

\$10.00

THE *Italic Way*

XXXVII 2011

The magazine of the Italic Institute of America

A portrait of Leon Panetta, the 20th United States Secretary of Defense, smiling. He is wearing glasses, a dark pinstriped suit jacket, a light blue striped shirt, and a red and white striped tie. The background features an American flag on the left and a blue banner with a white eagle and the word 'CITIZENSHIP' on the right.

**Defense Secretary
LEON PANETTA**
WHAT CAN'T HE DO?

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THE TALIAFERROS: AN AMERICAN SAGA
PROF. RICHARD GAMBINO - EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
THE ROOTS OF CITIZENSHIP

ITALO-TURK WAR: 100TH ANNIVERSARY
ITALY'S REUNIFICATION: STORY OF A FLAG
BOOK REVIEWS: *MALICE AFORETHOUGHT/UNBROKEN*

The Italic Way

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Managing Editor - John L. Mancini
Associate Editor - Bill Dal Cerro
Design Editor - Andrew Ricci
Production Manager - Rita L. Mancini
Technical Support - Raul Portillo
Research Associate - Peggy Fox
Feature Writers - Bill Dal Cerro, Don Fiore, Rosario Iaconis, Bob Masullo, Louis Cornaro, Anthony Vecchione

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Direct all inquiries to (516) 488-7400.
Fax: (516) 488-4889 Website: italic.org
email: ItalicOne@aol.com

Corrections

In our last issue, the Italian quote from a memorial at at El Alemain, page 28, was incorrect. It should be *Manco` la Fortuna non il Valore* ("Fortune was lacking, not valor")

Tid Bits

IN DEFENSE OF HERITAGE

For those who know Institute Vice Chairman Don Fiore, his love and knowledge of Italian heritage is vast. His specialty is Italian aviation history and he can easily be considered the top expert in the U.S. Don has been called upon a number of times to defend a giant of Italian aviation, Italo Balbo, whose memorial in Chicago, astride Lake Michigan, has been the target of revisionists and anti-Italians for decades. Balbo, it seems, was on the wrong side of history, a Fascist who pioneered tremendous achievements in global aviation culminating in the precision flight of 24 Savoia-Marchetti seaplanes across the Atlantic in 1933. Such was the feat that the city of Chicago immortalized it with a street named Balbo Drive and accepted a stone memorial from the Italian government. Both have stuck in the craw of some revisionists since the fall of Fascist Italy in 1945.



Like clockwork, each year someone wishes to obliterate Balbo from American history. But also like clockwork the Italian American community comes to his defense with Don Fiore and the Italic Institute at the lead. As of this writing, the latest revisionists have lost steam, bombarded with an Italic Institute petition signed by some 500 people and sound arguments in favor of Balbo. Balbo was not a war criminal. Balbo was against the Axis pact with Germany. He was against the Anti-Semitic Laws of 1938. He was an acknowledged pioneer in aviation. His 1933 flight occurred when Italy was still an ally from the First World War. Revisionist logic would

have Chicago rename Jackson Blvd. since U.S. President Andrew Jackson was an ethnic cleanser of the Cherokee Nation. (And what of his portrait on the \$20 bill?)

For once, Italian Americans, who discovered, named, and claimed North America for English-speakers, and for which they gave their blood and sweat to build it, should not have to beg for respect. We are all fortunate that people like Don Fiore are manning the ramparts.

J'ACCUSE! [Reprinted from the *NY Daily News*, August 29, 2011]

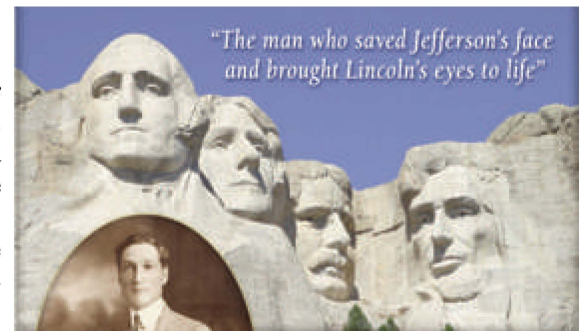
The chairman of the Italic Institute of America is not happy with *Law & Order: SVU* producers' decision to depict a character based on



Dominique Strauss-Kahn as an Italian. Rosario Iaconis, who describes the Institute as a “think tank devoted to the continuity of Italian culture,” tells us that *SVU* creator and producer Dick Wolf “slanders Italy” by “transmuting” DSK, “the frisky French pol accused of sexual assault” into a “lascivious” and Berlusconi-esque Italian dignitary (played by actor Franco Nero) for an upcoming episode. Instead of “recycling hoary stereotypes,” Iaconis says producers could have based their “DSK doppelganger” on a number of scandal-scarred public figures including Arnold Schwarzenegger, Eliot Spitzer, John Edwards or Moshe Katsav, the former Israeli president who is serving seven years in prison for rape. A spokesman for the show said he was unable to comment by deadline, but noted that the program is fictional.

ANOTHER MONUMENT!

How few of us know the extent of the fine Italian hand in American history. *The Italic Way* has reported Italian artistry in monuments at Stone Mountain, GA, Austin, TX, and the Arlington Bridge in Washington DC. Add to these the seated Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial by the Piccirilli Brothers and the frescos in the nation's capitol by Greco-Italian Constantine Brumidi. Now we learn that Mt. Rushmore is partly an Italian work. From 1933-1940, Luigi Del Bianco was the chief carver at Mt. Rushmore. Readers can find out more at www.luigimountrushmore.com.



OTHER MOBS?

The Hollywood-Mafia Axis, along with the FBI, has convinced most people in the world that Italian Americans have a lock on organized crime in America. So it came as a shock to many when Irish Mob chieftain Whitey Bulger of the Boston Clan was captured by FBI agents this past summer. FBI agents were also responsible for doctoring evidence during Bulger's reign that sent four innocent Italian Americans to prison for 30 years. Two of them died in prison and all four families were awarded \$102 million in a litigation settlement. The irony is that the FBI was founded in 1912 by Charles Bonaparte, the Italian American Attorney General in the Teddy Roosevelt Administration. But *La Cosa Nostra* is still top priority in FBI round-ups, media hype, and the Hollywood economy.



RACHEL-SPEAK

Rachel Donadio is a reporter for *The New York Times*. Her previous job was at the *Jewish Forward* and she writes about Italian events like she still works there. The Italic Institute has contacted her editors a number of times to apprise them of her shoddy verbiage. Last March, reporting on the German minority in the region of Alto-Adige, won by Italy in the First World War, Rachel cavalierly summed up the Italian victory over the Austro-Hungarian Empire after three murderous years of war as follows: “*This picturesque town in the foothills of the Tyrolean Alps became Italian by a twist of history, when Italy and Austria made a pact after the upheaval of World War I.*” That “pact” was called the Treaty of St. Germain. The victory cost the Italian nation over 600,000 war dead but utterly destroyed the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The real “twist” is in Rachel's interpretation of history. (pictured, an Alpine victory memorial)

A FRIEND PASSES

Last June, actor Peter Falk died at age 83. Falk was famous for his role as police detective Columbo in the long-running series of the same name. The Italic Institute honored Peter Falk in 1998 with our Silver Medallion for his positive role in *Columbo*. We had occasion to contact him again in 2004 when he was cast as voice-over for “Mafia” shark Don Brizzi in Dreamworks' anti-Italic animation *Shark Tale*. We asked Falk to change the name of his character. A little while later, Dreamworks announced that the character would be called Don Feinberg. Peter Falk was Jewish...as well as a gentleman.

ITALY UPDATE



Will Italy be the Undoing of the Euro?

Though the fiscal contagion roiling global bond markets began in Greece, more than a few pundits, prognosticators, and Germans have focused on Italy. Indeed, jittery investors and fear-mongering speculators joined the likes of *The Economist* and Rachel Donadio—*The New York Times*' Rome Bureau chief—in depicting the euro zone's third largest economy as a Balkan backwater on the brink of economic collapse. The facts tell a different tale.

Ironically, Landon Thomas, a knowledgeable *New York Times* business correspondent, quoted HSBC bank's chief economist, Stephen King: "On the basis of fiscal fundamentals, Italy is one of the best in class." For all its myriad shortcomings, the Italian government has responded to the burgeoning debt crisis with alacrity. In addition to prior austerity measures and structural reforms, the Italian parliament recently embraced

**"...Italy is one of the best in class."
-Stephen King, HSBC Bank**



Mario Draghi
New Head of the European Central Bank

efforts to eradicate the budget deficit by 2013. Rome is on track to pare its deficit to 3.9 percent of GDP this year. According to Greek economist Yanis Varoufakis, "Italy has done everything asked of it—it has cut left, right and center."

Following protest marches in Bologna—and wavering on the part of some Berlusconi's coalition partners—the Italian government's commitment to the austerity package seemed to falter. In the end, however, the government revamped the fiscal plan and the Italian Parliament approved it.

The revised austerity package includes tax increases, spending cuts, and a diminution of labor protections. All told, approximately 54 billion euros (\$76 billion) will be trimmed to balance Italy's budget by 2013.

Actually, Italy leads all Western industrial nations with a budget surplus of 2 percent of GDP. This all-important primary budget, which excludes interest on existing debt, is considered the best barometer of a country's financial well-being.

In order to compete in the global marketplace of the 21st century, however, Rome must restore the robust growth that characterized its postwar economic miracle. Indeed, dynamism *all'italiana* enabled Sergio Marchionne to reinvigorate FIAT and resurrect Chrysler. And Mario Draghi will soon replace Jean-Claude Trichet as president of the European Central Bank.

-Rosario A. Iaconis

Italians have hit the streets, sometimes violently, protesting austerity measures.



All'Italiana

IN MEMORIAM

Ed Zigo, 84, the NYPD detective who helped collar “Son of Sam” murderer David Berkowitz in 1977. Berkowitz had murdered six people and wounded six others, sending the city into a mass panic during the summer. Although there were already fifty detectives working the case, Detectives Ed Zigo and John Falatico were brought in by Captain Joseph Borelli who headed the Queens homicide unit. Following a report of a ticketed vehicle near the scene of a recent murder, Zigo and Falatico located the vehicle and found a rifle and documents in it. They waited for Berkowitz to use his car and made the famous arrest.



Raymond D’Addario, 90, an Army photographer who snapped Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. D’Addario shot thousands of photos of trial defendants Herman Goering, Rudolph Hess, and some 200 others during the famous trials. The photos were distributed to news services around the world. His one regret was that he was not assigned to photograph the executions of those whom he had come to despise.

Bob Marcucci, 81, launched rock ‘n’ roll stars Fabian Forte and Frankie Avalon. Marcucci co-owned a Philadelphia record studio with Peter DeAngelis, looking for new talent in South Philly’s Italian neighborhoods. He stumbled on a disconsolate teenage Fabian, sitting on his front steps as an ambulance rushed his father to a hospital. Taken by the boy’s handsome looks, Marcucci paid for the boy’s vocal lessons, supplied new songs, and introduced him to Dick Clark’s *American Bandstand* where the girls went wild. Avalon was discovered when the singer asked Marcucci to see a performance of a friend. Marcucci was unimpressed by the friend but loved Avalon’s voice. A fictionalized movie, *The Idolmaker*, was made of this story in 1980. Marcucci’s company only had one other star, black vocalist Claudine Clark, who sang (*I see the*) *Party Lights*, a Top 10 hit in 1962.



Geraldine Ferraro, 75, was the first woman on an American presidential ticket. Chosen by Democratic nominee Walter Mondale as his running mate in 1984, Ms. Ferraro blazed the trail that Sarah Palin would later trod twenty-four years later. Success was not to be against Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Ferraro’s Italian heritage and fami-

ly became targets for the media. At one point ABC-TV reporter Sam Donaldson challenged Ferraro to prove she was not tainted by organized crime. Although nothing came of the various insinuations and slander, the campaign was hopelessly bogged down, leading to a Reagan landslide. Ferraro, who had been a congresswoman, ran for the Senate in New York, losing twice in primaries in 1992 and 1998. Ferraro’s lasting tribute to her roots was narrating an Italic Institute documentary called *The Italian Legacy: Roman Law in America*.

Andy Robustelli, 85, was a Pro-Football Hall of Famer. After a short stint with the LA Rams, Robustelli joined the NY Giants as a defensive end in 1956. During his tenure the Giants won five conference championships. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1971, later retiring to become an assistant coach and general manager.

Jackie Cooper, 88, was a Hollywood actor/director born of a Jewish father and Italian mother (Mabel Polito, later changed to Leonard). His father deserted the family when Jackie was a child. But it was his mother’s family and her second husband who launched Jackie’s film career starting with the *Our Gang* comedy series. He played the role of young Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island* with Wallace Beery as Long John Silver. As an adult, Cooper starred in the 1950s sitcom *The People’s Choice*, playing alongside his sarcastic-thinking dog, Cleo.

Lt. Colonel Ralph Albertazzie, 88, piloted Air Force One during the Nixon Administration. It was Albertazzie at the controls when President Nixon flew to China in 1971 to open a new era of relations. He also flew Nixon home to California the day he resigned the presidency. Air Force One was temporarily redesignated SAM 27000 to reflect Nixon’s demotion. Albertazzie was from West Virginia where many Italians immigrated to work in the mining industry. His mother’s maiden name was Musetto. (Former West Virginia governor, now U.S. senator, Joe Manchin, is also of Italian lineage.)



Jimmy Roselli, 85, the pop vocalist who serenaded East Coast Italian Americans for decades in his authentic Neapolitan dialect. He made dialect songs like *Mala Femina* (Evil Woman), *Tazza di Caffè* (Cup of Coffee), and *Scapricciatello* (Little Wild One) standards at weddings, street feasts, and many radio stations. His record albums were in nearly every household of first and second generation Italian Americans. Born in New Jersey, Roselli lived with his grandfather and four aunts after his mother died. He mimicked their Neapolitan dialect to perfection to the delight of immigrant listeners. His career was long but rocky. He

had a falling out with fellow New Jerseyan Frank Sinatra and refused to conform to industry etiquette. He famously cancelled out on Ed Sullivan and Johnny Carson. Despite all, he remained the touchstone of Italian Americans to their immigrant roots.

Paul Picerni, 88, was famous for playing Eliot Ness's best agent in *The Untouchables* (he's second from left), the 1950s TV series.

Picerni had a very successful career both in feature films and television. Picerni's non-Italian character (agent Lee Hobson) in *The Untouchables* did nothing to balance the likes of Italo gangsters Al Capone and Frank Nitti, who



dominated the multi-ethnic criminal element in the series. Despite the inclusion of Irish, Jewish, German, and Polish murderers and thieves to reflect the reality of the era, the series came to be called "Cops & Wops" by many observant viewers. The series marked the beginning of the doomed Italian American anti-defamation movement.

