



# Our Italian Ancestors

# Where did they come from?

- In order to research your family in Italy, it is essential that you identify the city, town, or parish that they came from.
- It is difficult to find records since there is no centralized organization that is compiling the information. The information is maintained at the regional/city level.
- You can find out where they came from U.S. resources.

# Sources to be used to find the hometown

- Family Records, pictures, Bibles, letters, etc.
- Vital Records: Birth, Marriage, or Death certificates.  
(Remember to check on the sibling's records as well.)
- Church records
- Obituaries
- Military records: WWI draft registration, Civil War Pensions, etc.

# Passenger Lists and Naturalization Process

- Passenger Lists: Starting about 1900, passengers had to list their last residence. Prior to that, it was hit and miss.
- The naturalization process was not standardized until 1906. At which time, more detailed information was required including name changes and place of origin.
- U.S. Passport applications: If your ancestor got a passport, this is a gold mine of information. The passport application would include their hometown and parents' information.

# Italian Civil Records

- The civil records today are a result of the standardized system instituted under Napoleonic rule beginning in 1806. The same record system is used today. When Napoleon was ousted, some areas stopped using the system.
- Italy was unified in 1860. It was divided in 7,926 comuni (city/town) in 107 provinces separated into 20 regions.
- The civil records are kept at the local level and at the State Archive in each nearby provincial capitals in the form of Book registries.

# The Good News

- In 1975, Family Search began to work with the Italian National Archives to preserve the Italian records in the form of microfilm.
- In 2011, the Italian Archive and Family Search began to digitalize and publish the records on their websites. The Italian website is Portale Antenati.

(<http://www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it>)

# Types of Civil Records and Information Within

- Nati (Birth)
  - Record Number, Date act was recorded, Locality (seen in margin)
  - Name of person declaring child's birth, profession, age, where lives
  - Time and date of birth
  - Street name and number
  - Name of mother
  - Child's gender and name
  - Witnesses (2)
  - Marginal notations (name changes, legitimacy, etc.)




- Atto de Matrimonio (Marriage)
  - Record Number
  - Date of marriage
  - Locality where married
  - Name of groom, age, occupation, where born, where residing
  - Name of groom's father and residence
  - Name of groom's mother and residence
  - Name of bride, age, occupation, where born, where residing
  - Name of bride's father and mother.
  - Witnesses



- Marriage records can be divided into three groups.
  - Promesso: Promise/Marriage Intent
  - Pubblicazioni: The publication of the marriage.
  - Processetti: Collection of documents/Banns. This is an important group of marriage documents especially if the marriage was in the 1860's to 1880's. Before that birth certificates may not have been registered. The collection of documents often included proof of birth.



- Atto di Morte (Death)

- Record number
  - Date act was recorded
  - Locality where recorded
  - Two declarants: the name of person, age, profession, where lives
  - Time of death
  - Date of death
  - Street name and number
  - Name of deceased
  - Parents of deceased
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# How to Search Civil Records

- Search by Locations: This allows you to search a specific town or province. When possible, click the locality from the drop-down to ensure you see all possible results.
- Search by year: This allows you to input a specific year or year range.
- Search by Name: This allows you to search the portion of the records that have been indexed and are name searchable.
- Browse the Archives: This allows you to learn if the civil registration records have been digitized, what records are available in person, as well as any military or census records are available.

# Church Records

- Types of records
  - Baptismal
  - Confirmation
  - Marriage
  - Death and burial
- State of the Souls: This record documents the whole family to see what sacraments each family member have received. It was also used for taxation. Information within the documents include Birth, Death, Marriage place and dates, nicknames, occupation and financial status of the members of the family.

# Website for Parish Records

- [www.italianparishrecords.org](http://www.italianparishrecords.org) This site links to Family Search and other websites where Italian records have been digitalized.

For locating town names:

<http://en.comuni-italiani.it/>