



*Cheyenne Genealogical &
Historical Society*

Apr-May-Jun 2020

Vol. 17 Issue 2

Cheyenne Genealogy Journal

Messages From Your Presidents . . .

From Sue Seniawski, Your Outgoing President—



Wow! Our Society's year sure ended with a whimper, not a bang, didn't it? We had to cancel our last meetings of the year, our annual banquet and the Cemetery Walk. On the upside, we joined the 21st century with flying colors holding our election of officers online. Congratulations to the newly elected officers.

I hope you and yours are still staying healthy during this pandemic which has us all house bound. Maybe there is a silver lining to being house bound

and you have been able to advance your genealogical research. Before I ride off into the sunset, I want to acknowledge and thank all the officers and committee chairs who worked so diligently and with such dedication. Their tireless contributions made CG&HS so very successful. They set an unbelievably high standard. I also want to acknowledge and thank those fantastically generous members who made donations to the CG&HS recently. Their donations are greatly appreciated and will go far in benefiting the Society and our members. **Thank you all so much!** I look forward to my continued participation in the Society and I hope to see you soon.

Sue

thank
you!

From Judy Englehart, Your Incoming President—

May you live in interesting times...unfortunately, this curse does seem to be upon us. Uninteresting times are peaceful, perhaps even boring, but I am certain can all agree this past six months has been anything but boring. Many of us have specific dates cemented in our minds that seem like boundaries in our personal histories. Up until now 9/11 has been one such date and here in Wyoming, March 18, 2020 may be a new one for us. Once the closures to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 and "flatten the curve" were announced by Governor Gordon we all became focused on our electronic devices and checking toilet paper supplies. I have not personally been affected by the virus; I do not know anyone who has been ill or who has died but many of you may. Have you been documenting your excursion into these Interesting Times? As I explored the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and other disease epidemics from the Bubonic Plague forward I read that historians noted that the most difficult part of their studies was finding the stories of the individuals caught up in the events. Not surprisingly, historians, novelists, essayists and of course, scientists supply most of the information. In the past, individuals were hampered by the lack of medicines and information, and a daily struggle for survival; now we have medicines and the ability to find more and I might posit that we could have *too much information* but we are still caught up in our daily lives.

I am not a journal writer but I do realize that I have captured many of my thoughts, positive and negative online. Next year Facebook will be flashing "memories" at me and I will think about this particular time. If you are recording this Interesting Time, I can assure you that your children and grandchildren will appreciate it! I look forward to seeing you all soon, in person sharing our experiences and continuing to study and document our family stories.

Judy



Upcoming Events:

2-4 Sept 2020
FGS Family History Conference, "Blazing Trails in the Heart of America"
20-45 on-demand presentations & virtual exhibit hall; registration at:
<https://fgs.org/conferences/registration/>

8 Sept 2020
Monthly Meeting & Program to be announced
Cheyenne Genealogical & Historical Society
6:00-8:00 p.m.,
Online Zoom/Virtual Event

11-12 Sept 2020
"2020 Deep Roots—"Their Legacy—Utah Buffalo Soldiers, Black Cowboys & Other Pioneers"
African American History & Genealogical Regional Conference (to encompass Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah & Wyoming) Register at:
<https://conta.cc/3hU9cTz>
An Online Virtual Event



Congratulations & thanks to Sharon and Sue for their many contributions to our Society!



During Cheyenne Genealogical & Historical Society's 2019 Annual Banquet, Sue Seniawski (right), CGHS President, recognizes Sharon Field, longtime CGHS member, board person and mentor to many, with a lifetime membership for her many contributions to the society over the years.

Get to Know Your Genealogy Colleague: *Thomas Ralph Turse*

This newsletter column will introduce you to the genealogical work of members of the Cheyenne Genealogical & Historical Society, to help you get to know your colleagues and perhaps to provide a few ideas or hints—maybe even a family connection!

What is your full name?

Thomas Ralph Turse

Are you named after any relative; if so who & why?