Margaret Vinci Heldt, 92, was the hairstylist who created the beehive. The style, made famous by Audrey Hepburn, was created in 1960 when Vinci owned Margaret Vinci Coiffures on Chicago's Michigan Avenue. Inspired by a challenge in a trade magazine, Vinci conceived the style during the wee hours at home.

John Dabbene, 72, was an Italian American activist and member of the Order, Sons of Italy in America. His passion for heritage put him in the forefront of such projects as the Garibaldi-Meucci Museum (Staten Island, New York) where he labored for ten years to oversee fundraising, restoration, and expansion. His work in anti-defamation brought him to the attention of cable station HBO, which was producing the WW II series, *The Pacific*. The result was an inspiring and factual portrayal of Medal of Honor winner John Basilone.

Dominic Parisi, 92, survived landings at Anzio and Normandy while in the U.S. Navy despite wounds. He spent 30 years teaching at DePaul University in Chicago where he founded the School of Public Service for civil servants. He was married for 66 years and was father-in-law to Institute member Lionel Bottari.

FACEBOOK FATHERS

Remember the movie *Social Network*, about the litigation surrounding Facebook? Well, it was only half the story according to Paul Ceglia, who claims to be Facebook founder Mark

Zuckerberg's first partner. It was 2003 that Ceglia, a part-time programmer from upstate New York, was hired by 18-year old Zuckerberg and invested \$1,000 for a 50% share of "The Face Book." Zuckerberg's lawyers believe the email contracts were doctored. Ceglia is standing his ground by hiring Italic lawyer Dennis Vacco, former New York State Attorney General. This could be another movie.



GOLF DYNASTY

It may have originated in Scotland but the sport of golf has been a tradition in the Italian American Turnesa family. Since the 1920s, a Turnesa family member has competed in the U.S. Open, 46 of them thus far. And not just one member at a time. Originally there were seven Turnesa brothers. Six of them played in the same Open qualifier in 1946. The boys got their start when father Vitale worked as a greenskeeper at a New York course. His sons learned the sport on their own despite Vitale constantly chasing them off the fairways. Will there be a third generation of duffers? Right now the three younger Turnesa men are single. [Nota bene: One of American's all-time great golfers was *paesano* Gene Sarazen (Eugenio Saraceni) during the 1930s.]

ITAL-BRAINS

"Computer Wins" was the headline earlier this year to describe the first time a computer won on the TV game show *Jeopardy*. The computer was named Watson, developed by an IBM team led by researcher Dr.

David Ferrucci (pictured). Since the birth of the academic field of computer science in the 1960s, the quest has been for a thinking machine capable of processing general knowledge. The problem is that names and nomenclature can be confusing to a machine. But when it has the answer, Watson can hit the buzzer faster than any mortal contestant. Competing against all-time Jeopardy champ Ken Jennings, Watson earned \$77,147 to Jennings's \$24,000. Dr. Ferrucci was asked if Watson could morph into the evil HAL of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. He said that the goal is to be more like the computer on *Star Trek*, a brain without a personality.





World Notes

FINDING A NEEDLE

When Air France Flight 447 disappeared into the South Atlantic in 2009 between Brazil and France, any hope of finding the flight recorder was daunting. Two years and two failed searches had turned up nothing and cost \$25 million. Officials at Air France finally pinned all hope on the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution on Cape Cod, MA. It was a team from Woods Hole that found the Titanic in the 1980s. Dr. David Gallo was the Director of Special Projects. Dr. Gallo also happened to be an expert on the mid-Atlantic Ridge. Together with Expedition Leader Michael Purcell, the Wood Hole team supplied three unmanned Remus 6000 (as in Romulus & Remus) submarines for the project.



It took only eight days to locate and retrieve the recorder. An amazing feat! Luckily the flight data was intact and revealed that the crash had likely been caused by a poorly designed airspeed indicator. The 228 passengers that perished on Flight 447 did not die in ignominy or in vain thanks to Purcell, Gallo, and the Woods Hole team.

AN ITALIAN PLAGUE?

Last June, in a ceremony held ironically in Rome, as you'll see, the United Nations officially declared, that a second disease (smallpox was the first), had been wiped off the face of the earth.



The disease is *rinderpest* ("cattle plague" in German). Scientists claim that *rinderpest*, which throughout history has destroyed 95% of infected livestock in Europe and Asia, was first introduced to East Africa by the Italian Army during its colonial wars (1887-97) with the importation of oxen and beef cattle. The eventual spread of the dis-

ease throughout the continent caused the deaths of countless inhabitants who starved to death when their herds vanished. The eradication campaign began in 1945 and cost only \$5 million with the development of a vaccine and training programs. The last outbreak occurred in 2001.

The disease dates back to ancient times but Italians were the first to successfully combat it in 1713. In that year, Pope Clement XI asked his personal physician, Dr. Giovanni Lancisi, to stop the plague among papal herds. Lancisi utilized the research of Dr. Bernardino Ramazzini at Padua University, who believed germs caused the contagions rather than fog, curses, or astrology. Lancisi enforced quarantine and culling of herds rather than prayer and superstitious cures. Priests who opted for saintly appeals were to be sent to the galleys and laymen were to be hanged. Within nine months the outbreak was stopped. In northern Europe, where Protestants disdained Catholics and Italians, the disease persisted for a century and killed off 200 million cattle. The French acknowledged Italian primacy and founded the first veterinary school in 1761 teaching the Lancisi principles.

“AN AMAZING SUCCESS”

Those were the words of Timothy Massad, assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury, describing how Chrysler Corporation was resurrected by Italy's Fiat. Not only did Fiat enable Chrysler to repay its government loans of \$11 billion but it totally revamped the design and production of Chrysler's existing products. Italian technology was adapted to 16 Chrysler models, saving the company billions in research and development as well as increasing fuel economy of the fleet. Fiat's Abruzzo-born Sergio Marchionne kept every promise he made to U.S. taxpayers and Chrysler shareholders. Fiat saved 56,000 American jobs and even added another 9,000. The Italians succeeded where previous owners Mercedes-Benz and Cerberus failed. So much for 'German engineering.'

Moreover, Fiat studios are opening across the country, enticing economy-minded buyers with the flashy look of the classy Italian subcompact. Priced at about \$15,000 with a 38 mpg (standard shift), the new FIAT 500s are getting good reviews from the critics. There are plenty of models to choose from but it may be a while until you sight some of these roadsters in your area. By the way, the 500 is assembled in Mexico.



MAXIMIZING LUXURY

Italy has been tarred by the Greek financial bug despite having the world's seventh wealthiest economy (*per capita*). National debt may be the curse of every continent but the Italians have a talent as old as the Etruscans – making luxury goods. The Italian economy can weather any storm so long as there are wealthy people on the globe. Prada, Ferrari, Zegna, and Gucci translate into any language, especially now in Communist China where capitalist decadence is in vogue. By 2015, it is predicted that China will account for a fifth of the luxury market. But selling to the Chinese rich is only half the strategy. Italian corporations are now trading their stock on the Hong Kong Exchange, raising capital in Chinese currency. Prada has already raised \$2.1 billion dollars from Chinese investors. Something of note: the chairman of the Hong Kong Exchange is an Italo-Brit named Ronald Arculli.

KNOX, KNOX, WHO'S THERE?

After spending four years in an Italian prison in Perugia, American student Amanda Knox was freed after an Italian jury overturned her original conviction. In 2007, Knox, enrolled at Perugia's famous *Universita per stranieri* (University for Foreigners), was found guilty, along with her Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito, of murdering fellow student Meredith Kercher after a night of alleged wild partying. Though many cheered Knox's release, some who did not were Ms. Kercher's relatives, who flew in from Great Britain to watch Meredith's murder become an open question once again. (Note: Another person convicted in the case, African bar owner Rudy Guede, continues to serve his 16 year sentence.)

The reasons for the current jury's decision will be forthcoming—the Italian justice system, like ours, moves very slowly. Indeed, in his *Inferno*, Dante Alighieri gives lawyers their own special place in Hell (third tier). But the lull in the case has encouraged the U.S. media to engage in its usual “Italy is a Third World” campaign. Some American journalists were quick to compare the sloppy CSI work in the Knox case to that in our own O.J. Simpson and Casey Anthony trials, but others have focused on Knox's “innocent abroad” status—a young girl wronged by a legal system run by cads. Looking at it another way, if Amanda Knox had been in a Texas prison, she probably would have sizzled in the electric chair by now. Italy does not have the death penalty, an action which the Italians consider barbaric in a civilized democracy.

There was little criticism of Italy in the U.S. back in 1998 when a U.S. military pilot's “hot dogging” stunts snapped a cable car in Cavalese (near Trentino), plunging 20 tourists to their deaths? The pilot and his navigator, Captain Richard Ashby and Captain Joseph Schweitzer, were found guilty of the much lesser charges of obstruction of justice and conduct unbecoming an officer, a verdict that shocked Italians at the time.

LIBIA LIBERATA

In what is being called the most cost-effective war in 21st Century U.S. history, the NATO campaign to free Libya from mad dictator Muammar el-Qaddafi has accomplished its mission. A debt of gratitude should go to the Italian Republic, which provided air and naval bases for the NATO forces. Thanks should also go to Italian Vice Admiral Rinaldo Veri who headed the Allied

Maritime Command, which blockaded Libyan ports, and to U.S. Air Force Lt. General Ralph Jodice (pictured), of St. Louis, who led the Allied Air Command.



It was Lt. Gen. Jodice's air units that were the scourge of Qaddafi's loyalist forces. From March 23rd to mid-October, Jodice's war planes, mostly piloted by the French and British, sustained rebel efforts ultimately exposing Qaddafi himself as he tried to flee his last stronghold in Surt. As one of Qaddafi's aides testified, “He (Qaddafi) was very afraid of NATO (air power).” It was the key element in his demise.

American involvement in Libya was a test run for a wholly new military policy ordered by President Obama and executed by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. Not one American life was lost in the seven-month action and the cost was under one billion dollars, thus far. Better yet, no occupation of Libya is planned.

A CONVENIENT TRUTH?

Everyone knows that former U.S. Vice President Al Gore is the poster man for the green movement to save the planet from global warming. But Gore's nemesis is another politician named Kenneth Cuccinelli II (right), the Attorney General of Virginia. Cuccinelli believes a great fraud is being perpetrated on the world by grant-hungary scientists, opportunist politicians, and incompetent environmentalists, including the U.S. EPA. Although Cuccinelli claims he is aiming at the financial aspects of the fraud, his accusations go to the heart of the scientific method and the integrity of professional science. His conservative base considers Cuccinelli a defender of the taxpayer. He also defends gun rights, states rights, and opposes abortion rights. But there is a fear even among congressional watchdogs that investigating global warming may be political suicide. For now, Cuccinelli has put his chips on a lawsuit against the EPA that may drag out for years.



One man of science who would strongly disagree with Cuccinelli is ecologist Dr. Carl Safina (below). Safina is appalled by the careless treatment of the natural world he sees everywhere. Raised on Long Island, Safina got hooked on nature when his father raised canaries and homing pigeons, and turned toward the



sea during fishing outings off Long Island. He has journeyed to the Arctic and Antarctic as well as points in between in search of nature's wonders. Two of his recent books, *A Sea In Flames*, about the Gulf oil spill of 2010, and *A View From Lazy Point*, on his travels, give a very different

view from Cuccinelli's on where the fault lies.

Editorials

Et Tu, Calandra?

Imagine being a food critic for a national newspaper and being assigned to review a newly opened restaurant. And imagine your editor's surprise when he receives your review, which begins with a description of the place but then veers off into a blistering editorial about the unfair treatment of minority workers in a different restaurant down the street. At the very least, your editor would ask you whether you drank your lunch that particular day.

Yet such an astonishing thing recently happened in the *Italian American Review*, a periodical of the Calandra Institute at City University New York, where a DVD review of our 2007 documentary, *And They Came to Chicago: The Italian American Legacy*, acknowledged the quality of that film before turning into a bizarre diatribe on how all 15-20 million Italian Americans should get in touch with their inner-racist. Clearly, the tone of this piece was orchestrated by editor Joe Sciorra of Queens College (CUNY). Sciorra, a longtime multicultural activist at City University, has made it his career goal to force the national Italian community to shout '*mea culpa*' for the aberrant behavior of some of the residents of Bensonhurst, Brooklyn during a tragic racial incident in 1989. Why else would he assign the review of a simple historical documentary to Prof. Mark Naison, a non-Italic professor at Fordham University, also in New York, specializing in African American studies? Naison nuked us for "sanitizing" Italian American history regarding our allegedly innate racism and for failing to note that some Italians may have lived off government largesse in the past. The only thing missing was a quote from anti-Italic filmmaker Spike Lee.

Naison and Sciorra don't have an axe to grind — merely a buzz-saw. The whirring noise is drowning out their common sense.

-Bill Dal Cerro

A Right To Ridicule?

Mirabile dictu! (Good news!):

The MTV series *Jersey Shore* has lost its bid to garner a substantial tax windfall in the Garden State. NJ Governor Chris Christie has vetoed a \$420,000 tax credit for the so-called reality program.

But this isn't about censorship, as *The New York Times* seems to think (editorial, Sept 28th). In fact, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is under no legal, economic or constitutional obligation to grant tax credits to any motion picture or television project in the State of New Jersey.

So why all the hue and cry over the governor's decision? The *Times* editorial claimed Christie crossed "a basic constitutional line," even though admitting that *Jersey Shore* "tediously mocks Italians." David Hinckley, the *New York Daily News* TV critic,

found Christie's veto "distasteful."

Had MTV launched reality fare along the lines of *Jihadi Shore*, *Playa Caliente* or *Brighton Beach Boychiks*, chances are the Fourth Estate might have been a tad less vociferous in its First Amendment advocacy.

Promoting contemptible stereotypes under the guise of "the arts," as was done with *The Sopranos*, is absurd enough. To now dress a "guidos-gone-wild" commercial venture as a First Amendment right makes a mockery of free speech. The right to ridicule Italian Americans is not enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, a document based on the republic of laws forged by the Italians of antiquity *aka* the Romans.

-R. A. Iaconis

The Club Still Rules

Since 1944, the Columbus Club of New York has monopolized the annual Columbus Day Parade. Under the auspices of the Columbus Citizens Foundation, its non-profit alter ego, the Club uses a holiday honoring the Admiral of the Ocean Sea to generate an income stream worth one million dollars annually.

The Club sells television commercial time, selects grand marshals and honorees and pumps up its gala ticket and journal sales. A \$100,000 "parade package" speaks volumes about the real mission: promoting the CCF's gala.

