



La Notizia Italiana



The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey



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THE GARIBALDI GUARD (1861-1865) Italian-Americans in the Civil War



Between the Census of 1850 and the Census of 1860, the number of Italians emigrating to America jumped by 7,000, so that on the eve of the Civil War just over 11,000 Americans listed themselves as having been born in Italy. Many of them came to escape from stifling poverty, only to find it pursued them to the crowded cities of the East Coast of the United States. Others came to find freedom from the oppression of the Roman Catholic Church, which was trying to enforce orthodoxy upon its believers. Most Italians were simply looking for peace, for their homeland was torn by wars of its own.

New York City was the destination of the majority of Italian immigrants. There, they found many of their own people already established. The language was familiar and, despite the opposition of the Catholic Church in America, the old religious practices were still being observed. They had their own schools, when they could afford them, and their own newspapers. Francesco Secchi de Casali, a political activist who escaped from Italian authorities just in time, found refuge in New York.

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The Garibaldi Guard

Pictured left to right: Col. Frederick G. D'Utassy and brother; Lt. Col. Alexander Repetti; Lt. Col. Charles Schwartz, Sharpshooter.

He funded the publication of *L'Europee-Americano*, the first periodical to be printed both in English and Italian. The purpose of the periodical was to keep people informed of events in Italy and Europe, and to make written attacks on the Church authorities, which got Casali in trouble. He felt very strongly about keeping his people informed. When the first publication failed, he pawned his watch and some of his wife's jewelry to fund what is said to be the first important Italian language weekly published in the United States, *L'Eco d'Italia*, which remained in circulation until the end of the century.

Italians in New York had to deal with a number of social issues, including poor housing and schools, medical difficulties, and poverty. Again, their hero was Secchi de Casali. He raised money to start an evening school for Italians in the Five Points slum. Here the children were taught to read, write, do mathematics, and study the history of Italy and America. Casali failed to get widespread backing for a project dear to his heart. He very much wanted to find a way to move Italian immigrants out to the farmlands beyond the cities, since farming was what they had done in the Old Country. When he could not get the governments of Italy or the United States to back his plans, he turned to private businesses. Finally by the 1880s, Italian farmers

were "back on the land." American businessman Charles Landis donated land near Vineland, New Jersey, to start a farming cooperative.

Italian involvement in the Civil War was intense and passionate. Their militant hero back home, Giuseppe Garibaldi, was their inspiration. His republican views led many Italians to back the Union cause, though they were represented in the Southern armies as well. Francesco Casali spearheaded the formation of an Italian Legion, and later the founding of the Italian Garibaldi Guard, and was joined by many like-minded Italians. Luigi Tinelli, a former consul to Portugal and an industrialist, had experience as a militia commander. Francesco Spinola recruited four regiments in New York, and was appointed by President Abraham Lincoln to be their general. Count Luigi Palma di Cesnola, a veteran of the Crimean War, established a military academy in New York City, where many young Italians learned the art of war and later served in the Union army. Their stories are fascinating and colorful. Cesnola, for instance, was left wounded and pinned under his horse after fighting JEB Stuart's cavalry at Aldie, Virginia, in June 1863. While a prisoner of war, he agitated for better treatment for prisoners, to the point that his captors put him in charge of the prison commissary at Belle Isle. Spinola, finding his men of the

Spinola Empire Brigade outnumbered six to one in a battle, ordered them to fix bayonets. They charged, scattering the amazed Southerners before them in disorder.

The Garibaldi Guard

The Garibaldi Guard was the nickname of the 39th New York Infantry, a regiment of Italian-Americans recruited mostly from New York City under the auspices of Francesco Casale and other Italian leaders in the North. Most of the members of this regiment were men who had fought under Giuseppe Garibaldi, the freedom fighter and republican agitator. They wore a distinctively styled red shirt as part of their uniform to show their connection to their countryman, whose partisans had worn such a shirt in Italy. Other Italian nationals joined the guard as well, out of a feeling that the Union's cause matched their own ideals of freedom and equal justice. They also viewed the Northern ideology as closely allied with the aims of Garibaldi. They felt such alliance lent credence to the great patriot's ideas, since they were clearly being adopted by other nations. Colonel, Fredrick D'Utassy, a Hungarian, commanded the regiment. The Garibaldi Guard eventually consisted of many other European immigrants. Garibaldi's name was well known all over Europe as a great General, due to his success in the Italian Unification Battles.

