by *Angie's* main (Italian) characters ranks right up there in the annals of linguistic backwardness: "Howz ya sistah?" "My mutha wuz a free spearitt." "I hafta leave for duh show." Why must every film featuring Italo-Americans sound like an outtake from Lionel Stander's

soliloquies on *Hart to Hart*?

Angie makes full use of this stereotype. The title character's boyfriend Vinnie, a woefully wigged James Gandolfini, is depicted as an overweight insensitive plumber with delusions of provolone. Aida Turturro plays Angie's best friend as a cross between Ernest Borgnine's Marty and an Italo-American Miss Piggy. Her husband, another scion of Italy, is shown to be a misogynistic wife-beater. By contrast, Angie's Irish lover is a witty, urbane barrister with an eye for artistic masterworks and female pulchritude. Only Geena Davis as Angie and Philip Bosco as her father turn in creditable and credible performances. In

For once, an Italian-American heroine follows her own dictates and not those of a twisted patriarch.

fact, they very nearly circumvent the director's prejudices.

Geena Davis brings a refreshing air to her portrayal of the spunky Angie. She imbues the character with an intelligence not originally intended by the filmmakers. (Nor, I suspect, by the author of "*Angie, I Says*," the book upon which the movie was based.) Davis takes Angie



Geena Davis

into the Nineties and expertly conveys both the rage and helplessness of the title character. Geena is a striking woman whose humor and daring make an otherwise predictable melodrama watchable. For once, an Italian-American heroine follows her own dictates and not those of a twisted patriarch. In so doing, she discovers a greater truth amid the tragic realities of her life. The Shakespearean actor Philip Bosco also deserves many kudos for his understated yet powerful presence in the film. Bosco provides just the right mix of agony, fury and love.

And *Angie* affords Italo-Americans a ray of hope that future film projects will depict their fellows in a more benign and realistic light.

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The Italic Way



Focus

Enemies of the State

by Robert A. Masullo



Italian-Americans who were considered more dangerous to national security were exiled to Fort Missoula, Montana.

"I believe myself to be good but I find myself deceived." So wrote Stefano Terranova just before he leaped to his death from a San Francisco building. The year was 1942. Stefano Terranova's motive for suicide was shame. Shame of being Italian at a time when Italy's armed forces were locked in mortal combat against the United States and its allies in Europe.

Four other Italians residing near San Francisco, a city coincidentally named in honor of an Italian saint, ended their lives out of fear of arrest or exile. Indeed, some 600,000 Italian Americans were branded "internal enemies," and 10,000 were forced to leave their homes along the California coast. Some 1,600 were arrested and 264 were interned in a camp in frigid Missoula, Montana, at the order of the U.S. government. Ironically, it happened at the same time many of them had relatives in the American armed services fighting and dying for the American cause.

1942 was America's first full year of World War II. Italy, along with Germany and Japan, were its enemies and residents with links to Italy, no matter how remote, were suddenly seen by other Americans and government officials as suspect.

What happened to Japanese Americans is well known. German Americans must still research their story. But now, after nearly a half-century, the Italian American story is beginning to emerge. Anti-Italian activities took place to varying degrees throughout the United States but were most severe in the West, particularly in California. They did untold physical,

psychological and financial harm to thousands of Italian Americans, both immigrants and their American-born children.

TOGETHER BUT UNEQUAL

At that time, Italian Americans in the Western United States felt they were the equals of other Americans. Unlike the Northeast, Southeast and Midwest, where Europeans of other backgrounds were well entrenched before the great wave of Italian immigration took place (1880-1924), Italians arrived in the West about the same time as other Europeans. They helped build the banking industry (Bank of America), agricultural production (Del Monte, S & W), and the Napa Valley vineyards (Gallo, Mondavi, Italian-Swiss Colony) as well as the Pacific fishing fleets.