Moreover, this year's Grand Marshal, Joe Plumeri, while an admirable philanthropist, has not impacted our community or America in any relevant way. But he has both money and access to other wealthy individuals who can fill the Grand Ballroom at the Waldorf-Astoria.

In 2009, multi-millionaire Kenneth Langone was anointed Grand Marshal. But how about honoring Leon Panetta, our new Secretary of Defense? Or Medal of Honor winner Salvatore Giunta? Or planetary scientist Carolyn Porco, chief of the Cassini Saturn Mission? Or astronaut Michael Massimino? These are inspirational role models who reflect the sacrifices our people have made for this country.

The Columbus Club must democratize the parade and open it up to the community.

In addition to selecting the Grand Marshals, we must have a say in choosing floats that truly depict our 500 years in America; not to mention Italian-American bands and youth groups. Truck loads of CCF relatives, Irish bagpipers, cement trucks, and religious demonstrations do not reflect our secular patrimony.

This year, even Christopher Columbus was AWOL.

-R. A. Iaconis

Forum Italicum

ARE WE STILL A GOOD PEOPLE?

An opinion by John Mancini

Despite all their flaws, Italic people consider themselves decent, tolerant, and civilized in every sense of the word. But just as the Mafia put the scarlet letter on us so, too, did Fascist Italy's alliance with Hitler. We pay for the Mafia legend every day of our existence thanks to Francis Coppola, David Chase, Martin Scorsese and the toady actors who cling to stereotypes in the name of "art." The past few years have seen the rise of a new distortion of our history – anti-Semitism.

In 2005, The United Nations passed a resolution calling for an annual Day of Remembrance on January 27th, the day in 1945 that Auschwitz was liberated. Italy embraced the Day of Remembrance with more passion than its European neighbors and exported it through its foreign embassies and consulates. In the United States, January 27th is rigidly observed at the Park Avenue consulate in Manhattan where the names of Jewish Italian victims are read on the sidewalk each year to anyone within earshot. The ritual, in various forms, has spread to Italian cultural centers around the city. The message is clear: Fascist Italy was an active part of the *Shoah* (Jewish Holocaust) 65 year ago and Italy seeks atonement.

It is not my intent to explain what happened 65 years ago, for the war years were more complex than most people admit. The question to be asked is why has the Italian government exceeded other governments in putting on this hair shirt? And why do they expect Italian Americans to scratch with them? The *Shoah* was committed in Europe, not in the USA. In the spirit of *dietrologia*, the Italian art of examining motives, is it possible that Italian politicians are looking for more influence in the U.S. Congress via the Jewish lobby? One clue may be the amazing transformation of Gianfranco Fini, head of one of Italy's ruling parties. In the space of ten years he went from neo-Fascist to supplicant in Tel Aviv. Embracing Israel may be Italy's oblique path to the U.S. Congress. Italian leaders would love to create an Atlantic relationship to counter the Paris-Berlin clique that dominates Europe and leaves Italy the odd man out. Italians, for example, are forever seeking U.S. support in their quest of permanent membership on the UN's Security Council.

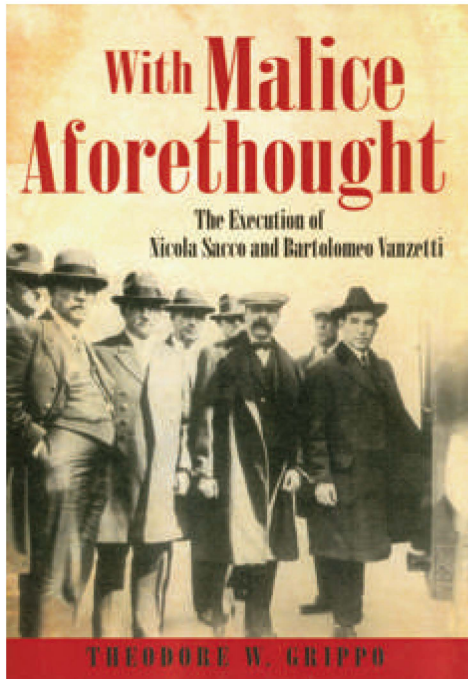
Perhaps this byzantine maneuvering led the Italians to partner with the Primo Levi Center, a *Shoah* lobby in Milan and New York. "Under the auspices" (that could mean subsidies) of the Italian foreign ministry, the Primo Levi Center has not merely assisted the Italian government in putting on its hair shirt but has launched a campaign to unmake the traditional image of Italians as "a good people" (*una brava gente*). This campaign promotes the following concepts: 1) Fascist military and government officials who refused to turn over Jews in occupied France, Greece, and Yugoslavia to their Nazi allies were merely doing so to aggravate Germans rather than to save Jews. 2) Seemingly humane Fascist officials like Giovanni Palatucci in Fiume who offered Jews sanctuary in an internment camp run by his uncle, a Catholic archbishop in Campagna, had a questionable past, which the PLC is still looking for. Palatucci died in Dachau for his humanity. 3) Events and museum exhibits that emphasize Italians saving Jews must not overshadow the anti-Semitic, Fascist nature of Italians in general. 4) The Allies in their quest for Nazis never indicted any Italian war criminals. A hunt must be undertaken.

"There are plenty of hair shirts to go around."

The Primo Levi Center has the attention of many, if not all, the Holocaust museums in the U.S., where the story of Italians saving upwards of 100,000 European Jews is either ignored or de-emphasized. The PLC also has a cadre of Italian American academics associated with it. One professor of Sephardic origin has clearly delineated Italians from Italian Jews. In 1997, while Italian American activists were appealing to the U.S. Congress to investigate the persecution of our community in 1942 by Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which uprooted 10,000 Italian Americans on the West Coast, curtailed their livelihoods, interned community leaders, and caused the suicide of four elderly men, this professor wrote a letter to the *New York Times*, essentially condoning the tragedy (August 11, 1997). Another PLC activist has lately spread the disinformation that Greek Jews on the island of Rhodes were deported to concentration camps by Italian officials in 1944. Rhodes was, in fact, under German rule at that time.

What are we to make of this campaign by our own academics to darken the Italian name? Do Italy's alleged sins of 1944-45 belong on this side of the Atlantic? If the Italian government wants to bare its soul and degrade itself to create a special relationship, it can only have negative consequences for our community, already burdened with despicable images. I say this to the Italian people and its leaders: Cut your ties with the Primo Levi Center. Separate yourself from self-serving academics. Stop darkening your past while others whitewash theirs. There are plenty of hair shirts to go around. We are still a good people - *una brava gente*. - JM

Book Review



**WITH MALICE AFORETHOUGHT:
The Execution of Nicola Sacco
and Bartolomeo Vanzetti**

By Theodore W. Grippo
(373 pages, published by iUniverse)

[Reviewed by Bob Masullo]

The case is less than a decade short of a century old. Yet the arrest, trial, and ultimate executions of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti continue to rankle millions.

For Italics everywhere, and especially Italian Americans, it is a burr-in-the-shoe that can't seem to be removed. That's because Sacco and Vanzetti are arguably the most conspicuous victims of anti-Italian bigotry in history.

But it is much the same for people of the political left, whether they have an Italic identity or not. They see Sacco and Vanzetti, both of whom were anarchists, as



"Our words - our lives-our pains - nothing. The taking of our lives, lives, of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler, all that last moment belong to us. That agony is our triumph." B. Vanzetti

representative victims of people who suffer because of their political beliefs. (Anarchists believe in a communal society – much like socialists – but with no government.)

Because early 20th century American leftists were better educated and more articulate in English than the average Italian immigrant, the bulk of writing about the Sacco-Vanzetti case has been by them. They have produced tons of books, articles, plays, movies, and TV shows about the case. The fact that both Sacco and Vanzetti were Italians living in a time and place where anti-Italianism was virulent has been given short shrift by the literati.

***Grippo has uncovered
deliberate manipulation
of court records.***

Enter Theodore W. (Ted) Grippo, a well regarded Chicago lawyer, now retired, who has long been active in pro-Italic causes. (In 2001, Ted sued HBO-Time Warner over their mob series *The Sopranos*, claiming it violated the Illinois state constitution's "Dignity Clause.")

Grippo spent years researching the Sacco-Vanzetti case, not only reading a tremendous amount of the published material but digging into long-forgotten court records as well. He reports on the anti-Italian bigotry of the time in much more detail than his predecessors. The result is *With Malice Aforethought*, his first book.

The 373-page volume is a digest of his research. For the most part it is compelling reading and fascinating history, both from American and Italian-American perspectives.

A brief summary of that history:

- Vanzetti, a northern Italian, and Sacco, a southern Italian, come to the United States separately in 1908 and meet in 1917 in the Boston area. Both are followers of Luigi Galleani, an anarchist writer.
 - The Slater-Morrill Shoe Co. in South Braintree, Mass. (a Boston
- The intensity of anguish around the world for these two victims of American injustice cannot be imagined in our time. Even Fascist Italy asked that the Governor of Massachusetts spare the lives of these anarchists.**



Attorney Michael Angelo Musmanno, right, put his career on hold to help with the appeal process. He reached out to Chief Justice Howard Taft, Justice Louis Brandeis, and even President Calvin Coolidge, to no avail. (Clarence Darrow stands on the left.)

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robbed of its \$14,700 payroll on April 15, 1920. Paymaster Frederick Parmenter and security guard Alessandro Berardelli are killed during the robbery.

- Sacco and Vanzetti are arrested as the suspected killers on May 5, 1920.

- Although evidence against them is highly inconclusive, both are convicted and sentenced to die in the electric chair.

- Legal wrangling, investigations, appeals, pleas to the governor, and world-wide demonstrations on their behalf go on for seven years. Nevertheless, on August 15, 1927, both are executed.

Through the years, the overwhelming majority who have written about the case have argued that Sacco and Vanzetti were innocent and that, even if they were not, they certainly were not given a fair trial.

The judge, Walter Thayer, was a bigoted ideologue. Shortly after the trial he bragged to a lawyer friend, “Did you see what I did with those anarchistic bastards the other day?” If he were around today he would probably be impeached and/or given a show on TV. And the prosecutor, Frederick Katzmann, might also. He had numerous political axes to grind and was hoping a conviction would propel him into office as the state Attorney General. (It did not.)

Grippe is assuredly in the Sacco-and-Vanzetti-were-innocent camp. What makes his argument unique is what he calls “the case’s Rosetta Stone,” something other writers have ignored or overlooked, and that proves to me – and I would think to any reasonable person — that Sacco and Vanzetti were not guilty.

Judge Walter Thayer’s prejudice was only one component of the overwhelming forces in the American establishment that doomed Sacco and Vanzetti.

That “stone” was found by Grippe in a decision made by Judge Thayer on March 25, 1924,

regarding one of the guns used in the crime. Grippe believes that papers arguing for an appeal based on what was done to the gun while it was in evidence went missing and that that “points to the deliberate manipulation of material court records in a capital murder case.” A very serious charge, indeed, and one that is difficult, if not impossible, to argue against.

Is *With Malice Aforethought* worth one’s reading time? For those who think they know the whole story of the trial, definitely. But be prepared to wade into some grinding legal aspects.

When Grippe is dealing with history, his writing is clear, engaging, and impressive (especially for a first-time author). But as the book goes on, it becomes more lawyerly. Minute details and names of minor role players abound. Such may be important in a courtroom but to a lay reader they may be confusing. No doubt, Grippe’s professional approach required such detail. For this book well may be a key resource for future historians.

Bob Masullo is a retired newspaperman. For many years he was a theater and music critic at The Sacramento Bee.

About the Author

Ted Grippe, a Northwestern Law School graduate, has spent 50 years in law enforcement and private practice in Chicago. He has been active in promoting Italian-American cultural and civic activities for many years.

He currently serves as a legal consultant on the Council of Advisors, Italic Institute of America.



Leon Panetta:

by
Louis Cornaro



Panetta's appointment to the CIA did not sit well with some CIA veterans and legislators, who questioned his lack of experience. Panetta proved them wrong.

Leon Panetta recently added a new job title to his illustrious career in government: that of Secretary of Defense. While he is not the first American of Italian heritage to assume this Cabinet post (Frank Carlucci did the job under President Ronald Reagan, 1987-1989), Panetta can claim a unique path leading up to this spot. His national service record began in 1964 with a two-year hitch in Army Intelligence as a 2nd Lieutenant, eight terms as a Democratic Congressman from California, Budget Director and then Chief of Staff for President Bill Clinton, and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency in the Obama Administration. Once at the CIA he escalated the use of remote controlled drone strikes. It was under his guidance that arch-terrorist Osama bin Laden was located in Pakistan and executed by Navy SEALs for the infamous massacres on September 11, 2001. In between these years he served in the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, in the U.S. Office of Civil Rights (under President Nixon), and moved briefly to New York City as an executive assistant to Mayor John Lindsay. And to put his legal training to use, Panetta had a private law practice for five years.

The professorial-looking Panetta combines the Italian tradition of Renaissance man (how many people can go from the Office of Civil Rights to the terrorist-hunting CIA?) and the Roman imperative for public service, known as the *cursus honorum*, or "career of honors." But unlike his classical forebears, Panetta has managed to rise through the

ranks without creating many political enemies. Maybe that's a sign of his gregarious Italian regional side. With deep roots in Siderno, Calabria, Panetta hasn't forgotten where he comes from. He shares those roots with such diverse Americans as Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito and vocalist Tony Bennett.

Leon Edward Panetta was born in 1938 in Monterey, California. His first-generation parents operated an Italian restaurant in the city and a farm in Carmel Valley. Monterey was the epicenter of the anti-Italic crackdown in February, 1942, under President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. Heavily Italian American, the California cities Monterey, Pittsburgh, and parts of San Francisco were purged of Italian, German and Japanese residents as fear of an Imperial Japanese invasion consumed the government after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Italian American fishing fleet was impounded, and businesses, including restaurants close to the waterfront exclusion zone, were either shuttered or turned over to non-Italic operators. A notable example was Joe DiMaggio's parents being banned from their own Fisherman's Wharf restaurant while he was baseball's top athlete. Worse, some 10,000 Italian American men, women, and children were evicted from their homes until Italian American votes were needed for November elections. Still, some 200 community leaders were sent to internment camps as suspected Fascist collaborators. Four elderly men even committed suicide. (See Issue XXII, 1994, for more details.)

The Panettas weathered this storm and Leon managed to pursue his education, with a B.A. in political science and a law degree. He married the former Sylvia Marie Varni and fathered three boys, who, in turn, produced six grandchildren. Leon and Sylvia Panetta still call the Panetta Family farm in Carmel Valley home. Italian roots are always deep. As if the Panettas haven't had enough of government issues, they established the Leon Panetta Institute for Public Policy at California State University in Monterey. This non-profit institute encourages young folks to enter public service regardless of political affiliation.

