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Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB

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President's Message

We have much to be thankful for. This past year we welcomed fifteen new members. We bottled our wine. We joined other cultures at the International Festival. Our club picnic, sauce tasting and annual awards banquet were well attended. Several of our older members worked with the people from CRG and Media Objectives on the 800 Block Project to commemorate the Greenbush Neighborhood. We also took care of some much needed maintenance for our historic building. Finally, we put on our most successful Festa Italia with wonderful food, first class entertainment and family fun.

Our first order of business in the new year is planning Festa Italia 2024. After completing



a thorough analysis and much discussion our Council voted unanimously to make Festa a two-day versus three-day event. This decision is primarily driven by our constant challenge to fill the hundreds of volunteer shifts needed to make Festa happen. Eliminating Friday night will save dozens of shifts and certainly some entertainment, food and security expenses. We'll also lose some revenue, but won't sacrifice any of the cultural experiences (music, pasta eating contest, bocce tournament, Flags of Italy Parade, etc.) that our guests have come to expect.

Your attendance is appreciated, but volunteering for a shift or two is required. Mark your calendars for May 31st – June 3rd. This four-day period includes set up, the Festa weekend and tear down. Make volunteering a priority. You owe it to your club. Sign-up forms with detailed descriptions

for each shift will be made available on line and at the clubhouse. We need everyone's help for Festa to remain Dane County's Premier ethnic festival.

Wishing you all a happy start to 2024. Grazie 🇮🇹

Inside this issue:

The Music and Instruments of Italy
Page 2

A Story About Making Wine
Page 4

Kickin' It With Forward Madison
FC *Page 6*

Things I didn't Know: Information
discovered in the Italian Workmen's
Club storage rooms *Page 8*

The Music and Instruments of Italy

By Tom Smith

In the world of music, Italy has been one of the most influential countries. Throughout history, Italy was the site of both important developments in music and the invention of musical instruments. From ancient Rome through the Middle Ages, and later the Renaissance, the innovations of musical scales, form, harmony, and notation enabled the development of opera and modern classical music that included symphony and concerto. And Italian inventors created many of the musical instruments found in folk, classical and modern music.

From the Gregorian chant (liturgical music of the Roman Catholic Church used to accompany the text of the mass), to the troubadour songs of the 11th to 13th centuries, to the Madrigal (a form of vocal chamber music that originated in northern Italy during the 14th century), all these contributed to the development of music. One of the most significant innovations was the invention of musical notation, creating a visual record of musical sound and visual instructions for the performance of music. It was Guido d’Arezzo, an Italian “medieval musicologist,” who invented modern notation in the 11th century, which over the following decades and centuries was consolidated by Catholic musicians and scribes.



Guido d’Arezzo



Zampogna

There were many musical instruments invented in Italy over the years – some familiar and some less so – that offer an even more vivid illustration of the rich history of music in Italy. When people hear bagpipes they usually think of Scotland or Ireland, but few know that every region of Italy produced a version of this instrument where air held in a bladder made from animal skin is expelled through the reeds in a pipe. The Zampogna is the traditional Italian instrument, with a bladder made from goat hide. Still fewer have heard of the Ocarina, a type of vessel flute related to ancient wind instruments. A typical Ocarina has an enclosed space with 4 to 12 finger holes and a mouthpiece that projects from the body, and is traditionally made from clay or ceramic (though some are fashioned from wood, glass, metal or even bone). Italian inventor Giuseppe Donati developed the modern 10-hole Ocarina in 1853.



Ocarina



Quartara

Two other rather unique instruments are the Quartara and the Ghironda. The Quartara is an especially interesting Italian folk instrument because it looks more like a ceramic vase or pitcher than an instrument. It is actually a wind instrument where you blow across the top to make a sound, and like filling a bottle with different levels of fluid filling the Quartara with varying amounts changes the pitch. It was mainly played in southern Italy in places like Sicily and Campania. The Ghironda is a string instrument that uses a bow to make the sound, but unlike a violin it employs a hand crank on the side that is attached to a rosin covered wheel which produces the sound as it moves across the strings. The Ghironda has multiple “drone strings” that sound the same pitch under whatever melody the player makes on the keyboard, producing sounds similar to the Zampogna. It is popular in northern regions of Italy, including Lombardy and Emilia.



Ghironda

Of course, in addition to these rather unique and little known instruments, Italy is famous for a number of much more recognizable instruments. Though known more for the violins he produced, Antonio Stradivari was also a maker of fine mandolins. During the 16th century the mandolin, which was an offshoot of the lute family, became one of the most beloved string instruments in Italy. There were many regional variants, but the two most widespread came from the Lombardy region and from Naples. There are different types of mandolins, ranging from soprano and piccolo to alto, tenor, baritone, bass and contrabass. One of Stradivari’s finest ever produced was the Mandolino Coristo, made in 1705. Pictured here, this mandolin is one of only two Stradivari mandolins left in the world.



