



La Notizia Italiana

POINTers in Person: Lou Costello Chapter #15

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Earthquake Hits Italy

L'Aquila a 'ghost town' as death toll passes 200



The death toll continues to rise, and more people are still missing, after an earthquake devastates the ancient city of L'Aquila in central Italy

BY JACK BREMER

FIRST POSTED APRIL 7, 2009

First reports from the epicenter of Italy's earthquake yesterday morning suggested less than a dozen people had died. Within 24 hours, the death toll had mounted to at least 200, while rescuers still scrambled amid the ruins of L'Aquila this morning to find 15 people reported missing.

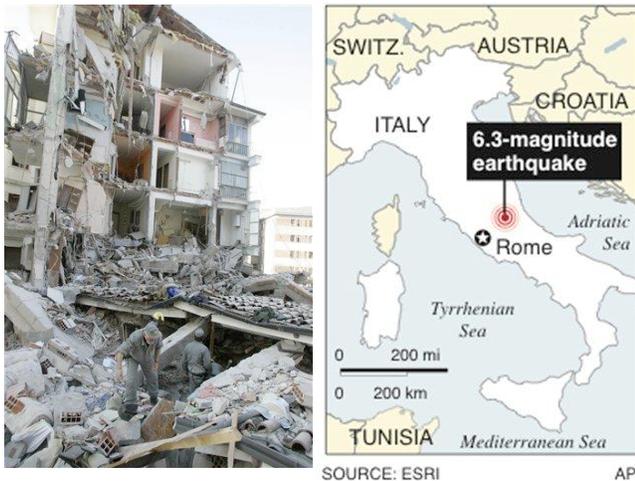
Working under spotlights in driving rain, emergency crews worked through the night to find more survivors in what began to look like a ghost town. But by dawn today there was little hope that anyone still buried in the rubble would survive.

As well as the dead, there are at least 1,000 people injured and nearly 20,000 made homeless. Many survivors spent their first night tents and cars. Others were taken by road to hotels on the Adriatic coast.

The earthquake, which measured 6.3 on the Richter scale, is reckoned to have destroyed between 3,000 and 10,000 buildings in the regional *cont'* on p. 2



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capital, L'Aquila. The medieval centre is devastated, with ancient churches and castles in ruins. "The damage is more serious than we can imagine," said Giuseppe Proietti, an official at the Ministry of Culture in Rome.

The death and damage is not confined to the city, however: nearby villages in the mountainous region of Abruzzo have also suffered. In Onna, the earthquake killed 24 of the tiny population of 300 people.

There were several aftershocks yesterday, forcing rescuers to pause in their work. One major tremor, late on Monday, lasted for around two seconds and made the ground feel like jelly, according to a BBC correspondent in L'Aquila.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has declared a state of emergency and says Italy has the resources to handle the disaster. But his government will have to answer questions about why warnings of



the impending quake were not taken seriously.

Several residents reported increased tremors in the region in recent months, and earlier this year a researcher at the National Physical Laboratory, Giampaolo Giuliani, raised the alarm after sensors in the area of L'Aquila detected radon gas escaping from the ground.

Loudspeaker vans were dispatched, urging residents of L'Aquila to evacuate their homes. But Giuliani was apparently reported to police for "spreading alarm" and forced to tone down his warning because other scientists claim there is no evidence that radon gas is a reliable indicator. Guido Bertolaso, head of Italy's civil protection agency, said on Monday: "There is no possibility of predicting an earthquake, that is the view of the international scientific community.



Italy Continues Rescue Efforts Amid Quake Devastation

The day after a 6.3 earthquake claims at least 207 lives, historic buildings lie in ruins and residents are in shock.

*By Henry Chu and Maria De Cristofaro
8:00 AM PDT, April 7, 2009*

Reporting from Rome and London -- Past glories and future hopes came crashing down together in central Italy amid a powerful earthquake Monday that crumbled centuries-old churches and claimed the lives of at least 207 people, leaving hundreds more injured and thousands homeless.

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As dawn broke this morning, rescue workers in the mountainous region of Abruzzo continued searching for at least 15 people believed buried in the rubble of buildings that in some cases had stood fast since medieval times. The ruined structures included an ornate basilica where a 13th century pope was crowned and an imposing castle full of priceless relics.



The city of L'Aquila, near the quake's epicenter, was transformed from a historic town built of warm, honey-colored stone into a disaster scene cloaked in choking gray dust.

