



May | June
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Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB

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President's Message

by Joe Tripalin

Festa Italia 2025

Hello fellow members. As you read this, we'll be just a few weeks from the start of Festa 2025. Festa Italia is a celebration of food, music, culture, sports and family fun that highlights our year and connects us with the community. Already, several members have put in many hours renting the park, completing the licenses, ordering the tents and porta potties, creating the schedule of events, ordering food and beverages, booking the bands, and connecting with sponsors, media, and with vendors that sell at Festa. There's a tremendous amount of planning that's already been done, and it seems like a million details to handle to get Festa off the ground each year. We need all the members to help make this a successful event and all you need to do to help make Festa successful is to sign up for a shift to help at the event.



Festa is our big effort each year to connect with the public and to share our Italian heritage. That community outreach is part of our mission statement. If things work out, it's also a time to make a little money that helps with scholarships, supporting social events, and keeping the club's financial condition healthy. It's also a time when members come together and work as a team to make Festa successful, and along the way build some friendships and memories. Maybe it's our version

“A tavola non
si invecchia.”

(At the table, one
does not grow old.)

— Italian Proverb



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The History of Pizza

By Tom Smith



My first experience with pizza dates back to trips taken as a young boy to visit family in Brooklyn, New York. There was nothing that could compare to walking down the street on a warm summer night to the corner pizzeria, where you could get a slice of real New York style pizza at a walkup window for 25 cents. For the uninitiated, New York style pizza – which is often sold in large wide slices to go – is made with a characteristically hand-tossed thin crust, thick and crisp only along its edge but soft, thin, and pliable enough beneath all its toppings to be folded to eat. Let me tell you, that was real pizza. Just thinking about it makes my mouth water.

I've had a lot of different pizza experiences over the years since those early days. I had a favorite uncle who took me to some amazing pizzerias in New York, and when he would come to visit somehow he would find the best local ones where I grew up in the Milwaukee suburbs. He also introduced me to a little pizza-like snack one night, when he had to come up with something using only what he found in my parents' kitchen. He took some English muffins, spread some leftover marinara sauce on them, added some mozzarella cheese, some black olives, and mushrooms, popped them into the oven and "sorpresa" ...mini-pizzas. Having attended the University of Wisconsin here in Madison at the same time Pizza Pit first began delivering pizzas, many were delivered to my door. And yes, I will confess to consuming a few Rocky Rococo pizzas from that franchise's early years as well. A college roommate once took me to the original Pizzeria Uno in Chicago because he said I had to experience the *authentic real* deep dish pizza. Of course, in more recent years, I have become a fan of our own Patrick DePula's Salvatore's Tomato Pies. So, where did the delicacy we know as pizza begin...what are its origins?



The word "pizza" itself has a number of suggested origins. It was first recorded in the town of Gaeta in the year 997 AD, when a feudal lord in southern Italy pledged 12 pizzas to the local bishop as an annual homage. The meaning of the word has been attributed to the Lombardic word "pizzo" (meaning "mouthful" or "bite"), or the Greek word "pitta" (meaning a round flatbread baked in a hot oven). Others suggest that pizza is derived from the word "pizzaiulo," which means "pizza



maker,” believed to have come from the Latin word “pinsere” which means “to press or pound” as in flattening the dough. Like many of the foods I have written about, its history dates back thousands of years, to the flatbreads with toppings of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. In fact, Virgil, one of Rome’s greatest poets, wrote about Trojan citizens fleeing destruction of their city and landing in Latium, Italy, ravenous from their long journey, who ate a meal of cooked stale round loaves topped with mushrooms and herbs.

But the pizza we are more familiar with – a delicious crust covered with tomato sauce, cheese, and toppings – was born on the western coast of Italy in Naples. The city of Naples has a long history, dating back to 600 B.C., and over time became a thriving city on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. In 1535 writer and poet Benedetto di Falco, in his “Description of Ancient Naples,” wrote that “focaccia in Neapolitan is called pizza.” Naples’ population exploded in the 18th and 19th century, with a large population packed into a dense area that included masses of poor, working class people who needed to eat and required an inexpensive food source. As much of their lives were spent outdoors, they also needed a food that could be eaten quickly. Pizza topped with tomatoes, oil, cheese, and garlic were sold by street vendors as a readily available and affordable food for all.