Mandolino Coristo

It also surprises many people to learn that the piano was invented in Italy. The piano is classified as an acoustic stringed instrument with the strings struck by wooden hammers coated with a softer material and played through a keyboard. The word piano is actually a shortened form of pianoforte – two Italian words that mean soft and loud respectively (referring to the musician’s ability to vary volume based on the force with which the keys are struck). Bartolomeo Cristofori was employed by Ferdinando de’ Medici, the Prince of Tuscany, as the “Keeper of the Instruments.” A skilled harpsichord maker, Cristofori built the first piano sometime around 1700. His earliest pianos were made with thin strings, producing much louder music than the clavichord. There are two types of piano, the grand piano and the upright piano, with the grand piano producing the better sound with more precise control to the musician. Cristofori’s grand pianos date to the 1720s. During the 1800s innovations like a cast iron frame allowed greater string tension providing a much more powerful sound and richer tone. This Italian invention is considered to be one of the most versatile instruments in the world of music.



Grand Piano

Continued on Page 5

A Story About Making Wine



By Todd Cambio

This is from a series of pieces that my great uncle Dino Brugioni wrote in 2003 from conversations he had with another great uncle Egidio Fraulini regarding growing up in a small, rural northern Missouri town that was full of Italians from our mountain village in Emilia Romagna, who immigrated there to mine coal.

“In late summer, Nono would order a ton of Zinfandel grapes from California. They would arrive in wooden boxes. Nono would personally examine every clump of grapes. The ideal was a dry stem. If the stem was green, he would personally remove every grape. The grapes would be put in a hand cranked crushing machine (ordered from Sears and Roebuck, similar to the one at the IWC). All of the kids took turns cranking the machine. All of the crushed grapes and juice would be gathered in buckets and dumped into the teeno - a large concrete vat that Nono had built in the Fraulini’s barn, and is still there... Now Nono began a vigil of watching the fermentation of the grapes. The fermentation had to be controlled. I remember he had

a portable kerosene stove he could light if the critical temperature fell. The bubbling would begin and Egidio said you could hear it. When it stopped was a critical time for Nono. He would stick his finger in the juice and rub it across his lips and mustache, tasting it. The juice (now wine) would be drawn from the bottom of the teeno and carried to the cellar where it would be poured into barrels. Egidio said one could only do this for 15 minutes for the fumes would be intoxicating. The ton of grapes would make two barrels of wine, about 100 gallons. Again, Nono would carefully sample the wine. When it was time, the wine would be bottled. The corks would be placed in boiling water to soften them. A little wooden device would squeeze the bottom of the cork and then the device would push the cork into the bottle. Egidio and others would do the bottling.

As kids, all of those empty wooden grape boxes were items that stirred our imagination. We would use them to make a wide variety of things. I remember that Egidio placed wheels on several (our primitive soap box racers) and

all the boys and I would race down our hill. If a box was crushed, we went up to the Fraulini barn and got another. Next to presents at Christmas, they were our favorite toys.

Nono would then add water and 2 bags of sugar to the remaining grapes in the teeno. Nono would let the mixture ferment into what was known as a second wine. The wine would be removed, barreled and later bottled. Nono would always have a bottle of wine on the dinner table. Guests were always served the first wine, frequent visitors the second.

He would put something into the remaining wine and let it go into a very good vinegar that was used in the salads that Nene fixed.

Some sugar would be added to the remaining crushed grapes that would be placed in a tub, allowed to ferment and then Nono would heat it. It was a small still. The fumes would be distilled and whiskey (alcohol) would come forth. Nono would put the whiskey into old Coca Cola barrels that had been charred. He would let it remain for several months.

The Music and Instruments Of Italy *continued*

No discussion of musical instruments invented in Italy would be complete without including the most famous of stringed instruments made by Antonio Stradivari...the violin (and the other



1714 “da Vinci, ex-Seidel” Stradivari Violin

members of the violin family he produced). The most famous luthiers or violin makers between the 16th and 18th centuries were from the Lombardy region. The city of Brescia is considered to be the birthplace of the violin, with the city of Cremona 25 miles to its south considered the center of the violin world. Born in Cremona, Stradivari was an extraordinary craftsman of stringed instruments including violins, cellos, guitars, violas, and harps. The Latinized version of his surname – Stradivarius – is used to refer to his instruments. It is estimated that during his 71 year career he made 1,116 instruments, including 960 violins. These violins were made of the finest materials, with beautifully flamed maple backs, a

lustrous red varnish, and unsurpassed tone quality. In 2022 the 1714 “de Vinci, ex-Seidel” Stradivari Violin was valued at \$20 million. A museum dedicated to violins, their origin and history, is located in Cremona, and displays the works of Stradivari as well as other masters of the craft.