Being half political and half managerial has made Leon Panetta sort of a master of the Foggy Bottom universe. Anyone who can run the Washington gauntlet for forty years and not be derailed by left or right fanatics must have special talents. Panetta's strength seems to

be in his ability to focus on his job and mission rather than political winds and lobbyists. "He has the reputation of a non-nonsense guy," says Doug Bloomfield, a lobbyist. That may come from crunching numbers during his budget management days or from living

with immigrant parents struggling to make it in America. Managing is an Italian talent whether it's a baseball team or a corporation. Panetta's concentration on managing the task at

Once at the CIA Panetta escalated the use of remote controlled drone strikes.

What Can't He Do?



Panetta served time in Army Intelligence. His new job as Secretary of Defense has brought back some memories. Here he visits with ground troops in Afghanistan.

hand and dealing effectively, often affably, with critics and obstructionists has made an impression on everyone who has sat in the Oval Office. His recent promotion to the Dept. of Defense was surely motivated by his proven skills in war planning and cost accounting. Ultimately, Panetta may preside over a wholesale reduction in the bloated military establishment. That, in itself, is a political and patriotic minefield.

Despite Panetta's universal appeal he is still subject to doubt among the Washington crowd. When President Obama nominated him for the directorship of the CIA, many former agents understandably questioned his experience in the cloak and dagger arts. Notwithstanding his youthful exposure in Army Intelligence some 40 years before, many felt that Panetta was just a "political hack." His appointment was characterized by former CIA analyst Michael Scheuer as trading a "silk purse for a pig's ear." Perhaps the critics should have asked themselves how Panetta could debase a CIA that had not seen coming the Nairobi embassy bombing, the U.S.S. Cole attack and the World Trade Center holocaust. The agency surely needed a new perspective. And there was clearly bad blood with Panetta's fellow Californian, U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein, who broke party ranks to lambast Obama's choice as inexperienced in the netherworld.

Leon Panetta paid all those critics back in spades when, as the new director, he coordinated the demise of America's worst enemy, Osama bin Laden, in 2011. We can only imagine the satisfaction Panetta had in delivering justice to the terrorist who had

plagued the Western world for 20 years. And although much of the honor rightfully goes to the daring men of SEAL Team 6, our nation mustn't forget the extraordinary job done by the CIA and the man who led it.

Not resting on his laurels for long, Leon Panetta was tapped for a new assignment -- Secretary of Defense. One of his first acts was to promote Iraq War genius General Ray Odierno to Army Chief of Staff. Gen. Odierno spent over four harrowing years in Iraq, rising to top commander in September, 2008. Odierno reported to General Petraeus who is usually given credit for the "surge" strategy that turned the tide of the American occupation. But, as Secretary Panetta and others acknowledged, it was Odierno who was the "architect" of the surge. It was also Odierno who recruited Sunni opposition leaders to turn on their foreign Al Qaeda allies. Clearly, Odierno earned his promotion the old-fashioned way. But who can doubt that Secretary Panetta felt special pride in promoting someone who shared his heritage? The last Italian American to lead the U.S. Army was General Carl Vuono during the First Gulf War.

Secretary Panetta fully realizes that he occupies the hot seat in the Cabinet. Like the CIA, an agency that needed control and redi-

rection, the Defense Department needs to reflect the new realities of America's global and economic conditions. Panetta will surely push drones versus boots- on-the-ground in continuing our battles with Al Qaeda.

The difference in costs is staggering and the fall out, politically and in lives, is infinitely less with drones. Even the short and cost-effective NATO action in Libya has registered with Panetta. But he has already warned the Congress and the President that the defense budget can only be cut so much, despite the nation's \$14 trillion (Cont'd. on p. 16)

He has an ability to focus on his job and mission rather than political winds and lobbyists.



Panetta was previously President Bill Clinton's Budget Director and Chief of Staff. "He is a problem solver, a strong leader and manager. He also calls it like he sees it." - Hillary Rodham Clinton

Reunification:

ITALY, REUNITED AFTER 1,400 YEARS

by Don Fiore

This year, the world celebrates the 150th anniversary of a monumental and defining event in Italian history. Or at least it should be celebrating. The civilized world would be unimaginably different, and immeasurably poorer, without Italy's vast contributions, so anything to do with Italian history deserves everyone's attention.

The Second Unification

Not surprisingly, though, media coverage, particularly in the United States, has been weak and not always accurate. When

The story of modern Italy has been reflected on her flag. It was a struggle between monarchy and republic, not resolved until 1946.

notice has been taken, this year is frequently reported to mark the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy. A more valid description of that occurrence, of course, would be the RE-unification of Italy, since the peninsula was first unified under the Roman Republic in 222 BC.

But what actually happened 150 years ago, specifically on March 17th, 1861, was the formal proclamation by His Majesty King Vittorio Emanuele II of the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy. To be sure, as the result of four decades worth of insurrections,

wars, and calculated diplomacy, the new nation's territorial composition included most of the Italian peninsula and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. But at that point in time, the business of reunification was by no means complete. The entire Veneto region still remained in foreign hands, and almost a full decade had to pass before Rome itself, which, ironically, had been responsible for the first unification, would be incorporated into the Italian state.

Even more, it would not be until World War I that most of the so-called *Italia irri-*

denta (Unredeemed Italy) sectors, such as Trentino-Alto Adige, Trieste, and Istria, were integrated into the Kingdom, and even then some insisted that the consolidation of Italic territory would remain a work in process until the French-held island of Corsica, the regions of Nice (Nizza) and Savoia, the Dalmatian Coast, and even the Swiss canton of Ticino, were brought into the fold.

None of this diminishes the significance of the formal creation of the modern Italian state 150 years ago. Having slowly devolved for nearly two millennia to what Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich famously dismissed as a mere "geographical expression," Italy at last had pulled itself together to emerge as an independent and sovereign nation. Given all the obstacles faced to reach that end — the proximity and military strength of its foreign oppressors, the pronounced antagonism of the Catholic Church, and centuries of bitter inter-regional rivalry and suspicion — it seems downright astonishing.

On the other hand, and in a purely technical sense, this year's commemoration pays homage to the establishment of an entity that ceased to exist in 1946, when the Kingdom of Italy was permanently dissolved and replaced by the Italian Republic. This apparent incongruity suddenly makes sense when viewed in context of that most basic of national symbols, the country's tricolored flag.

The Birth of the Tricolor

There's no certainty as to who first thought up the flag's design, but its close resemblance to its French counterpart is no coincidence. After

the French Revolution in 1789, the blue-white-red revolutionary banner, still the national flag of France, became a sort of universal symbol of the ideals of liberty and progres-



The original tricolor with the symbol of Savoia

siveness in a Europe that was still controlled by autocratic kings and emperors. It was only natural, then, for those in other lands who yearned for the same enlightened ideals to adopt variations of the French tricolor for their own political movements.

Thus, Italy's own ultra-conservative rulers were shocked and alarmed when in 1795 insurgents raised a flag ominously similar to the French tricolor during an uprising in Bologna. The sole distinction was that the blue section was substituted by green, the color of nature and, hence, the natural human right to liberty.



Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia. As a monarchist, he was constantly at odds with republicans Garibaldi and Mazzini. Mazzini was hardly welcomed into the new nation and Garibaldi went into self-imposed exile.

The Story in a Flag

Two years later, as part of an effort to disarm the neighboring aristocracies that were conspiring to destroy their newly-founded republic, the French sent General Napoleon Bonaparte on a successful campaign against the Austrians and their allies in Italy. Being of Italian blood, Napoleon marched into the land more as a liberator than a conqueror, replacing the aristocratic states he had defeated with French-style republics.

Italian soldiers were recruited into the militias intended to defend these new states, and one of them, the National Guard of the Transpadane Republic of Lombardy, adopted for its regimental colors a banner with three vertical bars of green, white and red.

The Cispadane Republic, composed of several north-central Italian



The first unification dates to 222 B.C. when Caius Marcellus defeated the Celtic occupiers of northern Italy. (see issue XXXV)

regions, selected the same colors, though with horizontal bars, for its flag shortly thereafter, and before long green, white and red colors became synonymous with the progressive principles for which Italians were acquiring an irresistible taste.

The obstacles to reunification included the antagonism of the Catholic Church

After Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo by a military coalition of the old European aristocracies in 1815, the victors met in Vienna to redraw the map of the continent, restoring the borders that had been so dramatically altered in the course of the Napoleonic Wars.

As a result, the red and white Austrian banner was hoisted once again over Lombardy, Veneto, and the Austrian puppet states of Lucca, Toscana, Modena, and Parma. The dynastic ensign of the despotic Bourbon monarchy flew anew over southern Italy and Sicily, while the yellow and white Papal Standard was returned to Rome and the central regions of the country. After its short life as a gallant symbol of liberty, the Italian tricolor was banished from the land.

Yet, one new flag appeared among the old ones in Italy after 1815, when the Piedmont-based Kingdom of Sardegna, ruled by the House of Savoy, Europe's oldest dynasty, raised its redesigned national banner. The new flag was composed of a blue field with a red canton in its upper left corner, which bore the white Savoyard cross. At that time, there could have been nothing further from the minds of the Savoyards than the idea of becoming the champions of Italy's independence and unification. But a condensed version of this very flag was destined in time to incorporate itself with the tricolor as the primary symbol of that heroic cause.

The liberal reforms introduced to Italy by Napoleon, short-lived as they were, had lasted long enough to quicken the long-dormant, national conscience of the Italian people. The restored aristocracies discovered that their subjects were unwilling to turn back the clock to their days of passive submission. The long years of the *Risorgimento* ("revival") were finally at hand. Underground political groups like the *Carbonari* and Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Italy continued to hold the tricolor as a rallying standard for driving the foreign rulers from the country. To openly display the flag was dangerous, since that simple act was likely to bring about one's arrest.

In 1848, practically all of Italy rose up in spontaneous rebellion against the tyrannical Austrian and Bourbon regimes that governed most of the peninsula. That same year, the little Kingdom of Sardegna, now a constitutional monarchy, courageously threw itself behind the independence movement and sent its well-organized but small army to war against the forces of the mighty Austrian Empire. To demonstrate his personal commitment to

(Cont'd. on p. 18)



Depicted above is the moment military leader Giuseppe Garibaldi met King Vittorio Emanuele II and turned over newly redeemed southern Italy and Sicily to him. Reunification was the fulfilment of Garibaldi's lifelong quest to recreate Roman Italy. But he never wanted a monarchy, especially after the king gave his birthplace, Nizza (Nice), to France.

Leon Panetta (continued from p.13)

debt. Will Panetta preside over a greatly reduced traditional military capability? Are America's days of global intervention with fleets and divisions numbered? At the age of 73, Leon Panetta has few political ambitions to pull his punches. As a veteran of count-



One of Panetta's first acts was to promote General Ray Odierno to Army Chief of Staff. Odierno was the architect of the "Surge" that turned the corner in the Iraq War.

less political struggles and bureaucratic labyrinths, he can smell waste and favoritism a mile away. But it's not only American politics he needs to address but some foreign ones, especially Israel.

Our Defense Department is of major interest to Israelis. It is their ultimate back-up plan in case of a Middle East

war. In 1973, Israeli forces were saved by American C-47s landing near the Suez Canal with fresh tanks and ammunition to stave off the Egyptian Army. America's military capabilities to supply Israel and our close presence in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf are of deep concern to Israel. One of the first questions some Israelis and Jewish Americans asked when Leon Panetta was nominated for Defense Secretary was "Is he Jewish?" that is, was Panetta Sephardic or Italic? For those who don't know of his strong Christian tradition it may be a good question. Rabbi Barbara Aiello of Pennsylvania claims that 90% of the people in Calabria have Sephardic roots. The name Leon may also throw people off. In any event, Panetta had rarely shown interest in Israeli or Jewish issues throughout his government career. This troubles some Jews. The Jewish newspaper, *The Forward*, reported on July 22, 2011 that Panetta shared a house in Washington, DC during the 1980s with Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY). In 1991, Schumer invited Panetta and his other roommate Martin Russo (D-IL), along with Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi for a junket to Israel sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League. The trip brought reassurance as Panetta and his fellow Italian Americans became aware



Frank Carlucci (center) was the first Italian American Secretary of Defense under President Reagan.

of Israel's strategic vulnerability.

Still, Panetta appears to be less inclined to compromise America's interests than most government leaders. As CIA director he made another trip to Israel in January, 2010, this time to admonish Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against any unilateral attack on Iranian nuclear installations. And most recently, as the new Secretary of Defense, Panetta flew to Israel in October and told reporters there that Israel risks isolating itself with its current diplomatic policies. "Is it enough to maintain a military edge?" when the Arab world is undergoing significant change, he pointedly asked.

Panetta made it clear to Israeli leaders that military might is not enough in securing the Jewish state.

This sort of straight talk to an ally may be just what the country needs to create a better international climate. If all goes well in Defense, we may be well advised to give Leon Panetta the biggest assignment of all: to solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem. After all, ancient Rome created Palestine. It would be fitting for an Italian American to recreate it.

**It a l IC InSt It ut e
of
a mer ICa
t ransforming the
Immigrant mentality
into a
Classical one
Come swim in the
deep end of the pool!**

Funny, They Don't Look Italian

Funny, They Don't Look Italian (Part II)

by Bill Dal Cerro

In our last issue, we compiled a list of entertainment celebrities whose Italic heritage is hidden from the public—people from comedian **Steve Carell** (born Caroselli) to *The View's* **Joy Behar** (born Josephina Occhiuto). Even Hollywood's latest super-hero, Captain America, is **Chris Evans** (mom's maiden name: Capuano).

Although the focus could easily shift to Americans in other fields—e.g., sports (golfer **Fred Couples**, born Coppola) or journalism (*Denver Post* newspaper founder **Frederick Bonfils**, born Buonfiglio)—we chose entertainment for two reasons: a) celebrities, especially in America, command the public's attention; and b) these particular celebrities' talents and looks shatter the stereotypes which many people continue to have about Italians and Italian Americans.