It was this latter dominance of California fisheries, which gave Italian Americans access to large boats and homes along the Pacific coast, that brought fear to the Anglo-Saxon establishment. Japan was, in early 1942, master of the Pacific and, after the telling blow at Pearl Harbor, sortees were made by Japanese submarines against some portions of the California coast. Were California's Italians aiding and abetting their Japanese Axis partners? Only after America's victory at the battle of Midway in June, 1942, did things calm down somewhat.

Nevertheless, thousands of Italian aliens and their citizen children were forced out of their homes within ten miles of the



California's fishing fleet was made up largely of Italian immigrants from Sicily. Denied their livelihood, some fisherman even had their boats impounded by the U.S. government and utilized for patrol and minesweeping duties.



Focus

coast and their freedom further restricted by curfews and travel limits. In San Francisco, just to cite a conspicuous example, the parents of baseball legend Joe DiMaggio were forbidden to travel more than five miles from home without a permit (DiMaggio Sr. was a fisherman). Even noted physicist Enrico Fermi, who contributed enormously to America's development of the atomic bomb, had his travel restricted on the East Coast and around Chicago. Others were penned up in Quonset huts and treated like prisoners of war. Noted teachers, actors and journalists in Italian settlements throughout America were branded "under suspicion," "subversive" or "disloyal."

Over 500,000 Italian-Americans served in WW II while their ethnic kin were considered internal enemies. Sgt. Anthony Basilone was a medal of honor winner who later lost his life in combat.



Joe Di Maggio's parents were subjected to curfew and travel restriction despite their son's fame.



A QUESTION OF LOGISTICS

Why did this happen? And why do we know so little about it?

In the wake of the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan and the subsequent declaration of war by the United States on Japan and its allies, Italy and Germany, America went through a frenzy of bigotry in the guise of patriotism.

People with links to Italy, Germany or Japan, no matter how many years they had lived peacefully in the United States, suddenly were viewed in a hostile light.

While it is widely known that Japanese Americans on the West Coast were rounded up and interned in camps—in what today is rightly seen as an obscene trouncing of their Constitutional rights—it is virtually a secret story that Italian Americans and German Americans were victims of the same hysteria.

The original intention of the military was to intern all people of Italian, German or Japanese heritage, whether

American citizens or not. It became obvious that such a round up was impossible. Moreover, national politicians, including President Roosevelt, thought better of antagonizing Italian American voters in the East and Mid-West.

Significantly, Japanese Americans living in Hawaii, the most vulnerable U.S. territory, were left untouched simply because there were too many of them (one-third of the population) and they were too much involved in the island's economy. But in the Western states their number, about 100,000, and concentration were just right for internment.

Italians, on the other hand, presented a logistical nightmare. They were dispersed throughout the country and were not as racially distinctive as Japanese Americans. Moreover, Italian Americans had some political clout and popularity. These were the days of New York City's Fiorello LaGuardia and baseball's Joe Di Maggio (Mamma DiMaggio went so far as to take to the radio in a plea for calm). And men like business tycoon A.P. Giannini (Bank of America) was himself a son of immigrants. But despite the exemplary role-models and the disarming stereotypes of Chico Marx and Henry Armetta in American cinema at that time, Italians had been objects of fear and suspicion throughout the 1930's. Unlike the Japanese Americans, the Italic community expressed much enthusiasm for Mussolini and the Fascist regime. In 1942, their ethnic pride would return to haunt them.

HURT & SHAME

The reason we know so little of what happened to Italians and Germans is twofold. On the one hand, the federal, state, and local governments were not proud of what they did. Many records were destroyed, actions were covered up or denied and later generations of bureaucrats pleaded ignorance, often quite legitimately since little documentation

DON'T SPEAK THE ENEMY'S LANGUAGE!



Just as the German-American image suffered in the Hun scare of the First World War, the Italian language and culture was dealt a mortal blow with World War II posters such as this.



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DOCUMENTING AN INJUSTICE

Fortunately some of the secrecy is finally being exposed. Scholars, notably those associated with the Western Regional Chapter of the American Italian Historical Association (AIHA), have begun to investigate and detail what happened. At least one book has been published about the experience (*The Unknown Internment* by Stephen Fox; Twayne Publishers, Boston, \$24.95) and, hopefully, others are in the works.

