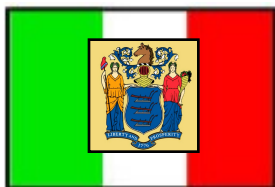
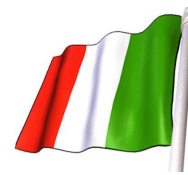




La Notizia Italiana

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey



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Cefalù: A Place of Revelation



Cefalù is a small Sicilian town built in the shadow of a colossal rock cliff

Cefalù is a small Sicilian town built in the shadow of a colossal rock cliff. Thousands of years ago a tribe called the Sicani, thought to be Sicily's oldest inhabitants, built a settlement on that rock cliff. Sicily gets its name from them. When the Greeks arrived in the 8th century BC, they called the island Trinakria (triangle), and for them it was the land of opportunity, a place where a man could make his fortune. Their Little America.

Apparently it was everyone's Little America for in its 3,000 year history Sicily has been invaded and dominated by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Goths, Saracen Arabs, Normans, Swabians, Angevins, (whose rule sparked the War of the Sicilian Vespers), the French and the Spanish. Some of them came back more than once. In turn, each conquering power did its best to erase all signs of the civilization before it, and for the most part they were successful. But some traces have survived, and along with them colorful legends like this one:

In the 12th century when the Normans ruled this island, the King, Roger II, encountered a terrible storm at sea as he sailed to Sicily from Naples. Fearing for his life, he vowed to build a Cathedral wherever he landed. That turned out to be the fishing village of Cefalù.

The king was a man of his word and so by his order construction of a Cathedral began in 1131. It was a massive project but he didn't hesitate, as he believed the Normans would rule forever. Little did he know they would lose control of Sicily in less than a hundred years, defeated by the Swabians. There are two parts of this legend that are true, however. The Cathedral was started in 1131 and the Swabian Hohenstaufen dynasty did come into power in 1194. As for the rest, who knows?

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Today tall palm trees flank wide stone steps that lead to the door of the town's majestic Cathedral. It is like a scene set for a Verdi opera, a spectacular theatrical entrance created long before Verdi was born. In front of the door there is a wide terrace called a "turniali", and that space was once used as a cemetery. The cemetery was created from soil brought from Jerusalem, and contains a substance that caused the rapid mummification of corpses. Is it another legend?

Along Corso Ruggero, the town's main shopping street, is the **Teatro dell'Opera dei Pupi**. The puppeteers are the last of the old time story tellers who once roamed the streets of Sicily recounting the tales of hard fought battles between the Arabs and the Christians. The stories the puppets tell are highly idealistic accounts of chivalry, honor, justice, faith and love. Norman knights lift papier mache swords to do battle against the Saracen Arabs.

The basis of most of the stories the puppet masters recreate is how the Normans conquered Sicily in 1061. What they don't tell is what a sophisticated civilization they found, and how they sought to imitate the Arabic architecture, government structure, literature, and especially the food. Many of the ingredients were brought here by the Saracen Arabs, including eggplants, artichokes, pistachios, sugar cane, lemons and oranges, saffron and the flaky shells for the over-the-top pastries in the bakery. Even oregano was brought here by the Arabs.

Back on the street after the puppet show, the seductive lure of the Baroque architecture teases with its excesses. While Sicilian Baroque does include many of the Baroque characteristics found in Italy and other European countries, it is also different in its use of grimacing masks and scary demons, all created with a grandiosity not found anywhere else. But who did all this? Who bent and teased those bars of iron into the decorative, elaborate balustrades? Who decided 10 grinning and grimacing faces were enough, or should it have been 20? Johann Wolfgang Goethe once wrote that without Sicily, Italy leaves no image on the soul, Sicily is the key to everything.

There are many things to see in Cefalù. But it's not only the sites of Cefalù that are memorable, but the feeling of the place, the quick smiles and conversations with shop

keepers eager to exchange impressions and share stories. It's difficult not to feel the weight of the centuries of history. Understanding it however, could take a lifetime.

Phyllis Macchioni is a Italian American writer who lives on the Italian Riviera. She is the author of a recently released collection of essays entitled "This Italian Life – People and Places", available on Amazon. Visit her blog at <https://www.thisitalianlife.blogspot.com> or <https://www.facebook.com/phyllis.macchioni>

Dion DiMucci Returns to Recording

Italian Tribune: 7 January, 2016



The Bronx's own Dion DiMucci partnered with Paul Simon on the title track of Dion's new album "New York Is My Home." Never one to rest on his laurels, rock 'n' roll legend Dion recently returned to the studio to record a new album that will be released this coming February. The album was produced by Jimmy Vivino (brother of Italian Tribune columnist and comedic icon, Uncle Floyd Vivino) who can be seen nightly leading The Basic Cable Band on Conan.

The album will be released on February 16. The album's title track "New York Is My Home" has already been released and features a duet with fellow New Yorker Paul Simon. He can be seen with Dion in the song's video, which was shot on the streets of New York in late October by David Niles. The song finds Dion celebrating the New York, finding the beauty of the City and equating its noisy streets with gospel music. Simon joins in at the end of the first verse and the two continue the song as together.

Dion says of the recording of the title track "Early on, I knew I had to sing it with Paul Simon. We share a love for rock 'n' roll street music, the way it was done when we were kids. I knew Paul would 'get' this song. And he did. Soon after I sent it to him, he called and said he'd become obsessed with it and added his own distinct touches to the production. He's from Queens, I'm from the Bronx. We're both at home in New York. This was a labor of love for us."

Dion was inducted into the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame* in 1989. This marks his 39th album including work with the Belmonts and his first album since 2011.