These particular celebrities' talents and looks shatter the stereotypes which many people continue to have about Italians and Italian Americans

Here are some more examples:

Kelly Ripa—host of TV's *Regis and Kelly*; her father was a labor union leader and bus driver;

Regis Philbin—host of TV's *Regis and Kelly*: Italian on his mother's side (Boscia), although of Arberesh (i.e., Albanian) origin;

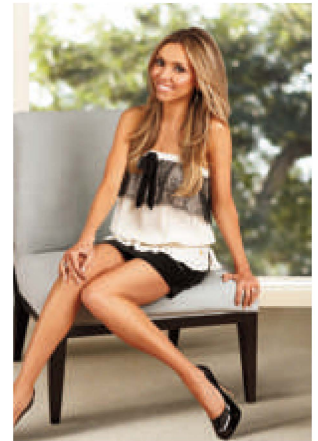
Giuliana Rancic—host of TV's "E!" show and married to *Apprentice* winner Bill Rancic; maiden name: DiPandi; born in Naples, Italy;

Jason Biggs—star of the *American Pie* movies; despite the English surname, Biggs told us that he is "75% Italian";

Thomas Ian Nicholas—Biggs's co-star in the "American Pie" movies; played Tony Danza's son in the 1980s sitcom *Who's The Boss?*; his family tree includes cousin John Scarne (born Scarnecchia), the 1950s magician, author, and White House favorite;

(Cont'd. on p. 20)

GIULIANA RANCIC
host of TV's "E!" show
and married to
Apprentice winner Bill
Rancic; maiden name:
DiPandi; born in
Naples, Italy.



JASON BIGGS
(right) star of the
American Pie
movies; despite
the English sur-
name, Biggs told
us that he is "75%
Italian."

LUIS MIGUEL
is a Mexican
superstar but was
born of a Spanish
father and Italian
mother (Marcella
Basteri, from
Carrara, Italy).



KELLY RIPA
host of TV's *Regis
and Kelly*; her father
was a labor union
leader and bus driver.

Reunification (continued from p.15)



**Altar of the Fatherland in Rome:
Commemorating the reunification under King Vittorio Emanuele II.
Also the tomb of Italy's Unknown Soldier**

the struggle, King Carlo Alberto of Savoy decreed that the tricolor should henceforth be considered the flag of his realm.

The single revision worked into the banner was the inclusion in its center section of the Savoyard insignia, a white cross on a red field bordered in blue; in effect, a condensed representation of the Kingdom of Sardegna's former flag. Until then, the tricolor, as an outlawed symbol of revolution, had usually been kept bundled up in the closets and cellars of insurgents, displayed only at the risk of a charge of sedition by government authorities. But as it now represented a long-established, recognized kingdom, the flag was suddenly given legitimacy by Carlo Alberto's extraordinary decree. When most of Italy was indeed liberated and reunified under the Savoyard monarchy in 1860, then the tricolor was raised as the new nation's official standard.

Political Changes

The economic and political chaos that shook the kingdom in the post-World War I years brought the Fascist Party chief Benito Mussolini to national prominence in a chain of events which culminated with his being appointed Prime Minister by King Vittorio



**The flag of Mussolini's Salò Republic
incorporating Rome's eagle and fasces.**

Napoleon Bonaparte, a son of Italy, introduced reforms that would awaken the dormant Italian soul

Emanuele III in 1922. As a result, massive changes were gradually worked into the Italian political system, though the tricolor was left unaltered. Actually, this is hardly surprising, since nationalism and loyalty to the Crown were two of the pillars upon which Fascist ideology had been structured.

But the military alliance that was eventually formed between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany did eventually succeed in bringing changes to the Italian flag. For a brief period, two tricolors, representing two, opposing factions, were raised over the land. In 1943, with his realm facing devastation at the hands of the invading British and American armies, King Vittorio Emanuele dismissed Mussolini from office and withdrew Italy from the Axis. But the move came far too late and did nothing to spare the country from ruin as Allied troops battled their way up the peninsula against the stubbornly-entrenched Germans.

Meanwhile, Mussolini, bolstered by German arms, had set up a new state called the Italian Social Republic. For its flag, *Il Duce* set the image of a gold eagle perched upon a horizontal fasces (an old Roman emblem and, of course, the symbol of his party) within the white field of the standard national banner. At the same time, that portion of the country remaining under the jurisdiction of the Royal Italian Government, which had since gone over to the Allied side, retained the traditional Savoyard tricolor.

Shortly after the war, a national plebiscite was held to determine the direction under which the devastated Italian nation would rebuild itself, with the retention of the monarchy edged out by a two million vote majority in favor of a republic. With that, the royal emblem of the House of Savoy was removed from the flag, and the tricolor once again assumed the appearance of its original ancestor that had first flown in Bologna in 1795.

Like our own American flag, the Italian tricolor has thus flown for centuries. But while the Stars and Stripes have stood for essentially the same government since the flag was first unfurled, the Italian flag has served as the standard for revolution, a monarchy, a Fascist state and a republic in succession, with each promoting an array of conflicting ideologies. Italy's tricolor has traced a tortuous path in its evolution, reflecting the Italian people as it explored and experimented its way



**Giuseppe Mazzini, the spiritual father of
reunification. From exile in London,
he fomented unrest throughout the
peninsula. He presided over the ill-fated
Roman Republic in 1849.**

Cont'd. on p. 22

A Question of Citizenship

The Remarkable Case of Caius Mancinus

by
John Mancini

Today's controversy concerning America's illegal aliens and the 14th Amendment has passions aroused. There are an estimated 11 million persons illegally living within our borders, sharing benefits enjoyed by legal residents. Some of these folks intentionally sneak in to give birth, automatically imparting citizenship to those newborns, a 14th Amendment right. My own father became a citizen this way, the only son of an Italian cabin boy who was stranded in Brooklyn after an accident at sea. That cabin boy, my grandfather, survived and thrived here, married, had a son, and returned to his homeland permanently with his new family. My father was only two years old when he left these shores. He returned alone some sixteen years later, fully Italian in culture but American by birth. He returned at a time when Italians were low on the immigration quota scale. The 14th Amendment clearly was an advantage to him...and ultimately to me.

For the millions of European Americans who arrived on these shores before the Declaration of Independence, citizenship was hardly meaningful. Everyone automatically became a British subject, and depending on your economic status – free or indentured – you had the right to work as you wished and to acquire property. Luxuries like voting, holding office, and religious freedom were subject to local restrictions. But the enduring pioneering right to pick up and leave solved many of these problems. For women, Native Americans, and blacks, the story was different, even after 1776. Full citizenship for them came in agonizing stages.

It was the plight of African Americans that ultimately caused the American Civil War and led to the 14th Amendment (1868) tying citizenship to birth. What makes citizenship such an important issue, beside the rights it brings, is that it is permanent. The only two ways you can lose your citizenship is to renounce it or to be convicted of treason. Among the first steps Nazi Germany took in its treatment of German Jews was to rescind their German citizenship. Although the 14th Amendment forbids any state from denying citizenship to persons born here or naturalized, some states created societies with second-class citizenship. The "Jim Crow" South degraded the citizenship of African Americans for almost one hundred years after Reconstruction (1877), enforced by laws and lynchings.

The Roman Experiment

The very concept of citizenship and the methods of conveying it were indisputably born on the Italian peninsula before the



Much like the U.S. Senate today, that of ancient Rome suffered from partisan politics. Utilizing procedural rules, later condemned by Senator Marcus Cicero, consul Caius Mancinus was illegally stripped of his citizenship.

birth of Christ. The very word "citizen" is derived, via French, from the Latin *civis* (KEY-weez). Someone with Roman citizenship merely had to say the words *Civis Romanus sum* ("I am a Roman citizen") and his person would be inviolate. These were the words St. Paul uttered to Roman authorities when he was arrested for causing a riot in Jerusalem among the Jews he was proselytizing. He was immediately unchained and put under house arrest until, by his own choice, was sent to Italy on appeal.

We know all of this from the Gospels (Acts 21 - 28).

the very concept of citizenship and how to convey it were developed on the Italian peninsula

What is interesting about the story is that St Paul was born a Jew, named Saul, in Tarsus, a city in Turkey.

Despite not being Italic stock or born in Italy, Paul's family achieved Roman citizenship. It not only allowed him the freedom to roam the empire but it inspired his revelation that Greeks and Romans could be converted to Christianized Judaism without the required circumcision. What a brainstorm that was! Just as he, a Jew, could become a Roman citizen without renouncing Judaism or mutilating a body part, so could anyone become a Christian.

The Romans had broken new ground in the concept of citizenship. Few, if any, other ancient peoples had shared communal rights beyond blood ties. The ancient Athenians shared their rights with no one, not even among their cousins in fragmented Greece or the myriad Hellenic settlements around the Mediterranean. In ancient Israel, anyone who wanted to join the twelve tribes needed to sacrifice the foreskin and embrace monotheism (*Cont'd. on p. 22*)

Don't Look Italian (continued from p.17)

Jon Bon Jovi—born Bongiovi; like his New Jersey homeboy, Bruce Zerilli Springsteen, a major force in modern American rock-and-roll;

Steve Tyler—lead singer of Aerosmith and now a judge on *American Idol*; family name: Tallarico; daughter Liv is an actress;

Weird Al Yankovic—song parodist; mother's maiden name: Vivalda;

Tim McGraw—country and western superstar; mom's maiden name: D'Agostino;

Joey Lawrence—teen heart-throb from the 1980s making a comeback in the sitcom *Melissa and Joey*; surname: Mignogna;

Dylan McDermott—former star of *The Practice* and *Dark Blue*; mother's maiden name: Marino;

Chris Issak—soulful rock-and-roll singer and occasional actor; mother's maiden name: Vignolo;

Cindy Lauper—peppy pop singer whose song *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun* was a 1980s anthem; her mother is Sicilian;

David Boreanaz—former star of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and current star of *Bones*; of Italian origin on his father's side;

Lea Michele—young star of TV's *Glee*; father is Sephardic (Spanish-Jewish), her mother is Italian;

Vin Diesel—star of *Fast and the Furious* movies; of Dutch, Italian, and African American descent;

Consequently, we listed people who have made a career out of "being Italian" but were either only part-Italian (Robert De Niro and *Sopranos* star Steve Schirippa) or not Italian at all (Portia di Rossi).

Another example is actor Jim Belushi, brother of the late comedian John Belushi. Although Jim plays many (often negative) Italian characters in films and TV shows, his family is actually Albanian.

On the flip side, many international performers have made it big emphasizing one part of their ethnicity. For example, the acclaimed singer **Luis Miguel** is a Mexican superstar but was born of a Spanish father and Italian mother (Marcella Basteri, from Carrara, Italy).

More ironies: Miguel made his singing debut as a 15-year-old at Italy's San Remo Fest and is called "the Mexican Frank Sinatra!"

DAVID BOREANAZ
former star of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and current star of *Bones*; of Italian origin on his father's side.



JON BON JOVI
born Bongiovi; like his New Jersey homeboy, Bruce Zerilli Springsteen, a major force in modern American rock-and-roll.

TIM MCGRAW
country and western superstar; mom's maiden name: D'Agostino.



STEVE TYLER
lead singer of Aerosmith and now a judge on *American Idol*; family name: Tallarico; daughter Liv is an actress.



The Taliaferro Family

An American Saga

by

John Mancini & Anthony Vecchione
(research by Peggy Fox & John Mancini)

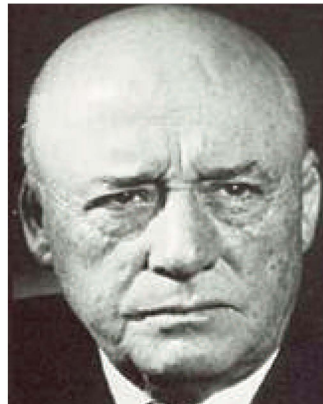
One of the great shortcomings of the Italian American experience is the lack of general knowledge of the role Italians played in America before the 20th Century. We delved into this subject in issue XXX of *The Italic Way* ("Deep Roots In America"), much of the research culled from Giovanni Schiavo's landmark work *Four Centuries of Italian American History* (1952). The fact is, our history in American school books appears to jump from Christopher Columbus to the mass migrations. What occurred in the interim seems irrelevant to even most Italian American academics and a black hole to the masses. That Americans speak English because of Giovanni Caboto's self-financed voyages of 1497 is apparently not a source of bragging rights among Italian Americans. That Mississippi explorer Enrico Tonti and Italo-Frenchman Napoleon Bonaparte were essential to America's acquisition of one-third of our nation isn't even a blip on the Italian American radar. In a word, we have come to believe that we are lucky that America allowed our poor grandparents to stay here.

To get an inkling of what happened before our grandparents arrived at Ellis Island, let's look at one Italian family that was among the original English settlers of the thirteen colonies, the Taliaferros of Virginia.

Virginia: The Italians Arrive

Virginia was the first English colony. The Jamestown settlement of 1607 was partly financed and sustained by Italian-Englishmen, including Sir Julius Caesar [Adelmare] head of England's Royal Treasury, and a contingent of Venetian glass-blowers who made goods for the Indian trade. The early colonists with Italian roots were, for the most part, educated and well-to-do. Many of them were physicians, alchemists, farmers and vintners. These Italian families were an integral part of the landscape of early America and the contributions that they made far exceeded their numbers. Virginia was a second home for Tuscan entrepreneur and political activist Filippo Mazzei, confidant of Thomas Jefferson. The first Taliaferro to arrive was Robert Taliaferro around 1651, where a land grant of 800 acres awaited him in Gloucester County.

The Taliaferro name reached patrician status as many descendants retained it with pride in some form or other. Records show spellings such as Tolliver, Talyfer, Talifer, Tallefare, and even Talford. Perhaps the most intriguing occurrence is black activist Booker T. Washington. Actually born Booker Taliaferro in Virginia, his elementary school teacher thought the surname inappropriate and changed it to Washington. He kept the "T" for old times sake. "Washington" may have had Italian blood or been given the surname as a slave. He does not indicate in his biography (*Up From Slavery*) that the Taliaferros originally owned him. Robert Taliaferro, himself, was possibly only one-quarter Italian.



The Taliaferro name is carried by such diverse Americans as actress Glenn Close, former House Speaker Sam Rayburn, and famed African American educator Booker T. Washington.

His grandfather Bartolomeo had immigrated from Venice to England as a merchant in 1562, marrying an Englishwoman named Joane Lane in 1583. His father, Francis, also married a woman named Bennett Haie or Hay. (Could her name have originally been Benedetta?) Robert was born in 1626.

Three years after arriving in Virginia, Robert married fellow English immigrant Katherine Debnam in 1654.

Go Forth and Multiply

Once planted on American soil, the Taliaferro name became an integral part of American history. It is quite amazing how such a unique Italian name managed to wend its way among the predominant English and Scottish surnames that created the United States of America. The Taliaferro name passed from Virginia into other colonies and their successor states. Taliaferros were slaveholders, judges, doctors, clergy, soldiers, politicians.