Most significantly, a museum-type exhibit — appropriately called "*Una Storia Segreta/A Secret Story*" — is making its way around the United States and a permanent home is being sought for it. Much of the research was done by its curator, Rose Scherini, and project director, Lawrence DiStasi. Both are Berkeley-based writers and educators.

Why bring the issue up now?

Because, according to DiStasi: "A people without a past is a people without a future. Knowledge of what happened, painful or not, is crucial to any community. Such knowledge is vital to maintaining a sense of its culture, its very self."

"The damage to our community has to be repaired," says William Cerruti, founder of the Italian Cultural Society of

Sacramento, Calif., one of the exhibit's sponsors. The society was responsible for getting the exhibit mounted in the rotunda of the California State Capitol, where it was seen by thousands, for three weeks earlier this year.

"Others have been apologized to but not us," adds Cerruti. "An apology is really necessary. This needs to be addressed just as the Japanese American experience was and until it is it will remain an open wound between the U.S. government and the Italian American communities throughout the nation."

Consequently, a National Italian American Redress Committee has been formed to seek, among other things, a formal apology from the United States government and the inclusion of this *storia segreta* in American history textbooks.

For information on having the exhibit "*Una Storia Segreta*" displayed in your community, write Lawrence DiStasi, 2806 Prince St., Berkeley, CA 94705 or call (510) 658-2976.

For information on the National Italian American Redress Committee write William Cerruti, 3105 Sierra Oak Drive, Sacramento, CA 95864 or call (916) 979-0707.



Perspectives

Harry Warren

Great American Composer

by Don Fiore

Harry Warren considered himself to be an extraordinarily lucky fellow. How else could you describe someone who had enjoyed a long and healthy lifetime doing exactly what he loved to do, and put a fortune in the bank while doing it?

For forty years, the songs of Harry Warren rolled out like a musical tapestry of the times, lending new color and definition to the changing tastes and trends of American popular culture. They blended into the backdrop of the free-wheeling, Roaring Twenties, and helped buoy the nation's careworn spirits through the gloom of the Depression. When America marched off to war, Warren's music was there to do its patriotic bit, with big bands striking up his tunes in every U.S.O. dance hall, and enlisted men tramping to his beat on the parade grounds. Into the Fifties, and even the Sixties, the songs kept right on coming; some to be left behind with the fading eras for which they were crafted, but many being here to stay. More than a few of Warren's titles can still ring a bell even among members of Generation X.

The roll call is an excursion



down the lane of familiarity: *You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby...Shuffle Off To Buffalo...Chattanooga Choo Choo... I Found A Million Dollar Baby In A Five & Ten Cent Store...Jeepers Creepers...We're In The Money...I Only Have Eyes For You...The Atchison, Topeka and The Santa Fe...September In The Rain...*

Warren was indisputably one of the most prolific and successful songwriters of the century. But though he shared friendship and peerage with Irving Berlin, the Gershwin brothers, and all the other musical greats of his day, he remained a shadowy figure outside show business circles. Given the popularity and sheer number of his hit tunes, this seemed like an injustice to some. Lyricist Johnny Mercer thought so, complaining that Warren "never got any acclaim, not half as much as he deserved."

But Warren wasn't complaining. Soft-spoken and shy, he steered clear of the spotlight and kept a well-marked distance between his private life and the public eye. Not the least among the various things that were largely unknown about Harry Warren was that he wasn't Harry Warren at all, but Salvatore Guaragna, the Brooklyn-born son of Italian immigrants.

Warren camouflaged his real name behind phonetics friendlier to the American tongue at some strategic point on his journey down the yellow brick road, a trek that bore all the elements of the classic Hollywood success story. The eleventh of his impoverished parents' brood of twelve, he began life the hard way in the crowded tenements of turn-of-the-century New York.