**The Pizza Seller 1825
by Gaetano Dura**

One version of pizza that originated in Naples was Pizza Marinara, usually prepared by a mariner’s wife as a dish to be served when he returned from fishing in the Bay of Naples. Pizza Marinara had a topping of tomato, oregano, garlic, and extra virgin olive oil. When King Umberto and Queen Margherita of Italy visited Naples in 1889, they tried a variety of pizzas from the local Pizzeria Brandi. The story told is that when they wanted to sample something new they were served a favorite called the pizza mozzarella...which was topped with white cheese, red tomatoes, and green basil. The pie ended up taking its name from the queen to become known as the Margherita Pizza. Pizza Margherita would go down in history as a



Wood-Fired Margherita Pizza

unifying food, elevating a poor person’s food to royal status, which made everyone feel good. For the Neapolitans, their local street food got validation, and for the monarchy it made them appear down-to-earth and culturally aware. This famous pizza became known as the “propaganda you could eat.” Over time, with the industrial boom, pizza spread from Southern Italy north to the top of Italy’s boot, becoming a national food.

History of Pizza continued

Its journey to the United States would come later in the late 1800s and early 1900s with Italian immigrants arriving in New York. In what is now known as Little Italy, Gennaro Lombardi opened the first pizzeria in 1905 (which is still in business today, having moved from its original location but still in the Little Italy section of Manhattan). Made in the classic New York style, using a coal fired oven and with the classic hand tossed thin crust, the evolution of pizza took hold in America. In the years that followed, pizzamakers who trained at Lombardi's began to spread across the city and open the next generation of pizzerias, including Totonno's in Brooklyn in 1924 and John's of Bleecker Street in 1929 (both of which are still flourishing). Allied soldiers returning after World War II brought with them an obsession for the pizza they came to love while in Italy. As Italians spread across the country, what was once thought of as an ethnic food became part of the American food culture.



Over the years different types and styles of pizza were created, and chains came into being. Deep dish, stuffed crust, gluten-free, vegan, even breakfast and dessert pizzas became popular. Individual tastes demand different pizzas, and there have been many arguments among family and friends about what is the best pizza. But given the origin of the Neapolitan pizza in Naples, in 2004 those wanting to preserve an “authentic Neapolitan pizza” actually passed a law about what constitutes a true Neapolitan pizza. It must be



round, no larger than 14 inches in size, produced with a specific type of yeast and wheat flour, cooked in a wood-fired oven above 905 degrees Fahrenheit, and can include only the finest ingredients. The olive oil must be poured in a spiral motion, and if grated cheese makes an appearance it must be spread with a uniform motion of the hand.

A few other factoids that might interest you? Most pizzas are round because the shape is ideal for even cooking. The round shape also makes it easier for quick cutting swipes with a pizza cutter.

Industry figures claim that up to 40% of Americans eat pizza at least once a week, and it is estimated Americans consume 3 billion pizzas every year. And the average American will eat over 6,000 slices during their lifetime.

By the way, if you missed National Pizza Day, celebrated on February 9th every year, National Pizza Party Day is coming up celebrated on the third Friday in May...which is May

Continued next page

President's Message continued

of the effort and sacrifice the members made in 1922 to build our clubhouse building? Imagine that effort!!

Festa is also a time when members can invite their significant other, children, and grandchildren to help in the work effort. I've seen many wonderful examples of families working together at Festa. What great memories.

One final thought. When each of us joined the club, we took an oath that stated in part "*Furthermore, I pledge to work for the moral and material benefit of the club by lending my time and talent and thereby, to be worthy of the honor accorded me, in being entrusted with membership*". We all need to take this pledge seriously. If you live in the area, are under 80 years old, and are healthy and able to help, we need you to take a shift or two at Festa. If you have a conflict, please call Jim DiUlio at 414-651-6993 or Joe Tripalin at 608-445-0984 to let us know your situation. The council will carefully review this year's sign up and consider actions that may impact the membership status of those who choose not to participate and don't bother to contact us to discuss their situation.

Something To Celebrate

The council has set up a plan to celebrate the clubhouse building being added to the National Register of Historic Places. On Tuesday July 15th, a membership meeting

night, there'll be a ceremony centered around the new plaque on the building commemorating the National Registry. The event will start at 5:00pm and there'll be appetizers and desserts after the ceremony. Later we'll have our normal meeting. This date and time will allow local TV media and news reporters to cover the event, which will be special for the club. Please mark your calendars regarding the earlier start time for the meeting.