Have You Been Interested in Building an Ancestral Family Tree?

Courtesy of *ancestry.com* and *MyItalianFamily.com*

This has become a very popular activity for many Italian Americans. Genealogy is a science, but most of all it's the ability to build our family tree with "exact" information.

How do you access such information if it is maintained in Italy?

Archives are different from country to country. In the United States, government agencies allow citizens to order specific historical documents online. In addition, there are catalogs, addresses, and instructions available online that can make research fast and easy. If records in America are somewhat easily attainable, those from Italy require a little bit more effort.

In Italy, there are three main public sources that are repositories of family information:

- Town Halls (Comuni) started to register the population only after the unification of Italy (about 1866-1873 to today's date).
- State Archives (Archivi di Stato) maintain the so-called Napoleonic records, mostly available in the south of Italy, covering the period from 1809 (1820 in Sicily) to 1865.
- Parish churches (Parrocchie) started to record births/marriages/deaths of their parishioners after the Council of Trento at the end of the 1500s.

Assuming that you know the essential information needed to start a research project in Italy (full name, date of birth, town where ancestor was born), you could well contact one of those sources to request names and dates and easily build your family tree. But the reality is rather different.

Only town hall officials and archivists can perform such requests, but they have time constraints; officials and archivists have the obligation to serve residents and visitors first and then if they have any time left to fulfill other requests. Parish priests, on the contrary, have no obligation to perform any of such requests. In addition, they have very little time available since they are busy with their parishioners and traveling from one village to the other. In general, few speak and understand any language other than Italian, but what is worse is that they receive hundreds of requests from all over the world.

How do you become first on the list?

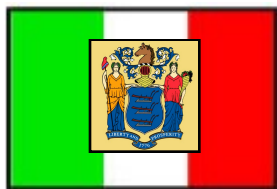
- Do not send money, except what is needed to cover the expenses to mail the response to a different country. Sending extra money will not get you any further up on the list.
- Try to request a reasonable amount of information at one time, especially when you are not sure about the names and dates that you are going off of.
- Try to avoid using online translators or software programs to translate lengthy documents from Italian to English. Be aware that some important facts may get lost in the translation, thus setting you back in your search.

The Church of Latter Day Saints has microfilmed part of these records (namely the Napoleonic Records) and is making them available through its Family History Centers. But these are difficult to understand unless you have extensive experience making sense of Italian records. Often handwritten in Latin or local dialects, old records are a challenge even for native Italians.

How can you be successful with a professional Italian based genealogist?

Using professionals trained in the art of reading and understanding Latin and Italian handwriting and the science of genealogy is essential. An experienced Italian based genealogist will have cultivated working business relationships with many of these officials. In most cases, information is gathered quickly and accurately including official registered birth, marriage, and death certificates. And most of all, the professional Italian genealogist can advise you on a course of investigation as well as when to persevere and when to give up. In many cases a complete and accurate family tree can be completed in several months and treasured for generations.

The above information is courtesy My Italian Family. For more information on genealogy research, visit www.myitalianfamily.com, email Italians@myitalianfamily.com, or call 888.472.0171.



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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**The Italian Genealogy Society
of
New Jersey**
(201) 803-9117

OFFICERS

President: Maria Carparelli
Vice President: Susan Berman
Treasurer: Judi Bonzkowski
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Newsletter Editor: Maria Carparelli
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Your letters and comments are welcomed.
We reserve the right to edit submitted materials.

The Italian Genealogy Society of NJ does not accept responsibility for errors, omissions, or opinions expressed or implied by contributors.

E-mail: LaNotizia1@aol.com

Web Site: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/%7Enjigc/>

Calendar

IGSNJ Future Meetings:

May 7, 2016

Program: *U. S. Citizenship & Immigration Records*
Presented by: Rich Venezia

Montclair State University

Inserra Chair in Italian American Studies:

February 8: 6:45PM - 8:45PM

University Hall Conference Center, 7th Floor

Italians in America: Recent Documentaries & Photographs

RSVP required:

<http://www.montclair.edu/chss/inserra-chair/events/2015-16/italians-in-america/>

Passaic County Historical Society & Lambert Castle Events:

Feb 12:

Valentine's Day Masked Ball

Lambert Castle 7p.m.- 11 p.m.

Don a mask and join us at Lambert Castle for some dancing. Light refreshment will be served. Cash Bar. Semi-formal attire requested. Tickets \$25 per person. No one under twenty-one years will be admitted. Reservations required. Call (973)247-0085 ext 201

February 13: Genealogy Club Meeting

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle

Free Admission

Program: *The How, Why, Who, Where of Familysearch.Org*
Presented by Diana Little, Director of the Family History Center in Caldwell, NJ

February 13:

1 - 4 PM at Lambert Castle

Join us at Lambert Castle for Valentine's Day and make your own Victorian style Valentine. Learn about early Valentine cards and the evolution of the holiday. Regular museum admission applies.

March 12: Genealogy Club Meeting

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle

Free Admission

Program: *Finding (traditional & non-traditional) Irish Related Records from the Contaes NA Eire to Passaic County*
Presented by: Alan DeLozier, Associate Professor & Seton Hall University Archivist

March 19: Make Your Own Spring Basket

1 - 4 PM at Lambert Castle

Join us at Lambert Castle and make your own Spring basket. Regular museum admission applies.

April 9: Genealogy Club Meeting

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle

Free Admission

Program: *Using DAR Documents in Genealogical Research.*
Presented by Janice Hunold, DAR Vice Regent General William Maxwell Chapter of National Society of the DAR

For more information:
973- 247-0085 ext 201
www.lambertcastle.org