The awesome responsibility of feeding a dozen kids gave Warren's father little time to think of music. But it must have been a real, if displaced, component somewhere in the senior Guaragna's soul, since he packed along an accordion with his meager luggage on the boat to America. It was, in fact, on this battered, old relic that little Salvatore squeezed out his first notes.

A high school drop-out, Warren taught himself to play a variety of instruments and then set his sights on the big time. The vision of better things ahead saw him through the inevitable

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purgatory of menial employment in the early days: carnival musician, stage hand, bar room piano player. Payday brought mere pennies, but the accumulated experience, the contacts made along the way inched him progressively closer to his goals.

In 1922, the 29-year old Warren landed a job as a song plugger for the Stark & Cowan music publishing company, planting him firmly within the Tin Pan Alley circuit and opening the opportunity to do some composing of his own. He managed to have four of his tunes published the following year, and two of them, *Back Home in Pasadena* and *Way Down South* were instant hits. Suddenly, he didn't have just a job. He had a career.

Warren went on to chalk up a few more years of consecutive successes in the popular song market before graduating to write entire scores for Broadway shows. Meanwhile, the Talkies had invaded the cinema, and Hollywood was looking to recruit the country's best songwriting talent for the new era of big musical productions that was at hand. In 1932, Warren was snatched up by Warner Brothers, and with lyricist Al Durbin he churned out

dozens of show tune hits with punch-press regularity over the next six years.

One of them, *Lullaby of Broadway*, written for the film *42nd Street* (1935), won an Academy Award. With an Oscar on his shelf, and legends like Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor regularly performing his work, Warren's prestige and status skyrocketed. The major studios were bidding for his services, with Warren commanding his price. When he moved to 20th Century Fox in 1938, he was writing tunes to the tune of \$3,500 a week. At one time or another, Warren was paired with most of the top lyricists in the industry, including Mack Gordon, Johnny Mercer and Ira Gershwin, and, predictably, each collaboration produced first rate results. The succeeding years brought new contracts with MGM and then Paramount, and more hits, including the Oscar winners *You'll Never Know* (with Mack Gordon for the

A scene from the classic Broadway show *42nd Street*. Music by Salvatore Guaragna



1943 film *Hello Frisco, Hello*) and *On The Atchison, Topeka and The Santa Fe* (with Johnny Mercer for the 1946 film *The Harvey Girls*).

At the age of 67, he finally retired his quill to spend the next twenty years on the golf course or reminiscing at the piano in his plush, \$3 million Sunset Boulevard mansion.

"I guess I got too expensive", he acknowledged a few years before his death in 1981. But scanning his catalog of hits, he was quick to add, "I could've written more."

(continued on p. 28)

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Perspectives



ROSETO: A MEDICAL MARVEL

by Candice Smith, Rosario A. Iaconis
and John Mancini

For nearly three generations, Roseto — a close-knit Italian-American community in east-central Pennsylvania — was a very special place to live. Despite a diet which often included fatty meats, peppers fried in lard and much wine, the Rosetans boasted a remarkably low death rate from heart disease, fewer ulcer problems and less mental illness than the



Are there health benefits from family and cultural cohesion? The people of Roseto were proof positive.

state and national averages.

These extraordinary findings prompted medical researchers Dr. John Bruhn and Dr. Stuart Wolf to conduct a fifteen-year study comparing medical histories, physical examinations and laboratory tests on a large sample of Rosetans and inhabitants of two neighboring communities, Bangor and Nazareth. The results were astonishing.

It showed that diet, exercise habits and genetics played no role in the Rosetans' immunity to heart disease. In addition, certain other facts remained a puzzlement. Men were outliving women and obesity was uncommon.