Club Finances

There's been a great deal of turmoil in the financial markets over the last few weeks. Our portfolios have fared better than the overall markets. We have a moderate-aggressive investment approach, and we continually monitor our allocations to ensure we're maintaining our investment strategy. We didn't make any big moves in the market, and while I'm writing this in the middle of April, we're doing just fine.

Welcome New Members

Finally, we've been blessed with quite a few new members over the last few months. Please go out of your way to make them feel comfortable and a part of the club. At the membership meeting or Festa, if you see a new face, introduce yourself and get to know the new individual. For me, one of the things I look forward to on membership night is catching up with my friends and sometimes making new ones. By reaching out, you

can help the new folks feel comfortable and appreciated. Thanks for helping with this

Joe ■■

Pizza Continued from page 4

16th in 2025. There is also Pizza Margherita Day on June 11th, National Cheese Pizza Day on September 5th, and the entire month of October is designated National Pizza Month. But you really don't need a holiday or special occasion to enjoy whatever kind of pizza you like. So have a slice, have a pie, and enjoy! ■■



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Italia

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Things I didn't Know 4-B:

The establishment of the Italian Methodist Church, its “Americanizaton” efforts and a history of the men and women of the church who laid its foundation.

Written and edited by Prof. Jim LeTourneau, IWC

In our previous edition of “Things I Didn't Know”, UW-Madison Graduate student John Arthur Valentine, in his 1964 thesis, wrote about the history of the Italo-Albanians who had immigrated to Madison in the early 20th Century. He also wrote about the influence the Italian-Methodist Church had upon the Italian community in Madison, how this Protestant Church appealed to the Italo-Albanians and the early conflicts that developed between the Albanian-Italians and the Sicilians who lived in the same “Bush” neighborhood, more things I didn't know about my old neighborhood.

John Valentine wrote, “Madison’s Methodists were unaware of the external similarities which existed between their religious practice and Greek Catholicism which the Italo-Albanians were familiar with. But in building their actual church in the Greenbush neighborhood, they appealed to the Italians’ traditions. Regarding its construction, the Methodists tried to incorporate some of the architectural features that the immigrants had known in Italy. When the church structure

was built, its design and decoration reflected this plan.

Methodism could not allow the design to include many of the religious symbols, such as statues, which were ordinarily associated with Italian immigrant churches. Ironically, however, the design of this church had great appeal for the Italo-Albanian immigrants. The Greek Catholic Churches in Italy make far less use of statues in their interior design than do Roman Catholic churches. Quite by accident, this Madison Church more closely approximated a Greek Catholic church with numerous icons on its walls than either a typical, austere Methodist Church interior or Roman Catholic Church interior with statues of Saints.



Madison’s Italian Methodist Church had large religious murals on the side walls, an even larger painting of Christ on the front wall behind the altar, and the Ten Commandments, in Italian, hung

conspicuously. Stained glass windows were abundantly in evidence and an ornate design separated the walls from the ceiling around the whole interior. Above the entrance, a Gothic rose window drew attention to the words inscribed directly below—“Chiesa Italiana.” The “Italian Church” was also Protestantized; its altar was simple, small and undecorative. And it was Americanized as well; ostentatiously draped over the communion rail was Old Glory!



According to Valentine, the Methodist Church, unlike Neighborhood House, displayed a real appreciation for Italian culture. Church events would inevitably include musical selections from Verdi and Rossini. It emphasized music in its Christianization and Americanization programs, believing that all Italians had musical ability and appreciation. The Church also demonstrated an appreciation for

less sophisticated forms of Italian culture. It sponsored seasonal festivals, block parties and band concerts. All of this might or might not be credited to the Italian ministers or the Albanian congregation itself. But there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the Board of the Church, all non-Italians, did genuinely appreciate and understand the Italian culture.

