



La Notizia Italiana

POINTers in Person

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POINTers in Local Papers

(The following article and photo appeared in North Jersey Media Group newspapers, The Herald-News and The Bergen Record, on Sunday, February 4, 2007)



Pictured above: POINTer Michele Tito and Marie Androski

Group Digs Deep For Roots ***Genealogy Helps Unite Generations***

By Ashley Kindergan
Herald News

ELMWOOD PARK -- The topic of the day was cemeteries.

A group of about 20 people, most of them female and over 50, sat on folding chairs in Borough Hall Saturday morning getting tips from Annita Zalenski, a Totowa genealogist, on searching cemeteries for clues to their ancestors' pasts.

Hint 1: Don't go until after lunch. The cemetery staff will be too busy with morning funerals to help you track your family roots. Hint 2: Bring a spray bottle of water to see fading inscriptions and garden clippers to battle overgrown weeds on tombstones.

Welcome to the world of genealogy, where dedicated members of North Jersey's chapter of POINT (Pursuing Our Italian Names Together) spend countless hours searching for their families' roots. The people gathered Saturday morning say they get together once every

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three months to hear a presentation by an experienced genealogist, share their latest discoveries and munch coffee-soaked biscotti.

Experts say many people start researching their families for the same reason Zalenski did – to fill gaps in their family history. Thirty years ago, one of Zalenski's children had to present a school project tracing her family's lineage. Stumped, Zalenski turned to a cousin who had made a family tree. She soon began interviewing aging relatives and combing through records on her own. She got hooked, she said, and went on to found the POINT chapter, and became president of the Passaic County Genealogical Society.

"I used to call it my hobby," Zalenski said. "My late husband used to call it my obsession. You want to learn more about your family and history, and your family's place in history."

The findings can make great cocktail party fodder.

Zalenski discovered that a distant cousin of hers is a saint. Mother Pauline, or Amabile Visintainer, as she was formerly known, was canonized in 2002 as a result of her work with the disadvantaged while serving as a nun in Brazil.

Ronald D. Lambert, a retired professor of sociology at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, studied genealogists toward the end of his academic career. He said many took up the hobby after being confronted with gaps in their family history or out of a desire to know more about their roots and to pass along their information to those who come after them.

"They were confronted with their own ignorance when they tried to remember the various places their parents had lived, or when they were looking over old family photographs and did not know who the people were," Lambert said. "It was also not uncommon for people to say they wanted to leave a record for their children or grandchildren. The notion of posterity was a very important factor in how people thought."

Many in the group compare themselves to detectives. Some said they traveled to Italy to track down surviving relatives who could fill in gaps, pore over records in town halls in locales from which their great-grandfathers emigrated. Others visited

the North Caldwell outpost of the Family History Center, a genealogy program run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The church has the largest collection of genealogical information in the world, and visitors to its satellite libraries can search microfiche records and other helpful resources for free.

"It's a discovery. Once you start finding things, you want to find out more," said Maria Carparelli of Clifton, current president of the North Jersey POINT chapter. "You want to find out how far back you can get."

Loretta Tito, who came from Orangeburg, N.Y., to attend the meeting, traveled to Carpino in Italy to track down her maternal grandfather's lineage. Her grandfather died at age 41. The trip to Italy filled in several mysteries – including the reason her grandfather always insisted on buying prickly pears at Christmastime.

"When my mother was 82 years old and we were entering the town he grew up in, there were prickly pears growing all along the roads," Tito said.

Lambert sees a certain sense of democracy in all of this. Genealogy is most popular among descendants of immigrants, and has begun to take on strength in the black community as a way of reclaiming a lost ancestry. That, he said, is a far cry from the genealogy of the past, which was used to establish how blue the blood of nobles ran.

"When a group has been marginalized, this has been a way of reclaiming the past," he said. "Increasingly, today, anybody's father and anybody's mother matters."