Researchers credited the townfolk's good health to the traditional Italian value system that encouraged strong extended families and a mutually supporting community. Such conclusions are borne out in other studies. As an example, the highly structured Mormons of Utah also share excellent health statistics, but unlike Rosetans, Mormons abstain from tobacco and alcohol. Similarly, studies of Black Africans have shown that removal from tribal environments into White urban areas

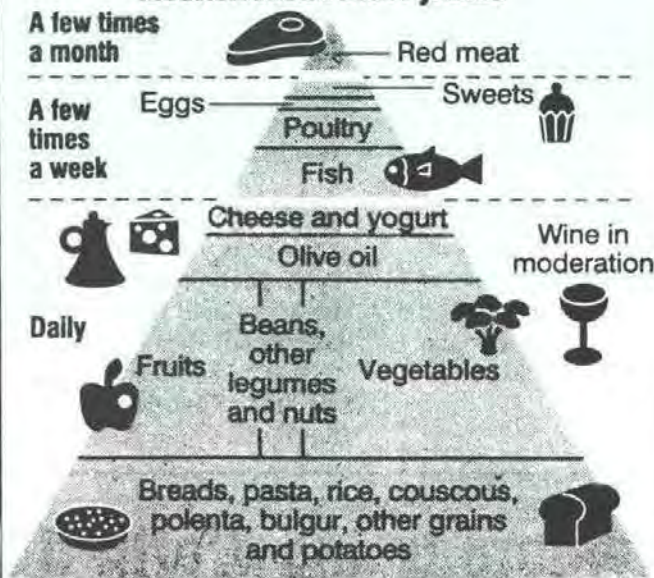
have led to increased hypertension, coronary problems and ulcers. In short, life is tough without strong social support.

The researchers were fortunate in being able to study Roseto in its final stages of cultural cohesiveness. By the mid-sixties, the old Roseto, the town founded by immigrants from the Italian town of Roseto Valforte, province of Foggia in southern Italy, was Americanizing. (The town came into being in the late 1800's spurred on by ethnic discrimination by English and Welsh neighbors in Bangor.) Succeeding generations cast off the traditional but sometimes stifling values that had contributed to the town's success.

Today, the Rosetans are eating less meat and fatty foods. They exercise regularly and believe that "you are what you eat." However, heart attacks and strokes are up while cancer percentages remain the same. Follow-up studies indicate that the Rosetans have experienced a rapid social change. Inter-marriage has jumped to 70% versus only 15% during the initial study. The family is no longer the center of their society. Competition and not cooperation is the watchword. As traditional values and relationships were abandoned by the rising generation, the death rate from heart attack climbed toward the American norm until, in 1971, deaths from myocardial infarction occurred for the first time among men under fifty.

"The lesson the Roseto experience offers Americans is that the thwarting of their biological need for social cohesion, community and emotional security is doing them tremendous harm, and they need to find distinctly American ways to share their lives with one another in warm, supporting communities," concluded the researchers. ****

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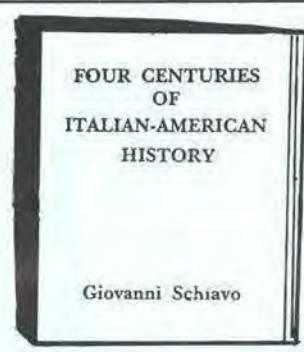
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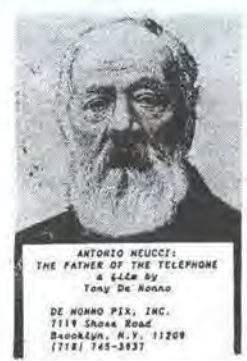


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Media Madness

[In which we present media material with commentary]

ITEM: An irate citizen on Long Island wrote a letter to the local newspaper complaining about Italian-American soccer fans who tied up traffic celebrating Italy's victory in the World Cup semi-finals. The citizen wondered why Italian-Americans are not as demonstrative on Memorial Day or Flag Day.

COMMENT: Italian-Americans need no lessons in patriotism from the "old guard." Italian-Americans served in both world wars in numbers way out of proportion to their population. And since the U.S. was eliminated from soccer competition, Italy was the only logical choice about which to be enthusiastic.



ITEM: The Annual Italian Benevolent Society Picnic and Parade held in Sutter Creek, California, features a "Win A Dago" truck contest among its entertainment.