They had, moreover, a keen understanding of Italian history, especially the Masonic movement which played an instrumental role in Italy's unification in 1870. In fact, it was in this context that they were confident they could Protestantize the local Italians. Ernest Clarke, a Church board member, wrote in his 1920 Annual Report of the Church's growth and plans..." The Italians are catching the inspiration of the great Italian prophets, Garibaldi and Mazzini, 'We are marching', said the latter, 'from the church of the past to the church of the future, from the dead church to the living, to the church of free men and equals...' Keep in mind that in the matter of religion a Protestant Christianity is the Italians' only heritage and hope".

Valentine wrote that, in the long run, the Italian Methodist Church enjoyed—at very best—only poor to moderate success in converting the Albanians. Among the Sicilians, its success was virtually nil. However, that it came close, very

close to accomplishing its conversion objective is what makes its history exciting. Forces beyond the church's control initially aided, but eventually waylaid its strenuous efforts. Although the Church failed in its Protestant proselytizing efforts, it was astoundingly successful in its Americanization work. In fact, it was due to the Americanization program that it flirted with the near impossibility of Protestantizing the local Italians and, in particular, the Albanians. This Herculean feat, according to Valentine, was nearly realized through the brilliant efforts of one man—the Rev. Antonio Parroni. He was the Church's fourth and last pastor and to fully appreciate his role, one must first turn to the years preceding his arrival.

The first pastor of the Italian Methodist Church, wrote Valentine, was a Rev. Leitz. His appointment was temporary as he was a student minister at the University of Wisconsin. Coming in the Spring of 1916 he served for almost two years. According to a Feb. 2, 1922 Wisconsin State Journal article, "although his stay was not long, Rev. Leitz was responsible for organizing the church band and placing the congregation on its feet". Valentine wrote that, even though he studied and spoke Italian, Rev. Leitz must have been somewhat handicapped by not being Italian. In those days, the local Italian immigrants did not trust or openly communicate with

anyone from outside their own community.

However, in overcoming this handicap he was considerably aided by Mrs. Angela Malinverni Magliola Sidell, an Italian immigrant from Milan. She met and married her German-American husband in New York City before arriving in Madison. In the Church's very early years, 1916-1921, she was a vital force in holding it together.



Sidell family; Angela, husband August, daughters Violet & Pierre

Being a Protestant herself, she worked closely with Rev. Leitz and other non-Italian Church officers, often acting as a go-between with the Italians. For example, Mr. Paul E. Stark was the Church's first Superintendent of Sunday School. *(Stark was the same wealthy realtor who sold the land to the Italian Workmen's Club for \$ 1.00 to build its clubhouse).* Mrs. Sidell acted as his interpreter for religious lessons after going through the Italian neighborhood coaxing and persuading her fellow Italians to

Continued next page

attend. She made house-to-house calls urging Italian cooperation to eventually build a church (*in 1922*) and giving their children religious instructions through Sunday School.

A Church contemporary, Carrie Adams-Henderson, wrote that Mrs. Sidell was active in other Italian activities as well. These included the Italian-American Civic League in the late 1930's to early 1940's. She did not appear to be inhibited or restricted by her Italian background. The fact that she married a non-Italian, was Protestant, went though an Italian community drumming up support for a Protestant Church, was a social and political agitator all attest to her open-mindedness and worldly orientation including photographs of her wearing up-to-date clothes, including fur wraps. This "look" contrasted with other Italian women of the time, pointing to her liberalism. (*Angela Sidell died in 1954 and was buried in Madison's Forest Hills Cemetery*).

During Rev. Leitz tenure, the Church was considerably handicapped by the lack of permanent facilities for either classes or services. Since Leitz was non-Italian, and a temporary appointee, very little of permanent significance was accomplished... nor expected. But, in late 1917, two of these problems were immediately resolved. Rev. Philip Pallotta, an Italian immigrant was secured as a permanent pastor. For

the next decade, Valentine wrote, his untiring struggles and devotion became a tradition to the members of the Italian Methodist Church. In his work, he was appreciably assisted by his wife, Rose, a trained deaconess. In 1920, Rose was the first woman to preach in a Madison church. Philip Pallotta's appointment was later made permanent when the National Methodist Church, as part of its mission work, assumed his yearly salary of \$1,200 (*approx. \$19,600 in 2025 salary*).