As far as I know there is no other Thomas in our family, however, my middle name, Ralph, is after my maternal grandfather, Ralph Rinard, and my older brother's middle name is Joseph Rinard Turse, thus we have his name, 'Ralph Rinard' in both our middle names. My surname is of Italian derivative having been "Tursi" in Italy as well as the early period of America.

What is your maternal ethnic heritage?

My mother's heritage was Pennsylvania Dutch (Deutsch/German) and English.

What is your paternal ethnic heritage?

My father's heritage is purely Italian both on his maternal and paternal sides. My paternal grandfather, Francesco Paulo Tursi, immigrated from Anzi, Italy to the U.S.

in 1885 with his two eldest sons, Domenico (my grandfather) and his younger brother, Donato.

Give your maternal surnames three generations back:

Surnames of my mother's line are Rinard, Geasey, Bonstein and Wardell.

Give your paternal wives' or mothers' surnames three generations back:

The surnames of my father's heritage are Tursi/Turse, Garramone and Dragonetti.

Provide some information about yourself, your background, your family:

I am married and have three grown sons, all of whom have given us a total of four grandchildren—two boys and two girls. One grandson lives in Denver, one in Bellvue, near Ft. Collins and two granddaughters here in Cheyenne. I am currently retired although I've never been busier in my life. I was on active duty as a special agent with the U.S. Army Intelligence for 14 years, serving in Philadelphia, PA, two tours of duty in Germany, one tour in Okinawa, Japan and one tour in Vietnam. After separation from active duty, I joined the U.S. Army Reserves serving as a special agent with the U.S. Army Criminal Investigative Command. In 1990 my unit was called up to active duty for Desert Storm. I thought I was going to be sent to the middle east, but I ended up at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. This assignment was on the security-protective service team for then Secretary of Defense, Dick Chaney and General Colon Powell. As a Pennsylvania native and world wide resident with the military, I had little knowledge of the State of Wyoming but I did come from the Wyoming Valley area of Pennsylvania. It was through duty on Dick Chaney's security detail, that I became more acquainted with Wyoming. In 1994, still working but now as a civil service Special

Agent Investigator with the U.S. DOD, I accepted a promotional transfer to Cheyenne, and worked here for four years before accepting a buyout during a downsizing of my agency and retiring after 31 years as a civil servant. I then worked as a contract investigator for several agencies to include the Wyoming State Attorney General's Licensing Boards, the State and Federal Public Defender's Offices and several Wyoming attorneys. I am also a licensed private investigator in the City of Cheyenne. In 2009 I retired from all investigative employments and contracts. I now spend much of my free time volunteering at the library conducting my genealogy and helping many family members and friends.

When did you start doing genealogy?

I started doing genealogy in 1974.

What got you interested in this crazy hobby?

I was in the U.S. Army stationed in Darmstadt, Germany. In the military newspaper, "The Stars and Stripes," there was an article about this young Specialist 4 who was also stationed in Darmstadt and who was doing his genealogy and finding that his family had come from a town a few kilometers from Darmstadt giving him access to numerous German genealogists, who were always interested in those folks that emigrated to other countries. That peaked my interest and began my adventure. I must say that I dabbled in genealogical research for 20 years and didn't really know that there was a method to my madness until 1994-95, when I joined the Cheyenne Genealogical Society. It was here that I learned the proper procedures of genealogical research of which I am still learning. I also served as the President of the Society from 1999 until 2001.

(continued on page 3)



His Ancestors Include a German Hessen Mercenary Who Fought at the Battle of Trenton

(Continued from page 2)

Are you doing direct-line only or collateral research?

I have always researched first direct lines and then peripheral families.

When is the furthest back that you have researched; what have you found?

My wife's line is documented back to the 1100s and undocumented back to [King Ecgberht \(Egbert\)](#) of Wessex, England (771-839).



What is the most interesting/funniest/most bizarre story you have uncovered? Explain what it was and was it accurate, or if not, why not?

One of the two most interesting stories that I have discovered is about my 5th great grandfather, Bonstein, a German Hessen mercenary soldier recruited by the British to fight in the American Revolutionary War. He was assigned to the English General Howe at Trenton, NJ and he was captured that fateful Christmas Eve, when Gen-

eral George Washington crossed the Delaware River on a nighttime raid of the British at Trenton.