COMMENT: These Italian-Americans are so benevolent that they come close to being Uncle Toms or whatever the Italic version of that is. One day at this festival, which by the way is promoted in the California Festivals guide book, could be hazardous to your ethnic health.

ITEM: Frank Cerabino, columnist for a Boca Raton daily, recently crossed the line with a dart-filled commentary on the Italian-American community's resistance to losing Columbus Day as a city holiday.

COMMENT: Who needs enemies when there are so many irrepressible Italian-American media types ready to destroy their own for a laugh or a few bucks? Using phrases like "horse's head", jokes about Italian Alzheimer's, and dialect words like "froonge" (*fungo* = mushroom) is the stuff of saloon conversations, not newspaper commentaries. We can forgive a *cafone* like Cerabino, but what kind of editors allow ethnic defamation from their staff?



ITEM: Olympic skater Tonya Harding is debuting as a feisty waitress running from the Mafia in a new movie entitled *Breakaway*.

COMMENT: Does this movie sound familiar? Aristotle once said that there are only seven basic plots in drama. Unfortunately, Hollywood only knows one about Italians.

ITEM: Italian-American sports writer Mike Lopresti (*USA Today*) demonstrated the sad state of his ethnic pride during the Italy-Bulgaria soccer match during the World Cup. "The Meadowlands was crammed with Italian partisans from the top row down to field level, and even lower if you count Jimmy Hoffa."

COMMENT: A vowel does not an Italian make. Hoffa is no more Italian than O'Hara or Agassi. But beside that, Mikey (*cafone* that he is) should have editors to wipe his butt occasionally. Obviously, the editors don't bother to read his tripe.





Media Madness



ITEM: New York's District Attorney busts an Italian bread racket and gets front page treatment from the *New York Times* (July 14, 1994).

COMMENT: At a cost to the taxpayers of at least \$100,000 just to set up a dummy Italian bakery (not to mention the salaries of DA office personnel and overhead), New York's courageous lawman Robert Morgenthau claims to have saved consumers 5¢ on every loaf purchased. Besides, he collared half a dozen social undesirables with vowels at the end of their names. Is this the stuff of movies or what?

ITEM: *Long Island Newsday's* Italian-American food critic tours Sicily and reports that it is indeed the land of the lesser breed.

COMMENT: The critic, Rita Giordano, is of Northern Italian extraction and took great pains to remind herself and her readers that "nobility coursed through her past." The word "chaos" is used as frequently as the word "Mafia" to darken her portrait of the island. "Why" she wondered, "do so many [Sicilian] men have scars? Even the watermelon man looked menacing brandishing a knife." Oh well, she no doubt was looking to show her Irish-American husband that she was quite different from southern rabble.



ITEM: *The New York Times* reader Vincent Tortora blew the whistle on shoddy reporting by that newspaper concerning Italian economic data. One factoid *The Times* printed was that Italy had a "galloping trade deficit" when it was actually an \$18.7 billion surplus. It was, apparently, a typically negative news article based on "traditional" media perceptions.

COMMENT: Every newspaper and magazine, including *The Italic Way*, makes factual errors sometimes. But when the sacred *New York Times* reports Italian economic statistics so out of whack that they are completely the opposite, maybe it's time that some *Times* staff members come to grips with their preconceived notions of Italy. We reported Italy's trade position in our last issue and somehow got it right.

ITEM: *Uncle John's Bathroom Reader* states unequivocally that explorer Amerigo Vespucci was a fraud who never sailed to the New World and got the continents named after him by an Italian mapmaker.

COMMENT: This may knock the reader off his seat but the mapmaker in real history was a German. And historians no longer doubt that Vespucci did what was credited to him, namely four voyages to the New World and proclaiming it new continents rather than the Indies.



ITEM: Atlantic City's Showboat Casino features a good old-fashioned "Italian" organ grinder in their Mississippi River atmosphere.

COMMENT: Now that Aunt Jemina has a slim and modern look and Sambo lawn decorations are out, why not conjure up the old Eastside of New York? Forget the historic inconsistencies. The Showboat doesn't want to offend multi-culturalism.