Music is a form of art that takes its name from the Greek word meaning “art of the Muses.” Through the centuries, from ancient Rome to the Middle Ages, to the Renaissance and beyond, the important developments and innovations in music, along with the invention and production of so many instruments – especially the enormous contributions made by the Italian instrument makers like Bartolomeo Cristofori and Antonio Stradivari – made Italy one of the most influential countries in the world of music.



The Coke barrels would give the whiskey, as Egidio would say, “a piss color” (Egidio is always descriptive). If the barrels were not present, caramel would do.”

This is much the same process that we do at the club. We order about 600 to 900 lbs of California Zinfandel grapes, a fraction of what he was using, and we make anywhere from 40 to 60 gallons, as opposed to 100 gallons. We press them in the fall, put them in carboys instead of barrels, and bottle them in the spring. We store them in a

fridge instead of a cellar. We don’t make the second wine or make grappa because we are not nearly as resourceful as our ancestors. 🇮🇹

Photos by: Steve Ferraro

Page 4, l to r: Foreground: Frank Ranallo, John Tobin. Background: Luigi Vitritti, Paul Giansante; Foreground: Thomas Crapisi, Mike Stassi, Joe Tripalin, John Porco. Background: Todd Cambio, Mike Cammilleri, John Cusimano, Tim Gatti; Foreground: Joe Tripalin, Daniel Rendler, Todd Cambio, Jack Zarovy. Background: Jack Parrino.



Kickin’ it with Forward Madison FC

By Tim Gatti

Sports fan or not, there’s a good chance that you’ve already heard of our local soccer team Forward Madison FC. Whether it be their strong social media presence, their [unique mascot](#), their flashy uniforms (called “kits” in the soccer world), or their growing number of enthusiastic supporters, the team has grown to be largely successful in just their first four seasons of existence. You may even have met members of the team when they made an appearance at our very own Festa Italia in recent years!

FMFC: A Brief History

FMFC is a Madison-based professional soccer team that plays in the third division of professional soccer in the United States, USL League One. Professional soccer in the states is broken up into [three main pro leagues/divisions](#):

- Major League Soccer (MLS)
- United Soccer League Championship (USL Championship)

- United Soccer League One (USL1)

MLS is the highest division of soccer in the US, and though Wisconsin does not have an MLS team, teams at this level would be synonymous with the Milwaukee Bucks or the Green Bay Packers. Forward Madison FC plays in USL 1, the third tier of pro soccer. Professional soccer regularly scouts and signs talent worldwide across all levels. In fact, this year FMFC has roster talent from: USA, England, Mexico, Germany, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, Austria, Uganda, Venezuela, and South Africa! (they have yet to sign an Italian player)

The FMFC Flamingos play their games at [historic Breese Stevens Field](#) on Madison’s near east side. As a local landmark Breese has a long sports history, hosts many local community events including markets and concerts, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Since FMFC was created, significant investment and devel-

opment has gone into both the stadium itself and the surrounding area. New video boards, concessions, suites, and fan seating create a unique gameday environment. However the real treat, and a driving factor behind the success of the Flamingos, is the fans. Singing, chanting, flags, smoke, and cheers of the club’s ever-present, official supporter group (known as The Flock) helps guide an electric and exciting experience for a diverse and large fanbase. Off the field, both the team and fan groups are largely involved in the community with a range of outreach and support programs that help tie them to Madison’s identity.

Forward Madison has had mixed success in league play. In their 2019 inaugural season, they finished 4th out of 11 teams and



made the playoffs, losing in the first round to league champ North Texas SC. Since then, the Flamingos have finished middle or lower in the league table in the last four of their first five years of existence. With one game to go in the 2023 season, they sit in the final playoff spot facing a win-and-in situation!

IWC Flocks to Forward Madison Match

On Wednesday, September 20 members of the IWC (with family and friends) attended the Forward Madison FC evening match versus Northern Colorado Hailstorm FC. Pre-game, the group was treated to a unique opportunity to meet and talk with fellow member, and Forward Madison FC Assistant Coach John Pascarella.

[The match proved to be a defensive showcase, ending in a 0-0 draw.](#) An exciting opportunity for the Flamingos came in the 36th minute, when they were awarded a penalty kick for a foul. Northern Colorado’s goalkeeper made a great save to keep the score level. Both teams had scoring chances throughout the game. Despite the 0-0 scoreline, Forward Madison entered the match as the underdog, and both teams were happy to take a point home. (In soccer league play, teams are awarded league points based on results of matches: 3pts for a win, 1pt for a draw, 0pts for a loss).

