

INTRODUCTION



Italian Immigrants arriving on Ellis Island

ELLIS ISLAND IN THE EARLY 1900s

INTRODUCTION

By Paul and Sandra Montrone

Dear Reader,

For some unknown reason, the search to understand our heritage has always been of interest to us.

We did our first family roots study over 35 years ago in the mid-1980s. An ancestral document search was supplemented in the mid-1990s by recorded interviews of almost all our then living U.S. relatives by Brian O’Connell, thus preserving their memories. This was an incredibly fortunate and rewarding effort. Additional research and interviews were conducted by the New England Historic Genealogical Society based in Boston, and by some of the staff here in our New Hampshire office. We are thankful for their great work.

We are also very grateful to all of the contributors to this document, especially our relatives in Italy mentioned throughout the book. They added many historical insights and perspectives that none of us here in the U.S. fully appreciated.

You have reached the Introduction from the Table of Contents. To do our roots job well, we have found it necessary to write quite a complex book with many Chapters, each covering a different theme. But in an effort to reduce the complexity, we have adopted a few principles.

First, each Chapter begins with a name defining its theme. Then comes the Chapter Guide, which lists various sections pertaining to that Chapter theme. In order to keep the main theme of a Chapter more simplified, we have created

“Boxes” within each Chapter that provide details on a particular subject that are not in the Chapter mainstream and may or may not be of interest to a particular reader. They are easily skipped without interfering with the main theme of the Chapter.

Second, although we have combined the Montrone and Gaudenzi family histories in each of our Chapters, to clarify the family distinctions, we have attempted to write separate paragraphs on the theme for each side of the family. This should make downloading for a particular family a little easier.

In the Table of Contents there are also four links to other information that complement the content of the Book.

First, we have the [Genealogy Charts](#). These Charts look back a few centuries and are quite interesting. But unlike many family histories, in this Book we have not been so much enthralled by the technical details associated with our ancestors, nor have we strived to search for royalty in our ancestry. We know our family roots are mostly rather humble. Our goal is quite different. It is to explore the activities, occupations, communities, sacrifices and, most important, the values of our ancestors as best as we can define them. We have been shaped by this heritage and are happy to have benefited from it. We hope that this knowledge will help our family and descendants understand and appreciate our ancestors, and put our lives in the proper context, as we seek our own fulfillment and happiness.

In this regard, we are especially thankful to our more immediate ancestors. They are the individuals who, through our research and interviews, have given us an in-depth understanding of their lives and values, as well as their knowledge of the earlier ancestors known to them.

Beyond this history, looking back much farther, one discovery worthy of particular note is that modern science is now able to explore our DNA. So, although our lineage charts explain the origins of our ancestors over a few centuries, our DNA analysis attempts to establish where they emigrated from in the more distant past.

Of course, most “scientists” believe that all human beings emerged from Africa, but current DNA work does not go back that far. It is more about looking at what happened

after emerging from Africa. But this “science” is in its infancy, and varies by testing practices, so there will certainly be more clarification of humans’ longer-term heritage as the science matures.

As an example, we had our DNA analyzed by three different sources, and, of course, the results were all different.

Overall, the DNA results from both Ancestry and 23andMe showed that both of us had a very high percentage of Italian DNA with Sandra mostly north and Paul mostly south.

On the other hand, My Heritage showed much smaller percentages of “Italian.” This analysis obviously went deeper and revealed a very diverse ancestry.

Here's how the My Heritages analysis compares us:

Sandra		Paul	
Italian	43.5%	Italian	34.4%
Greek and South Italian	25.8%	Greek and South Italian	38.1%
Iberian	19.9%	Sardinian	14.2%
North and West European	7.2%	Middle Eastern	7.7%
Ashkenazi Jewish	3.6%	West Asian	4.6%
		Ashkenazi Jewish	1.0%

This mix has led to a continuation of the ongoing debate between the two of us as to who is more “Italian”. It also somewhat explains why Paul’s mother said that her grandmother had red hair and must have roots outside of Italy.

But more important, now we go to our many diverse friends, be they Middle Eastern, Jews, Greeks and other Europeans and Asians, and tell them to stop pulling rank on us (since Italy is a relatively new country) as we happen to be one of them.

