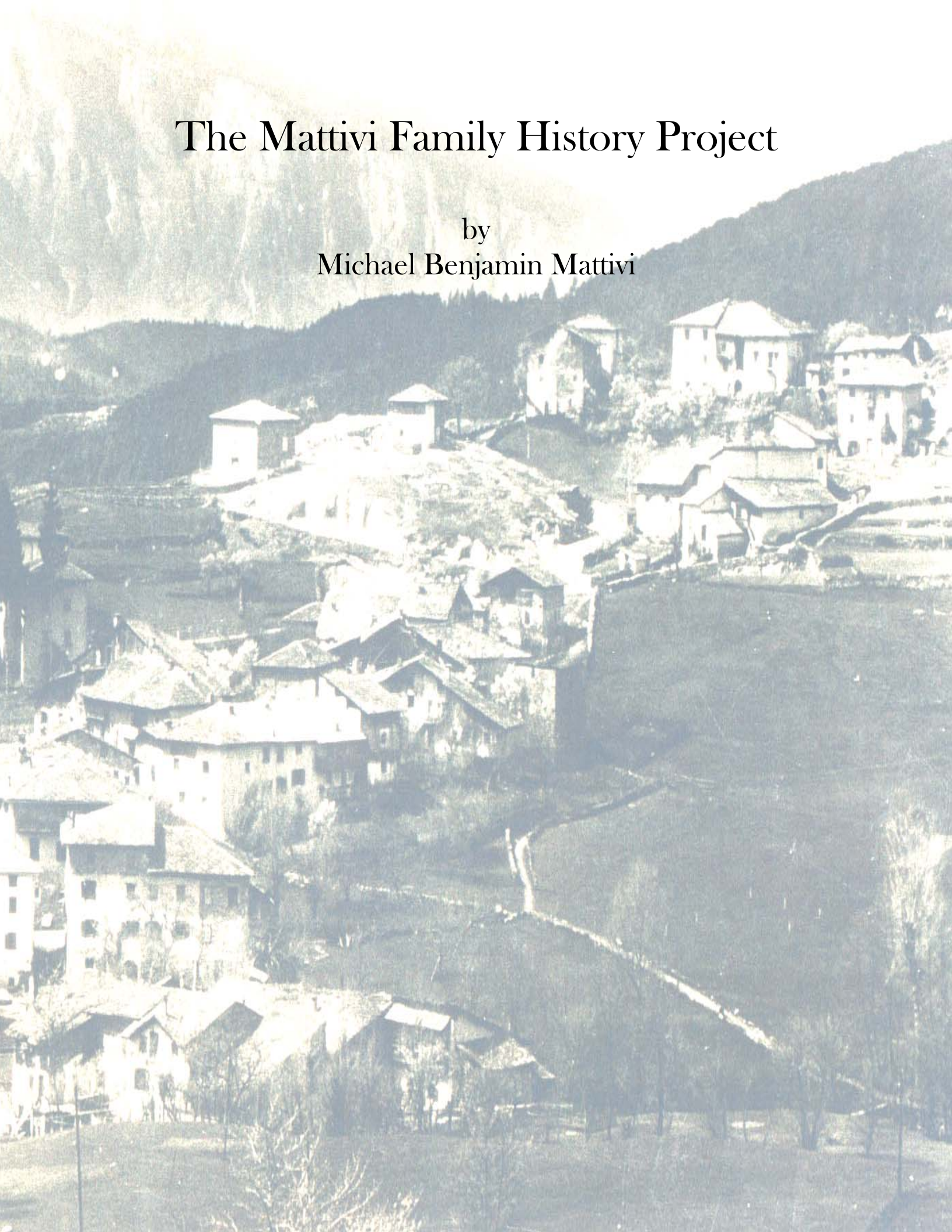


The Mattivi Family History Project

by
Michael Benjamin Mattivi



Introduction

This family history is dedicated to the memory of Giuseppe Beniamino “Ben” and Rosa (Girotti) Mattivi. The work is based on their patriarchal line and focuses on their lives, and descendants. The information within is supported by documents (i.e. immigration, birth, death, and census records, etc.) where possible, as well as social history and some conjecture or educated guesses. A variety of historical information learned during the process has been included to provide context and understanding of the events detailed. This includes information about immigration, mining, name origins, and the various cities encompassed in this genealogy.



Background Information

Geography

Thus far, there are two significant cities, Baselga di Piné, Italy, and Novinger, Missouri, which have played key roles in the history of the family and are central to its story. [Baselga di Pine](#) is a small village in the Northern Italian region of [Trentino-Alto Adige](#). The area, specifically Baselga di Pine-Tressilla, is the birthplace of Ben Mattivi and the origin of many surnames associated to this family. Even today, various distant relatives remain in the area. The American counterpart is the small, old mining town of [Novinger](#), located in northeast Missouri. Novinger was the eventual landing point of the Mattivi and Girotti families following their immigration, joining place of these families, perpetual home, and the final resting place of many. Both continue to stand as great sources of this family's history and are integral to its story.

Secondarily, but no less important to the history, is the [impact of mining](#) on the family's livelihood and movement. As with the majority of other Trentini immigrants, this family was heavily involved in mine work from the time of their arrival through the first half of the 20th century. This work provided a basic livelihood for many family members and heavily contributed to their travels. In fact, the early years of many ancestors were marked by their frequent movement across the Midwest seeking opportunities in various mining camps and/or cities, including the following:

Silverton, Colorado
Novinger, Missouri
Springfield, Illinois
Clinton, Indiana
Dawson, New Mexico
Frontenac, Kansas
Sheridan, Wyoming
Chisholm, Minnesota

Surnames

In addition to the geographical points, there are many surnames attached to this genealogy, including [Mattivi](#), [Girotti](#), [Anesi](#), [Giovannini](#), Sandretto, Merlo, and others. During the course of

this research, the Mattivi, Anesi, and Giovannini names were regularly found in combination with one another and often surfaced in other, unrelated family genealogies. Additionally, the Anesi and Giovannini surnames were found to overlap within this family's history. The names were found to be associated to the family through marriage, as well as blood bonds, possibly producing double ties. For example, Annia Girotti's maiden name was Giovannini, and Ben's sister, Lisetta Mattivi, married and had children with Cristoforo Giovannini. Whether the two Giovannini families are directly related to one another is unknown. No matter the case, those descending from both Annia and Lisetta are doubly connected to the Giovannini name. For example, James Mattivi (Ben's first son) had first cousins from Lisetta carrying the Giovannini name, which became attached to the family through marriage. Additionally, James Mattivi, by way of bloodline attachment to Annia (Giovannini) Girotti, his maternal grandmother, was also connected to this Giovannini name and line.

