

# INTRODUCTION



Italian Immigrants arriving on Ellis Island

## ELLIS ISLAND IN THE EARLY 1900s

## **INTRODUCTION**

**By Paul and Sandra Montrone**

**Dear Reader,**

**For both of us, the search to understand our heritage has always been of interest to us. We did our first family roots study 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.**

**In later years, 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 also made personal contact with close and distant relatives both here in the U.S. and in Italy. We are very grateful to all of those individuals who contributed 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.**

**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 often written separate paragraphs on the theme for each side of the family. This should make following the content or downloading it for a particular family a little easier.**

**In the Table of Contents there are also three Sections added to the Introduction containing information that complement the overall content of the Book.**

**First, we have the Genealogy Charts. These Charts look back at the details pertaining to individuals in our ancestry over a few centuries. It is quite interesting and informative.**

**But unlike many family histories, we have not been enthralled by these ancestry details, nor have we strived to**

**search for royalty in our heritage. Our goal has been quite different. It is to explore the activities, occupations, communities, sacrifices and, most important, the values of our ancestors as best as we can determine them.**

**As we describe in our Concluding Chapter 11, we have been shaped by our 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.**

**A current genealogy chart, containing the names and relationships of our broad family both here in the U.S. and**

**Italy, will be provided in a separate document which will be updated periodically both in print and on our website. We think it will be worthwhile to understand this range of current relatives and provide a basis to help in maintaining familial connections going forward.**

**The second Section is meant to face the challenge of describing the relationship of a particular individual to us when 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 fact that these individuals and their meaningful insights are referred to often throughout the Book.**

**For these individuals, whenever they are first referred to in a Chapter, we have selected a simple name, and after their name we indicate 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 (G1) in the Montrone (M) line. After the first reference in a Chapter, later references may call him Antonio Montrone or Antonio.**

**One complexity of the Montrone side 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.**

**On the Gaudenzi side, there is also a complexity. Sandra's paternal grandmother, Mary Cavagnaro, was born in the U.S. This is unlike any of Sandra or Paul's other grandparents who we identify as first-generation Italian**



**Americans (G1). So rather than call her a G2, for consistency in following the other Italian American generations in this book, we refer to her as G1. In this regard, Paul and Sandra's parents will be G2, making Paul (G3 - M) and Sandra (G3 - G). But we will simply refer to ourselves as Paul and Sandra. We hope our 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.**

**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 or Paul 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 in a Chapter, and any further references to her in that Chapter will simplify her name, in this case, Jean or 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, there is a third Section that is a general Relationship Chart which we hope will be a useful guide to help you to determine your relationship with referenced individuals.**

**Now, returning to our content, we must explain Chapter One. Beyond our family history shown in the Genealogy Charts, 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 Heritage analysis shows our DNA comparison:**

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

**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 amusing, we can now tell our many diverse friends, be they Middle Eastern, Jews, Greeks and other Europeans and Asians, 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), which we refer to as “Italia” in our text, 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 Roots Book with Chapter 1 reflecting the history of Italia going back to the pre-Roman Empire period, and continuing all the way to the formation of the Republic of Italy in 1946. The Chapter describes the many countries and tribes that**

**tried to dominate Italia over the centuries, which helps to explain our complex DNA.**

**This book is a rather long story, but we hope that reading it will prove to be rewarding.**

**Enjoy.**

**Paul & Sandra**

# RELATIONSHIP CHART

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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