

NUTLEY UNICO

(*nutleyunico.org*)

DEC. 2022 NEWSLETTER

Merry Christmas to all!!

The first order of business with this newsletter is to request that all members who have not yet paid their **dues** (especially those who regularly attend our dinner meetings) attend to this immediately. The Chapter has paid your national dues as of Nov. 30 assuming you are maintaining your membership. Dues can be mailed to Nutley Unico, PO Box 43, Nutley, given to any executive committee member or brought to the dinner meeting. Grazie.

Two recent events were a great success. Thanks to Alan Genitempo and his committee for the work done coordinating the **Breakfast with Santa** event. The kids loved it. And, thanks to the members who did the shopping and gift wrapping, and Mr. & Mrs. Claus.

The second holiday event was the **Christmas Party** at Nanina's. Debbie Bellucci did a great job getting this together and thanks to John Monaco for the floral arrangements. Food was great, and of course the music of John Cafone was right on.

November Dinner Meeting

The November meeting featured the recognition of members and guests who are veterans of the US military Service. The guest speaker was Ron Negra, author *Waves of Hope*, a book describing his mother's (Agnes Negra) effort to notify the families of WW II prisoners of War in Germany that their sons, husbands, etc. were alive. Ron also spoke of his dad's (August Negra) experiences in the Battle of the Bulge and his recovery from a serious wound. Gus later served as a Captain on the Nutley Police Force and was a Charter member of Nutley Unico.

Good & Welfare

- Bobby and Gloria Vangieri became grandparents for the first time with the birth of Gianfranco Salvatore Maculoso on Sunday, Dec. 18, to his daughter Gabriella and her husband Gianfranco Maculoso.
- Vito and Mellissa Matura also entered the grandparent fraternity on Tuesday, Dec. 17 when they welcomed Garrett Gregory LeNeve into the family. The proud parents are Gregory & Kristamarie LaNeve.
- Carmen Lore home for the holidays recuperating after a short stay in the hospital.

Executive Committee

The committee met on Dec. 21.

- National Business
 - Jan. 14 – Italian Fun Night at Al Di La (\$75 per person).
 - Jan. 24 – Night with the NJ Devils – 7:00 pm at the Prudential Center, Newark. Tickets at \$53. A limited number are available. If interested go to <http://fevo.me/unico2>.
 - Marconi Science Award applications are due Jan. 6. This is for someone with a - significant achievement in Science. It does not have to a Unican.
 - The committee approved a \$100 donation towards the 2024 Unico National Calendar.
 - National Scholarships are now available. These are not restricted to high school students/graduates. College students are also eligible. For additional information please contact Michelle Fleitell (mmichdb@gmail.com).

- District VII Business
 - Next Meeting – Tuesday, Jan.24. Elmwood Park is the host Chapter with the site TBD.
 - Save the Date! Tuesday, April 25 our Chapter hosts the District Recognition Dinner at a site TBD.
 - The Chapter paid our annual \$300 assessment to the District.

- Chapter Business
 - **Our next dinner meeting is Thursday, Jan. 5, at 7:00 pm at Mama Vittoria's.** Please be reminded that although we do not have a dress code requirement we do have a preferred dress code which includes a jacket for men and no jeans.
 - Two awards will be presented at the Jan. meeting. Phil Cuzzi will be presented with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for his decades of work with ALS and Maurice Ferraro will receive the **Mille Grazie Award** for his work with our chapter's finances.
 - Members will be receiving their annual \$100 raffle tickets in the mail or personally delivered. It is important that every ticket be sold to guarantee the prize money.
 - The Chapter received a \$100 donation from Lou & Celeste Pandolfi from the Kearny Chapter.
 - A.S. Preis donated \$500 to the Chapter in the memory of Sam Battaglia. The family will determine the most appropriate use of these funds.