The cause of this intra-family name overlap is unknown. It was not uncommon, however, for families during the early 20th century to engage in multiple cross-marriages, producing situations of this kind. Immigrant families especially, tended to marry those with the same regional roots and pre-established relationships.

Immigration

The family immigration history mostly remains unknown. It encompasses several families, including the Mattivi, Girotti, Anesi, and Giovannini clans, as well as other families joined through marriage following their immigration and settlement in the United States. As previously stated, the bulk of these families originated from the Province of Trento, and specifically the area of Baselga di Piné, and its encompassing villages. As such, this family's immigration story likely mimics that of other Trentini immigrating to the United States around the turn of the 20th century.

According to historical accounts, during the mid to late 1800's many areas of Trentino experienced sickness, hardship, and severe economic conditions. In the 1850's, disease wiped out potato crops and mulberry bushes, a primary food source for silkworms. In turn, silkworms, the heart of a centuries old industry and economic staple, were destroyed and the industry was severely damaged. In addition to this devastation, 1882 and 1885 the region suffered from heavy rain, floods, and landslides, resulting in further destruction of crops and trees. Combined, these events sparked a significant exodus from the area and around the turn of the century many Trentini people fled to the United States and South America, seeking better lives. A common departure point was the city of Trento. From there, an emigrant could travel to the ports of France (Le Havre, Cherbourg), England (Southampton), or Italy (Genoa), to begin their journey. During this time, Trentino remained under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and all Trentini immigrants thus traveled with Austrian passports. This circumstance helped them avoid much of the discrimination suffered by other Italians.

Of the Trentini that immigrated to the United States, many settled in the mining towns of southwest Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming. These destinations were likely the product of heavy advertisements in foreign newspapers by U.S. mining companies, which promised jobs and opportunities for property ownership.

This historical account provides a logical explanation of this family's immigration, or at least those on the Mattivi and Anesi side. (The Girotti and Giovannini's immigration story remains mostly unknown at this time, as they emigrated from the Torino Region, in Northwest Italy.) The Girotti line began their immigration in the late 1880s, with the Mattivi members following a short time later. Both were heavily involved in the mining industry upon their arrival and remained engaged in the industry throughout their early years of assimilation. Although it is unknown whether the mine company advertisements and lure of jobs and land were the motivating force, it certainly had vast impact after arrival.

Giuseppe Beniamino "Ben" Mattivi from Birth to 1909

Giuseppe Beniamino "Ben" Mattivi was born in Baselga di Piné-Tressilla, Italy, on December 27, 1888 (source birth certificate). He was the fifth of five children born to the marital union of Giacomo Mattivi and Domenica Anesi. It appears he was raised in the area and remained there through age 17. The details of his childhood are unknown.

On December 29, 1906, at age 18, Ben boarded the [S.S. Le Bretagne](#) at the port of Le Havre, France, and began his journey to the United States. Ben arrived at the Port of New York on January 6, 1907, and was processed through Ellis Island. According to the ship manifest, Ben was 5'9" tall, single, and a farmer by occupation. He declared \$28 in currency and indicated he had paid for his own passage. Ben's stated destination was [Silverton, Colorado](#), and he reported he was to join his brother, Giovanni (John), who had immigrated in 1900 (source 1920 census). At the time of Ben's entry, Silverton was a popular destination for Trentini immigrants due to its booming gold and silver mines.

Rosa Girotti from Birth to 1909

Rosa Girotti was born on February 21, 1892, in Osage, Kansas, the fourth of nine children born to Giovanni (John) Girotti and Annia Giovannini. As of this writing, little if anything is known about Rosa's short life.

John and Annia, as well as their first born child, Lena, immigrated to the United States in 1888 (source 1900 census). Their port of entry and original destination are unknown. It appears their journey began in the Torino region of Italy, likely Pratiglione. The family's first recorded appearance in the U.S. occurred in 1900, when they were captured in that year's federal census living in the town of Springfield, Illinois. Although their first movements are not documented, the order and localities of their children's births indicate the Girotti's lived in several cities prior to settling in Novinger. The cities include the following:

1889	Illinois (birth of Mary M. Girotti)
1890	Clinton, Indiana (birth of Maggie Girotti)
1892	Osage, Kansas (birth of Rosa Girotti)
1894	Clinton, Indiana (birth of Joseph J. Girotti)
1896	Illinois (birth of John P. Girotti)
1898	Illinois (birth of Edith Girotti)
1899	Missouri (birth of James F. Girotti)
1902	Springfield, Illinois (birth of Willie Girotti)



Based on recorded events, it appears that between 1902 and 1904, the family settled in Novinger, Missouri. The events signifying this date are Giovanni Girotti's 1904 charter membership of the Italian Tirolese Club, and Maggie Girotti's 1904 entrance into the country (Ellis Island records indicated she was processed in 1904, accompanied by Andrea Chiarattino, and was traveling to her father's house in Novinger).