It was a full night of fun, friends, and football (that’s soccer for some of us)! We are looking forward to our next chance to attend a match together!



IWC Members in attendance included: David Rizzo, Christian Swomley, Paul Giansante, Dan Malone, Ross DePaola, Carmelo Alfano, Dan Dyer, Steve Urso, Jim DiUlio, Travis Hunter, Marco Galletti, and Tim Gatti. ■

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Call **Mike Heald** for more information on advertising in *Italia*.

(608) 516-7637

Things I didn't Know:

Information discovered in the Italian Workmen's Club storage rooms

Jim LeTourneau

In 2023, as a member of the Italian Workmen's Club of Madison, I was asked to join a committee tasked with finding photos and other information which would aid the people charged with creating a wall mural for a new building being erected on the 800 block of Regent Street in Madison. This area was part of the old "Greenbush", a neighborhood made up of Sicilian-Italians, Albanian-Italians, Eastern European Jews and African-Americans from the southern US and Chicago. It no longer exists due to a mid-1960's urban renewal project which leveled almost all of the existing homes and businesses within and bordering a road triangle of S. Park St., West Washington Ave. and Regent St. The Italian Workmen's Clubhouse is just one of a handful of structures still standing in this former neighborhood..

While searching the IWC storage

rooms and closets for pictures to be used by the mural creators, I came across other printed articles that seem to have been long hidden and forgotten in bags and boxes, many going back as far as the 1920's. One item I found was a brown file folder containing a UW-Madison graduate student's thesis. It was written in 1964 by John Arthur Valentine and titled: "A Study In Institutional Americanization; The Assimilative History of the Italian-American Community of Madison, Wisconsin". It was 248 pages written in 4 chapters with citations.

As a retired journalism professor, I've read over, corrected and graded my share of thesis papers, understanding there are going to be some small fact errors or discrepancies. Efforts to find Mr. Valentine were also fruitless. Though the UW-Madison Alumni Foundation has his name in its records, there is no listing of

former addresses, other contact information or if he is even still alive, having to be in his 80's by now.

However, after reading the full thesis, I decided to share much of what Mr. Valentine wrote 60 years ago in a series of installments within the IWC newsletter. I will summarize much of the information to shorten the installments. I will also provide information on other articles written about the Madison "Greenbush" area which I found, published or unpublished, which readers of this newsletter can access to read on their own.

Despite my growing up in "The Bush", coming across information like the Valentine thesis elevates my curiosity of a history my parents and grandparents lived in when coming to Madison in the early 1900's. It's information of a lot of things I didn't know.

Things I Didn't Know

by Jim LeTourneau

In 1964, John Arthur Valentine, a graduate student in history at UW-Madison, wrote a thesis paper about the Italian community in Madison. It was written as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for his Master's degree in history. He was, no doubt, influenced by an earlier thesis paper written in 1916 by another UW-Madison student, Henry Barnbrock, Jr. Barnbrock was instrumental in publicizing the terrible conditions members of the Italian colony were living under in the "Greenbush" area. His efforts spotlighted the need to improve the living conditions of these immigrants and helped establish a successful social center, Neighborhood House, which aided the immigrants in bettering themselves.

The following series of articles are summary excerpts of each of the four chapters of Valentine's unpublished thesis: "A Study in Institutional Americanization: The Assimilative History of the Italian-American Community of Madison, Wisconsin". In it, I found a lot of things I didn't know.

Chapter 1: "A Survey of the Italians' Experience in Wisconsin". (In the beginning)

John Valentine wrote in 1964, "Over the course of the past centu-

ry, perhaps as many as five million Italians have immigrated to the United States. Of all those peoples, only the Germans had been more numerous than the Italians. In sheer size alone, Italian emigration stands apart from any other nation". Valentine continues, "For the 31 years preceding the outbreak of World War I, nearly 14 million Italians departed from their homeland. What were the conditions of the people and country which provoked and permitted this mass movement?"

According to Valentine, "In the 18th and 19th centuries, Northern Italy was among the areas that led the way in the Great Age of Discovery and Exploration. It rapidly became industrialized and urbanized. Northern Italy has traditionally been known for its worldliness due mainly to its navigational skills and foreign trade. Northern Italians were first to begin emigrating, establishing themselves in all corners of the world, especially when it came to business ventures." (Valentine also mentioned, in his footnotes, about another 1963 thesis by Rudolph J. Vecoli, also a UW-Madison grad student, pointing to the success of the Bank of America, a Genoese family foundation. However, as Valentine points out, comparing business success between northern and southern Italy can be misconstrued, noting that southern Italian business success was more recent and

probably had gone unnoticed. He mentioned the success of Sicilians who had moved north to Milan and controlled the fruit and vegetable markets there and Neapolitans the retail textile business.)