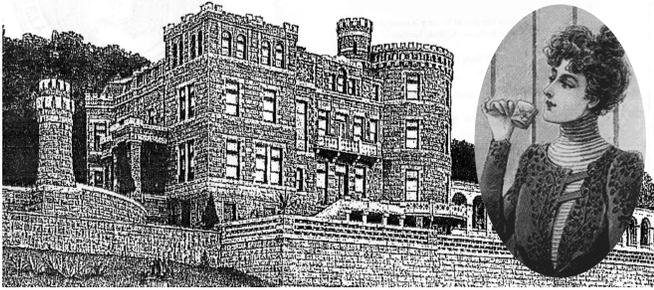
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Editor's note:

Annita Zalenski has written a book on the subject of cemetery research, **Written in Stone**. The book is available for purchase at the Lambert-Castle Museum Shop for \$15



High Tea at Lambert Castle

The Passaic County Historical Society hosted their **First Annual High Tea** at Lambert Castle on April 28. The event was a re-creation of traditional High Teas enjoyed by ladies in the Victorian Era. Originally an English tradition, High Tea is accompanied by dainty crustless sandwiches, scones, cookies, and of course, tea.

There were two seatings to accommodate the overwhelming response from eager tea drinkers. Tables were set up in the Grand Atrium, Breakfast Room, and Drawing Room of the Castle for the guests. Guests were greeted and seated by our own *POINTers*, Annita Zalenski and Geri Mola. Upon being seated, we were treated to our choice of wonderful teas, including such varieties as Vanilla Bourbon and Peach Apricot. Scones were served with “clotted cream” and “lemon curd.” The cranberry and caramel scones were warm and absolutely delicious, especially when spread with either the lemon curd or the clotted cream. After the scones, came dainty sandwiches (crustless, of course!) with a selection of cucumber/cream cheese, egg salad, or chicken. The dessert course included ambrosia, cookies, and other delectable sweets. It was as if we had stepped backward in time to a bygone era and relived the way that society ladies entertained.

In addition to the tea was a presentation on the “*History of Tea*” by Colleen Henderson, and a raffle of Victorian items, as well as “*Scentsational Perfumes*” parlour games. (Guests received little cards that told tales of the games that were played before TV was an option!)

It was a wonderful afternoon for all who attended.



POINT Member News:

Annita Zalenski Writes Book

POINTer Annita Zalenski has written a book, “**Entertaining With Tea.**” The book was offered for sale at the *Lambert Castle High Tea* on April 28. The book is a wonderful collection of recipes for afternoon entertaining. Although some recipes are authentic and historical, (clotted cream and lemon curd) others are favorites of the author. Also in the book is a brief history of tea and its traditions. Proceeds of the book will go to the Passaic County Historical Society to enable the society to continue to preserve the history of the area. The cost is \$7. If you enjoy recipes for easy entertaining, the book is available for purchase at the castle.



Calendar

Chapter 15 Meetings:

Elmwood Park Municipal Building
August 4, 2007
November 3, 2007
February 2, 2008

Passaic County Genealogical Society:

Lambert Castle 10AM
Meeting dates:
May 12, 2007:
Military Ancestors
June 16, 2007
Irish & Scots-Irish Roots

Trip to Sleepy Hollow Country

June 9, 2007
Cost of \$66 includes transportation and tours of Van Cortlandt Manor and Sunnyside Manor and lunch at Main Street Cafe in Tarrytown.
(973) 773-1817

Lambert Castle Events: Candlelight Tour of the Civil War Encampment

May 5, 7 & 9 PM
\$10 Adults, \$7.50 children ages 5-17
Advanced tickets required
(973) 247-0085 ext. 200

Antique Show and Sale

June 2 & 3
10 AM - 5 PM
Admission: \$5

Genealogy Society of Bergen County:

Ridgewood Library, 7PM
Meeting dates:
May 14, 2007
New Member Reception
June 25, 2007:
Researching Italian Roots



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.

Italian American Museum Events:

The Italian-American Museum
Presents:

ItaliaNY

Photography by Salvatore Sparavigna
April 16 - June 29
28 W. 44th St.,
17th Floor
New York, NY 10036
(212) 642-2020

e-mail:

info@italianamericanmuseum.org

web:

www.italianamericanmuseum.org

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Italian Language Groups: The Center for Italian & Italian-American Culture, Inc.

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Conversazione e Caffè:

Cedar Grove Library:
2nd & 4th Monday
6:30 - 7:45 PM
Municipal Plaza,
Pompton Avenue
Cedar Grove, NJ

Montville Library:
1st & 3rd Thursday 7:00 - 8:00 PM
90 Horseneck Road
Montville, NJ
www.montvillelib.org

Montclair State
Every Sunday,
6:00 - 7:30 PM
Richardson Hall