- The Chapter will continue to recognize members with 25, 35, 40, 45 & 50 years of continuous membership. This will take place at our spring meeting when the major scholarship recipients are presented.
- Several new members will be sworn in at the January meeting.
- 2022-23 calendar:

Upcoming Events

Jan. 5 – Dinner Meeting

Feb. meeting – Date to be determined (At Nanina's)

March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1 – Dinner Meetings

CULTURE & HERITAGE (The story of Dr. Virginius Mattia's grandfather's recorded exploits in settling in Newark will continue this year.

As noted in previous newsletters, I recently came into possession of a manuscript titled, *The Early Italian Settlers in Newark*. This is a compilation of the writings of the grandfather of Dr. Virginius Mattia, Jr., who resided in Nutley and was the former President/CEO of Hoffman La Roche. Dr. Mattia's grandfather, Peter/Petrino Mattia, came to this country from Calabritto, a province of Avellino, with his family as a little boy and settled in Newark in 1873. He began to write about his experiences, and those of the other early Italian immigrants who came to Newark in the 1880's. His papers were passed on to his granddaughter, Jessie Mattia Rosa, Dr. Mattia's sister, in 1953 upon his passing. They laid dormant for the next 32 years until Senora Rosa's husband transcribed them into a 91 page manuscript in 1985 describing Petrino's recollections, experiences, the problems facing the Italian immigrants, the "firsts" (first school, first macaroni factory, first wedding, first dance in a public hall, first hotel, etc.), problems with the Irish, politics, development of the "colonies" (wards), Branch Brook Park, and many more vignettes.....

I want to continue to provide you with some interesting sections of the manuscript.

INTRODUCTION

"I am writing this, my second history of the early Italian settlers of Newark, NJ.....I had no thought of writing a history – I did it to make it easy for me to answer questions. As we came from the different towns and provinces of Italy, people would ask me, ' Who is he and where did he come from'. So, I got it down in the best way I could to give their names. Later I made memorandums of happenings in the 'colonies'. I felt sorry for the single men and those that left their families back home. I could see them with tin pails go to get food and take it to their lodgings to eat.

Chapter Eighteen

“The Smallpox Epidemic”

That epidemic was the worst in the history of Newark. Many entire blocks were roped off. Tenants were quarantined..... The streets most hit were River St. from Cherry St. to the Canal, and many streets in the Ironbound. Doctors and nurses were scarce.

I was immune as I had smallpox as a baby. I was assigned to work with the ambulance by Dr. Lehlbach, head of the Newark Health Board. To make matters worse, was the panic. The City of Newark was broke. City employees were not paid for months. People lost their homes for nonpayment of taxes or not being able to pay their mortgages.

Chapter Nineteen

“The Third Italian Colony”

The third colony was started by Giovanni Franchi, the maternal grandfather of Peter, C. Zazzale, lawyer and assistant tax assessor of the city. Franchi settled with his family on Bank St. It was later known as the Genovese colony. The late police captain, Joseph Cordano, was the first Italian to join the Newark police force. That colony was bound by the Morris Canal on the north and Market St on the south. Although small it has given men that became well-known: Franchi, Zazzali, Serra, Cordano, Dughi and Moglia. Moglia's ice cream is known in New Jersey. Zazzali and Dughi were among the largest banana merchants in these parts. Victor Bianchi built the Italian hall in the center of the city on Market St., between Comes Alley and Pierso St. The hall was known as Columbian Hall with a bar and bocce alleys on the first floor. The second floor was for meetings and dancing. The Orsi brothers built the second hall on Bank St., corner of Comes Alley.

I was often asked by Italians and others where did so many Italians get the money to buy so many street pianos (on wheels). The fact is that they were rented by the day to different people which made them look like many.

Chapter Twenty

“The Fourth Italian Colony (The Ironbound)”

That section of Newark east of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the old days was generally referred to as the “Down Neck Section”. That was before they knew about “Ironbound”. Luigi Panzulli was the first to settle in the Ironbound section of Newark (the fourth colony). However, any credit for colonizing this colony should go to the two brothers, Pio and Pascasio Serratelli, who started a junk shop on Monroe St. in 1875. The Ironbound was an ideal spot for junk yards for there was plenty of ground and away from residential homes.