When Rev. Pallotta arrived, the church conducted its classes and services in various rooms and buildings throughout the community. Acknowledging the inadequacy of the situation, Pallotta and the Church Board agreed the



Rev. Philip Pallotta & wife Rose

immediate and chief objective was to build its own facility. In 1919, provisions were made for the usage of Trousdale Methodist Church on Madison's far South side. Here, religious services were held for the small membership until 1922 when the church's new facilities were dedicated on Sunday, February 5th at the corner of Milton and Lake

Streets, right in the heart of the Sicilian neighborhood. The raising of the money for the new church building was no easy task. According to John Valentine, most of the Protestant denominations didn't keep their earlier promises of financial support. However, the local Methodists did not flinch and with the aid of the National Methodist Centenary Movement, \$8,000 (*approx. \$150,000 in 2025*) was given to help defray the building costs while a local, city-wide financial drive began. The theme was "bigger and better Americanization and Christianization work". With a permanent facility, the Church could hope to Americanize and Protestantize all of Madison's Italians. Dr. R.A. Chase, at that time, district superintendent of the Methodist Church, struck the fundraising keynote when he said..." I would recommend this field of investment to all who believe in a fuller Americanization and fuller Christianization."

There were a number of speakers at the February, 1922 dedication of the Madison Italian Methodist Church. The general theme of each speech was "when a foreigner becomes a better Christian, he at once becomes a better American". One speaker, the Rev. F.P. Sulmonetti an Elizabeth, New Jersey Methodist minister, related the following story to the church dedication audience, of how, due to Christianity, he had become Americanized...

“ I and another missionary, an American, had once been guests at a private home in which we were to speak. The little girl of the house had heard a ‘Dago’ was coming to visit and she was curious to see one. When I and my companion arrived, the child asked her mother which one was the ‘Dago’. The mother told her to guess. The child guessed the American”.

Valentine wrote that, if Rev. Sulmonetti’s purported “eloquence” was debatable, one of his observations was not. He asserted that “only five percent of the Italians in America (*at that time*) were actively affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church.” He then urged that...” the other ninety-five percent be taken into the (*Protestant*) fold.” Being Italian, his views were considered authoritative by the dedication audience. Moreover, this view was supported locally by Rev. Pallotta, who estimated that ninety percent of the local Italians could be converted. Although grossly false, these assumptions gave the Madison Methodists much hope in their work. It was this type of confidence that pervaded not only the dedication ceremonies, but also the immediate years to follow.

With adequate facilities now available, Rev. Pallotta pursued his work with great vigor. He made over one thousand house visits a year, encouraging the local Italians to take advantage of the Methodist Church. Slowly, but steadily, his efforts reaped dividends. The

Sunday bible school increased its membership from 75 in 1921 to 113 in 1926. The congregation of 50 was doubled in the same time span.

The Church’s Americanization programs were intensified and met with moderate success. Rev. Pallotta delegated most of those tasks to others. According to Valentine two, in particular, were noteworthy. Miss Carrie E. Adams-Henderson came to the Italian Methodist Church in 1922. A trained deaconess, she was paid \$100 per year (*about \$1,900 in 2025 money*) by the National Methodist Church with further income supplemented by women of the West Wisconsin Conference. This organization also provided gifts of every kind for further distribution among the needy of the Church.

Most of Miss Adams-Henderson’s work dealt with the young women of the Church. She conducted cooking, sewing, housekeeping and music lessons. Some of the classes were purely Americanization efforts. For example, the Cradle Roll Department was designed to bring community mothers and children together for American methods of childcare. Other programs attempted to work religion into the Americanization program, sewing classes would do “handiwork, illustrating the Bible stories” while other classes were purely Christianization efforts such as a Sunday Bible school.

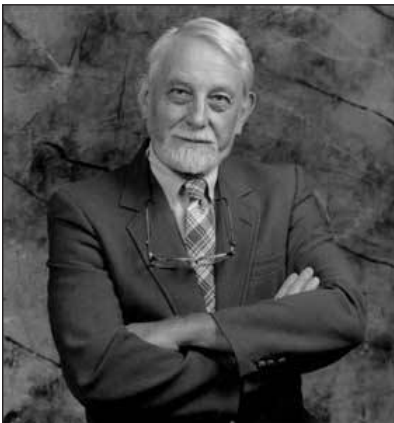
Miss Adams-Henderson served as Deaconess until 1944 and there-

after continued her work for the Church on a part-time volunteer basis. Her tenure was marked by a sincere belief in her calling and a complete dedication to her duties. However, according to Valentine, her religious sincerity gave her an inflexibility of mind which made her work less effective.

