

They Came in Hope

**Pictorial and Oral History
of Lowell's
Italian Americans**

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Acknowledgments

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Preface

A review of the Italian Americans of Lowell denotes a continuity of ethnicity that is measured by the daily lives of the descendants of early settlers. Population moves often result in the regrouping of ethnic groups especially Italians when they become a minority in comparison to other groups. This has clearly happened in Lowell where today third generation through intermarriage did create a dualism in the preserving of traditions rather than a fusion or loss.

Lowell, because of its diversity in population seems to guarantee some ethnic continuity and with the yearly Lowell Folk Festival perhaps the newer members of the Italian American community can find interest in the preserving their cultural heritage through festivals, cuisine and language. The generations to come can declare themselves special beneficiaries of the legacies brought from Italy because they are now part of the patrimony that belongs to all Americans.

The pictorial part of this book suggests a visual record, a moment in time in the life of Lowell's Italian Americans. The many pictures offer a glimpse of the physical, human and sometimes psychic landscape surrounding this community while at the same time allowing a visual interpretation of reality. This process reinforces in the reader's mind the images of time gone by while it gives credence to the oral narratives of several immigrants who established their home in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Chapter I Through the Years

Lowell, Massachusetts, was founded as an industrial center at the turn of the XIX century and prospered as such for several decades attracting a work force, at first, of New England girls, and then of immigrants, who came in droves from several parts of the world. Waves of Irish, French-Canadians, Greeks, Poles, Jews, Portuguese and, to a smaller degree, Italians swelled the tenement neighborhoods of the thriving city. Irish immigrants were the first to arrive in Lowell and constituted the core of the labor force needed for the digging of the canals and the construction of the mills, two activities vital for the growth of the new industrial city on the banks of the Merrimack River. They established the first Roman Catholic church, St. Patrick's, and the first parochial school.¹ Their examples was imitated by other ethnic groups among which the Italians who arrived in Lowell at the end of the century and in 1890 settled in the Howard Street area in the midst of the Irish neighborhood centered around St. Peter's church.

The stream of Italian immigrants got larger and the new arrivals spread throughout the neighborhood surrounded by Central, Back Central, Howard, Elm, Chestnut, Walnut, Chapel and Gorham Streets. These streets were part of St. Peter's Parish, whose church building² was erected in 1892 to be followed in 1912 by St. Peter's School.³ Other groups like the Irish, Greeks, French-Canadians, Portuguese, and Poles.

The Italian American community is today an integral part of the economical, political and educational structure of the city regardless of its size. Often the Italian American presence is depicted with a short shrug followed by standard statements: "there are only a few Italian Americans in Lowell" or "one must go to Lawrence to study Italian immigration in the Merrimack Valley," certainly these opinions are based on well known immigration patterns. Nevertheless, the high degree of intensity in the participation of Italian Americans in the life of the city compensates for the lack of numbers.

The first Italians were mainly laborers who formed work gangs under the leadership of a "padrone." Few records survive of this first wave, even though they played an important role in the life of the city. Their inferior status in relationship to

Yankees and other already established ethnic groups is evidenced from the near total silence about them in the local papers or by patronizing remarks like: “another face from sunny Italy” or “they are orderly and industrious” and “not a single arrest was made during their stay for disorderly conduct.”⁴ These immigrants came here through the Stabile Bank of Boston, which at the end of the century brought to Boston via New York, a large number of Italian from the two Italian ports of Genoa and Naples,⁵ in conjunction with the White Star Line and Shipping Company.

These Italian immigrants came to Lowell to work on construction sites. They followed the pattern of early Irish settlers as their services were needed to build roads, canals, water works, and other construction projects necessary for the thriving industrial city. Among them there were stone cutters, masons, and bricklayers. This new ethnic labor force was made mostly by hardworking young people willing to accept any form of manual labor in order to help their families in Italy and often they were referred as “birds of paradise” because most of them returned to Italy. ⁶ Their traveling patterns are recorded in several files of the International Institute where their trips back home, to fulfill their desires to be with their families, are described with the most intimate and poignant terms. As years went by, the majority of these immigrants decided to put roots in the city even though the notion of settling in Lowell at first was alien to them.