Residents who had been sleeping peacefully were jolted awake by the 6.3 temblor, which ripped through the area about 3:30 a.m. Monday after weeks of tremors and subterranean rumbles that hinted at the possibility of worse to come. The violent shaking of a few seemingly eternal seconds leveled homes and dislodged masonry that smashed to pieces on the pavement and slammed into cars, crushing them.

Survivors wandered around, dazed, for hours, some of them still in their pajamas, others clutching mementos and random belongings grabbed before the rush outside into blackness.

Authorities had originally feared that 50,000 residents were made homeless by the temblor, but revised that figure today down to 17,000.

Around 1 a.m. an aftershock that lasted for a few seconds could be felt as far away as Rome, but it appeared to cause no further damage. Another major aftershock juddered through the area shortly after 11:30 a.m.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi declared a state of emergency on Monday and canceled a trip

to Moscow even as critics complained of official failure to strengthen buildings in an area prone to seismic activity. Repeated tremors had been reported over the last few months in Abruzzo, which led one local scientist to warn of an impending large quake before authorities blamed him for causing public panic with allegedly unfounded predictions.

Speaking to reporters today, Berlusconi said that about 1,000 people had been injured in the earthquake, with 100 in serious condition. He said that rescue efforts would continue for two more days, after which the hope of finding anyone still alive under the rubble would be slim.



Homes were leveled, cars were crunched by falling masonry and dust was everywhere in L'Aquila, a town of about 70,000 people around 60 miles northeast of Rome and close to the epicenter. Strong aftershocks rattled nerves, complicated the rescue effort and caused already weakened buildings in the regional capital to shed tiles in sprays that forced bystanders to scurry for cover.

"The damage is incalculable. Entire buildings have collapsed, innumerable homes destroyed or rendered unsafe. Many public buildings have been damaged," Stefania Pezzopane, the president of L'Aquila's province, told an Italian news agency.

Among the fallen structures were churches and other buildings of inestimable historical value, some dating back to medieval times, according to Italy's Ministry of Culture. The apse of L'Aquila's Basilica di Santa Maria di Collemaggio, a pink-and-white architectural gem that witnessed a papal coronation in 1294, collapsed. The temblor also razed a beautiful archway built in the 16th century to honor the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

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The tower of the city's Renaissance-era Church of San Bernardino came tumbling down, as did part of a castle from the same period that now houses a national museum.

Outlying villages were hit hard, with one hamlet, Onna, completely flattened, local media reported.

In some places, volunteers and rescue workers scabbled at debris with their bare hands, afraid that heavy equipment might cause further damage. At times, they shushed onlookers in order to catch the possible cries or scratching of survivors beneath the rubble. As darkness fell Monday, rain made the work even more difficult.

Earlier in the day, a man in L'Aquila clad only in his underwear and coated in dust sobbed in his rescuer's arms after being pulled out. But others were not so lucky, their bodies covered with sheets out on the streets before the coffins began arriving.

The Abruzzo region has long been a quake hot spot. A devastating temblor in January 1915 killed 33,000 people.

On Monday, survivors concentrated on looking for missing loved ones and finding shelter for coming days after being warned by authorities not to return to their homes.

"We are on our knees," an unidentified man in Paganica told the Sky TG24 news channel. "We are saved, but who knows how many are buried."

-Article courtesy of the LA Times-

Italian-American Museum Raises Donations for Quake Victims



NEW YORK, April 6—The Italian American Museum announced today that it will begin accepting monetary donations to assist the victims of the earthquake in the Abruzzo region of Italy. Checks should be made out to

"IAM EARTHQUAKE RELIEF FUND 2009"

Checks can be dropped off or mailed to the Museum, located at **155 Mulberry St., New York, NY 10013**. The Museum is on the corner of Mulberry and Grand Sts. in Little Italy. Donations can also be made by credit card by calling the Museum at:

212-965-9000.

Museum president Dr. Joseph V. Scelsa is requesting monetary donations only. Prospective donors are advised not to bring food, clothing or other items at this time, as there is no mechanism in place for delivery.

Founded in 2001, the Italian American Museum is dedicated to exploring the rich cultural heritage of Italy and Italian Americans by presenting the individual and collective struggles and achievements of Italians and their heirs to the American way of life. The Museum received its Provisional Charter from the New York State Board of Regents on June 12, 2001 and is a 501 (c) 3.



UNICO Announces Initiation of Fund to Aid Abruzzo Italy Earthquake Relief

UNICO National extends its heartfelt sympathy to those who have lost relatives, and to the thousands who have been left homeless by the Abruzzo Earthquake.