***Taliaferros were slaveholders,
judges, doctors, clergy, soldiers,
and politicians.***

A great grandson of Robert was Benjamin Taliaferro, born in Virginia in 1750. Benjamin served in the Revolutionary War as a lieutenant in a Continental rifle company. He (*Cont'd. on p. 24*)

Reunification (continued from p.18)

down the diverse paths of political identity.

But it's important to note that while political structures came and went, the colors remained unaltered. The green, white, and red banner was claimed with equal jealousy by Mazzini's passionate republicans, by monarchists and anti-monarchists, by Fascists and their Communist arch-enemies. Never, through it all, did the colors change. The reason for this is obvious. Since the colors indeed represent the spirit and culture of the Italians, the political faction that could legitimately lay claim to the flag could legitimately lay claim to the very soul of the country. ****

Citizenship (continued from p.19)

as the first steps. Few aspired to the honor.

As in the United States, it took a civil war for the city of Rome to open its citizenship to all the free inhabitants of the peninsula. (See issue XXVIII for the story of the Social War.) The requirements for citizenship were loosened still further over the centuries until all free males of the empire were given equal rights. Along the way, the Romans had experimented with levels of citizenship (Latin rights, Italic rights, etc.) each with various social and political privileges. To promote recruitment in the Roman Army, a process was put into place for non-citizen soldiers to earn citizenship upon discharge. Even slaves commonly earned freedom and citizenship, an amazing testament to the humanism of Roman law. It was this process that our Founding Fathers were familiar with and made its way into the 14th Amendment. (Never forget the shameful "three-fifths compromise" in the much-revered American Constitution that counted a slave little more than half of a white person.)

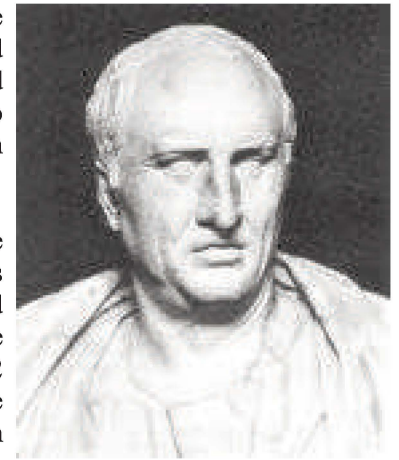
The Mancinus Case

Notwithstanding its liberal citizenship process, Rome, like modern nations today, had a class system and political intrigue. One example of mixing politics with citizenship is the remarkable story of Caius Hostilius Mancinus, a Roman consul in the year 137 B.C. According to Cicero (*On the Orator*), Mancinus "was a fine man of the highest rank, a former consul, who had become unpopular at Rome because of the treaty he had made with Numantia (part of Spain)."

As the story goes, as one of two consuls (co-presidents of the Roman Republic) elected for the year 137 B.C., Mancinus was sent to Spain to subdue the Celtiberian city of Numantia. The Romans had recently embarked on what would be over a century to fully conquer Spain. The Numantines were fierce opponents who defied Italianization. When Mancinus arrived at Numantia he found his assigned legions there were in a pitiful state, both in training and discipline. Rather than attack, Mancinus negotiated a humiliating treaty with the city. When word got back to the Roman Senate, a clique of his enemies managed to have Mancinus relieved of command and offered up to

the Spanish enemy. The Numantines still considered Mancinus an authorized negotiator and refused to play along with the Roman Senate.

One can only imagine the state of mind Mancinus was in. His family had served Italy nobly during the Hannibal invasion (216-202 B.C.) and he had taken the "career of honors" in Roman government, rising to the rank of consul. Now he was treated like an illegal alien. Cicero tells us that Caius Mancinus returned to Rome and marched right into the Senate chamber to confront his political enemies. He was ordered out on a technicality. Nevertheless, Mancinus continued his fight to restore his honor and citizenship. His rights were eventually restored and his case became a landmark in Roman jurisprudence.



Jurist and senator Marcus Tullius Cicero (above) cited Mancinus as the classic case of the illegality of revoking Roman citizenship. Cicero wrote some one hundred years after the event.

Numantia was eventually conquered by Scipio Aemilianus in 133 B.C., the general who had destroyed Carthage in the 3rd Punic War (146 B.C.) It took 15 months and 60,000 legionaries to subdue Numantia by starvation. There were rebellious outbreaks in parts of Spain until the reign of Emperor Augustus 13 B.C. By then, Romanization was well established with the settlement of Italian veterans and the spread of Latin.



General Scipio Aemilianus, Mancinus' replacement, finally subdued Numantia. Previously, he had destroyed Carthage.

not his first name. Mancinus means "left-handed" and has been a common family name in Italy for millennia. All forms of Mancinus (Mancino, Mancini, Mangini, Mancinelli, etc) are listed as #17 in the top 20 surnames of Italians (See issue XXXII). My own family name was Mancino and we originated in Gaeta, Lazio not far from Rome. Another interesting coincidence is that General Pietro Mancini, who led the Italian Corps of Volunteers during the Spanish Civil War, was defeated at Guadalajara in 1937 A. D. Only the number 9 differentiates this from the year of Mancinus' ancient defeat in 137 B.C. - JM]

Prof. Richard Gambino

An Interview with Professor Richard Gambino

[eDIt or : few rank & file members of the Italian community have ever heard of Professor Richard Gambino. nor would they know Giovanni Schiavo, John la Corte or the handful of individuals who spent their lives preserving our heritage here in America, often at their own cost. Prof. Gambino, like Schiavo and la Corte, traces his roots to Sicily, yet each of them saw only one people: Italian Americans. each was inspired by the greatness of our people but tormented by the apathy and ignorance of their brethren in America. Schiavo's great deed was his *Four Centuries of Italian American History* (1952). la Corte restored the names Verrazzano (explorer), Meucci (first telephone) and Charles Bonaparte (founder of the FBI) to American history, no small feat. For Richard Gambino the quest was to understand the psyche of Italians in America and to document the ultimate clash of cultures. His books, *Blood of My Blood* (1971) and *Vendetta* (1977), are must-reads for anyone who wants a truer understanding of our battered people. *Vendetta* was made into an HBO movie and is available through our on-line catalog (www.italic.org). a fuller biography of Professor Gambino can be found at the end of this interview. -Jm]

It has been 40 years since you wrote *Blood of My Blood*. Has the Italian American attitude toward its complex 3,000 year old legacy progressed beyond the *Mezzogiorno mentality you so well documented? *(“Mid-day”- denotes southern Italy and Sicily.)**

It has changed but the “family-is-central” core remains strong. The relations with the world beyond the family have, of course, grown immensely. The historic mistrust of the “outside world” was a valid

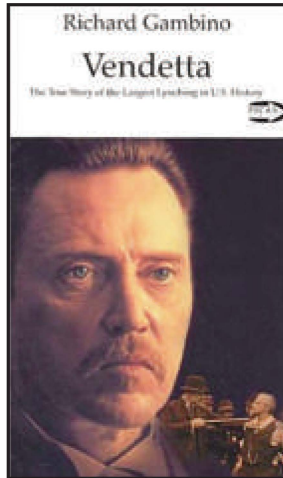


Prof. Gambino, left, with interviewer John Mancini, enjoying a summer repast on Long Island's East End

survival adaptation in the *Mezzogiorno*. There, the local, regional and, finally, national governments were hostile, exploitive, ignorant of the people of the *Mezzogiorno* and/or bigoted against them. The hierarchy of the Church there was aligned with the oppressive land-owning class, and with some of the governments. With the reunification of Italy from 1861-1870, the new national government adopted trade policies to advance the industrialization of the north at the expense

of the south, and the Church and the new government fought each other tooth-and-nail but did nothing to help the people of the *Mezzogiorno*.

The idea that the old *Mezzogiorno* mentality was an ethic of “amoral familism” — a view that only respects moral matters regarding the family, and respects none beyond the family — is a great distortion, and I've argued against it in my writings over many years.



The HBO movie version starred Christopher Walken. HBO has refused our requests for encore presentations every March 14th, the anniversary of the infamous lynching (DVDs are sold on our website)

However, among American scholars, and others, the amoral familism theory is still popular — and is still used by some to reinforce two slanderous slurs, one, that Italian American culture is criminal, and, two, that Italian Americans are low-life social misfits. These two slurs have been immensely popular since the events of 1890-91, described and detailed in my book, *Vendetta*. That is, the two slurs were trumpeted for years all over America and Europe to justify the lynching of eleven Italian Americans in 1891. The two defamations, which have grown with each generation since then, and now are celebrated worldwide, are a conspicuous exception to the

severe political correctness that prevails regarding other groups. For this reason, I've termed the great difference between the realities of Italian Americans and how they are “understood” by the rest of the world as constituting a great existential absurdity. It is also one that is very damaging to the minds of Italian American youngsters and young adults.

Most Italian Americans still have little educated knowledge of their history or social psychology. Nevertheless, today's evolved version of the traditional mentality is, in my opinion, a healthy and moral life-habit.

Can you give us some insights into how you were able to get your book, *Vendetta*, published and then made into an HBO movie?

Back in 1973, a great editor at Doubleday contacted me after he read a long newspaper article I'd written about Italian Americans, and asked me if I wanted to write a book. I told him I was already writing one, called, *Blood Of My Blood*. His name is Walter Bradbury. I'm very grateful to him, and am sad to say he retired a long time ago. In 1976, or so, I sent the manuscript of *Vendetta* to him, and as with *Blood*, he was enthusiastic about publishing it. Nick Pileggi, a long-time friend of mine, convinced HBO to make a feature film from it, and I am very grateful to him also. (Cont'd. on p. 27)

was promoted to captain and later captured by the British in Charleston in 1780. After the war, he settled in Georgia and was a member of the Georgia Senate and served as its president. He was a delegate to the Georgia State Constitutional Convention in 1798 and as a Federalist to the 6th U.S. Congress and then reelected to the 7th Congress. In addition, he was a judge of the Georgia

James Monroe Taliaferro's godfather was not fictitious Don Corleone but the very real President James Monroe. He was a classmate of Robert E. Lee at West Point and served Virginia as a senator.



The Wythe House in Williamsburg

The Civil War

The Civil War brought new challenges to the Taliaferros.

William B. Taliaferro was a Confederate major general. There was even a Taliaferro's Brigade in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter got his picture on Confederate currency as the South's Secretary of State. He also initiated the move of Virginia's capital from Williamsburg to Richmond. Before the war, in 1839, Hunter was Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. (Note to former Speaker Nancy Pelosi: You were the first female but not the first Italian American Speaker.)

But there remained some Italic rationale in the family even during the hate-filled years of the Civil War. Among the documents you can find in the Rare Book Division in the Library of Congress is James G. Taliaferro's "Protest Against the Ordinance of Secession." In 1861, while the South was enraged by President Lincoln's election and secession was in the air, James Taliaferro of Louisiana offered his state convention a resolution to defeat the motion of secession in favor of negotiations. His resolution was defeated and Louisiana joined the rebellion. This Taliaferro's story is featured prominently in the book *Scalawags: Southern Dissenters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* by James Alex Baggett. His branch of the family had migrated from Virginia to Louisiana via Kentucky some 40 years before his stand against secession. A planter and attorney, James G. Taliaferro owned a lumberyard and gin mill at the time of secession. He apparently was a slaveholder but loved the Union passionately. He founded a newspaper, *The Harrison Independent*, which carried a quote

from Roman senator Marcus Cicero on its masthead: "I defended the republic in my youth; I shall not stop as an old man." His unionist views led to the burning down of his lumberyard and his imprisonment. With the Union victory, he became a judge during Reconstruction and was actually nominated for the office of governor by

black Radical Republicans. He was defeated but he stood for a new America, well ahead of his time.

Branching Out

Generations of Taliaferros appear in American records across the nation. A Dr. Alfred Taliaferro served in the California Legislature from 1852 to 1858. Tennessee and Texas produced Samuel Taliaferro Rayburn [Sam Rayburn] a quite famous Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives who (Cont'd. on p. 30)

The Confederacy's first Secretary of State (1861-1862) Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter. He appeared on the \$10 note.

Superior Court and a trustee for the University of Georgia until his death in 1821.



In 1768, John Taliaferro was born near Fredricksburg, VA. A lawyer, he was elected to four terms in the United States House of Representatives beginning in 1800. He also served on the Electoral College and worked as a librarian at the United States Treasury Department from 1850 to 1852. His sister Lucie married multi-millionaire Thornton Alexander, after whom Alexandria, Virginia, is named. An older nephew, John Wishart Taliaferro, was a "surgeon" on the John Paul Jones's ship *Bon Homme Richard* during the Revolution.

Robert Taliaferro Hunter was the first Italian American Speaker of the House. (1839-1841)

Another Virginia descendant, Richard Taliaferro, was a colonial architect and builder. Included among his works are the Wythe House in Williamsburg (declared a U.S. National Historic Landmark in 1970) and the President's House at the College of William & Mary.

General Lawrence Taliaferro, born in Orange County, Virginia, in 1785, entered the War of 1812 as captain of the 2nd Regiment of the Virginia Artillery. Lawrence also served as a member of the Virginia Assembly and as a member of the Virginia State Senate from 1819 to 1832.

The Italo-Turkish War

One-Hundredth Anniversary

1911 - 2011

by
Don Fiore

Libya was much in the news lately, engulfed in civil war. For Italy, a NATO member involved in supporting the rebel factions, Libya is a major investment as well as a headache. Although Italians held Libya as a colony from 1912 to 1943 it never made them rich. The huge oil reserves that make the mostly desert nation viable were exploited after the colony was lost. Yet Italy now has the biggest stake in the private oil business there. It hasn't come cheaply. Italians were shaken down by the late Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi to the tune of \$5 billion in reparations for the relatively brief colonial years. How Italy acquired Libya and how it led to world-changing events are important to understand.

Quest for Colonies

By 1911, the Kingdom of Italy had spent three of the five decades from its creation in 1861 in search of overseas territories to absorb its surplus population, augment its meager supply of natural resources and raw materials, and to claim for itself the status of a Great Power.

Italian Somaliland and Eritrea, Italy's existing East African colonies, had been acquired in the late 19th century, but being largely sterile, arid lands, failed to provide an appreciable return on the expenses of their occupation. Italy had been casting its eyes on the North African coast for decades. But it was Tunisia, already home to a large Italian commercial colony, that was widely expected to become the Kingdom's first lucrative territory. That expectation vanished with the sudden annexation of Tunisia by France in 1881. The move so infuriated the Italians that it was the chief reason for their joining the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, France's bitterest rivals on the continent. It



Italian troops thought the Arabs would welcome liberation from Turkish rule. They did not count on the religious ties.

was then that Italy shifted its expansionist efforts to the Libyan coast, known as Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, under Ottoman (Turkish) rule. (Italy's involvement in Libya dated back to Italic settlements during the Roman Empire. In 1803, Italian seamen helped guide U.S. Marines to the "shores of Tripoli" during the Barbary pirate war.)

