

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey

ALBERT MAROTTA

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey met on May 6, 2017 at the Clifton Public Library. Eighteen people attended.

Maria Carparelli opened the meeting by sharing correspondence sent to the Society. She noted that the Festival Italiano Vintage Auto Show on the grounds of The Hermitage Museum in Ho-Ho-Kus took place May 7. Festival Italiano is a celebration of Italian automotive engineering where area automobile enthusiasts can view a variety of vintage and modern Italian-engineered automobiles including Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, and Alfa Romeo. Traditional Italian food and refreshments was available for sale and Italian music was played throughout the day. Maria asked about the status of the Society's Facebook page and learned that it was not yet ready.

Judy Bonzkowski presented the treasurer's report. The ending balance as of May 6, 2017 is \$430.00. The chapter has 35 members, however only 22 people have kept their membership current with the payment of dues.

It was decided by vote that The Society should raise the dues for membership. Effective February 2018, membership dues for IGSNJ will be \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families. This should help to recruit quality speakers to present at the Society's future meetings.

Elder Clark and Elder Windsor, representing the Family History Center in Caldwell, gave a joint presentation about the vast genealogical-related resources available from the collections of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Copies of these records are available at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City in Utah and can be accessed from any of their over 4,700 Family History Center branches located in 134 countries. There are twenty Family History Centers of the LDS in New Jersey, including those in Caldwell, Newark, Paterson, Passaic, Mahwah and Morristown. Since the LDS has been gathering genealogical records for over 115 years, it is considered to have the largest collection of genealogical and historical records in the world, featuring over four billion names.

The goal of these centers is to assist patrons, provide access to genealogical records through the Internet or on-site and offer free how-to-classes. They are open to anyone interested in genealogical research free of charge. However, there is a small fee to order microfilm of records if they are not available on site. Family History Centers also provide free access to many subscription genealogy databases, such as *Newspaper Archives*, *Ancestry.com*, *ArkivDigital Online*, *findingmypast*, *Fold 3.com*, *Heritage Quest Online*, *Historic Map Works* and *World Vital Records.com*.

The foundation for the Mormon's intense work on genealogy is based on the Hebrew scripture, Malachi 4:6 and its context is the period right before the Second Coming and the return of the prophet Elijah. This verse states: "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." "The turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers" is interpreted by the Mormons as planting in the hearts of the children that feeling and desire which will inspire them to search out the records of the dead. This is necessary in order that they might go into the house of the Lord and perform the necessary labor for their fathers, who died without a knowledge of the gospel. They believe that this verse invites the reader to participate in family history and temple work.

Most record microfilming is done in diocesan archives and provincial and court archives and will be indexed; some even have ten-year indexes. Wars destroyed many records. Thus many communities, in accordance with a post- World War II law, called its citizens together to attempt to reconstitute their records from memory. Although these records may not be completely accurate, they are better than no record. Specialized Italian gazetteers and atlases are also available.

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The Family History Catalog, which can also be accessed through their website, can help the researcher find in the collection what Church or Civil Registration records are available by town as well as many other helpful resources such as *Italy-Letter Writing Guide*, *Getting Started with Italian Research*, *Ask a question in the Italian research forum*, *Italy-Languages*, *Italian Workshops* (strategies for doing research in Italy), *Italian Registration – vital records research*, *Italy-Genealogy*, and *Italy-Church History*.

More than 23 million images and four million searchable names from Italian genealogical records that were previously available only in archives or on microfilm are now available on the Church's family history research site, new.familysearch.org. Through the efforts of thousands of volunteers participating in the Italy Civil Registration Project, individuals now have access to birth, marriage, and death records for Italian ancestors in a searchable database. This new project involves digitizing and indexing Italian genealogical records. It started after an agreement between FamilySearch and the Italian State Archives was finalized in July 2011. The Italian State Archives granted FamilySearch access to its birth, marriage, and death records located in state archives throughout Italy in exchange for FamilySearch providing digital copies of the records to these principalities, as is their long-standing practice.

They will digitally preserve and provide online access to the entire civil registration collection (birth, marriage, and death records) of Italy from 1802 to 1940.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has worked in Italy since 1975 to preserve civil registration records; however, now the project will digitally preserve, publish, and make publicly available additional Italian civil documents. Records still need to be obtained from various states in Italy.

The LDS also has FamilySearch Centers which provide scanning equipment to digitize the patron's family history books, photos, etc. and provide access to genealogical websites using the Family History Center Portal.

Details can be found at their website, <https://familysearch.org> and <https://familysearch.org/italian-ancestors/>

Future meetings will be held on:

November 4, 2017
February 3, 2018
May 5, 2018
August 4, 2018

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