The Italian Methodist Church had an extremely successful music program. Most of the classes and organizations were directed by Bruno Martinelli, a graduate of Chicago’s Moody Bible Institute. He studied music in Italy and possessed a keen knowledge and appreciation for Italian music and culture. He was highly respected by the Madison Italians and exerted considerable influence over them. Various bands and orchestras were organized and conducted under his leadership, performing Italian classical and folk music throughout the city. Mr. Martinelli also taught and encouraged music and, when possible, fitted religion into the music. His classes were quite popular, perhaps more so than any other program of the Methodist Church, and in terms of sheer entertainment and relief from the mundane drudgeries of immigrant life he was considered, according to Valentine, “a real blessing to the Italian people with whom he came into contact”.

Rev. Pallotta was of the belief that the Italians would be best Americanized by first becoming Protestantized. Other than his work

with English and naturalization classes, which were oftentimes conducted by volunteers from the University, he seemingly had little interest or effect upon the Church's Americanization program. Pallotta's one mistake, according to Valentine, which was crucial to his ultimate downfall, was that he did not understand the mind of the "contadini", the immigrant Italian peasant. For example, for assuming that ninety percent of the local Italians were non-Catholic, he made a major strategic error. He did not realize, in the words of immigration historian Rudolph J. Vecoli, ... "Italian peasants were, on the whole, deeply religious, but their beliefs and practices were not confined to the doctrines, sacraments and liturgy of the Catholic Church. Rather, their religion was a composite of Christian and pagan elements, of devotion to the saints and Madonnas, of communal religious celebrations, of magical rites and incantations. Nor did the peasantry regard the church and its clergy with reverence or respect. Other than on the feast day of their



Prof. Rudolph J. Vecoli

patron saint and Easter, the 'contadini' especially the men, seldom set foot in the parish church".

Consequently, Rev. Pallotta mistook the local Italians lack of church attendance, anti-clericalism and polytheistic views as being akin to non-Catholicism. Also, according to Valentine, he probably mistook a few Albanians' reluctance to join the nearby St. Joseph's Catholic Church and their apparent zeal in taking up Protestantism as typical of all Italians in the neighborhood. Given these conditions, his evangelization work must have been quite frustrating for him.

In 1922, quoted in a Feb. 2nd Wisconsin State Journal news article, Pallotta said, "It is a difficult proposition to convert people of this kind because they are drifting away from religion". Valentine opined that if Pallotta could not convert the Albanians, which he was not doing with any overwhelming success, he certainly was not going to convert the Sicilians. There was also no evidence to suggest that Rev. Pallotta was aware of the local Albanian's unique religious history they brought to American with them from the Albanian settled areas of Sicily.

Pallotta was zealous in his efforts and sincerely believed the message he was trying to convey. Because he spoke the Christianization-Americanization message well, he

was highly regarded amongst the local Methodists, especially the Church's Board and Madison city clergymen. But because he had influence with the outside community, he ran into trouble with some of the local bootleggers. They wanted him to use his influence to gain certain advantages in their business operations. Rev. Pallotta adamantly refused and his courage in this matter was quite commendable.

But, according to Valentine, the local gangsters intimidated him by threatening his life. He mistook a bombing next door (*which blew out the church windows, as mentioned in the previous chapter 4-A*) as an attempt to demolish him and the church building, when neither was intended. Yet, according to John Valentine's interview sources, it was common knowledge that Pallotta's life was truly in danger. Volunteers from the Church acted as his bodyguards and escorted him everywhere in the community. He even began to carry a pistol. Obviously under such circumstances, Pallotta could not carry on his ministerial duties. Yet, he valiantly tried, until his family's safety was jeopardized and, in 1927, he decided to take a new pastorate in Chicago.

There was a sense of real tragedy involved in Pallotta's experience in Madison. According to Valentine, probably nobody wanted more desperately to help the local immigrants than Rev. Pallotta. His departure was tragic for another

reason, as well. During Prohibition Days, when crime and murder were rampant in “the Bush”, the local Italians were incurring the wrath of the City of Madison, including the newspapers, outside populace and government. Yet, he was the Italians only defense and he adequately and sometimes brilliantly defended them. Speaking at a Rotarians event in December, 1923, Pallotta was quoted in the Wisconsin State Journal...” You can’t help being born an American citizen. I chose to be one and when I renounced allegiance to the foreign power, I was the proudest man who ever lived. It would be a good thing for many Americans to be put to the same test”. It was unfortunate that the Italians most powerful voice was silenced at a time they most needed it.