Bonstein was captured and assigned to a Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, farmer until the end of the war. He also had a brother, the only two brothers to serve together from Germany. After the war, his brother Paul Bonstein went back to Germany while Bonstein decided to stay in America. He went on to marry the daughter of the caretaker of William Penn's son's estate, Pennsbury Manor, in Bristol Township, PA which is located on the bank of the Delaware River.

The next interesting discovery was my 3rd great grandfather, Corporal John William Wardell, who enlisted in the Civil War at Lackawanna County, PA. Fortunately for me he had two children—his daughter was my great great grandmother. I say lucky for me because he was shot and killed by a confederate sniper at High Bridge, VA, just down the way from Appomattox Courthouse, VA. His unit was in pursuit of General Lee. He was killed two days before Lee surrendered. I guess I was lucky, which is more than I can say for my ancestor.

to consulting with Glen York, with the Larimer County, Colorado Genealogical Society.

What do you think are the best methods or best resources (tools, sites, etc.) for researching? Why?

I think that Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org are my most utilized research tools, however my most accurate—meaning—"documented" research is only on my private computer.

Do you use timelines or research plans to help you stay on track or learn what you need to research?

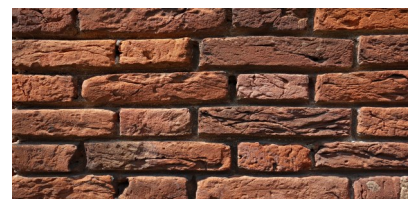
I do utilize timelines in my research as a very effective tool.

What software program do you use for your own documentation and keeping your family tree?

I use Legacy genealogy software on my personal computer, which I keep private—it is not available to the public or other family members.

What is your biggest brick wall on which you would like assistance?

Brick walls? I have a few—the most irritating is my wife's great great grandfather. We think he was Johann Hoffman from Wurttemberg, Germany. In 1850 he conceived one son in Germany but who was born in New York City in 1851 and conceived a second son in NYC born in 1856. His son and grandson both became NYC police officers. We have extensive documentation on the mother of these two boys, but cannot find Johann/John Hoffman anywhere. We looked into hiring a professional genealogist, but it would take anywhere from \$2,000-\$4,000 to **maybe** find him....so this is still one of my biggest brick-wall challenges.



"The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, December 26, 1776" is the title of an oil painting by the American artist John Trumbull (Yale University Art Gallery) depicting the capture of the Hessian soldiers at the Battle of Trenton on the morning of Thursday, December 26, 1776 during the American Revolutionary War.

Have you had a DNA test... if so, what has it confirmed, disproved or confounded for you?

I have had DNA tests done by three companies—Ancestry, 23 & Me and My Heritage and my genealogies and DNA are available and shared. My DNA research is a work in progress and I look forward

More United Kingdom Family History Books to Become Digitized

This article is from Dick Eastman's Online Newsletter of 3 Mar 2020.

The Society of Genealogists and FamilySearch are working on a program of digitization of some 9000 family history books and over 5000 genealogy pamphlets, offprints and unpublished tracts from the Society of Genealogists' extensive genealogy library. Since its foundation in 1911 the Society of Genealogists has collected the largest assembly of narrative family histories and biographies in the United Kingdom. Some of its collection are unique materials deposited in the Society's library for the use of genealogists. This digitization program not only ensures the preservation of the library's books, bound monographs and multi-volume histories, but also enables the Society to make them available to a wider audience. Scanned digital images of the works will be available for use in the library and, where possible, will be published online as part of the SoG's digital collections.



Items within the family histories collection include, for example, the three volume *Records of the Cust Family of*

Pinchbeck, Stamford and Belton in Lincolnshire compiled by Lady Elizabeth Cust in 1894 (the first woman to join as a Founding Fellow the Society of Genealogists in 1911). There are some 50 volumes of bound notes and manuscripts for the Scattergood family acquired by the SoG in 1967 and a typical three volumes of bound typescript notes abstracting wills, registers etc. entitled *Rolfe Family Records* compiled by A.W. Rolfe and donated in 2003.