Northern Italians began arriving in the U.S. in the early 19th century and by 1850, there were approximately 3,700 settled here. Thirty years later, the number of Italians in America had increased to over 44 thousand, most of whom were from Northern Italy. According to Valentine, by the 1860's, Northern Italian emigration worldwide surpassed over 100,000 a year. Most were seasonal emigrants seeking work in adjacent European countries like France, Switzerland, Germany and Austria-Hungary. In the later part of the 19th century, Northern Italian emigration spread further out to South America and North Africa. The farther they travelled, the more permanent the migration.

Valentine writes that "the main impetus of this emigration was the European industrial expansion which created a labor demand. Because the North of Italy was part of the "industrialization zone", life was more tolerable than that of the South. This explains why northern emigration to American, after 1900, never equaled that of the South."

Continued next page

Following the Middle Ages, Southern Italy was cut off from mainstream Western Civilization. During this period, the land declined in productivity because of deforestation, lack of rainfall and faulty technology. Southern Italy also endured various army invasions, scourges of malaria, excessive taxation and repeated earthquakes.

Valentine writes that “the once glorious past of Southern Italy degenerated into one of the most backward, isolated, poverty and disease-ridden areas of the western world.” What economic backbone that existed in the South centered on agriculture. The farmer-laborer class, the “contadini”, lived by the thousands in rural villages, usually situated on a hilltop as a refuge from the brigands and malaria. Each day they descended the hill slopes to work their fields before climbing back up the hill to the protection of their hilltop village.” A static, feudal social structure grew up around this social framework. A man’s position was largely determined by birth. Social, economic and physical mobility upward was virtually non-existent.

The “contadini” were at the bottom of the social order. But as a “class”, even this status did not provide solidarity as a social “class”. It was the “family” which provided solidarity. So exclusive was the demand of the family for the loyalty of its members that it

precluded any allegiance to other social institutions: church, government, nationality. Reminiscent of “clans”, each member was expected to further the family’s welfare and defend its honor, as well. The ties were so strong, the only non-family members who might gain access to the “inner circle” were “padrino” or “madrina” (god-parents).

While an imaginative picture of Southern Italy might seem bleak, not all the areas of the South were economically depressed and socially retarded. There was not a mass exodus from the whole region though some areas experienced more emigration than others. In fact, there were some areas of Southern Italy that saw virtually no emigration at all.

According to Valentine, in the late 19th century, Southern Italian agriculture became depressed and was unable to compete with efficient and mechanized production elsewhere and the misery increased enough to justify the beginning of a huge emigration. In 1880, restrictive bans were lifted and Southern Italians, those who wanted to, began their move out of the country. Then, in 1901, the Italian government passed a law providing free passports. Intense passport demand and great competition among steamship companies greatly reduced passenger costs, sometimes as low as nine dollars per person. The exodus began. Even though it was inex-

pensive and easy, the “contadini” emigrated for one basic reason: so troubling were the terms of their living conditions, moving was more desirable.

“Home” for Southern Italians became anyplace that provided them with bread. However, many who made the move to another country eventually returned to Italy. Despite the promise of better wages elsewhere, including in America, the allure of Italy overcame many with a desire to return to the familiarity of the “Old Country”. Larger numbers of Southern Italians increased the huge emigration move around 1880. Ten years later, despite an economic slump in the 1890’s, the number of Italians entering the U.S exceeded that of any other ethnic group. The year 1900 marks the year more Italians came to the U.S. than those Northern Italians who went to South America. It also began a string of 15 years where the number of Italians emigrating to North America (U.S. and Canada) exceeded 100,000 per year, with the most coming to North America in 1907 at 285,000.

The “contadini” did not go back to farming in the U.S. as their techniques were useless here, plus the fact they didn’t have the money to buy a farm. They had also lost their desire to farm, considering it a “degrading” occupation and no longer had any “ties to the land”. Their only choice was to enter

the unskilled labor market where an overwhelming majority were employed in railroad building, mining, or working in local government construction while a few worked in factories up until World War I. The goal of a “contadino” was to accumulate enough savings to improve his family’s economic position. If his family was already here, that meant getting a house. If his family was still in Italy, it meant saving enough to get them to America. Many hoped to return to Italy to become land owners, not farmers. Making 80 to 90 cents a day as a construction worker in the U.S. was a lot better than making 10 to 15 cents a day as a farmer in Italy.

