



# La Notizia Italiana



The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey

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## Italian-American Innovators

*Italian Americans created many of the familiar items we enjoy every day.*



- **Antonio Meucci** invented the telephone in 1871, five years before Alexander Graham Bell, but the impoverished inventor did not have the funds (about \$25.00) to file a patent. *(pictured at left)*

- The Jacuzzi hot tub and spa were invented by the **Jacuzzi family**, whose family of seven sons and six daughters came to America in 1907. In 1915, they formed the Jacuzzi Brothers Incorporated, which supplied the American military with propellers. In 1926, they developed the deep well (jet) water pump that led to the famous whirlpool bath.

- Mr. Coffee, the best-selling coffee maker in the world, was invented by **Vince Marotta**, who also developed a better way extract oil from coffee beans and in-

vented the paper coffee filter. Since 1972, more than 50 million Mr. Coffees have been sold. An estimated 10 billion Mr. Coffee paper filters are sold annually.

- The convertible sofa was invented by **Bernard Castro** (1904-1991) who came from Italy and opened an upholstery shop in New York in 1931. In 1945, he invented the famous space-saving sofa that even a child could open.

- **Chef Boyardee**, the man behind the nation's leading brand of spaghetti dinners, pizza mix, sauce and pasta, was really **Ettore Boiardi**, an Italian immigrant from Emilia Romagna. Boiardi, who began as a chef's apprentice at age 11, eventually opened a restaurant in Cleveland, Ohio in 1924 and began packaging pasta and sauce for his customers to take home. In the 1930s, he began selling his pasta and sauce in cans. A food distributor convinced him to change the spelling of his name to make it easier for Americans to pronounce. During World War II, the company was the largest supplier of rations for the U.S. and Allied Forces.

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- The Big Mac, McDonald's sandwich classic, was invented by **Jim Delligatti** owner of a McDonald's franchise in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Since its introduction in 1967, more than 14 billion Big Macs have been sold, making it the most popular sandwich in the world.
- The popular Radio Flyer red wagon was created by **Antonio Pasin**, an immigrant Italian carpenter in 1917. Pasin began making the wagon he called the Liberty Coaster, after the Statue of Liberty, one of his first sights in America. Today, his grandson, Robert Pasin is the president of the Chicago-based Radio Flyer Inc, which he runs with his brothers, Antonio and Paul. The company's 100 employees manufacture about 8,000 wagons a day.
- The chocolate bar exists today in part thanks to **Domenico Ghirardelli**. In 1867, he perfected a method to make ground chocolate. Today, Ghirardelli chocolate is sold all over the world, including the square in San Francisco named after him, where his chocolate factory - now a shopping center -- still stands.
- Mr. Peanut and the Planters Peanut Company were created by **Amedeo Obici** and **Mario Peruzzi**, two Italian immigrants. Obici, who came to America from Oderzo in 1889, began selling five-cent bags of peanuts on the street. In 1897, he took Peruzzi as his partner. By 1930, the two had four huge factories, and raked in over \$12 million annually. Today the Planters Peanut Company has over 5,000 employees.
- The cough drop was created by **Vincent R. Ciccone**, who began his career in the 1930s as a janitor at the Charms Candy Co. and retired as the company's president and chief executive officer. Ciccone secured 20 patents, including the "Blow Pop," a lolly pop with a bubble gum center. He died at age 81 in 1997.
- **Charles Atlas**, born Angelo Siciliano, invented the body-building technique called "Dynamic Tension" in 1921 and was dubbed "America's Most Perfectly Developed Man" by *Physical Culture* magazine. By the 1950s, the former Coney Island janitor, had over one million followers. He died in 1972 at age 79 while jogging too soon after a heart attack.
- The ice cream cone was invented by an Italian immigrant to New Jersey named **Italo Marcioni** in 1896.
- The three-way light bulb was invented by **Alessandro Dandini**, who patented more than 22 inventions, including the rigid retractable automobile

top and the spherical system, which concentrates and extracts solar energy. Dandini came to the U.S. in 1945, and taught at the University of Nevada in Reno. He held degrees in science, languages, hydraulic engineering and classical literature. He died in 1991 at age 88.

## ITALIAN AMERICAN INFLUENCES IN WASHINGTON, DC

*Most Americans know that the District of Columbia is named after Christopher Columbus, but few realize how great a role other Italians and their descendants have had in building the city and its monuments. Italians helped create Washington's classic architecture and impressive monuments, and many of the city's schools, churches, and federal buildings.*

- **THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL** -- Neapolitan immigrant Attilio Piccirilli and his five brothers carved the statue of Lincoln, which they began in 1911 and completed in 1922. It is 19 feet high and made of 28 blocks of marble, carefully fitted together. The gifted sculptors, working out of their studio/living complex in the Bronx, also carved the famous lions on the steps of the New York Public Library, and the facade of the Brooklyn Museum among many other works in New York and across America. See Attilio Piccirilli's biography by Joseph V. Lombardo, published in 1944.
- **THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL** -- Using techniques handed down by stone carvers since the Middle Ages, Italian artisans created the gargoyles and statues that decorate the facade of Washington's most famous place of worship.
- **THE CAPITOL BUILDING** -- A concrete symbol of American democracy, the Capitol bears the imprint of Italian talent. Between 1855 and 1870, the Italian artist, Constantino Brumidi decorated its interior dome, corridors, and the President's Room where Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.
- **UNION STATION** -- Italian construction workers helped build Washington's train station, which was begun in 1905 and completed in 1908, considered one of the most beautiful train stations in the United States. The six statues that decorate the station's facade were sculpted by Andrew E. Bernasconi between 1909 and 1911.
- **METRO** -- Washington is justifiably proud of its quiet, modern subway system, but few of the thousands of commuters who ride it daily know that more than 60 percent of Metro's 764 subway cars are made in Italy. The DC Transit Authority purchased 466 cars from Breda Costruzioni Ferroviarie in Pistoia at a cost of about \$1.3 million each.