The Madison Italian Methodist Church’s third pastor was Rev. John Wesley Buono. Coming in 1927, he took his namesake’s maxim to heart—“Go to those who need you, but go to those who need you most.”-- Born in Italy in 1901, he was intent on running the Church in a business-like manner. In the terms of one Madison Italian immigrant, “Rev. Buono was very G.I.” The meaning, of course, was Buono being straightforward, fire and brimstone, preaching and spiritual concentration to the exclusion of temporal and Americanization work. Such methods not only ran afoul with the Italians but also alienated the Church’s Board. Consequently, his term in Madison was short lived, not quite

two years. After Madison, very little is known about Rev. Buono, according to Valentine, to which he opined that it coincided with his lack of influence upon the local Church.

Rev. Buono was followed by the Rev. Antonio Parroni who would be the fourth, and last, pastor of the Italian Methodist Church of

Madison. A recent graduate of the Garrett Biblical Institute of Evanston Illinois, he proved to be a very fortunate appointment for both the Madison Methodist Church



Rev. Antonio Parroni

and the local Italian community in general. In the opinion of John Valentine, his 31-years of distinguished service easily made him the most important and colorful figure in local Madison Italian history. Rev. Parroni came by his religious vocation in a somewhat unorthodox fashion.

Research by Jim LeTourneau: Born in 1894, the third and youngest son of a well-to-do Central Italian family, Antonio Parroni’s father wanted him to be an engineer. Accordingly, as a young man, Mr. Parroni left his native village of Giulianova on Abruzzo’s central Adriatic coast and went to the

University of Turin to study engineering. World War I interrupted his studies and he was drafted into the Italian Army. He was wounded twice, which left him with a scar along his left cheek from shrapnel. He was decorated for heroism and given the rank of Captain. From here, his military history took an unusual turn.

Parroni had developed an interest in submarines and with his background in engineering and, taking a six-month short-course on underwater craft, he applied for a position in the Italian navy. This got him the command of a new type of Italian submarine, the X-class. These were mine-laying submarines originally developed by the German navy. By somewhat freak circumstances, Parroni started a second military career on one of only 3, X-type submarines in the Italian Navy.

During World War I, the German navy was providing its ally, Austria-Hungary, with various types of warships, from battleships down to submarines. Part of modern Croatia was, at that time, the Istrian province of Austria-Hungary. It had a major naval port in the city of Pula, on the Adriatic coast, across the sea from the Italian naval ports of Ancona and Rimini. A little further down the Croatian coast, in the small port of Cattara (now Kotor, Mon-

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tenegro), was an Austria-Hungary Adriatic submarine base.

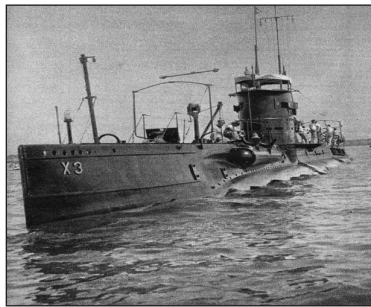
When World War I began in July 1914, Italy was a partner in the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, but decided to remain neutral. However, a strong sentiment existed within the Italian general population and its political factions to go to war against Austria-Hungary, Italy's historical enemy.

Annexing territory along the Austrian and Italian frontier stretching from the Trentino region in the Alps eastward to Trieste at the northern end of the Adriatic Sea was a primary Italian goal that would "liberate" Italian speaking populations from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while uniting them with their cultural Italian homeland. During the immediate pre-war years, Italy started aligning itself closer to the Entente powers, France and Great Britain and eventually, the United States, for military and economic support.

On April 26, 1915, Italy negotiated the secret Pact of London by which Great Britain and France promised to support Italy annexing the frontier lands occupied by Austria in return for Italy entering the war on the Entente side. On May 3, Italy resigned from the Triple Alliance and, three weeks later, declared war against Austria-Hungary at midnight on May 23, 1915, but remained neutral with Germany.