According to John Valentine, as a group, these immigrants had no peer when it came to saving money. It was estimated that the “contadini” saved up to 80% of their earnings. They were extremely dedicated to frugality, even at the expense of their own health, even putting their lives at risk. They ate as little as possible and abstained from alcohol. It was not uncommon to find up to 20 men living in one or two rented rooms.

Because of their frugality, very few American communities profited from or welcomed gangs of Italian construction workers into their neighborhoods. Americans began to look upon Italian immigrants with great disfavor which was intensified by other aspects of their behavior. Like most immigrant

groups, they were “clannish” and, being ignorant of the English language or American customs, they stuck to themselves. Italians displaced other workers by accepting lower wages and inferior working conditions. They also worked as strike breakers, making organized labor greatly upset.

Italians held the lowest status jobs in society, which made them targets for exploitation by the “padrone” system. Certain Italians were hired by railroads to recruit other Italians. They were the “boss” (padrone) because they had been with the railroad longer, knew some English language and had access to the Italian labor source. However, the “padrone” usually selected his fellow townsmen (paesani) who, in turn, trusted the recruiter because he had come from the same “paese” (town) in Italy. The “boss” would get a certain fee from the railroad for every laborer he found, then would charge his “paesani” a fee for getting them a job. The “padrone” only cared for his fee, not the working conditions or wages of his recruits. This “padrone” system had innumerable examples of fraud and exploitation. This was a bit ironic considering these Italians distrusted strangers and could not be easily duped by Americans as were other immigrant groups.

A Southern Italian man knew little patriotism for Italy and felt even less solidarity with his “condatini”. The first and foremost loyalty was

reserved for his family. However, most Southern Italians felt an attachment to their native towns. This was called “campanilismo”, a figure of speech suggesting that the world of the “contadini” was confined within the shadow of his towns’ “campanile” (church bell tower). For this reason, the “contadini” who did not trust strangers, placed their faith in a “paisano”, but not a fellow “contadini” from another Italian town.

It was this same “village-mindedness” of the Italians which largely determined their distribution in the U.S. Clustered together in the same neighborhood, they tended to congregate with others from the same province, town or village. The first “little Italy’s” were established among cities along the eastern US seaboard. In 1910, almost 72% of Italians were in nine New England or Middle Atlantic states. As early as 1880, over one-quarter of all Italians resided in New York City. Early in the 20th century, Chicago became the major area of concentration in the Midwest. By 1920, there were over 20,000 Italians living in Chicago with most working for railroads as the Windy City became a major recruiting area. Being a rail hub, Italian immigrants began to fan out from Chicago along the rail lines to Milwaukee, Madison and even Mineral Point, WI.

Most of the Italian settlements of Wisconsin were established this way. Mineral Point, Wisconsin had a local zinc mine. Both the Illinois Central and Milwaukee Road railroads had rail lines there transporting zinc ore from the 1850's until around 1930 when the mine closed. Most of the Italians who arrived in Mineral Point all came from the same small town in Italy. As of 1964, there were still 30 Italian families in Mineral Point.

There were 5,000 Italians in Milwaukee in 1905, most from the Sicilian colony in Chicago, working on the railroads or doing road construction work. Ten years later, almost three-quarters of the Italians were now working at Allis-Chalmers, Falk Manufacturing or The Rolling Mills Company, all foundries or steel mills. This same pattern of jobs brought Southern Italians from Chicago to Kenosha and Racine, WI. auto plants.

In the 1880's, according to Valentine, a few Southern Italians were employed as strike-breakers and were sent to Cumberland, WI, a small town in Barren County in Wisconsin's northwest, where a rail line from St. Paul, Minnesota was being built, winding its way from St. Paul through Wisconsin, passing Cumberland up to Superior-Duluth. About 90% Of these Italians were from Abruzzo. When the railroad construction was complete, about 1,000 remained in Barron County, returning to farming.

They were one of the few Southern Italian agricultural communities in the whole U.S.

The Italian communities in Beloit and Madison were also established by Southern Italian railroad workers who, originally recruited in Chicago, remained in these cities after their railroad work was finished. About 90% of Wisconsin's Italian population was settled in this manner. The remaining 10% traced their origins back to the mining industry. In the 1840's, a group of miners from the northern Italian Piedmont area worked in the lead mines of Galena, Illinois. From their ranks sprang an agricultural community in Western Wisconsin on the Mississippi River. New Genoa was established in 1848 about 20 miles south of La Crosse and was later renamed Genoa. According to Harvard Professor Robert F. Foerster writing in 1919, "The New Genoa colony was one of the most successful farming communities in the U.S."