Lowell was often a destination of secondary immigration and the records of the International Institute indicate that the previous residences of early Italian settlers were located along the Eastern Seaboard in places where a job was available for them. They worked as far away as the coal mines of West Virginia and Pennsylvania or the farms of Loganslanding, Indiana, and the quarries of Rockland, Maine. The Lowell area attracted them because of friendships with other fellow immigrants who had moved to this part of New England or because they were lured by the prospect of better jobs in the mills. The type of jobs taken were: sewers, stitchers, watchmen, scissor grinders, cobblers and all around maintenance. Working with any of the railroad systems was also another way to come into Lowell. There are cases of Italian immigrants who settled in the city after having worked with the New York-New Haven Hartford; the Baltimore & Ohio, the Boston & Maine Railroad companies.

The stay in Lowell for some of them soon became permanent, but for many others Lowell was just a step toward Lawrence, 10 miles down the Merrimack River, or a forced labor wait before returning to Boston. The Boston North End was a magnet of great importance but the presence of a large Italian community in Lawrence offset the lure of Boston, and still today the Italian American community of Lawrence is a strong one even though the newer generations are moving into the surrounding suburban towns of Methuen, North Andover, and Londonderry, N.H. In Lawrence there is an Italian American ethnic parish and a strong and active lodge of the Sons of Italy, perhaps the failure of the Italian American community of Lowell to establish an ethnic parish as a cultural center is a pivotal reason for the lack of community growth.

The young men who remained in Lowell married Italian American girls from the Boston area or brought their Italian families to America after a waiting period marked by thrifty savings. More often of the young men, through marriage outside the ethnic confines and the Italian minority, were assimilated into the mainstream of the dominant ethnic communities. These patterns impacted on the possible establishment of a “Little Italy” in the neighborhood between Howard and Central Streets. The lack of a cultural center in Lowell was certainly an important factor in the process of moving away from the neighborhood to more affluent areas of the city and to the suburbs.

In the late twenties several members of the Italian American community had established themselves and their successes included ownership of a house, running water and/or ownership of a private business, and among the other trappings of the American Dream the road toward American citizenship. In 1930 for this purpose the Italian American Citizens Club was founded and a more permanent relationship with the city was established. Carmelo “Charlie” Ianuzzo on the first anniversary of the Club foundation, April 26, 1931, emphasized this new reality: “conscious as we are of our glorious Italian heritage, we are no less proud of our American citizenship. And tonight we reaffirm our intentions to assist our brothers of Italian extraction in their endeavors to secure for themselves the rights and the privileges peculiar to a citizen of these glorious United States.”⁷

The established community still continued to experience many drawbacks and several immigrants returned to Italy with their American born or naturalized wives and

children especially on the eve of the great depressions. In Italy, though, the majority of these wives and children soon began the process for the eventual return to America. The American born children of these Italian immigrants, even after they had married Italian spouses, did everything in their power to return to Lowell from the “paese” of their fathers.⁸ This was a long journey which for the majority of them could only be fulfilled later in their mature life. According to records, this process of return continued well until the middle of the XX century, as late as 1955 when an American born citizen was able to reunite his family on this side of the ocean by bringing over his Italian born wife and children. It took six long years of paper work for the family to be reunited in Lowell. Taken to Italy as a small child in 1918, he returned to Lowell in 1949 where by working at two jobs, one at the Prince Macaroni Co., and the other at the Solazzo Landscaping Co., he saved enough money to finally call his family. Several Italian American families went through his heartbreaking experience, but the presence of compatriots from Sicily, Tuscany and Campania,⁹ which form the bulk of the Italian Americans of Lowell, helped many to adjust or readjust, as the case may have been, to the changing ways of life in American society.

The first experiences of these Italian immigrants included the desire and a strong tendency to go into private business in order to establish themselves as independently entrepreneurs and move up the social ladder, several of them understood that to be laborers in the mills¹⁰ was only a first step of a much longer process toward a bourgeois status. If worked and economical self-sufficiency was important for these Italian immigrants, family life was equally important and not secondary. It is common belief among today’s Italian Americans that these early immigrants felt a scared commitment to family life and this crucial aspect was emphasized by keeping the family together especially during hard economical times. The Italian Americans of Lowell, because of their strong social ties, survived the test of time and established a community on solid grounds even though they were outnumbered by much larger and diverse ethnic groups. This sense of family was so fundamental, that today many families claim their ties to a large number of offspring from the early settlers: Stecchi (10), Schiripo (12), and Spinelli, Lenzi, and Solazzo. The Stecchi family already large when it came from Italy, increased even more after reunification in the states. James Stecchi was fond to tell that

this real name before coming to America was Ultimo because he was supposed to be the last child born from Primo Stecchi.