The big takeaway from this DNA research is that although in the past we have always seen ourselves as 100% Italian, that only means that our most immediate ancestors lived in what is now defined as Italy. But that peninsula (or boot as it

is sometimes called) has a long history of cultural changes.

They resulted from its occupation over the centuries by the

many peoples and tribes that commanded the

Mediterranean Sea and others that invaded from the north.

The result of these findings was our decision to start this

Book with Chapter 1 reflecting the history of Italy going

back to the pre-Roman Empire period, and continuing all

the way to the formation of the Republic of Italy in 1946.

This Chapter describes the many countries and tribes that

tried to dominate Italy over the centuries, which helps to

explain our complex DNA.

A second Table of Contents link is the [Picture Gallery](#). This

shows numerous family pictures and is sorted by family

group. In the final book, many of these pictures will be

placed in the appropriate Chapters. We would like to add any pictures you may have to this gallery. Please send them to us.

A third link is the [Current Generations Chart](#). This chart contains the names and parents of the current generations of children in our direct family. We would like to expand this by adding various relatives, especially including cousins you know of both here in the U.S. and in Italy. We think it will be fun to understand this broad range of current relatives and help to connect them. So please give us your comparable information. You can send it to us by [clicking here](#).

The fourth and final link is meant to face the challenge of describing the relationship of an individual to us each time they are referenced in the Book, especially given their

completely different last names or married names. To help simplify this, we have selected certain names which we call [Frequently Used Names](#). This listing was not selected based on a relationship to us (those relationships are described in the Genealogy Charts), but rather by the frequency to which they are referred throughout the Book.

For these individuals, whenever they are referred to, we have selected a simple name, and after their name indicated in parentheses whether they currently remain as Italians (IT), or are Italian-Americans, with their generation number (G1, G2, G3...) and family identity as to either Montrone, (– M) or Gaudenzi, (– G).

For example, Antonio Montrone (Paul Montrone's paternal grandfather) will be referred to as Antonio (G1 - M), since he was a first-generation immigrant in the Montrone line.

One complexity is that Eugenio Giancini (G1 - M) emigrated with three young children, Diodato, Bice and Domenico.

Although immigrants, they will be referred in the book by their American name -- David (G2 - M), Beatrice (G2 - M) and Dominick (G2 - M), since they were of the second Italian-American generation in the U.S.A. In this regard, we will be referred to as Paul (G3 - M) and Sandra (G3 - G).

This naming convention will also make it easier for other members of our families to adapt the text to their own roots stories, if they wish to do so.

A complete list of these frequently referred to individuals, with other details about them, is in the Frequently Used Names link in the Table of Contents. A more brief description is provided at the beginning of each Chapter, just after the Chapter Guide. The names listed there are those that are mentioned in that Chapter. This can be a handy reference to the reader to check on while reading the Chapter.

For individuals that are only occasionally referenced in the Book (and hence not in the Frequently Used Names list), we have noted their relationship to Sandra (G3 - G) or Paul (G3-M) when they are first referenced in a Chapter. In addition, for a person with a maiden name and a married name, the maiden name will be in parentheses. As an example, Jean (Miles) Gaudenzi will be described as

(Sandra's paternal aunt) in her first description, and any further references to her in that Chapter will simplify her name, in this case, Jean Gaudenzi.

This all sounds rather complicated, but you'll have to trust us, it is simpler than describing a relationship each time the individual is referenced.

For our readers' benefit, we have also attached a [Relationship Chart](#) which is a useful general chart that can help you to determine your relationship with any referenced individuals.

This book is a rather long story, but we hope that reading it will prove to be rewarding. We invite your feedback on any

content, which is the purpose of the Feedback buttons located throughout the Book. After we have received your feedback and any additional relevant information, we hope to have the final edition of the Family Roots Book, published by next year.

Enjoy.

Paul & Sandra

The relationship in each box is what that person's relationship would be to you, where you are "Self." As you can see, you, your siblings, your 1st cousins, 2nd cousins, etc., are all in the same generation. Thus, "once removed" means "one generation removed."

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Designed January, 1987