Origin Chart of the Italians in Wisconsin from the 1950 census

Milwaukee and Waukesha:	Sicily, Abruzzo, Piedmont
Kenosha-Racine:	Calabria, Sicily, Piedmont
Beloit:	Sicily
Hurley & Iron County:	Piedmont, Abruzzo
Madison:	Sicily

Another major population area of Italian immigration in the 1900's was the Iron County town of Hurley, WI, located right at the border of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Working in the "open pit" mines, lumber mills and on two railroad lines, these Italians were mostly from Piedmont and Abruzzo and were recruited from New York. (The Italian heritage in Hurley is celebrated each Labor Day weekend with the "Festivale de Italiano"). Many small towns and villages in Iron County near Hurley had scatterings of Italians. (In the 2000 census, 30% of Hurley residents listed themselves "Italian".) In Pence, WI, about six miles west of Hurley, almost all the residents were Piedmontese or Tirolese with a few French folks from Corsica. In Kimball, WI, also west of Hurley, 15 Italian families formed a land company to begin an agriculture venture. They were surrounded by Finnish immigrants and, according to Valentine, their settlement was called, "Dago Valley". (Public enemy # 3, Ralph

Capone, older brother of Al Capone, lived in Hurley where he died in 1974).

See origin chart Valentine created
Marinette, Vernon, Barron Counties & other N. Wisconsin areas:
Piedmont: Abruzzo, Lombardy

(The listing of Sicilians would include those Albanese who came to Sicily in the 15th Century)

Eighty-five percent of Wisconsin's Italians were southerners, mostly from Sicily, with a smaller number from Abruzzo. Of the remaining 15%, most came from the north Piedmont area. The chart also concluded that 85% of Italians in 1950 lived in the industrial, south-eastern part of Wisconsin or Madison. Slightly more than 5% of Italians were employed in agriculture or its dairy branch-cheese production. The 1950 censuses also concluded that 95% of Italians lived in urban areas and that most of the northern Italians originally came to work in the mines with a few returning to farming. Meanwhile, most Southern Italians first worked on the railroads and then primarily turned to factory or industrial labor.

According to John Valentine, in the four decades between 1840 and 1880, approximately 1,000 Italian immigrants came to Wisconsin. In the next decade, this figure doubled. From 1890 to 1910, 8,000 more arrived. Of this last group, most were unskilled and illiter-

ate. However, these "contadini" brought with them a strong trenchant culture from the old world. One of the strongest elements in their culture was the previously mentioned sentiment of "campanilismo", which did not die easily in Wisconsin. For example, not one, but four "Little Italy's" were formed in Milwaukee. Three were located near downtown in the city's first ward (Brady St. area Sicilians) and third ward (Sicilians living between Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan) plus the city of Bay View (Northern Italians). The fourth was in West Allis. All these colonies reflected immigrant efforts to maintain a circle of relatives and friends within one neighborhood. This was also true in Kenosha where most Northern and Southern Italians lived in the city's northwest side. Neighborhoods within a settlement often comprised of a few city blocks with only residents of the same native village in Italy.

Desirous of maintaining their native culture, the Italians built separate churches for themselves. In part, this desire was a reaction against American Catholicism which was incomprehensible to the immigrants. American Catholic churches lacked characteristics which Italians associated with their worship. The immigrants, especially the "contadini", were fond of religious symbols such as statues of saints and the

Madonna. They also wanted Italian priests to conduct services in their native tongue. The final touch of "campanilismo" was added when the church was named after patron saint of the immigrant's native Italian village.

Churches were also social centers. For example, in 1904, the Blessed Virgin of Pompeii Church of Milwaukee's 3rd Ward(the little "pink" church) was established by Southern Italians. Soon families clustered and lived around the church like a big family united in a common bond of community until the church was demolished in 1967 to make way for the new I-794 Interstate.

But the Italians brought more than their church to Milwaukee. They established the Florentine Opera Company (formerly the Italian Opera Chorus), which was the first and last such venture in Wisconsin. They also published three newspapers and sponsored early radio programs. The first newspaper, "Corriere del West", was started by Giovanni Schiavo in the early 1920's. and lasted about a decade. The second, "Corriere", lasted until the late 1930's. The third, and most successful, the "Italian Tribuna", began in the late 1930's. It was published monthly in both English and Italian and lasted until 1966.

Continued next page

With the exception of their churches, most other Italian communities outside of Milwaukee were unable to establish and maintain the number of cultural institutions and events Milwaukee’s settlement provided its Italian citizens. Milwaukee had a far greater number of Italians than did any other community and, consequently, was able to gain the public support and financial backing for various cultural activities.

But all communities , including Milwaukee, did develop mutual aid societies. In Madison, the Italian Workmen’s Club, was established in 1912 by predominantly Italo-Albanians from Sicily. Also in 1912, the Bersaglieri Club was established in Madison for the Sicilians, meeting in St. Joseph’s Church. They later converted an old furniture store on the opposite side of the colony into a clubhouse. Kenosha’s Italians had “The Italian Hour” radio program. In 1904, Hurley began publishing an Italian language paper, “La Nostra Terra” (Our Land), until 1913, merging it with the “Iron County News“.