Italian American women largely stayed at home while the men went out to work and children attended school, but, if there was a need, wives would go out to work and so did the teenager child. The jobs taken by these women were as domestics or as laborers in the mills. The young boys besides the mills were sent to work under their father's trade or business, if he had one, if not, they were directed into the tutelage of a relative, a friend or a "compare" either in construction or in some factory. James Stecchi recalls that his father started his construction company by taking sub-contracting jobs in the building of "Route 1" in Revere and in Lynn while he together, his brother John and Irish friends began to work in the building trade.

Often women want to work for several reasons: help in the finances of the family especially if the father or husband's salary was very meager;¹¹ put money aside to buy a house; save money and establish a bank account so relatives from Italy could be sponsored. Regarding this last point a particular case comes to mind. A Lowell resident wanting to sponsor a second cousin from Italy, a young man orphaned of both parents in the aftermath of the second world war, decided to bring him here and no stone was left unturned in the late forties and early fifties to accomplish this task. The extended family as well as Senator John Kennedy, the 5th district congressperson Mrs. Rogers, and then Massachusetts Governor Mr. Furcolo were asked to support this endeavor. This case is certainly not dissimilar to others across the United States especially after the war when distraught Italians looked upon their American relatives for help. World War II produced a second wave of Italian immigration to Lowell and many of these immigrants were young women who came to the city as war brides. Once in Lowell they attended English classes either at the Lowell Public Schools or the International Institute.

The International Institution was established in 1919 as an organization of the YMCA to help immigrants and later in 1935 it became an independent social agency whose purpose was to help the new immigrants become citizens of the United States. The Institute serviced the Italian American community of Lowell by counseling individuals and families with legal and technical aspects of immigration and naturalization, but more often helping with personal, family and social problems. The

community and individuals through the workings of the Institute were encouraged to keep the language and the culture of Italy while learning the English language and American ways. Soon, through the encouragement and the assistance of the Institute, several Italian American permanent residents began the process of naturalization.

American citizenship was also the primary purpose of the Italian American Citizens Club since its inception in 1930. Eight years after its foundation, at a dinner attended by about 300 Italian Americans in Keith Hall, Mr. Spinelli reminded the gathered members of the community, that “the first aim of the club is to help Italians and other people of Italian descent to become citizens of the United States, and the second aim is to promote the moral intellectual and material interest of its members.” To accomplish the first aim in the year preceding the Second World War, according to records, a larger than usual demand of citizenship applications was requested by Italian Americans. Those who came in the states between 1885-1911 and to Lowell and to Lowell between 1902-1917 were ready, in the late 1930's, to accept this new land as their own.

Conscious of their patriotic choice, many young men enlisted in the armed forces during the 2nd World War and willingly participated in the European and Pacific theaters and together with other Italian Americans in the invasion and liberation of Italy. Many served with distinction and those who returned to Lowell established an Italian American Veterans Organization, which for several years used to locale of the Italian American Citizens Club on Central Street. Among those who returned, two Dallo brothers: Michael (purple heart) and James; Paul Santilli who served as supervisor with the Boston Naval Shipyard; Anthony Beati who served in the Army anti-aircraft battery during the battles of Leyte Gulf, in the Philippines, and Okinawa. Frank Fergola, a career navy veteran who reached the rank of Chief Petty Officer who served both in World War II and in the Korean War. He received several medals and was a survivor of Pearl Harbor having served on the USS Detroit during the Japanese attack. Among those who did not return, another Dalli brother, (Ernest), who died in action in the Pacific and a Paul Ceci,¹² wounded in action in the Pacific who later died at San Diego Naval Hospital.

A social and political problem developed as a by-product of the war: the “enemy alien” registration card. Several Italian immigrants were subjected to this new regulation

including people who had been here more than forty years. Needless to say that this bureaucratic quagmire caused hardships for several families. One side effect of this policy is that it became more difficult for the Italian American community to deal with relatives from Italy. The result of this was a serious blow to the family reunification program. According to many records there are cases of families separated by the conflict that sadly were never reunited after the war because the members who were in Italy during the conflict turned out to be missing or deceased at the end of hostilities, thus impeding the reunification process.

It was during the war that the Italian community turned for direction toward the Catholic Church. At this time, more than ever before, St. Peter's Church received the affectionate title of "Italian parish" of Lowell. The religious experience of the Italian Americans of Lowell was not difficult than other Italian communities in the States. Italian males were in larger indifferent or anti-clerical to the church while women attended religious services. As tradition and custom demanded, in general, everyone kept pace with the religious ceremonies which surround one's life according to the sacramental life of the Church. This did not stop Italian immigrants, including women, like a young Miss Andreoli, to join Mason organizations in keeping up with the intellectual and social backgrounds. Italian Americans more often than not looked at the church for a sense of purpose and direction, especially during the difficult times and more so during the years of the war.