The SoG holds a facsimile of what is considered to be one of the first compiled family histories which is of the Berkeley family compiled in the 1620s by John Smyth of Nibley (d. 1640) using public records and family muniments and which were republished in an abstract in 1821 edited by Thomas Dudley Posbrooke. While most are excellent, exact and authoritative works, some (very few) may be like the first published English family history by Robert Halstead called *Succinct Genealogies of the Noble and Ancient Houses of Alno, Broc and Mor-daunt (1685)* which is replete with forged charters and fictitious pedigrees! The project will involve not only the preservation and scanning of the items but also an extensive amount of work to re-catalogue and withdraw the items to safe storage, thus freeing up considerable space in the library. The project is expected to last at least two years with equipment and personnel provided by FamilySearch working in the Upper Library with SoG volunteers and cataloguers.

A Bit About Italian Immigration from Family Tree Magazine

This article is excerpted from "Viva Italia," by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack; originally published in the June 2005 issue of Family Tree Magazine, copyright Yankee Publishing, Inc. Reprinted with permission. For the complete article go to: www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/viva-italia-italian-immigration/

Every ethnic group in the United States can recite ways its group has impacted American culture, but Italians have them all beat. After all, they dubbed the land America—a fine Italian name. And who doesn't like Italian food—pizza, spaghetti, lasagne, tiramisu?

If you claim Italian ancestry, here's a quick primer on Italian-American immigration history.

Small numbers of Italians, mostly from northern Italy, came to America during the Colonial period. Italy still was a collection of independent states, so these early arrivals identified themselves by their hometown or region (Florence or Parma, for example) rather than Italy. Of course, to other Americans, they were all Italians, so that's how they're most likely listed in US records. When the Italian states unified as the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, some place names changed. You'll need to know the pre-unification name to find family in earlier records. Modern Italy's 103 province are grouped into 20 regions (regioni). If your ancestors immigrated after the Civil War, they likely came from the southern regions of Abruzzo, Molise, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, parts of Latium and the island of Sicily. About a quarter of Italians who immigrated to the United States in steerage left from Naples. Other ports of departure were Genoa in northern Italy and Palermo in Sicily. Most Italian emigrants, whose roots had been planted in their homeland's soil for centuries, were what historians call "push migrants." They didn't want to leave Italy, but unfavorable circumstances—low wages, a failing agrarian economy, malnutrition, disease, industrial stagnation, the lingering feudal system, a high cost of living and government corruption—forced them to. On top of that, in the early 1900s, southern Italy experienced drought, volcanic eruptions of mounts Vesuvius and Etna, and a 1908 earthquake that killed more than 100,000 people in the city of Messina alone. In addition, higher wages and the opportunity to own land enticed people to America.

Wanted/Needed: More members to share their Genealogy Research

Thanks to some of you for stepping up to share your genealogy adventures with your fellow researchers. Readers want more! So this newsletter editor is still seeking volunteers who will share some of their research for the column, "Get to Know Your Genealogy Colleague." The column's purpose is to introduce readers to the genealogical work of members of the Cheyenne Genealogical & Historical Society, to help them get to know their colleagues, provide a few ideas or hints to help them in their own research, and maybe even discover a family connection in another person's research. If you would like to participate and share your research through a series of provided questions & answers, please notify the **Cheyenne Genealogy Journal** editor:

Wendywy04@aol.com with your name and contact information.