Originally, the mutual benefit societies were organized to provide insurance benefits to their Italian members. All societies paid benefits to families of the deceased and a few even provided accident and unemployment insurance. Consequently, if two or three groups of Italians from different regions

lived in one community, a corresponding number of mutual aid societies were formed. In later years, one would eventually emerge as the strongest in the colony.

For example, Madison’s Italian Workman’s Club eventually reached this position. According to Rosario Stassi, a former President of the Italian Workers Club, in the late 1950’s, officers of his club and those of the Madison Bersaglieri Club proposed a merger, but a membership vote of both club’s rank and file rejected the proposal. In the early 1960’s, the Bersaglieri Club was disbanded and its clubhouse building was demolished as part of a neighborhood renewal project.

According to John Valentine, this type of peculiar individualism was not conducive to concerted action. This, coupled with the fact that Italians were scattered throughout Wisconsin, hindered them from displaying any sustained, unified action. However, there were two exceptions. There was political agitation to make Columbus Day a national holiday and the publication of an Italian magazine, The Italian Leader.

According to Valentine, in order to understand the significance of having a national Columbus Day holiday, one must recall the image of Italians in the 1920’s. All immigrant groups have been

discriminated against by native, contemporary Americans. “New immigrants”, in particular, felt the wrath of this prejudice with unparalleled nativism, culminating in Ku Klux Klan marches and immigration restrictions beginning in the 1920’s. Italians experienced added resentment from established American society, being viewed as a dangerous and lawless class, especially prone to crime.

There is little doubt that some Italians were much involved in criminal activities. To many Sicilians, especially from the Palermo area, crime was a way of life. Their long tradition was carried to America where murder and extortion, in the form of the Black Hand, were rampant in every Italian community, especially with those with a population of Sicilians. However, the victims of these crimes were other Italian immigrants. ■

In the next installment of the “Italia” Newsletter, we’ll present part 2, going further into John Valentines 1964 theses to look at the establishment of Columbus Day, the lead up to World War II, the Italian magazine “The Leader”, and the climb up the ladder for Italians to gain “respectability” in Wisconsin.



IWC Birthdays

January

Charles Hannan	1/3
James Trameri	1/5
Steve Urso	1/8
Matthew Jarosz	1/9
Robert Murray	1/9
Dave Valenza	1/13
Garrett Gundersen	1/14
David Spadoni	1/15
Carlo J. Bonura	1/17
Bob Lavigna	1/17
Rudy Senarighi	1/19
Nick Baldarotta	1/23
Peter Cerniglia	1/24
Richard Trameri	1/29
Daniel Blasiolo	1/31
Jason Mascitti	1/31

February

Russell Theel	2/2
Thomas Speranza	2/3
Sam Martino	2/5
Joe Alfano	2/12
John Cusimano	2/13
Joseph Musillami	2/17
Joseph M. Schiro	2/19
Micheal Alioto	2/21
Vincent Ritacca	2/21
Joseph Scarpelli, Jr.	2/22
Robert Chiesa	2/24
Stephen Sasso	2/26
Frank Alfano	2/27



Italia

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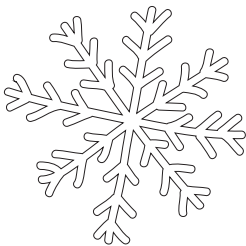
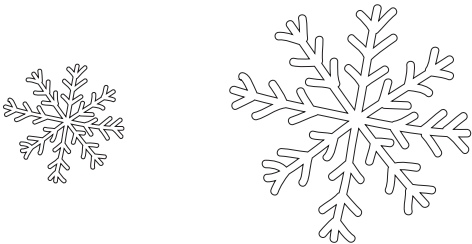
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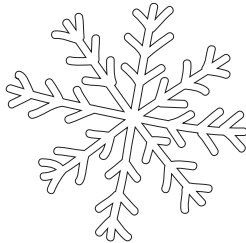
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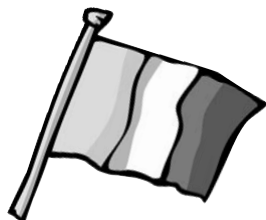
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Meeting Dates

- IWC Council Meetings – 2nd Tuesday of Each Month 7:00 pm
- IWC Membership Meetings – 3rd Tuesday of Each Month 6:30 pm

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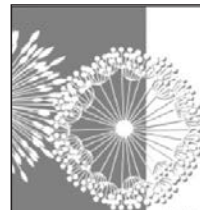
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