The Marriage of Giuseppe Beniamino "Ben" Mattivi and Rosa Girotti

Sometime prior 1909, Ben and Rosa's paths intersected in Novinger, Missouri. They were subsequently married on March 13, 1909 (source Ben's naturalization application), and shortly thereafter began their family. Their first child, James, was born on January 14, 1910, in Novinger. In typical tradition, he was named after Ben's father. Based on vital records, the family probably remained in the Novinger area for a couple of years. The 1910 census record indicated Ben, Rosa, James, as well as Ben's brother John, were living together at that time. (The census record also indicated Lena (Girotti) Merlo and her children lived next door.)

Between 1910 and 1912, Ben and Rosa moved the family to [Dawson, New Mexico](#), where their second child Evelyn was born on September 6, 1912. The family likely moved to Dawson to join the various other migrants who flooded the area to work the mines. They were joined in Dawson, although the timing of each couple's arrival remains uncertain, by Joe and Lena (Girotti) Merlo, Rosa's older sister and brother-in-law. On November 6, 1911, Lena Merlo died of unknown causes and was buried in the Dawson Cemetery.

In November 1912 (source Ben's naturalization application), the family returned to Novinger. From this point to 1916, Ben and Rosa's movements remain undocumented, as there were no births, deaths, or census collections during these years. They next appear on June 11, 1917, living in Radley and/or Pittsburg, Kansas. On that date, Rosa sent a postcard to her brother John Girotti which indicated Ben and others were attempting to obtain work in the area, most likely in the mining industry. Pittsburg, Kansas, like the other areas they had been to, was a mining town. The length of their stay remains unknown, but ended prior to 1920. Although Ben and Rosa left the area, it appears John Mattivi (Ben's older brother) remained and apparently spent his final years in Frontenac.

By 1920 (source 1920 census), Ben and Rosa returned to Novinger, where Rosa subsequently passed away on June 26, 1921. The cause of death (source death certificate) was determined to be Septicemia, an infection/bacteria in the blood stream, with the secondary or contributory cause identified as a pelvic abscess. She was treated for this condition for approximately one-and-half months prior to her death, and underwent an unsuccessful operation on June 2, 1921, in Kirksville, Missouri. Rosa died in Kirksville and appears to have been hospitalized at the time of her death. Ben and Rosa were married approximately 12 years and this was Ben's longest enduring marriage, but by no means his last.

The Marriage of Giuseppe Beniamino “Ben” Mattivi and Oliva Grisenti

In 1923, approximately two years after Rosa’s death, Ben married Oliva Grisenti, another Trentini immigrant. The marriage occurred in either Novinger, Missouri, or Chicago, Illinois, with the exact location unknown at the time of this writing. What is known is that they eventually settled in Chicago.

Both Ben and Oliva had Novinger ties and likely met there. According to immigration records, Oliva immigrated to the United States from Baselga di Pine on December 13, 1920. She traveled with her cousin, Louis Cadrobbi, and proceeded to Novinger, where she joined her sister, Angela Avi, Angela’s husband (Paolo Avi), and their children (Ernesto and Brunette). For years, Oliva has been identified as Oliva Avia, which appears to have been a misspelling of Avi, her sister’s married name, and a product of a mistaken surname identity.



This marriage, although short, produced one child, Corine Mattivi. According to Corine, she was born in Chicago and the family resided there throughout her parent’s short marriage. Following their divorce, Ben apparently returned to Novinger, while Oliva and Corine remained in the Chicago area. Corine reported having little contact with Ben during her formative years. At age 16, she contacted Ben and visited him in the Novinger or the Kansas City area. Following this visit, she lost touch for a while and then rekindled the relationship after she was married, visiting occasionally.

The Marriage of Giuseppe Beniamino “Ben” Mattivi and Loraine “Dutch” Robinson

Ben and Dutch divorced shortly after Bud was born, with Ben taking custody of Bud and Dutch taking Jocelyn. Dutch and Jocelyn returned to the Kirksville area, while Ben and Bud remained in the Kansas City area, where Ben labored with Jim in the stone mason business. Bud indicated he was passed around and a child and often moved between relatives house. He spent time with Jim in the 1930s, where he and Ben lived in a street car on Jim’s Breen Acres lot.

Bud indicated his father always moved around and was always had various girlfriends.

The Marriage of Giuseppe Beniamino “Ben” Mattivi and Maggie (Girotti) Sandretto

The dynamics of this marriage are very curious. Maggie was Rosa (Girotti) Mattivi’s older sister, and at one time Ben’s sister-in-law. They were likely married in Adair County, Missouri, in 1938. From approximately 1908 through 1938, Maggie had lived in Chisholm, Minnesota, and returned to the Novinger area that year (source obituary). The pair legally separated on October 17, 1939 (source divorce order). No children were born to this union.

The Marriage of Giuseppe Beniamino “Ben” Mattivi and Theresa Hurst

Ben’s fifth and final marriage was to Theresa Hurst. They lived in Gladstone, Missouri, and apparently operated a small restaurant in the area for sometime. Naturalization records indicated Ben moved to the Gladstone area in approximately 1945, from his former home in Northmoor. No children were born to this marriage.



Ben’s Music

Ben was an accomplished accordion player and was pictured with his accordion at family gatherings and other places. He likely learned to play prior to his immigration and brought an accordion with him during his travel. The accordion pictured here was made in Italy by a well-known manufacturer, Egidio Galvan, and remains in the family. In the latter stages of his life, Ben played with the KMBC orchestra, a local radio station in Kansas City, Missouri.



Music has been an important and historical part of the Trentini culture. The accordion was a common instrument and has had vast impact across Italy.

The Citizenship of Giuseppe Beniamino “Ben” Mattivi

After approximately 40 years in the United States, Ben applied for citizenship and began the process of naturalization on March 16, 1940. His quest for citizenship was supposedly driven by his need for social security benefits and desire to retire. Ben filed his initial declaration of intent in the United States District Court, Eastern District, at Hannibal, Missouri. He subsequently filed his petition for naturalization in the United States District Court, Western District, at Kansas City, Missouri, on July 15, 1943. He listed Marino and Rosa Borello as sponsors.