St. Peter, according to the effective recollection of old timers, became the center of the community and many still today remember Monsignor Kelleher as the shepherd of the Italian people of Lowell and as a beloved spiritual leader of the community. Another priest, Fr. McCabe, is still remembered as a very good friend of Italian immigrants. BY identifying and creating a sense of belonging to a parish church, erected for the Irish Catholic, the Italian community tried to fill a vacuum which was never filled before by emphasizing their connection with this particular church they satisfied their personal and spiritual need for God by keeping up with religious practices in their lives.

The community was growing and the greater majority felt the need for religion for several reasons among which to officiate weddings¹³ conduct funerals, and other religious ceremonies like baptism, first communion and confirmation. Already, since the

mid-twenties an Irish priest, Fr. Marion, credited for speaking Italian, had visited several families in need and brought to them the comforts of the Christian faith. As a spiritual leader of the Italian community, Fr. Marion, like other Irish priests of this period in St. Peter's Church, could speak Italian quite well and older Italians thought and today many still think of him as an Italian priest.

The role of spiritual leadership was filled during the war years by Fr. Markham, the pastor of St. Peter's, who later became auxiliary bishop of Boston. Bishop Markham, while pastor of St. Peter, brought together the Italian community in both religious and civil sense by coordinating the efforts to send money, clothing and food to war-ravaged Italy. In this task he helped by several volunteers, among which Mario Malagrifa, a gold-medal decorated "bersagliere" of World War I. Malagrifa went from door to door to collect pledged money and other items. He was not new to the community, having worked as a delivery man for his new brother-in-law, Mr. Michelonghi, owner of the short-lived Roma Bakery (1920-1926) that was moved to East Boston for lack of business in Lowell.

The greater amount of interaction between Irish and Italians surely was done through St. Peter's Church and St. Peter's School. Italian American parents, when they reached more affluence, began to send their children to St. Peter's School, even during the hard times of the depression, as the records indicate. At first there was some name calling, Irish kids would call "I-talians" their Italian counterparts and they would make fun of them, but by the middle thirties the Italian kids became integrated in the overwhelmingly Irish school population. Teenagers from the two ethnic groups began to date each other and the large number of marriages that followed between the two groups is certainly an indication that common ground was found in the relationship between the two ethnic groups.¹⁴

Irish names like Walsh, McCormick, Clark, McCarthy, O'Connor, Cunningham, Canney, Duff, Kane, Mahoney, Lappin, Kelley, Linehan, are the most common when it comes to marriages between the Irish and Italians. For sure the common religious bond of Catholicism was the link that gave them a sense of oneness, yet there was a difference in mentality, but the daily contacts at work in the day-to-day living helped to overcome many difficulties inherent to their different cultural milieus. The same pattern was

followed in the interaction with other ethnic groups name French, Polish, Greeks. At times the language barrier was such that statements and name calling incidents were often misunderstood. An old timer was fond to recall often his own experiences after this arrival here. The story goes that he obtained a job in the construction of canals and he used to be addressed by his Irish foreman like this, “Get down to work you Son of a Bitch.” Not knowing the meaning of the insult he would thank his boss for the name calling only to be surprised by the type of laughter of the co-workers. When he finally understood the type of insult which was addressed to him, not only was he outraged but also jumped and attacked the foreman, the result was his firing on the spot.

The city was slowly changing and in the name of the progress in the sixties two mortal blows struck the small Italian American community around St. Peter’s Church a) the tearing down of the greater part of the neighborhood to make room for the Bishop Markham Housing Project and b) the construction of the Lowell Connector which separated the community by destroying geographical unity. The old neighborhood, because of these two projects, was meted a slow death. Only few of the residents remained in the neighborhood surrounding the Italian American Citizens Club, among them Joseph Priori who kept his house on Gorham Street by refusing to accept the \$3,000.00 that the Commonwealth was willing to give him. His house today faces the abrupt end of the connector as it enters unfinished the city of Lowell. The road was greeted by city officials as a great achievement for the future of Lowell but opposition soon mounted and it was led by the Future State Representative Ray Rourke who vowed to preserve the houses and the neighborhood. In the aftermath of the connector controversy and the Bishop Markham Housing Project, not only the Italian American neighborhood was destroyed but within 15 years also St. Peter’s Parish was closed and all the records moved to the Sacred Heart Church. In the early summer of 1995 St. Peter’s Church was demolished. The old St. Peter’s rectory which was used by Bishop Markham as Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Boston will become the official residence of the Auxiliary Bishop for the Merrimack Region of the Archdiocese of Boston.