The earthquake has resulted in 91 deaths, approximately 1,500 injured and many people still missing. Between 30,000 and 40,000 people are believed to have lost their homes.

UNICO has set up a Disaster Relief Fund to help those affected by this tragedy.

**If you would like to donate to this fund,
please send your donations payable to:**

**“UNICO Foundation”
Earmarked Disaster Relief Fund**

**Mail to:
271 US. Highway 46 West
Suite A-108
Fairfield, NJ 07004**

Thank you for your consideration of support for the victims of the Abruzzo Italy Earthquake.

For further information, please contact:
Pat Pelonero at the UNICO office: 973-808-0035

E-Mail: ppelonero@unico.org.
Visit our website at www.unico.org.

P.I.P. PROGRAM FOR MAY 2, 2009 ***Obtaining Your Italian Citizenship:*** ***A How-To Presentation.***

Description: Daniel V. Donatucci, a professional genealogist and specialist in Italian records and the citizenship application process, will present on the nuts and bolts of putting together your application for dual citizenship. Topics covered will include the pros and cons of obtaining citizenship, a clarification of the process and of both Italian and U.S. law that pertains to it, how to determine your eligibility, the costs that are involved, and sources for further information, among others. A handout packet containing a concise text version of the presentation will be provided.

Bio: Daniel V. Donatucci has been doing genealogical research since 1988, professionally since 1995, and specializes in Italian records as well as records of the northeast United States. He is working on his certification with BCG and is currently a doctoral student in English and comparative literature at Brandeis University. He holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree with a specialization in Archival Studies and is an active member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the National Genealogical Society, and the Society of American Archivists, among others. He writes, speaks and offers a variety of classes on genealogical topics, chiefly in the areas of northeastern New Jersey and eastern Massachusetts.

Update on Ancestry World Archives Project.

At present there are three Italian projects online available to be indexed by the community:

- Pavia, Lombardia, Italia: Registri di Morte:1866-1937
- Pavia, Lombardia, Italia: Registri di Morte:1866-1937
- Verbanco-Cusio-Ossola, Piemonte, Italia: Registri di Matrimonio e Morte: 1866-1937:

There are plans to make available records from other regions as well, for example from Toscana, Basilicata, and Sicilia just to mention a few.

A “how-to” CD will be available at our meeting.



POINTers in Person-

The POINTers In Person program, an autonomous branch of **POINT - (Pursuing Our Italian Names Together)** was founded in 1992. Our group, Chapter 15, was organized in September 1996. The 21 nationwide chapters of POINTers In Person provide genealogical researchers an opportunity to meet socially, and learn and share information pertinent to Italian research. Each chapter is independent and sets forth its own procedures and schedules of events.

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

Membership in our parent organization, POINT, is not a prerequisite to joining our group; however, it is highly recommended.

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The Lou Costello Chapter

POINTers In Person

Chapter 15

Northern New Jersey

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OFFICERS

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Your letters and comments are welcomed.
We reserve the right to edit submitted materials.

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Web Site: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~njpoint/>

Calendar

POINT Chapter 15 Future Meetings:

Elmwood Park Municipal Building, 10 AM

August 1 Meeting:

"Struggles of the Italian Immigrant";

"The Dante Alighieri Society"

Guy Catrillo, presenter

Passaic County Genealogical Society:

10 AM, Lambert Castle

May 9 Meeting:

"Underutilized Records at the National Archives"

Dorothy Dougherty, Presenter

Passaic County Historical Society:

7 PM, Lambert Castle

May 6 Annual Meeting:

"19th Century Passaic County Photographers"

Gary Saretzky, Presenter

Lambert Castle Events:

May 29

Antique Show Preview Night.

7 PM - 9PM

May 30-31

Third Annual Antique Show & Sale

10AM - 5 PM

June 6-7

Civil War Encampment at Lambert Castle

June 6

Candlelight Tour

8 PM

For more information on PCHS & Lambert Castle Events:

973- 247-0085 ext 200

Genealogy Society of Bergen County:

Bergen Community College

9 AM - 3:30PM

May 9 Genealogy Seminar

Dr. John Colletta, Presenter

Eric J Roth, Presenter

Jonathan D. Shea, Presenter

Additional Information:

www.njgsbc.org

E-Mail: GSBC_seminar@yahoo.com.

Hudson County Genealogical Society:

11 AM: Secaucus Public Library

Future Meetings:

May 9

June 13