On August 25, 1944, Ben was naturalized and officially granted American citizenship.

Illness

For approximately 5 years, Ben suffered from cancer. Just prior to death, he experienced an obstruction related to the cancer, which ultimately took his life (source death certificate). It appears he spent his final days at home.

Historical Reference Information

The Mining Impact

For the bulk of the first 50 years the family history, movement, and foundation in the United States was inextricably tied to the mines of the Midwest. Although it is hard to say, it appears the family livelihood was dependent on the jobs provided by the various mines, causing our ancestors to frequently uproot their homes and follow the work. This pattern is prevalent across the family and appears to trace its origin to the first days of their arrival. At this point, their movements can only be traced through census and vital records, which only provides estimated dates of travel. This pattern does not appear to be unique to this family, but rather common among immigrant populations and especially those of Trentini origin.

Various family members lived in the following localities:

Silverton, Colorado
Novinger, Missouri
Springfield, Illinois
Clinton, Indiana
Sheridan, Wyoming
Dawson, New Mexico
Frontenac, Kansas
Chisholm, Minnesota

These towns were all heavily influenced and supported by the mining industry through the first half of the 20th century.

The History of Silverton, Colorado

Like many other Trentini immigrants, John and Ben Mattivi migrated to the mining town of Silverton, Colorado, upon their entry into the United States. (Although Ellis Island records confirmed Ben entered the U.S. with a Silverton destination, it is unknown whether John proceeded directly to Silverton upon his arrival or spent time in other parts of the U.S.)

Silverton is located in a secluded valley high in the San Juan Mountain Range in Southwest Colorado and legally opened to miners in 1874, following the Brunot Treaty with the Ute Indian tribe. An estimated 2000 men moved into the region that year, coming from across the U.S., as well as many parts of Europe and China. The pursuit of minerals and accompanying wealth from a gold or silver strike drew the majority to Silverton.

Early day Silverton, set in the backdrop of an extremely harsh environment, was rough, turbulent and often violent. Mining was a very dangerous occupation with few, if any safety precautions, causing frequent casualties among the workers. In addition to the weather, miners were subject to various dangers, including open shafts, powder explosions, mine cave-ins, and snow slides. Free time in Silverton could also be treacherous. Saloons, prostitution, gambling, and robbery were prevalent, producing a number of violent deaths.

Mining reached its peak by approximately 1912, with the population of San Juan County peaking at 5000. The area boasted four railroads, three smelters, and over thirty mills serving myriad gold and silver mines high in the mountains. Men worked at these remote locations year around, living in boarding houses, coming off the mountains via tram bucket (designed to carry the ore from the mine to mill several thousand feet below). Town visits were spent on Blair Street in saloons and prostitution houses. The town also sprouted churches, fraternal lodges and women's club, as well as a baseball team and brass band. Dances were popular and Silverton had its own ice skating rink.

In the years to follow, San Juan County suffered through series of boom and bust cycles commonly associated with the mining industry. During good times, people of various ethnic groups flooded the area to take advantage of the valuable precious metals produced by the mines. In turbulent times, the settlements turned into ghostly reminders of themselves. Over time, financial and environmental setbacks, such as Lake Emma's flooding of the Sunnyside Mine in 1978, crippled the industry, eventually signally the end of Silverton's mining era. The Sunnyside was the last of the big mines to close, in the early 1990s.

Modern day Silverton has a population of 500. The entire town has been designated a National Historic Landmark. The area is littered with old mining shafts and cemeteries of those who perished. Large contingents of Mattivi families are buried throughout Colorado and several Mattivi's remain active in Colorado politics and industry. Our relationship to these people remains unknown.

The History of Novinger, Missouri

The community of Novinger, Missouri, was formed in approximately 1878, during a time of railroad expansion across Northeast Missouri. At that time, the Pacific Railroad began extending its line towards Kirksville, necessitating the crossing of farm land, and specifically that of John C. Novinger. In exchange for permission to run rail across his farm, Novinger negotiated the construction of a depot, named "Novinger," officially marking the formation of the city of Novinger. Novinger was subsequently incorporated on April 5, 1901, and John Frank Novinger, son of the town's founder, was elected its first mayor.

Although the railroad expansion initially spawned the forestry industry in the area, which supplied the necessities for the rail lines and depot, mining was to be the future for the town of Novinger. In 1890, with the organization of the O.K. Mining Company, the town's first coal mine was opened on a hill adjacent to the western edge of the city. The introduction of coal mining was a significant event in the formation and history of Novinger and for several decades was driving force behind the economy, expansion, and identity of the city. Although the industry experienced down times over the years and Novinger suffered from a competitive imbalance, the Novinger coal mining business prospered through the early 1950s. At the coal businesses peak, the Novinger Commercial Club boasted a population of 5,000, and the town had 27 developed coal mines, four churches, two railroads, two banks, two newspapers, a good school, and numerous retail stores. This expansion was the direct product of the Novinger coal business, which fed markets all over the Midwest.

An offshoot of the mining boom was the ethnic diversity it produced in the town. Over the years, people of various descents settled in the area, including those of German, English, French, Irish, and Italian origin. During the early years, the individual ethnic groups remained close knit and lived in close proximity to one another. Over the years, like the country in general, the groups settled into one community and engaged in cross marriage and association.

For some time following the fall of the coal industry, the city and its population fell into decline, appearing to be a town that time had left behind. Many of its remaining citizens were retired coal workers and their families, who relied on the business and employment opportunities located in neighboring Kirksville for subsistence. This increased the decline of the infrastructure and morale of its citizens. In the late 20th and early 21st century, Novinger has undertaken a renewal project in an effort to revitalize the city and promote its history and legacy in the area.

St. Rose Catholic Church

This small church is located in Novinger, Missouri, and has been the place of numerous family events, including weddings and funerals.