The Turks were by no means oblivious to Italy's designs and prepared for the worst. Though the Bedouins who



inhabited the lands bore little love for their Turkish overlords, neither were they willing to trade the Moslems like themselves for Christian rulers; even less so after Turkish propaganda assured them that the Italians intended to colonize the provinces by exterminating the Arab population. Ottoman officials accompanied these warnings

with calculated reforms in their governing policies, thereby securing an alliance with tribal leaders as the likelihood of Italian military action increased.

As in our own Spanish American War, grass-roots war fever propelled Italy to war. On stage at the Teatro Balbo in Torino in 1911, when popular singer Gea della Garisenda, clad in a tightly wrapped cloak approached the dimmed footlights during one performance, singing a newly penned homage to "Italian" Tripoli [see the lyrics at the end of this article], the orchestra then struck up the vigorous, opening measures of *Marcia Reale* ("Royal March," the national anthem). The stage lights fully brightened, Garisenda flung open her cloak to reveal herself garbed in the Italian flag, raised her arms exultantly, and cheers rang out. The act brought the frenzied audience to its feet. The nation wanted Libya. A formal declaration of war came later in the month.

The Royal Italian Navy opened the campaign with landings and the capture of Tripoli, Tobruk and Derna. The Royal Italian Army under General Carlo Caneva drove Turkish troops into the Sahara Desert. The first major battle took place when the 11th Bersaglieri Regiment, which garrisoned the oasis of Sciara Sciat outside of Tripoli under the command of Col. Gustavo Fara, was attacked by Turkish forces from the south. In the course of fierce action, the Italians were almost overrun by a sudden, surprise assault by hordes of Arab horsemen from the opposite direction. The fighting went on for over 24 hours, and though surrounded and outnumbered, the Bersaglieri emerged barely victorious.

(Cont'd. on p. 26)

Air Power First Used

The battle of Sciara Sciat presented the Italians with the grim revelation that they were not simply facing the Turks, but Arab tribesmen as well, from whom they had anticipated little, if any, hostile involvement. Their unexpected and almost overwhelming appearance confirmed the need for more accurate information on enemy positions and numbers.

To those ends, the Italians promptly deployed a fleet of aircraft that had been shipped unassembled to Tripoli in crates marked



“Top Secret” a few weeks earlier. Under the direction of Captain Carlo Piazza, a rudimentary airfield was built and for the first time in their short history, airplanes became tools of war. Utilized immediately for reconnaissance, they proved brilliantly effective. Consequently, there were no surprises regarding enemy strength and movements at the next battle at Ain Zhara, affording the Italians another major victory.

Inspired by the airplane's enormous potential, Piazza's squadron broadened its role over succeeding days. Signals were worked out with Italian gun crews so the aviators, observing the enemy from above, could communicate to the artillery exactly where to aim its guns. But perhaps the most dramatic innovation came on Nov. 1st, when 2nd Lt. Giulio Gavotti brought along a box of hand grenades during an otherwise routine reconnaissance flight and began lobbing them on an enemy encampment below. While undoubtedly among the lightest bombing raids in history, it was also aviation's first. In fact, before the war's end, the Italians would set precedents for every modern military aeronautical application except troop transport and air-to-air combat. (Italians would later pioneer troop and supply transport by air in Abyssinia in 1935-36.)

Though a remarkable example of Italian ingenuity, the pioneering deployment of airplanes was not enough to decisively tip the balance toward a favorable outcome. This was especially true in Cyrenaica (eastern Libya), where Senussi warriors, well-armed by the Turks and virulently anti-Western, engaged the Italians with all the fury of a *jihād*. As in Tripolitania to the west, Italy's forces managed a landing at Benghazi, but facing much fiercer resistance, were able to cling to their coastal footholds only with great difficulty.

The arrival of the new year 1912 saw growing impatience for a swift, final and complete victory, but since the vastness of the ter-

rain and very nature of desert warfare made that improbable, the Italians decided to prod the Turks toward a settlement by extending operations beyond North Africa. To that end, the Royal Italian Navy dispatched a flotilla of destroyers and cruisers to the eastern Mediterranean, which engaged and virtually annihilated the Turkish fleet off the coast of Lebanon. Thus unopposed, Italian warships steamed to the Dardanelles (site of Turkey's capital, Constantinople) and proceeded to bombard the Turkish mainland while Rhodes and neighboring islands off the Turkish coast were taken by landing forces.

The predictable objections of every major European power over

The Italian Navy bombarded homeland Turkey to achieve victory in Libya

Italian military action in the Middle East and the Aegean Sea were disregarded by Rome. Casting off its junior power status, Italy now believed it had earned the right to take whatever course it deemed suitable to advance or protect its interests without prior approval from any other nation. (Note: this all occurred well before Benito Mussolini and Fascism came on the world scene.)

Mechanized Warfare Introduced

Back in Africa, the Italians continued to apply new technologies in wartime mechanization by equipping their forces with armored cars. Built by automaker Isotta Fraschini, these steel-clad vehicles incorporated two guns, including one mounted on its revolving turret, and may be considered a direct ancestor of the tanks that would become a ubiquitous component of modern warfare a few years later. Thus reinforced, Italian troops launched a final offensive from all of their coastal footholds in July, 1912, and slowly but inexorably pushed the Turks deeper into the desert hinterlands.



Air power was first introduced to warfare by the Italian Royal Army in 1911.

Already pressured by the succession of Italian victories on the field and a resumption of punishing bombardments by the Royal Italian Navy in the eastern Mediterranean, the Turks were finally prodded toward negotiations by the eruption of the First Balkan War in early October. The occupied peoples of the Balkans seized the opportunity that the war in Libya had presented. Suddenly forced to shift all attention and resources to the defense of their Balkan territories, the Ottomans readily accepted Italy's invitation to discuss a settlement.

The Turks formally ceded all of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica to the Kingdom of Italy. For their part, the Italians agreed to relinquish control of all of the Aegean islands seized by their navy, but only after a period of continued (Cont'd on p. 30)

But I'm unhappy to say that over many years, a frequent response from commercial publishers is "Italian Americans don't read books," and so they are not interested. And feature film producers and directors say that only films about "The Mafia" get audiences. If anyone thinks this is no longer so, try making contact with these people yourself.

Does the oft-told statement presumably uttered by a president of Yale University that "If Italian Americans aren't inferior they do a good imitation of it," still have validity?

It never had any truth to it, or any other authentic validity. But when it comes to anti-Italian American bigotry, here's a likely story with which I began a keynote presentation I gave to a conference of psychological counselors at the City University of New York in October 2010, a dialogue between a person and God. Person: "Lord, will there ever be an end to war?" God: "Yes, but not in your lifetime." Person: "My God, will there ever be an end to famine?" God: "Yes, but not in your lifetime." Person: "Well, my Lord, will there ever be an end to the routine defamation of Italian Americans?" God: "Yes, but not in my lifetime."

This routine defamation is damaging to Italian American personality formation in young people, damage that often lasts for life. Such damage to the children and young adults of other slandered groups is meticulously cited by the larger society, and deplored with great outrage. With regard to Italian Americans, it is ignored or brushed aside.

Would you describe Italian American culture as still a reflection of the Immigrant Age or a media version?

It is an evolution of the old culture in the stream of the broader American culture. But, as I've said, the two media slanders have polluted it for more than a century, and threaten to damn it to a forever confused and absurd existential condition. It's like a child being forced to wear a Halloween costume, and then condemned to being understood in terms of that costume for the rest of his or her life. Outrageous in itself, and very confusing in damaging ways to young people.

Is the preservation of Little Italys an important need for our community?

They are now tourist attractions, and beneficial mainly to the restaurant owners in them. Today, they bear little relationship to those generations long ago when they were vibrant centers of Italian American populations. Yes, old photos hanging on restaurant walls, and such, have some nostalgic value to some who are now elderly, including me. But the Italian American population is no longer there, and can no longer be defined by a location in the U.S., any more than African Americans can be defined by cotton fields. The history of Italian Americans of past generations can only be understood, as any history is, in reading good books.

Frankly, in my opinion Italian Americans still rely too much on nostalgia and not enough on scholarly-sound reading. It's

an indulgence and neglect that poorly serves a people whose genuine heritage is being turned into something like what was grotesquely seen in fun house mirrors in old circuses. For example, as an analogy, I visited the battle site of Gettysburg when I was 18 years old. But my knowledge of the Civil War, its causes, issues and great aftermath, and not just the geography of one battle, has been gained in a lot of reading since then.

What memories of your childhood in Brooklyn molded your devotion to heritage? Was organized crime as much of an obsession to you as it was to Coppola, Scorsese and Chase?

I've described many of my experiences growing up as an Italian American in Brooklyn in *Blood of My Blood*, and in a humorous way in *Red Hook*, and in many articles. I've never been obsessed with organized crime. For good reason: its reality is a marginal part of the actual Italian American experience, and not much different than it has been in other sizable ethnic groups, despite the never-ending tsunami of sensational popular nonsense about it.

Do you believe that our community is providing sufficient acculturation of its youth?

If by "acculturation" you mean genuine education based on scholarship and reasoned analysis — as distinct from folk tales and family stories — about Italian American history and other Italian American realities, my answer is no. The advice "know yourself" is wise for all people. For Italian Americans, the ceaseless din of over one hundred years of an ever-increasing crescendo of defamation makes it critical.

The Italic Institute estimates that only 6% of the \$6 million spent by the major Italian American organizations goes to heritage-related

projects. The remaining money is donated to scholarships and charities or banked. Does this bother you?

Although I salute the organizations for giving to charities, and especially to scholarships, I also urge them to do a lot more regarding the education of young Italian Americans — and not so young ones — regarding both their Italian heritage and their understanding of their Italian American history and its issues.

For decades, I taught at Queens College a one-year course on Western Civilization — on the history, and the history of ideas, of our civilization. I especially loved teaching about the Renaissance. It was born in Italy's *Rinascimento* and reached glorious fruition there, and spread to France, England and other parts of Europe. All Americans would do well to know Michelangelo and Leonardo, Pico della Mirandola and Galileo. The *Rinascimento* is nothing less than a major part of the defining DNA of our civilization. As a matter of fact, for example, I would say Pico's definitive *Rinascimento* view of human nature — in his *Oration On The Dignity Of Man* — laid the ground for our modern humanistic view.

But Italian Americans have an urgent and necessary need to understand the story — in scholarly accounts — of their 500-year history on this continent because the dominant cul-

(Cont'd. on p. 28)

**“...the Italian American story...
is in danger of being turned
into a vile, damaging, bizarre,
negative illusion.”**

ture's view has it that the *Rinascimento* culture is not Italian Americans' defining culture, but rather it is one of thuggish, murderous Mafia crime and "Guido" (formerly, *cafone*) and "Goombah" stupidity. Our organizations should expand their educational mission beyond scholarships to counter this.

Have Italian American academics had any positive effect on media stereotyping or reaching the masses?

Yes, but that influence has been overwhelmed by the two perennial slurs against Italian Americans and their culture — the slur that their culture and they are criminal, and uniquely so, and the slur that their culture is one of "low life" and they are "low lifes." The critically important thing to note is that although the slurs against most other groups have faded and are still fading, the two slurs against Italian Americans grow with each generation, and have done so since they both became standard American fare in 1890-1891, in the events presented and detailed in my book, *Vendetta*. There are new major incarnations of them every generation or so. The two greatest of countless examples of current ones, *The Sopranos* and *Jersey Shore*, stand on the shoulders of *The Godfather* novel — which is not a history, although one might think so from the authority people give to it — and the movies from it, and "The Fonz.*" I can trace such continuity and growth back to 1890. *(Italic character in TV's *Happy Days* series)

And, critically important, while slurs against other groups are now condemned by righteous political correctness, slurs against Italian Americans are evermore celebrated and richly rewarded, because they serve a "positive" psychological function for many millions of people, worldwide, and make many millions of dollars for those who traffic in them — as I explain in detail in a recent paper.

Recently, an Italian American institute at a major university held a symposium on Guidoism as a sub-culture. Would you characterize the "Guido" or "Goombah" as a sub-culture?

The question is how much does this "subculture" reflect reality and how much of it is a virtual reality created over generations by the media, which over time helped both exaggerate and further create this alleged subculture?

Consider that *Jersey Shore* is the most watched T.V. program among Americans who are between 12 and 34 years old. Not to mention countless other such presentations of Italian American "low life" culture in the past, including many long before the term "Guido" became common currency in American speech, thanks to the media, reflecting and expanding popular bigotries. Also consider that in the spring of 2011, Rutgers State University paid one of the media-selected, not to say media-encouraged and media-shaped, self-identified "Guidettes" from *Jersey Shore* a sum of \$32,000 for a single speech she gave at Rutgers — which, of course, is a public university supported by tax money. I'd say the university, the media and all other institutions and individuals who create and support — including the unwitting support of New Jersey's taxpayers — that appalling T.V. show are by such participation in it key parts of the so-called "Guido subculture." And so are any and all who watch the program because it is a

"freak show," because freak shows have always been watched because they allow individuals in the audience to feel oh-so-good about being better or "more normal" than the freaks. Bigotry well-serves the bigot psychologically, so it is valuable to him.

I give you an old insight via the ancient Stoic, Marcus Aurelius, who was also a Roman emperor: "The mind is dyed by the colors of its thoughts." And cultures, both real and virtual, are paintings of those colors, constituted of the minds of both active and passive participants. Mass psychology is not always simple, but it is sometimes very powerful.

What parts of our heritage are worth saving and what can be discarded?

The most undesirable parts to be discarded have already been so. For example, the indifference about formal education on the part of so many Italian immigrants of the late 19th and early 20th centuries — a survival adaptation of people in a preindustrial Italy with pre-birth control large families, and so the necessity of assigning children and teenagers to work — is gone. Unfortunately, some, like the indifference to the greater world's opinions, is still among many of us, for example, seen in the many Italian Americans who say about the turning of our story into one of criminal thugs and low-lives, "So what? It doesn't matter."

And the related illusion that we can overcome this by publicly honoring individual Italian Americans, especially celebrities. Even, in some cases, Italian American organizations give public honors to show-biz people, and others, who've made money or become famous by trafficking in the two base slanders of our history, culture and community. Mass psychology, which can be highly irrational, doesn't work that way — we can't overcome the slurs we face by honoring individuals. The universal bigotry just dismisses the honored people of achievement as "exceptions who broke loose from their culture" — and the honoring of those who've trafficked in the slurs is thought to "just show that the views of the group are authentic, so even they honor them."