The first piece of artificial ice was made in the 90's by the Krueger Brewing Co. on the east side of the Penn RR. Some of the best vans and trucks were made on old Passaic Ave. It had more cooperage shops than any other city. Murphy Varnish Works, The Blue Works, De Voe's Paint Factory. The Newark Smelting Works on Chapele St, Sisters Fertilizer Plant on Lister Ave. A few of the streets have changed their names. Fleming Ave was called Bowery St. Hamburg Pl changed to Wilson Ave and Ave. R changes to Doremus Ave. The first Italian to manufacture jewelry in Newark was Salvatore Torre, a pioneer settler in the colony.

The First Italian Arrested in the Colony

It occurred on South St in 1877. An Italian was passing going up South St, the bells hanging on a rope told of the approach of a junk wagon. A man came out of the company's yard and called the Italian. He asked him if he wanted some brass stampings. After the man had filled his bag, he put it on the wagon. He started to arrange the things on the wagon. The man who had called him came back with a policeman and told him to arrest the poor Italian for stealing the brass clippings, "Come and get on the wagon and make the charge in the station. I didn't see him stealing anything", said the policeman. At the station the man made the charge. The officer said, "Sargeant, this man is a liar. I heard him call the Italian man and told him to take the stuff". The Italian lost a bag, for the dirty fellow had to carry the bag back from the police station. This was something that happened to our early settlers who could not speak a word of English.

Saint James Hospital

Some Italians said they came to the Ironbound before 1875 and also said that St. James Hospital was there at the time of their arrival. For many years only piers were there before the hospital was built. I have heard a few say that they heard Mass in Our Lady of Mt. Carmel's Church. That was impossible as the church was bought in the early 90's. The church had been a Protestant church bought by the Rev. Dr. Conrad Schotthoefer. Rev. Father Alli, a Turk convert, was put in as a resident priest. After his death the Rev. Father D'Aguila was made pastor. Mother Cabrini opened a school in the Mt. Carmel parish in the early 20th century. A short time before Mother Cabrini had started the first orphanage on Midland Ave. in Kearny.

The Farm in the Meadows

*Even his friends thought the man was insane. He started to farm where the Newark Airport is. He selected spots that had been used as a dump for ashes and garbage. The land was damp and fertile. Many Newark Italians in the early 90's began to buy unoccupied land in Belleville and **Nutley** in what was known as Franklin. Starting first on the old canal bank in Nutley and then spread out, although having their homes in Newark.*

Chapter Twenty-One

"The Fifth Italian Colony"

The fifth colony had its beginning on 14th Ave between Hayes St and Bedford St. That block from Hayes St to Jones St was cut through after the new century. At the new century the Italians had spread far west and on most of the side streets of the neighborhood. This colony had for many years been the center of the Italian clothing manufacturing center of the city.

A Tragic Event

On March 12, 1900, fifteen Italian men were burned to death in the vicinity of Morris Ave and 14 Ave. The 15 men lived by themselves. What started the fire was never determined. Most of the bodies were burned beyond recognition. That fatal night cast a gloom in every Italian home, not only in that neighborhood, but in all of the nearby towns. The Italian United Societies met and by unanimous vote agreed to defray the funeral expenses to give these men a decent burial. The day of the funeral can never be forgotten by anyone who saw it. It was a long line of marchers from 14 Ave. to Broad St to Orange St and to the Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in East Orange. On each side of the fifteen hearses were four men, members of some society, who were pallbearers. Men removed their hats, there were many quivering lips, perhaps saying a silent prayer. May God prevent another such fire!

To be continued....

F. Cocchiola

Please forward any changes in email addresses, good & welfare items, questions for the Executive Committee or questions concerning the newsletter to me at fcoch@aol.com (Frank Cocchiola)