News of the Institute

YOUTH PROGRAM BEGINS

Our annual AURORA Italian Language & Culture Program got off to an excellent start on November 5th with the enrollment of 32 children. These fifth- and sixth-graders meet at our classroom facility every Saturday morning until Christmas. Those who wish to continue the program are offered classes after the New Year. Level I is free to all comers. Course brochures are distributed to the surrounding school districts.

PLEDGE FULFILLED

The Executive Council announced the completion of fundraising for the State University of New York (SUNY) at Purchase, NY. A total of \$25,000 was donated to the campus toward a chair in Italian Studies.

University officials have agreed to hold two public events at the campus to promote Italian culture and heritage. ISI's Secretary of Programs, John Mancini, is developing a selection of events.

8th ANNUAL DINNER DANCE - 1995

Hold this date: May 20, 1995. The Institute's 8th annual fundraising dinner will be held at the Waldorf=Astoria in Manhattan.

Tickets will cost \$325 per seat or \$3,000 per table of ten.

PICNIC

Our annual family picnic in Pomona, NY, was yet another success. Attendance was 351 adults and 110 children. The weather held up through the day and rains only started at the last hour. This event marked the return of Social Chairman Mike Carbone as Picnic Chairman.



VIDEO BROADCASTS & DISTRIBUTION

October was the month we went public with our video products, *Italian-American Visions* and *The Italian Legacy*. Free air time was granted on Long Island's Cablevision and New York City's CUNY stations. *The Italian Legacy*, narrated by Ms. Geraldine Ferraro, made a good impression on one distributor who has asked to add the 23-minute feature to his catalog of educational videos.

DECEMBER 14TH LUNCHEON

By popular demand, the December Plenary Council Luncheon is becoming another annual ritual. Billed as a Holiday Luncheon, this gathering features a seven course gourmet meal prepared by a special Italian chef. Contact the ISI office at (516) 488-7400 for reservations. The price to be announced. Place: 60 East Club at 60 East 42nd St., New York City.

GOLF OUTING II

This annual fundraiser is breaking all records. Slots were sold out two months in advance and there was a long waiting list. A total of 145 golfers hit the links. Organizer Elizabeth Polizzi is considering two outings each year just to meet the demand by our sports-loving Plenary Council membership. The demand for fundraising money is also a motive. Elizabeth has been the Institute's secret weapon. She is the daughter of our Events Coordinator Monica Polizzi, the dynamo behind our annual Dinner Dance.





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PROFILES



Henry Mancini

by Don Fiore

Popular music in the 1950s and early '60s found an unusually formidable number of Italian American entertainers on stage and in the studios, with Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Perry Como, Connie Francis and Liberace listed among the biggest names in the business. This fact did not translate into an extensive popularization of Italian music, though the country was indeed exhibiting a rare receptiveness to it at the time, with songs like *Volare*, *Al Di La* and *Cara Mia* finding their way up the charts.

Far from treating their listeners to the torrid passions of Neapolitan serenades, these performers, as a rule, stayed comfortably within the familiar, artistic boundaries of mainstream America, recommending Italy more by their surnames than by their actual work. What chiefly distinguished each of them, instead, was an exceptionally relaxed, naturally smooth manner of delivery. So relaxed, in fact, that the popular music classification into which their talents were pooled came to be known as "Easy Listening."

The ultimate master craftsman of this genre, yet another Italian American, was the late Hollywood composer Henry Mancini, who passed away earlier this year from cancer. In parallel with other successful musicians who shared his ethnic background, the Italic element was present in his story, but only in its earliest chapters. His father, a Cleveland steelworker, was an ardent proponent of Italian music, performing regularly with the neighborhood concert bands. It was through his persistent encouragement that Mancini decided on a professional music career.

