

# The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey

## ALBERT MAROTTA

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey met on May 2, 2015 at the Elmwood Park Municipal Building. Sixteen people attended.

Maria Carparelli opened the meeting by sharing correspondence she received which indicated that the Sociology Department of William Paterson University will offer a new course taught by Professor Susanna Tardi and a minor in Italian Studies in the Fall of 2015. Dr. Tardi is developing an interdisciplinary Italian Studies Program and is writing a socio-historical manuscript on the Italian – American experience from immigration to the fourth generation. Maria also mentioned that since a local UNICO group expressed interest in a trip to visit The Garibaldi-Meucci Museum in Staten Island, IGSNJ might join them since a larger group is more practical concerning transportation. The Garibaldi Guard was brought up. This was the 39<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Regiment which served in the Union Army during the U.S. Civil War. This regiment was recruited from 52 European principalities, including Italy. A listing of the Italians who served in this regiment is being compiled.

Sal Lagattuta reminded the Society of its approaching 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and thought it might be wise to plan for a celebration or special event.

Judy Bonzkowski presented the treasurer's report. The ending balance as of May 1, 2015 is \$316.30. The chapter has 33 members, however only 20 of these have kept their membership current with dues payment. There was a discussion about dues delinquent members and possible methods to increase membership.

Richard Venezia gave the presentation, "Discovering Your Immigrant's Origins: Exhausting Every Resource." He founded Rich Roots Genealogy ([www.richroots.net](http://www.richroots.net)), after a decade of researching his own family history. Also, Rich was a member of the research team of *Genealogy Roadshow's* Season 2 on PBS. He specializes in Italian and immigrant ancestry, and dual citizenship applications.

Rich said that it is essential to discover the exact place of the ancestor's origin. The researcher should always begin this project at home by asking any older relative if they have a document box which might contain photographs or vital and other records, especially a Certificate of Citizenship. If the relative does, it will save a great amount of time in the research. Rich told the Society that old family photographs inspired him to begin his research. Neighbors, friend and associates of the ancestor can also be very helpful.

Among the sources which are valuable for finding an ancestor's specific place of origin are ship manifests (for Ellis Island or Castle Garden); vital records (including those of children); marriage licenses, both World War I and World War II Draft Registration Cards; naturalization paperwork, including the Declaration of Intent and Petition for Naturalization (clues can be found in census records); Order of the Sons of Italy in America records kept separately by state (these might include Mortuary Fund Claims, Enrollment and Death Benefit Records, Membership Applications and Lodge Records); and possible applications, death benefits or other documents from other Fraternal Organizations (both ethnic and non-ethnic.)

Other sources which are helpful to locate are church records (local and diocesan level), cemetery records, obituaries (including those in ethnic newspapers), newspaper articles, probate files (usually found in probate, family or surrogate's courts or state archives), passport applications and records from the New York Emigrant Savings Bank.

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Often overlooked, but important records are provided by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services ([www.uscis.gov/genealogy](http://www.uscis.gov/genealogy)). These records include C-Files (Naturalization Certificate Files from 1906-1956), AR-2 Forms (Alien Registration Forms from 1940-1944 required for all aliens over 13 years of age residing in or entering the U.S.), Registry Files (records for immigrants who arrived before 1924, but for whom no arrival information could be found; from 1929-1944), Visa Files (arrival records for those arriving for permanent residence under the Immigration Act of 1924), and A-Files (Alien Files from 1944-1951.)

Many of these records can be found on location or at various databases including [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org) and state and local archives.

Future meetings will be held on:

November 7, 2015  
February 6, 2016  
May 7, 2016  
August 6, 2016

For details, see our website: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~njigc/>