*Prepared by: The National Italian American Foundation  
The NIAF thanks military historian Rudy A. D'Angelo for his assistance with this fact sheet.*



## ITALIAN AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION



There are nearly **15 million** people who have identified themselves as **Italian American** in the 1990 U.S. census, the Population Division of the U.S. Census Bureau reports. The Census Bureau estimates, however, that **1 out of 10 Americans** has some Italian blood, bringing the total number of Americans of Italian descent to **26 million**.

Italian Americans are the fifth largest ethnic group in the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The four larger groups are: the Germans, Irish, English and African Americans.

The average Italian American still lives in the city in which he was raised, has attended at least one year of college and has an average family income of about \$33,000 per year, according to a survey of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago.

Italian Americans are evenly split among the three political parties: 35 percent Republican; 32 percent, Democrat; and 33 percent Independent, according to the NORC. No matter their political orientation, Italian Americans tend to support liberal social causes: 89 percent would vote for a woman president; 55 percent are pro-choice; and more than 60 percent think the government should spend more on health, education and the poor.

Italian Americans either make up 15 percent of the population or number more than 1 million in the following states:

California 1,500,000  
Connecticut 650,000  
Massachusetts 845,000  
New Jersey 1,500,000  
New York 2,900,000  
Pennsylvania 1,400,000  
Rhode Island 200,000

Italian Americans are also found in significant numbers in 15 other states, including Florida (800,000); Illinois (730,000), Ohio (640,000); Michigan (412,000); Texas (314,000) and Maryland (253,000).



## *FINALLY, LUIGI IS GETTING HIS DUE.*

**January 9, 2014**

*Carving a Niche for Himself; The Untold Story of Luigi Del Bianco and Mount Rushmore*, author Douglas J. Gladstone's valentine to the obscure Italian American immigrant who served as chief carver of the Mount Rushmore National Memorial, will be published by Bordighera Press, it was recently announced.

Featuring a foreword by Italian American businessman Robert Benedetto, the chairman of Benedetto Guitars in Savannah, Georgia, *Carving a Niche for Himself* examines the selfless efforts of five time Parent's Choice award winner Lou Del Bianco, a children's performer and storyteller from Port Chester, New York, to honor his late grandfather.

Though Rushmore sculptor and designer Gutzon Borglum's correspondence in the Library of Congress clearly indicates that Luigi Del Bianco was the glue that held the project together, Del Bianco never received credit in scholarly publications or documentaries on the creation of the memorial.

Del Bianco died on January 20, 1969 of accelerated silicosis that was brought on, in part, by his years of not wearing a mask while working at the monument.

*Carving a Niche for Himself*, which is Gladstone's second book, is scheduled to be released in May 2014

Bordighera Press is recognized as the foremost publisher of Italian-American literature and poetry in North America. Featuring works by or about Italian and Italian American authors and topics, it has produced groundbreaking scholarship and research consistently used in university courses. Founded in 1989 by Fred Gardaphé, Paolo Giordano, and Anthony Julian Tamburri; Bordighera Press' books are carried by Small Press Distribution.

For more information, contact either Gladstone at 518-817-8253 or Tamburri at 212-642-2031.



## 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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#### OFFICERS

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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.*

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## Calendar

### IGSNJ Future Meetings:

*Programs to be announced*

**May 3, 2014**

**August 2, 2014**

**November 1, 2014**

### Passaic County Genealogy Club: Genealogy Club Meetings

**February 8, 2014**

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle

*Iron Masters in Ringwood late 1740-late 19th Century:*

Presented by Sue Shutte

**March 8, 2014**

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle

*Tips and Tricks for Successful Research Using Ancestry.com,*

Presented by Toni McKeen

**April 12, 2014**

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle

*Speaker to be announced*

### Passaic County Historical Society & Lambert Castle Events:

#### PCHS Quarterly Meeting

**February 5, 2014**

7 PM, Lambert Castle

*Robert Erskine, George Washington's Map Maker.*

*Presented by Ralph Colfax*

**April 24-27:**

#### Victorian Tea Fundraiser

Lambert Castle

By reservation only, \$40 per person.

*Join us for our annual Victorian Tea. Program to be announced*

**For more information on  
PCHS & Lambert Castle Events:  
973- 247-0085 ext 200  
[www.lambertcastle.org](http://www.lambertcastle.org)**

## Garibaldi-Meucci Museum

Owned by Sons of Italy Foundation, Inc.

Administered by Grand Lodge  
of NY Board of Commissioners, OSIA

### ITALIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES WINTER/SPRING 2014

Registration for the winter/spring semester 2014  
of Italian Language classes is now open.

**REGISTER ON LINE:  
VISIT OUR ONLINE STORE  
OR BY PHONE AT 718-442-1608.**