The elder Mancini would have doubtless been delighted had his son taken an affection for or even recognition of the music of his ancestry on his path to fame and fortune. Alas, he did not, but was wholly fascinated by the Big Band sound which, after training at Carnegie and Juilliard, brought him into association with the Glenn Miller organization during World War II. Mancini's work as an arranger and pianist with the orchestra led him in turn to Hollywood contacts and then Hollywood contracts. Soon reputed to be one of the industry's most promising talents, he was chosen by Universal Studios to score the *Glenn Miller Story* (1954) and *The Benny Goodman Story* (1956).

Though his own personal style of arrangement and



composition was evolving, the biographical nature of these films naturally obliged him to limit his creativity to imitating the styles of the subjects at hand. Not until 1959, in fact, was Mancini granted unrestricted latitude for compositional originality in providing the highly stylized and impressionistic musical background for the *Peter Gunn* television series. The cool, emotionally removed tone of the scores won everyone's attention but certainly nobody's heart. Around the corner, however, was material of a vastly more appealing nature which would prove that Mancini was by no means just another hack in the soundtrack studios.

The revelation of his arrival as a first rate composer was heard in the pensive and absorbing *Moon River*, which he inserted in his score for the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). The song was immediately designated a classic and brought its creator an Academy Award, as did his title piece for *The Days of Wine and Roses* the following year. These and other compositions, notably *Dear Heart* (1964) and *The Sweetheart Tree* (1965) distinguished Mancini as a master at conveying tender sentimentality, a reputation that would be reconfirmed some years later in his score for *Love Story* (1971).

His talents did not dwell exclusively among the gentle nuances of intimate romance, of course; the slyly humorous *Pink Panther Theme* being the most famous of Mancini's many interspersions in the line of love ballads. Whatever the mood or emotion he sought to depict via film score, LP, or stage performance with his orchestra,

Henry Mancini unflinching took the high road.

Had some sort cultural seismograph been available to detect the latent rumblings of social and artistic change, its needle would have skipped off the chart during the years of Mancini's creative peak. Popular music was entering a stage of dramatic transition in which the reigning styles of the day were gradually ceding primacy to Rock & Roll, which itself would mutate from a sort of primitive innocence to psychedelic, and, finally, psychotic expressionism. The nihilistic amorality and artistic destitution in so much of what passes for "music" today makes Mancini's work seem like sophistication's last stand.





Warren (continued from p.17)

Warren's rags-to-riches story stands as an inspiration to aspiring, young talent everywhere, and is surely worthy of everyone's admiration. But the question rises: did his ethnic background have any significant influence on or connection to his success? And if so, did Warren, himself, recognize it? The composer had little to say about most things, and even less about his personal life.

Sadly enough for cultural preservationists, neither Warren nor the late Henry Mancini, nor the thousands of other first and second generation Italian American musicians who were exposed to or nurtured on the fluid melodies and exquisite harmonies of Italian music, lost any time deserting it in favor of such all-American genres as Swing or Jazz. While the musical traditions of other ethnic groups have thrived or been revived (witness the renaissance of Jewish music), there is a weak, often misconceived representation of Italian music that continues to exist in this country today.

In Warren's case, the severance could hardly have been more complete. At best there's only a slight nod in three of his hundreds of published songs: the innocuous *So This Is Venice* (1923), the broken English-titled *Where Do You Work-a, John?* (1926) and the pseudo-Neapolitan *That's Amore*,

written for the 1953 Dean Martin-Jerry Lewis film *The Caddy*, all of which might just have easily been penned by a Dutchman or a Swede.

The truth, then, is that Salvatore Guaragna left behind more than a discarded set of syllables when he became Harry Warren. Like any of us, he was under no obligation of loyalty to his Italian roots, and the reduction of his ancestry to an incidental footnote, for whatever reason, was his conscious and deliberate decision. In homage to that background, in simply recognizing from whence he came, scarcely a drop of Warren's ample supply of talent and creativity was expended. That, of course, takes nothing away from his deserved status as having been one of America's most remarkably gifted songwriters. But amidst the ongoing erosion of our ethnic heritage, culturally-minded Italian Americans can be excused for feeling a trace of regret over Warren's choice to not look back.

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Italic Studies Institute, Inc.
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