The photo is from 1905 and appears to picture the church under construction as the bell is not yet in place and it hasn't been painted.



This is a rare view of the early interior of St. Rose, circa 1903 to 1905, with Father McCormick at the altar.



St. Rose in 1959. The bell, which made the whole building shake ominously, was eventually moved to the ground in front of the church.



The History of Dawson, New Mexico

In 1869, John Barkley Dawson purchased 20,000 acres of the Maxwell Land Grant for \$3,700. (He thought he had obtained one thousand acres, but it turned out to be a parcel of over twenty thousand acres.) Following the purchase, he settled about 5 miles upstream from Colfax on the Vermejo River. In approximately 1895, coal was discovered on the property and Dawson began selling the coal to neighbors in order to supplement his ranching income. In 1901, Dawson sold the property to the Dawson Fuel Company for \$400,000. The Dawson coalmine subsequently opened, a railroad was constructed from Dawson to Tucumcari, and the town of Dawson was born. The company worked the mine for several years, before selling the mine and town to the Phelps Dodge Corporation in 1906. Upon purchase, the Phelps Dodge Corporation was determined to transform the town and developed amenities to draw miners. It featured schools, a theater, bowling alley, modern hospital, golf course, and even an opera house. Through vast advertising in areas such as St. Louis, Missouri, and others, miners from the U.S. and immigrants from Greece, Italy, China, Ireland, and Mexico flooded the town. (During its height, coal mined in Dawson fueled an area equal to one-sixth of the United States.)



During its operation, Dawson experienced two mine large tragedies, one in 1913 and another in 1923. The first occurred on October 22, 1913, when an incorrectly set dynamite charge resulted in an enormous explosion in Stag Canon Mine No. 2 that sent a tongue of fire one hundred feet out of the tunnel mouth. Rescue efforts were well organized and exhaustive; Phelps Dodge sent a trainload of doctors, nurses, and medical supplies from El Paso; and striking miners in Colorado ceased picketing and offered to form rescue teams. But there was little need for anything except caskets. Only a few miners escaped. A total of 263 died in what was declared one of the worst mining disasters in U.S. history. Almost ten years later, on February 8, 1923, a mine train jumped its track, hit the supporting timbers of the tunnel mouth, and ignited coal dust in the mine. Approximately 123 men perished. Despite the disasters, Dawson success continued for many years.

Following the close of World War II, natural gas and diesel fuel overtook the market, driving out the coal industry. Once the coal market faded Phelps Dodge sold the property and company town to National Iron and Metals Company, who agreed to dismantle it. Phelps Dodge had sold the whole town, buildings and all, to be carried off to other locations. In April 1950 the people of Dawson were given 30 days to abandon their homes in order to raze the town. Today, the Dawson Cemetery remains the only portion of the former town open to the public. The remaining property operates as a private ranch.

The History of Sheridan, Wyoming

In the late 1800s, a booming Wyoming coal business began among homesteaders, whose lands contained outcroppings of coal. During that time, the landowners began selling coal through advertisements in the local papers, offering people the ability to dig their own coal or have it delivered. In 1893, the production of coal as an industry became a reality, when C.H. Grinnell

(later Mayor of Sheridan), J.R. Phelan, George T. Beck and Anson Higby formed the Sheridan Fuel Company on lands approximately four miles north of Sheridan, Wyoming. Word spread quickly and people from the east, mostly of foreign extraction, began pouring into the region. Company-owned mining camps subsequently formed and began housing the various miners flooding the area. By 1901, Sheridan was considered "A Busy Little City," as described in an issue of The Sheridan Post. Over the next several years, various veins were opened and furthered expanded the town of Sheridan, as well as the mining camps themselves. The camps resembled small cities and contained churches, schools, company stores, saloons, pool halls, union halls, a hotel, and more.

In the late 1940's, like the mining industry in general, the mines of Sheridan fell on hard times. This produced a vast change in the industrial makeup of the area. The Big Horn Coal Company, with its huge draglines, enormous trucks, and heavy equipment, began strip mining, rushing in a new era.

Origin of the Mattivi Surname

The ancient origin of the Mattivi name is Hebrew and believed to have originated from the words Mattithyah or Mattitya (an abbreviated form of Mattithyah). The literal Hebrew meaning of the name is "Gift of God," as translated through a breakdown of the words, with mattah meaning gift, and Yah (abbreviation of Yahvé) of God or of God of Israel. The Greek derivative is Matthaïos and Latin, Mattheus.

The Mattivi name, as well as various derivatives, is formed from the base names of Mattei, Matteo, or Mattia. Mattivi is prevalent throughout the Trentino region of Italy. Dematte, Mattevi, and Mattivi originate in the zones of Pergine, Civezzano, and Piné. Some variants are also found in Adige (Matte), Val di Cembra (Mattedi), and Valsugana (Matteoni and Mattiatto). The following is an exhaustive list of those names associated to the Mattivi name:

MATTEI, MATTEO, MATTEIS, MATTEA, MATTEDI, MATTEVI, MATTIA, MAFFEI, MAFFEO, MAFFII, MAFFI, MASSEI, MASSEO, MAZZEI, MAZZEO, MAZZEA, MAZZIA, MAZZI, MATTICH, MATTIELLO, MATTIELLI, MATTEINI, MATTEUCCI, MATUCCI, MATTEUZZI, MATTIUZZI, MATTIUSSI, MATUSSI, MATTEOLI, MATTIOLI, MATTEOTTI, MATTEONI, MATTIONI, MATTEACCI, MATTIACCI, MATTIAZZI, MATTIAZZO, MATTIASSO, MATTIASSI, MATTIATO, MAFFETTI, MAFFINI, MAFFINA, MAFFUCCI, MAFUCCI, MAFFIOLI, MAFFIOLETTI, MAFFEZZOLI, MAFFIOTTI, MAFFULLI, MAFFIONI, MAFFONE, MAFEZZONI, MAFFETTONE, MAZZELLA, MAZZILLI, MAZZIOTTI, MAZZIOTTO, MAZZIOTTA, MAZZULLO

Origin of the Girotti Surname

At this point, little is known of the background and origin of the Girotti name. The name does not originate from the Trentino region and has little current representation in that area. Based on immigration records, it appears the Girotti family may have immigrated from Pratiglione, a small village in the Province of Torino.