Has Roman Catholicism been a positive influence on our intellectual outlook in America?

The Church makes a distinction between the spiritual Church and the men who run the church, who are as mortal and prone to error and sin as all other humans. What I have to say is with regard to the mortal men, priests and hierarchy, past and present. In the *Mezzogiorno*, ordinary people had good and bad relationships with individual parish priests, as was true everywhere in Catholic lands. But the Church hierarchy was on the side of the landowning class, which was, as I've said, not exactly beneficent to ordinary folk. There developed a reality — which some may consider as paradoxical — that, one, the people of the *Mezzogiorno* were very religious, and very distinctly so. Their religion was not of an abstract doctrinal kind, but an intense experiential reality — belief married to visceral reality. In fact, I seldom see that kind of religious experience among any Catholics today. The poignancy and joy of the old religious street *feste* was an example. Today, we run religion through finely textured rational and self-conscious filters. "More sophisticated, less peasant-like."

But it's a trade-off, with the downside being a more anemic religious experience. But, two, those in the *Mezzogiorno*

were also wary of the clergy, and many even anti-clerical. Italian immigrants came into an American Church built and controlled heavily by Irish Americans. In Ireland, as in Poland, the centuries-long history was of a struggle against a foreign, non-Catholic oppressive power, Protestant England ruled Ireland, and Russian Orthodox czars ruled Poland, so the ordinary people in both those lands formed political-religious alliances with their clergy. But not so in southern Italy. Irish-American Catholics saw Italian immigrants as imperfect, and even bad, Catholics, scandalously so. They were Catholics to be corrected and improved.

They were considered “pagan Catholics,” an attitude still exhibited by the Irish nuns who conducted my childhood Catholic education in the Brooklyn of the late 1940s and early 1950s. An effort was made by those dominant in the Church to “Hibernize” Italian American Catholics over generations — in ways far more significant than having girls in parochial schools wear Gaelic-design dresses, boys, Gaelic ties, and celebrating St. Patrick as a preeminently special saint, and learning Irish dances, (Notre Dame still calls its athletes, the “Fighting Irish.”) Beyond these cultural trappings the central effort was to make Catholicism for Italian Americans much more a doctrinaire and priest-oriented religion in the Irish manner.

But the last several years have brought a stunning shock, which has created a great crisis. I mean, of course, the scandal of pedophile priests, and of the hierarchy who for decades covered up their crimes, and even sent offending priests elsewhere where they had access to more children they sexually violated. So today, Italian American Catholics, in my experience, privately seething with anger and shame, have become like their immigrant and second generation ancestors, priest-wary and hierarchy-wary, and now are joined in this by countless other American Catholics.

Is intermarriage the asteroid in our future? Is our heritage doomed to extinction? Will we be just America’s “cooks and crooks” to future generations?

Intermarriage is not the problem. People in the U.S. frequently say things like, “I’m part Irish, part Ukrainian, part Norwegian.” More significantly, one can see evidence of their backgrounds in how they live and value things. The Italian equivalents of people actually living their multiple heritages are readily seen in the U.S.

But as I’ve said, our story and our culture are in severe danger of being turned into a virtual reality of criminals and low-lives. An analogy would be the defamatory virtual reality — not to say slander — of African Americans created over generations in the past, at one time generally taken as genuine reality by most people. Whereas there is now a great effort, aided by a zealous political correctness, to tell the authentic story of African American history and culture, the situation regarding Italian Americans is going in the opposite direction expanding and accentuating the two caricatures of us. And political correctness is indifferent to this, or, in some cases, actually is part of it. So, the Italian American story, in all its dimensions, is in danger not of extinction, but is in danger of being turned into a vile, damaging, bizarre, negative illusion. So much has this illusion captured minds around the world, that even to question it provokes charges of being a “denier” of an obvious truth, as pathetic as one who still insists the

world is flat.

A trivial example: I was at an Italian restaurant with a group of people. “You know,” one of them said, *sotto voce* to the rest of us, “this place is owned by the Mafia.” I smiled and asked, “How do you know that?” The reply was, “Everyone knows that.” Except me. I knew the owner of the restaurant, and he is no more a criminal of any kind than was St. Francis of Assisi.

Are you considering writing another book on the Italian American experience?

I’m considering it but won’t do so unless a major publisher expresses a serious interest in it. I have a great deal of historical, sociological and other scholarly material. And I’ve thought about it for decades, and honed my thoughts in countless classes, public speeches and scholarly presentations. I write a great deal today on various topics from local to national interest. But at my age (72), I won’t invest the time needed to write a book with little chance of

Dr. r ICHar D GamBino - Biography

Richard Gambino holds a PhD in Philosophy from NYU, and is Professor Emeritus at Queens College (CUNY), where in 1973 he founded the nation’s first college-level Program of Italian American Studies, which is now the CUNY Italian American Institute. His book, *Blood of My Blood: The Dilemma of Italian Americans* was published in 1974. In 1974, he and the late SUNY Professor Ernest Falbo founded the semi-annual journal, *Italian Americana*, which is now published at the University of Rhode Island. By appointment of President Gerald Ford, he served on the United States Bicentennial Commission in 1975-76. His book, *Vendetta: A History of The largest Lynching in U.S. History: Of Eleven Italian Americans in New Orleans in 1891* was published in 1977, and was made into a fictionalized feature film by HBO in 1999, starring Christopher Walken, Ed Herrmann and Bruce Davison. His historical novel about three generations of an Italian American family, *Bread and Roses*, was published in 1981. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he hosted ten programs about Italian Americans at NBC TV, broadcast throughout the U.S. He served, by appointment of Governor Mario Cuomo, as a member of the New York Council For The Humanities from 1984 to 1992. In the mid-1990s, he was for seven semesters the first full-time Visiting Professor of Italian American Studies at SUNY/Stony Brook, starting Italian American studies there. He authored a play, *The Trial of Pius XII*, which was performed twice in the Hamptons, NY, in 2001. In 2005 his short, humorous book, *Red Hook*, about growing up in a Brooklyn Italian American neighborhood, was published. He is the author of tens of dozens of articles in the academic and popular presses. In 2009, the New York State Press Association gave him a First Place Award for monthly articles he has been writing in the *Sag Harbor Express* for seven years. In October 2010 he gave a keynote address at a three-day conference at the CUNY Italian American Institute on “Italian American Mental Health and Wellness,” to be published in the conference proceedings. In the Summer of 2011, *Italian Americana* published a 4,000-word digest he compiled from one of his uncle’s *World War II ‘Italian’ Diary Of An Italian American GI*.

occupation to ensure Turkish compliance with the peace settlement. In actuality, however, Italy would retain possession of those islands, collectively called the Dodecanese, for the next three decades.

How The World Was Changed

Modern historians have frequently dismissed the Italo-Turkish War as a minor, even irrelevant, conflict between two second-tier nations. This perspective unfairly ignores the innovative technologies introduced by the Italians in their military operations, including airplanes, dirigibles and armored cars, each of which immeasurably changed the way all future wars would be fought. Further, by providing the Balkan states with the impetus to rise against the Turks, the Italian actions in North Africa directly contributed to the destabilization of southeast Europe. Within two years, in 1914, this would trigger the First World War.

The airplane proved to be the most versatile of all of these innovations, attracting wide international interest as the Italians continued to devise new uses for airplanes as the war progressed. Along with reconnaissance, artillery spotting, propaganda distribution, and assault, a particularly ingenious application occurred in January, 1912, when Capt. Piazza equipped his aircraft with a camera and was consequently able to present the Italian Command with a composite, photographic aerial map of enemy territory.

"Because of the airplanes," wrote Gottlieb Von Krause, war correspondent for the *Berliner Tagblatt*, *"the Italian Command has always been on top of the enemy's exact placements and movements. Beyond this, the photographs taken from dirigibles and airplanes have been compiled into excellent relief maps that will continue to be most useful in the future"*

In an August 12, 1912, editorial, the *London Times* asserted that after the Italian demonstrations in Africa, no modern nation would henceforth go to war without some degree of air power.

The correspondent from the British Central News, who watched the war from the Turkish side of the lines, called the airplanes a *"fearful means of destruction"* that had suddenly revolutionized military tactics. *"What I've seen in the deserts of Tripoli"*, he reported, *"has convinced me of the need to establish a British air fleet."*

**Do you know where the land is most fruitful?
Do you know where the sun smiles most magically?
Over the sea that links us to golden Africa
A treasure stands at Italy's fingertips!
Tripoli! Beautiful land of Love! My song comes sweetly to you!
Unfurl the Tricolor above your towers to the roar of the cannon!
Sail on, warships, the winds are favorable, the season is sweet.
Tripoli, enchanted land! You'll become Italian to the roar of the cannon!*
- From *Tripoli Bel Suol D'Amore* (G.Corvetta & C.Arono, 1911)]



This is reputed to be a photograph of the James G. Taliaferro family of Louisiana. If this was taken around the time of the Civil War, James G. would be the bearded man. He was a courageous patriot and civil rights advocate.

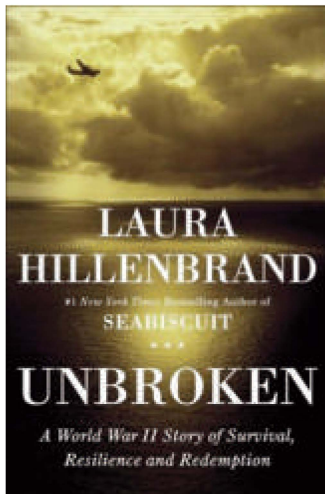
served three times between 1940 and 1961. Connecticut was the homestate of Dr. William Taliaferro Close, an American surgeon who helped to prevent the spread of an Ebola virus outbreak in Zaire in 1976. He was the father of American actress Glenn Close. There is even an infamous Tolliver from Georgia who shot and killed former president Jimmy Carter's grandfather in 1903.

As Americans of Italian descent explore their rich history and ponder their future legacy, the Taliaferro family is a reminder that their culture and heritage is deeply embedded in the beginnings of the American nation. Our recent ancestors can and

James G. Taliaferro of Louisiana objected to secession and supported Negro rights during Reconstruction

should relate to early American figures such as William Paca of Maryland, signer of the Declaration of Independence and later governor of his state, and Col. Francesco Vigo, a fur trader in the Northwest Territories (Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin) who helped finance and provide intelligence for Continental general George Rogers Clark to take control of the area from the British in 1778. These and other individuals prepared the way for the millions of Italian immigrants that would follow. Sadly, few of those immigrants or their descendants realize the Italic contributions before they arrived.

Book Review



Unbroken

by
Laura Hillenbrand
Random House, 473 Pages

Reviewed by Rosario A. Iaconis

Step aside, John Wayne. Move over, Captain America.

Make way for the saga of Louis Zamperini, an authentic Italian American super hero who became a record-shattering distance speedster, competed in the 1936

Berlin Olympics — earning Adolf Hitler’s handshake — and endured savage hardships at the hands of the Japanese in World War II.

Seabiscuit author Laura Hillenbrand pens a biography that has the texture and tension of a high-flying wartime novel. Still, her protagonist is a larger-than-life persona certainly who sparks Ms. Hillenbrand’s tale. But she forges a mesmerizing narrative that helps readers establish a link to the charismatic Zamperini.

Even as a rambunctious youth growing up in Torrance, California, Louie evinced the resourcefulness and resilience that would make him a valorous warrior of the air—and a survivor with pluck and true grit.

To her credit, Hillenbrand does not soft pedal the bigotry that confronted the children of Columbus in the land of the free and the home of the brave: “In Torrance in the early 1920s, Italians were held in such disdain that when the Zamperinis arrived, the neighbors petitioned the city council to keep them out.”

Having spoken the language of Dante Alighieri in his household, Louie “knew only a smattering of English until he was in grade



school.” The man who would later command the adoration of all of Torrance’s townspeople, the respect of the USAAF and the admiration of his fellow airmen was initially deemed a “suspect Italian”—and a likely target of the eugenicists who deemed the scions of Italy genetically inferior.

Ironically, Hitler himself was quite taken with Zamperini’s feats of fleet-footed velocity at the Berlin Olympics. In fact, *der Fuhrer* sought Louie out to shake the speedster’s hand: “Ah, you’re the boy with the fast finish.”

The Japanese were another matter, however. But that was well after Pearl Harbor and the onset of war in the Pacific.

As a bombardier on a shaky B-24 emanating from Hawaii, Army Air Corps Lieutenant Louis



Zamperini, at the 1936 Olympics, got this German guard to suspend regulations long enough to have this photo taken. He even got the guard to smile. was one of only three crewmembers to survive a crash into a treacherous, shark-infested ocean. After a grueling 47-day stretch aboard a rickety, ill-equipped raft—on a diet of rain water and the blood of fallen birds they’d killed—Louie and pilot Russell Allen Phillips (Francis McNamara, the tail gunner had died) washed ashore on the Marshall Islands.

Unfortunately, they became prisoners of the Japanese, who knew of his Olympic fame. As a symbol of American exceptionalism, Louie was singled out for the most sadistic torture, beaten senseless and denied medical care. Yet he refused to knuckle under to his feral captors. One in particular, the brutish war criminal Mutsuhiro Watanabe, became incensed when Zamperini adamantly refused to broadcast anti-American propaganda over the radio.

(Cont’d. on p. 32)

Older but unbroken, Louis Zamperini poses in front of a B-24 like the one that began his harrowing adventures in the Pacific theater.

Even 2008 Republican presidential candidate John McCain — a high-flying hero in his own right during the Vietnam War—understandably relented at times to his captors in Hanoi.

Like ancient Mucius Scaevola thrusting his hand into the fire or the modern day Fabrizio Quattrocchi showing his Taliban captors “how an Italian dies,” Zamperini displayed the stubborn valor of a true Italic hero—and fierce bravery under hellfire. Bloodied

and brutalized, he remained *Unbroken*.

Plans are in the works for a major Hollywood motion picture. And that would be most fitting. Before he joined the army, Louie worked as a movie extra on *They Died With Their Boots On*, starring Errol Flynn.

-Rosario A. Iaconis



Do You lIKE WHAt We Do?

Do You Want uS t o Do more?

In 2012, the Italic Institute of America will be 25 years old. We were founded in 1987 to be an alternative to the charitable and networking organizations that dominate the Italian American community.

We Do n't do charity.

We Do change.

We Do n't do galas.

We Do research and we speak out.

We Do n't revere Ellis Island, food or Celebrities.

We Do revere the Italian Spirit.

Join us and support us so our community can reach its intellectual potential. a Classical mind is a terrible thing to waste.

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