Millions of Italians Immigrated to America to Leave Poverty, Disease, Corruption Behind

Information in this article is from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia—https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Americans

About 5.5 million Italians immigrated to the United States from 1820 to 2004, with the majority of Italian immigrants to the United States arriving in the 20th century from Southern Italy. In 1870, there were fewer than 25,000 Italian immigrants in America, many of them [Northern Italian](#) refugees from the wars that accompanied the [Risorgimento](#)—the struggle for Italian unification and independence from foreign rule which ended in 1871. Immigration began to increase during the 1870s, when more than twice as many Italians immigrated (1870-79: 46,296) than during the five previous decades combined (1820-69: 22,627). The 1870s were followed by the greatest surge of immigration, which occurred between 1880 and 1914 and brought more than four million Italians to the U.S. the largest number coming from the Southern Italian provinces of Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily, which were still mainly rural and agricultural and where much of the populace had been impoverished by centuries of foreign misrule and the heavy tax burdens levied after [Italian unification](#) in 1861. This period of large-scale immigration ended abruptly with the onset of the First World War in 1914 and, except for one year (1922), never fully resumed. Further immigration was greatly limited by several laws Congress passed in the 1920s aimed at restricting immigration from Italy and other Southern European countries, as well as Eastern European countries. Following the unification, the unitary Italian state initially encouraged emigration to relieve economic pressures in the South.

Approximately 7000 Italian Americans served in the Civil War, both as soldiers and as officers. While some served in the Confederate Army (including general William B. Taliaferro, of distant Anglo-Italian descent), the great majority of Italian-Americans, for both demographic and ideological reasons, served in the Union Army. The [Garibaldi Guard](#) recruited volunteers for the Union Army from Italy and other European countries to form the [39th New York Infantry](#).

After the American Civil War, which resulted in half a million people killed or wounded, immigrant workers were recruited from Italy and else-

where to fill the labor shortage caused by the war. Beginning in 1863, Italian immigrants were one of the principal groups, along with the Irish, that built the Transcontinental Railroad west from Omaha, Nebraska.

In America, most Italians began their new lives as manual laborers in eastern cities, mining camps and farms. Descendants of Italian immigrants gradually rose from a lower economic class in the first generation to a level comparable to the national average by 1970. The Italian community has often been characterized by strong ties to family, the Catholic Church, fraternal organizations and political parties.

From 1880 to 1915, 13 million Italians migrated out of Italy, making Italy the scene of the largest voluntary emigration in recorded world history. This migration wave single-handedly accounts for the large Italian element in the European-descended population of South America, as there were lower language and cultural barriers in countries like Brazil and Argentina than in the United States. During this period of mass migration, 4 million Italian immigrants arrived in the United States, with 3 million coming between 1900 and 1914. Most planned to stay a few years, then take their earnings and return home. The immigrants often faced great challenges. Unskilled immigrants found employment primarily in low-wage manual-labor jobs and, if unable to find jobs on their own, turned to the [padrone system](#) whereby Italian middlemen (padroni) found jobs for groups of men and controlled their wages, transportation, and living conditions for a fee.

According to historian Alfred T. Banfield: "Criticized by many as slave traders who preyed upon poor, bewildered peasants, the 'padroni' often served as travel agents, with fees reimbursed from paychecks, as landlords who rented out shacks and boxcars, and as storekeepers who extended exorbitant credit to their Italian laborer clientele. Despite such abuse, not all 'padroni' were dastardly and most Italian immigrants reached out to their 'padroni' for economic salvation, considering them either as godsends or necessary evils. The Italians whom the 'padroni' brought to Maine generally had no intention of settling there, and most were sojourners who either returned to Italy or moved on to another job somewhere else. Nevertheless, thousands of Italians did settle in Maine, creating 'Little Italies' in Portland, Millinocket, Rumford, and other towns where the 'padroni' remained as strong shaping forces in the new communities.

In terms of the push-pull model of immigration, America provided the pull factor by the prospect of jobs that unskilled uneducated Italian peasant farmers could do. Peasant farmers accustomed to hard work in the Mezzogiorno, for example, took jobs building railroads and constructing buildings, while others took factory jobs that required little or no skill. The push factor came from Italian unification in 1861, which caused economic conditions to considerably worsen for many. Major factors that contributed to the large exodus from both northern and southern Italy after unification included political and social unrest, the government's allocation of much more of its resources to the industrialization of the North than to that of the South, an inequitable tax burden on the South, tariffs on the products of the South, soil exhaustion and erosion, and military conscription lasting seven years. The poor economic situation following unification became untenable for many sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and small business and land owners. Multitudes chose to emigrate rather than face the prospect of a deepening poverty. A large number of these were attracted to the U.S., which at the time was actively recruiting workers from Italy and elsewhere to fill the labor shortage that existed in the years following the Civil War. Often the father and older sons would go first, leaving the mother and the rest of the family behind until the male members could afford their passage. Many sought housing in the older sections of the large Northeastern cities where they settled, that became known as "[Little Italies](#)", frequently in overcrowded substandard tenements which were often dimly lit with poor heating and ventilation. Tuberculosis and other communicable diseases were a constant health threat for the immigrant families that were compelled by economic circumstances to live in these dwellings. Other immigrant families lived in single-family abodes, which was more typical in areas outside of the enclaves of the large Northeastern cities, and other parts of the country as well.