According to other research, the Girotti name has ties to parts of the Marches region, as well as roots in Bologna and Veneto.

Origin of the Giovannini Surname

The Giovannini name originates in Tuscany. It is a derivative of Giovanni.

Origin of the Anesi Surname

The origin of the Anesi name is unknown; however, the name is heavily present in the Trentino region. Probably originates from anes (anice), anise, or Agnese.

The History of Trentino-Alto Adige

The Mattivi, Anesi, and Giovannini names originate in the Region of Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy, and are heavily represented in Baselga di Piné. The region is located in northeastern Italy and has been the focus of many historical events, as well as great strife. Throughout its history various powers, including the Romans, Napoleon, and the Hapsburgs, have conquered, occupied, and controlled the region. The motivating force behind these occupations appears to have been the geographical significance of the Trentino province, and specifically the city of Trento. Located at the base of the Alps, the Trentino region provides a natural gateway and significant divider between the Nordic and Mediterranean cultures of Europe, as well as an important commercial passageway. Thus, various armies and countless rulers have battled for control of the territory. Throughout these events, the people of the region have suffered greatly, leaving an indelible impression, defining their customs, and producing a fierce internal loyalty among them.

The first significant invader was the Holy Roman Empire. They initially began a presence in the territory near the end of the 2nd century B.C. (200 B.C.), and officially took control of the Trentino region in the year 40 B.C. As part of the Tenth Roman region, Trentino was called the Italic Region and at one point was part of Venetia. The Roman period is marked by the great growth and expansion, including the development of the city of Trento. The modern site of the city of Trento, which is surrounded by three hills (the Veruca, St. Agatha, and the St. Rocco), provided a fortified and strategic site to guard the territory and control the flow of commerce, producing the modern city. The city's name is believed to have been derived from the three surrounding hills, from the Roman/Latin name of Tridentum. Under the auspices of the Roman development, the city prospered as a political, administrative, and cultural center. It maintained a direct connection to Rome through the Via Claudia Augusta, which was built during the Roman control.

Although technically a conquered land, the Trentino people attained legal, official Roman status during their years of occupation. In the year 46 A.D., the Roman Emperor Claudius Augustus issued an edict conferring Roman citizenship to the people of the Trentino region (the original bronze tablet was discovered in 1869 and is preserved in Trento National Museum). This edict provides the oldest known citizenry for the people of the region, a definitive linkage to the Italian Republic, and provides clear proof that the people of Trentino had been Italian since the concession of Roman citizenship.

Following the Romans, from the mid-400 through 490 A.D., the region was conquered and occupied by the Barbarians, Franks, and Ostrogoths. Throughout this period, the region

suffered severely. In early 490 A.D., the Western Roman Empire, through invasion by the Byzantine army, was reestablished in the area and the city of Trento was restored to its former glory. It was during this time the administrative activities of the area were entrusted to the bishops of Trento (directly administered by a solicitor), setting the stage for future battles. In approximately 568 A.D., Narsete, a Byzantine general irritated with growing powers of the Bishops, traded his allegiance and aligned with the Longobards, clearing the way for their occupation of the area. That year the Kingdom of Italy was formed, with Trentino incorporated as one of the 36 dukedoms. During the Longobard rule, various castles were built around the Trentino region to defend the ongoing Franc raids.

In 800 A.D., Italy and the Longobards were defeated by the armies of the King of France, and Trento was incorporated into the Roman Empire of the Franks. At that time, the Bishops were installed as rulers of the area.

In 962 A.D., the Longobards again invaded the region, reclaiming Italy as well as the Trentino region. This sparked the formation of the Roman German Empire. The Trentino region was then combined with Verona and placed under a feudal rule and German administration. This began a long and tenuous rule of the Count-Bishops of Trento, who maintained divided loyalties. The Bishops were vested with ecclesiastical power and loyal to Rome, whereas the Counts ruled through political/feudal authority and sided with the Empire. During a 300-year period, a power struggle persisted between the Counts and Bishops for control of the territory. Over time, the Counts of Tyrol and the Dukes of Austria, who were supporters of the Emperor and feudal rule, gained power and slowly took control of the area.

In 1497, Venice began attempts to expand its sphere of control into the Trentino region. The Treaty of 1516, in which Emperor Maximilian incorporated Four Vicariates from Venice, enclosing the principality of Trento and areas to the south mountains, ultimately settled the expansion efforts.

During the 1500s (lasting approximately 100 years), the Trentino region was ruled by the Bishops of the Madruzzo Family, who oversaw further cultural and economic development of Trentino. This influence exacerbated the ongoing tension with the Counts of Tyrol, who also wished to regain influence in the area.

In the latter part of the 18th century (approximately 1796), Napoleon Bonaparte and the French Republic began their push into the Trentino region, as they conquered central Europe. The region subsequently fell to Napoleon and under his rule (1810) the new Kingdom of Italy was formed. Trentino was incorporated as one of the approximate 12 total provinces combined to form the Kingdom and remained so through Napoleon's eventual defeat and loss of power. The defeat, in 1815, marked the passing of the region to Austria and the Hapsburg Empire, sparking a long-standing feud between Italy and Austria for control of the region and its people. (Austria took control of Italy in 1714 and maintained control through 1861, the official formation of the Republic of Italy.) During this time, the Trentino people requested special autonomy, due to their Italian nationality and language, but were refused, sewing the seeds of discontent and future rebellion. The Hapsburg control officially ended a 727-year reign of the Trentino territory by the Bishops (Roman Church).