On March 16, 1916, mine-laying submarine UC-12 from Cattara, sailing with a German crew but under

an Austrian flag, was sunk off Italy's Taranto harbor, reportedly by one of its own mines. When later raised and salvaged by Italian divers, the German connection was discovered. This was part of the reason Italy finally decided to end neutrality and, in August of 1916, finally declare war on Germany.



Perroni's X-3 World War 1 sub

The salvage of UC-12 led to Italy deciding it needed a few mine-laying submarines of its own. Repairing and renaming UC-12 as X-1, it was a model for two more, Italian-built X-model mine-laying submarines, X-2 and X-3. The X-3 was the sub assigned to Antonio Perroni as its captain. He had one other officer and a crew of about 20 men, all on a vessel about 110 feet long and 11 feet wide weighing about 1100 tons. Equipped with six tubes to house 120 mines, Perroni's job was to mine the ports of the Austrian Navy's Pula fleet.

The X-class subs were not designed for speed. Travelling only about 7-1/2 miles per hour on the surface and 6-1/2 MPH submerged, they were designed for stealth. Based in Rimini and Ancona, the distance between either Italian port and the Austrian base at Pula was about 85 nautical miles. It would take about 12 hours sailing time. There is no record how long it would take an X-sub to deploy all 120 mines, but evidently Perroni did a good job and, for the following

2-1/2 years, he and the X-3 survived the war.

Staying in the Italian navy after the war, he returned to Turin for more engineering classes. In 1923, he was part of a group of 50 fellow experts sent by the Italian government to the United States to study the most advanced engineering then known to the scientific world.

According to an October 12, 1940 article written in the Wisconsin State Journal, in 1926 after attending a series of Presbyterian open meetings held in Philadelphia, Perroni was converted and decided to drop engineering for theology. He then left for New York City to learn better English and more theology, and to run a small mission church. In 1927, he left for the Garrett Bible Institute in Evanston, IL, to head up another mission until late 1928. It was then that he was asked to head further north to take over an Italian Methodist-Episcopal Church with about 140 members situated in the Italian neighborhood of Madison, Wisconsin. He would remain there for almost 32 years.

In our next, and final installment of "Things I Didn't Know", 4-C, we'll look at the accomplishments of Rev. Antonio Perroni in Madison's Italian neighborhood and what John Valentine, the author of this thesis, concludes in his Epilogue after researching all the information he discovered about Madison's Greenbush Italians.

Prof. Jim LeTourneau, IWC. ■



IWC Birthdays

May

- Enzo Ciarletta (1)
- Eric Holmes (5)
- William Battista (7)
- Scott Theel (9)
- Anthony Gatti (10)
- Frank Hill (12)
- Ron Giordan (16)
- James Pullara (19)
- Jay Moretti (20)
- Jim LeTourneau (21)
- Ron Gatti (23)
- John J. Colletti (27)
- George Colletti (28)

June

- John Baker (3)
- Todd Cambio (4)
- Vincent Colletti Weis (4)
- Joseph Shubat (5)
- Anthony Balistreri (6)
- Gary Berger (8)
- Frederick Underhill (11)
- Dick Murray (12)
- Biagio Scalissi (20)

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- Joanne Jenson May 18
- Rigina Rendler June 08
- Cindy Parisi June 13
- Jean Musillami June 21
- Kim Rendler June 29

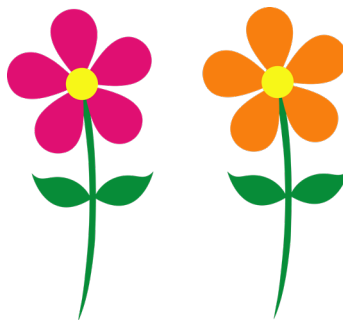


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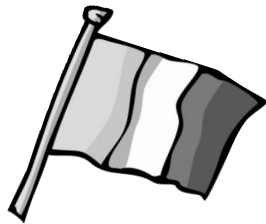
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- IWC Council Meetings — 2nd Tuesday of Each Month 7:00 pm
- IWC Membership Meetings — 3rd Tuesday of Each Month 6:30 pm

Please clip and post this calendar.



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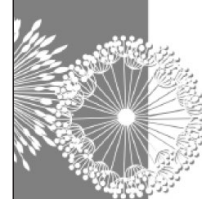
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