An estimated 49 percent of Italians who migrated to the Americas between 1905 (when return migration statistics began) and 1920 did not remain in the U.S., but with their savings, returned to Italy.

**Cheyenne
Genealogical &
Historical Society**

P.O. Box 2539
Cheyenne, Wyoming
82003-2539

Website:
www.cgshwyoming.org

To contact CGHS or to
submit newsletter
suggestions and/or
articles, send a note to
Wendy at
wendywy04@aol.com

Follow us on the Web at
www.cgshwyoming.org
and on Facebook at [https://
www.facebook.com/pages/Cheyenne-
Genealogical-Historical-Society](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cheyenne-Genealogical-Historical-Society)

The Cheyenne Genealogical &
Historical Society continues to
wish all its members a healthy
productive home-bound time
filled with genealogical research
wonders and inspirational learn-
ing.



"Check This Out"

Family history-related fiction & nonfiction
book reviews by CGHS members & others



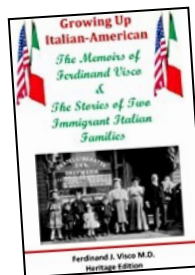
Some Grief Some Joy

by Leo Vadala

(c 2019; 458 pages; Idea Graphics Publishing,
California—biographical fiction)

Immigration to America is a dream fulfilled for a young Italian teenager and the beginning of a saga that will challenge the reader with its many surprising developments. This novel, drafted as a memoir, will make you root for the protagonist, cry for him and wish for his success while keeping you completely absorbed by the twists and turns of his life path. A masterpiece of narrative exploits that combines all the emotional conflicts of the immigrant's life with the joys of love and an unexpected tragedy to create a perfect novel.

Review by one reader on Amazon: "I found this to be a wonderfully written book, keeping my attention throughout. The author, who became an American after emigrating from Italy as a teenager, created a compelling story mixing personal exploits along with fictional occurrences, detailing tragedy and happiness over decades during his life. Also, as an Italian-American I enjoyed reading his quite descriptive narration of his time in Sicily and Genoa."



Growing Up Italian-American: The Memoirs of Ferdinand Visco & The Stories of Two Immigrant Italian Families

by Ferdinand J. Visco, M.D.

(c 2018; 434 pages; CreateSpace Independent
Publishing, New York—autobiography)

Why did our ancestors leave Italy in the early 1900s? Why did they come to America? How were Italian immigrants processed at Ellis Island? What were the requirements for naturalization in the early 1900s? Which Italian-American dishes are really not Italian? What is the difference between Sauce and Gravy?

Answers to these questions and many more in this reader-friendly and entertaining book that attempts to capture what it means to be Italian-American. The book contains the stories of three generations of Italian-American history, values, and culture including traditions, religion, language, folklore, customs, music, food and humor. The book also contains Italian Proverbs, offers sage Italian-American advice, and features recipes from Padula and Vico Equense. It tells the stories of three generations of Italian-Americans and represents over one hundred and fifty years of family history. It traces the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of the Baratta family from Padula and the Visco family from Vico Equense, both of whom settled in Manhattan and subsequently moved to Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island. The stories, which were taken from family memoirs and transcripts, are told by those who lived them in their own words and are placed in historical context. Since the author lived in Italy for almost six years, the book is also in part an Italian travelogue and contains descriptions, pictures, and interesting facts about many Italian cities. —Amazon Review