During the Hapsburg control, the Empire attempted to “Germanize” the population and flush its subjects into the area. Trento and other parts of the region, however, clung to their Italian heritage, providing great resistance and spawning a movement for reunification with Italy. The movement was identified as the Italian Risorgimento and created a large and significant opposition to the Hapsburg Empire, who generally treated the people of Trento as second-class citizens. In contrast, the people of Alto Adige, who had been subjected to Hapsburg influence since medieval times, embraced the Austrian influence. This area became known as South Tyrol. During the late 19th century Trento and Trieste, Italian cities still belonging to the Austrians, became icons of the national unification movement. In fact, during the 1800s Italian armies, allied by Trentini separatists, fought to free the region from the county of Tyrol. (In 1816, the Trentino region was united with the county of Tyrol.)

It wasn’t until the First World War (1918), that Trento and Trieste were conquered by the Italian troops. Major battles were fought high in the Alps and Dolomites between Austrian and Italian forces, for whom control of the South Tyrol and Trento was a key strategic objective. The collapse of the Austrian war effort enabled Italian troops to occupy the region and its annexation was confirmed in the post-war treaties, which awarded the Trentino and South Tyrol to Italy under the terms of the Treaty of Saint-Germain. What is now Trentino-Alto Adige was renamed and reorganized as “Venezia Tridentina” (Venetian Trento), alluding to the former mainland territories of the Republic of Venice.

Under the rule of Benito Mussolini, the Alto Adige region was subjected to a program of Italianization, in an effort to eradicate the years of Austrian influence from the region and to specifically regain control. In 1938, to further separate the competing interests of Trento and Alto Adige, Hitler and Mussolini agreed that the German-speaking population of the area would be transferred to German-ruled territory or dispersed around Italy. The scheme failed to materialize due to the outbreak of World War II.

Following the end of the World War II, the years of competing influences and differing loyalties had taken its toll on the people. Trento and the surrounding area remained strongly devoted to its Italian roots, while Alto Adige and the northern border retained an Austrian influence. Thus, in 1946, Italy and Austria negotiated an agreement to settle the unrest and retain their competing influences. The region, while remaining in the Italian Republic, was granted considerable autonomy, allowing both Italian and German languages to be officially recognized. Despite the agreement, the German-speaking population and Austrian government remained unsatisfied, causing continual friction between Italy and Austria.



The issue again came to a head and subsequent resolution in 1971, at which time a new Italo-Austrian treaty was signed and ratified. The treaty stipulated that disputes in the Bolzano (Alto Adige) province would be submitted for settlement to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, that the province would receive greater autonomy from Italy, and that Austria would not interfere in Bolzano’s internal affairs. While this agreement appeared to be a reasonable solution, it has actually proved to be little more than another political expedient which has led a sort of de facto internal division. Even the most casual visitor will have little trouble noticing that Trentino, the southern part of the region centered on the city of Trento, is far more Italian than Alto Adige (Bolzano).

At present, Trentino-Alto Adige consists of two provinces, Trento, also the capital, and Bolzano. The Province of Trento, almost entirely Italian-speaking, is characterized by the presence of dialects, some of Venetian origin and some Lombardi (especially from Brescia).

Baselga di Piné



Baselga di Piné is located on the high Piné Plateau, and sits just northeast of the capital city of Trento. Baselga is the administrative seat and the economic, tourist, cultural and religious center for the municipality of Baselga di Piné. The municipality of Baselga di Piné is made up of ten areas: Baselga, Faida, Miola, Montagnaga, Ricaldo, San Mauro, Tressilla, and Vigo. It sits at 967 meters above sea level surrounded by a lake and mountains. The town has a population of roughly 4700 inhabitants.



Tourism is important to the economy, driving the numerous services accommodations of the area. The Serrai and Piazze Lakes, Congress Center, and International Ice Rink make Baselga one of the most famous resorts in Trentino. Characteristic churches provide other unique attractions in the area, including the Antica Pieve di St. Maria Assunta Church, which is built with unique features based on the different styles employed, from Romanesque to Gothic, and Renaissance to Baroque.

The plateau is also famous for the "Sanctuary of the Appearance," where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared before a young shepherdess in 1729. Mining has been present in the plateau since the Middle Ages. The Cembra Valley looks like a deep and narrow furrow, dug by the Avisio Stream, around which there is an expanse of sunny terraces used for vine cultivation of renowned wines and excellent brandies.

The Piné Plateau, as well as the Cembra Valley, is also famous for its rich folklore and musical traditions. The area boasts hundreds of active choirs and musical ensembles.

Religion

Trentino is a land rich in religious history and its people are guided by their deep-seated beliefs and Catholic devotion. This profound faith is preserved through the multitudes of monumental and religious works of art, as well as the large number of sanctuaries and hermitages spread throughout the region. The historical significance of the area was secured in 1545, when the city of Trento was selected to host the famous Council of Trent. The Council was assembled by Pope Paolo III in order to reform the Catholic Church following the protestant reformation, and to stem the tide of Lutheranism from spreading further south through Europe. Since that time, the Trentino has been recognized as a bastion of the Catholic religion.

Work in progress

As with other ancient areas of the world, the Trentino was pagan. In ???, paganism was supplanted

St. Lucia

The patron saint of the Altopiano di Pine region (including Baselga di Pine) is the Virgin Mary, or the Madonna di Pine. According to history, the townspeople of Montagnaga were devoted to the Madonna di Caravaggio (the site of Mary's appearance three centuries before) and often visited the shrine at Treviglio. On one such pilgrimage, Giacomo Moser purchased a portrait of the Madonna and placed it over the alter of Santa Anna's Church in Montagnaga.