The Italian Troops fought valiantly and remained loyal to the Union Army. We must all be proud of them.

Source: The Civil War Society's "Encyclopedia of the Civil War."



Michelangelo's David (1501-04)

Photo: Annie Slizak via Wikimedia Commons.

Michelangelo's David Threatened By Earthquakes

Posted: 12/23/2014 9:28 am EST Updated:

12/23/2014 9:59 am EST

This article originally appeared on Artnet News.

The Italian minister of culture, Dario Franceschini, has announced that the state will invest €200,000 on an "anti-seismic plinth" for Michelangelo's David (1501-04), AFP reports. Angelo Tartuferi, director of the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, which has housed the statue since 1873, said the platform should be ready for use within the year. The announcement, made last Saturday, came after a bout of 250 minor earthquakes, which shook the Florence region last week.

Last spring, experts revealed that Michelangelo's marble sculpture was at risk of collapsing due to a set of micro-fractures in its ankles (see "Michelangelo's David Is Fine"). The Galleria dell'Accademia limited then the number of visitors and ordered a special platform to minimize vibrations. Yet, the recent earthquakes "make this project even more urgent," Franceschini said in a statement. "A masterpiece like David must not be left to any risk," he declared.

The two strongest tremors that shook the region at the end of last week took place on Friday, hitting 3.8. and 4.1 on the Richter scale. No one was injured, and fire-fighters reported only minor structural damage near the epicenter, 30 kilometers south of Florence.

In April 2009, a 6.3-magnitude earthquake shook the town L'Aquila, 100 kilometers east-northeast of Rome, killing 309 people. It was the biggest earthquake disaster to hit Italy in recent years, and was preceded by several weeks of minor tremors.



The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey began as a chapter of POINT - (Pursuing Our Italian Names Together). When POINT officially dissolved in December 2013, our members voted to continue on as an independent organization. We are now known as

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey.

The group, originally organized in September 1996 as a POINT chapter, will continue to provide genealogical researchers an opportunity to meet socially, and learn and share information pertaining to Italian research and culture.

We cordially invite genealogical researchers to attend our quarterly meetings. Membership is open to all. In addition to regular meetings we take occasional field trips to genealogical research sites in the New Jersey/ New York area.

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Your letters and comments are welcomed.
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Calendar

IGSNJ Future Meetings:

August 1, 2015

Program: *TBA*

November 7, 2015

Program: *Intermediate Genealogy & Case Studies*

Presented by: Tony Lauriano

Passaic County Historical Society & Lambert Castle Events:

Passaic County Genealogy Club:

May 9: Genealogy Club Meeting

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle

Program: *Owning New Jersey* - Individuals and how land ownership played an integral role in their lives.

Presented by Joseph Grabas.

PCHS Quarterly Meeting

May 6, 2015

7 p.m. at Lambert Castle

Program: *Peter Hasenclever and the American (Iron) Company*

presented by Hans Niederstrasser.

May 16:

Spring Wine Tasting

5 - 8PM. at Lambert Castle

Tickets: \$50 per person (age 21 and older).

Reservations required.

Light refreshments served.

May 30:

Coins in the Ashes: A Tale of Two Families and the Need for Remembrance and Gratitude

2 p.m. at Lambert Castle.

Writer, musician and award-winning public radio journalist Joe McHugh discusses the quest to find the family of an African-American woman named Helen who cared for him as a young child when tragedy threatened to destroy his family.

Regular museum admission applies

April 15 - June 28

Exhibit: *Highlights of the Paterson Evening News*

3rd floor gallery at Lambert Castle

Regular admission fees apply.

For more information:

973- 247-0085 ext 201

www.lambertcastle.org

Passaic-Clifton UNICO:

June 5: Annual Pasta Dinner/Tricky Tray

7PM: Clifton Boys & Girls Club

Tickets: \$20

Contact: LaNotizia1@aol.com

Montclair UNICO:

June 22: Italian Folk Dancing

Presented by Barbara Grieco

7PM: St. Cassian's Church

187 Bellevue Ave., Upper Montclair, NJ

Guests: \$5

Light refreshments