Sometime later, a young shepherdess, Domenica Targa, unable to take a pilgrimage, received as many as five apparitions from Mary. The first occurred on May 14, 1729, while Domenica was in the field tending her sheep and unable to attend the town festivities. Around noon, all of the animals were frightened and fled. Domenica, fearful, began citing the rosary and pled for the help of Jesus and Mary. At that moment, the Virgin Mary appeared. Domenica subsequently expressed her devotion and inability to travel to the Caravaggio shrine. Mary then instructed Domenica to immediately travel to Montagnaga and enter the Santa Anna Church. There, kneeling on the first step, she would receive a miracle.



Domenica immediately left the field and proceeded to the church, where the parishioners were praying for rain. While kneeling as instructed, Domenica received a second apparition. Mary appeared at the alter with a baby and the rosary, and exhorted Domenica to reveal the apparition to all urge at the church.

After Domenica revealed the divine apparition, the priest summoned church officials from Baselga. Upon arrival of the officials they all gathered in the church where Mary appeared to Domenica a third time, with the baby Jesus in her arms, bleeding from wounds. The Virgin Mary blessed the picture (Madonna di Caravaggio) and exhorted Domenica to exclaim, "the happy Virgin comes." Mary then approved her worship at the church. Mary, showing the wounds of the divine child, explained they wounds of sins and urged prayer for the conversion of sinners.

Two days later, still facing skepticism, Mary again appeared in order to console Domenica and urge her to expose all to her confessor, don Michele Bernardi. As a result, Domenica's experiences were presented to the Church for ecclesiastical recognition of the appearances. Sometime in 1730, the Church officially approved Montagnaga's devotion to the risen Mary and authorized an annual commemorative celebration, to be conducted May 26th of each successive year. The date coincided with the anniversary of Domenica's second apparition and the anniversary of the Madonna of Caravaggio.

On May 26, 1730, the Virgin Mary appeared to Domenica for the last time, in the church of Santa Anna. Wrapped from a light fulgidissima, and encircled from a



stuolo of vergini, the Madonna invoked the blessing of the Getlteman over the multitude of those present, operated some guarigioni, manifesto to Sunday its satisfaction, and, greeting it amiably, s' she always removed in order.

In June 1730, in the face of vast pilgrimage to the sight, Pope Benedetto XIII granted complete recognition of the apparitions and worship. The Sanctuary of the Madonna di Pine was subsequently erected on the site to welcome the numerous pilgrims to this place of hope and conversion. It remains a significant site of pilgrimage.



The Secret Wine Cellar of Trentino

Wine has long been a part of the Trentino culture and embedded in the daily life of its people, as represented by an ancient Trentino legend, the Ghost's Wine. According to legend, a man, "...captured by the goodness of the wine, immediately filled a jar to take home, but three ghosts stopped him and made him promise to take away just enough for him and his family and to keep the secret of the magic cellar. But one evening the foolish farmer threw a party and, carried away with good cheer, gave some of the fine wine to his friends. Suddenly, terrible cries were heard to echo round and the magic cellar faded away for ever. It is said that the cellar still exists, hidden away somewhere, but nobody reveals the secret...."

The role of wine in the region is further illustrated through a Trentino saying, "Pane e vino fanno un bel bambino," or "bread and wine make a beautiful baby". The expression reflects the widespread belief that bread and wine are fundamental sources of nourishment and growth, both physically and emotionally.

The secret cellar still exist, it is the size of all Trentino! In every corner of this land, you will find vines and taste wines belonging exclusively to that area. The art of winemaking has always belonged to the culture of Trentino; it is part of both the legends and the traditions. Many local and international vines have found their ideal growing conditions, in an environment made up of different micro-climates that vary from Mediterranean to Alpine, all of which are perfect for producing grapes of exceptional quality. Every valley, slope, and corner of this land has its own particular wines, wines which draw the very best from the place in which the grapes grow.

The territory seems to have been designed specially for the vines; in the mild climate of the Valle di Laghi, the land exposed to the sun provides the highly prized Vino Santo Trentino, made from overripe Nosiola grapes. On the stepped terraces of the mountains, where the land steepens, an extremely aromatic white wine is produced. In the valley beneath, on the Rotaliano plain, is home to the great Trentino red, Teroldego. Further south in Vallagarina, a more gentle red, Marzemino, is grown. In the hilly areas Chardonnay grapes are grown and produce a refined and sophisticated spumante.

There are three grapes native to this region, one is the white Nosiola and the other two are the red Teroldego Rotaliano and the Marzemino. In addition to the native grapes, well known international grape varieties such as Chardonnay, Cabernet, Merlot, Moscato, Pinot Nero and Pinot Grigio, as well as Müller-Thurgau, are grown throughout the region. One main distinction between Trentino and Alto Adige production is the fact that in the northern area the wines are produced mostly by small family-owned and managed wineries that sell their product locally with limited exports to Germany and Austria. Trentino on the other hand counts on a large number of growers who joined into large cooperatives, such as Ca'vit and Mezzacorona, which produce wines that have consistent taste and characteristics year after year. These popular wines have found their niche, both in Italy and abroad, among wine drinkers who look for reasonably good and affordable wines for daily enjoyment.

Immigration-Ellis Island

This section provides depictions of the early 1900 immigrant experience at Ellis Island and depicts what Ben and our other relatives faced upon entering the United States.

Under construction



Immigrant Station, Ellis Island, New York City



S.S. Le Bretagne

The S.S. Le Bretagne was built in 1886 by Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, in St Nazaire, France. It was built for the French Line, sailed under a French Flag, and operated a Le Havre to New York service. The ship was 6,756 gross tons; 508 (bp) feet long; and 51 feet wide. It was powered by compound engines, triple screws, and sailed at a service speed of 17 knots. The ship held 1,060 passengers, of whom 402 were first class, 60 second class, and 598 third class passengers. In 1912, the ship was sold to Compagnie Sud-Atlantique and began operating a France to South America service. In 1919, the ship was renamed Alesia, but was ultimately scrapped in Italy in 1923. During its service, the ship was an integral part of the immigration boom and carried many immigrants from Europe to the shores of America.