A factory in the decline of the close knit Italian American community was also the Americanization process constantly at work. Inexorably the several ethnic communities began to interact with each other and residents of one community learned to

attribute to the other a measure of social legitimacy. This process led to the disintegration of the small Italian community “per se” thus aligning Lowell with national trends. Mutual acceptance was the next step and the different ethnic groups reached the realization that to be courteous, to be friendly, to respect one another did not imply the denial of one’s own tradition and cultural milieu within a multi-ethnic neighborhood.

The Italian cultural milieu spilled out from the Howard-Central Streets neighborhood and spread throughout the city and still continues on an individual scale without the support of a community behind it. This effort was made possible through the activities of several organizations and clubs: St. Anthony Society (1912), a mutual aid society to help members financially and spiritually;¹⁵ the Christopher Columbus Club (1915), a social club; the Alessandro Manzoni Lodge #61 of the Sons of Italy (1929), active until the middle 80’s when it was closed; the Italian American Citizens Club (1930), active until the early 80’s but a few years after its 50th anniversary celebration, it was eventually disbanded in 1987. The building that housed the club in the heart of the Italian American neighborhoods on Central Street was sold in 1993. This action brought the closure of a chapter in the existence of an organized Italian American Community.

The Italian American Citizen Club in the early 80’s under the leadership of Richard Beati and Mario Aste with the help and collaboration of the Women Auxiliary became active in community and cultural activities within the Regatta Committee and the Lowell National and State Parks and by participating to the Lowell Folk Festivals. The Old Fashioned Picnic was reinstated and for three years crowds of almost 1000 persons attended the festivities and celebrations at the De Mauro’s farm near Lake Nabnasset in Westford.¹⁶ In 1984 when Southern Italy was ravaged by an earthquake, through the efforts of the club and the Women’s Auxiliary Volpe in order to help the people affected by the disaster. These events were the swan song of these organizations because soon afterwards the club experienced a dwindling in its membership members as the old timers began to die and the lack of new members did not provide funds necessary for the effective running and proper functioning of the club. The club could not meet the expenses of an active organization, and so in 1988 the few members remaining (18) voted to close the club and sell the building.

There were other organizations in city: the Italian Mother's Club (1922), affiliated since the early 1900's with the International Institute was devoted to keeping Italian traditions alive. Stories are told how Mrs. Romagnolo, a president of the club in 1935, danced the "Tarantella" with her father Mr. D'Arezzo and taught this traditional Italian dance to several children. The members of this club collaborated in 1938 in the publication of an International Cookbook which was printed four times since. This organization was involved in the teaching of Italian at the International Institute in the years preceding and following the Second World War. It is interesting to note that in 1947 Miss Clementine DeRocco, an American Italian ancestry, was appointed the executive director of the Institute. Another organization, this of a religious nature, was the Mother Cabrini Society (1935), whose most of the members were the same of the Italian Mother's Club. These two clubs eventually fizzled out.

In 1976 the Italian American Women Auxiliary, with membership from members of the two previous organizations, became very active within the activities of the Italian American Citizens Club. In 1985 when the Men's Club was experiencing the most difficult years, the Auxiliary with new recruits became the Italian American Cultural Club in 1985. The meeting place was chosen by the members was again the International Institute but in 1994 they met the same fate of the Italian American Citizen Club and voted to disband.

A mention should be made also of two youth organizations defunct since the war, The Florencia Girls Club (1925), for young girls and the Venetian Club (1925), for young men. The two clubs were affiliated with the International Institute ethnic clubs program. The purpose and the objectives of these organizations was to preserve the language and the culture of the several ethnic groups in Lowell. Multicultural experience was alive and well already then and the local papers at that time gave a great deal of information about these clubs and their activities.

From the late 80's to the middle 90's it was the Italian American Cultural Club that continued in the task to preserve Italian Culture in Lowell. They continued the tradition of celebrating Columbus Day with flag raising at City Hall followed by a reception and performance of the Lowell Opera Company. Its presence in the Lowell Regatta committee kept the tradition of Italian customs alive by their yearly participation

to the Lowell Folk Festival. It is also in this period that the club under the leadership of Josephine Ouellette, Michaelina Lumunello, Maria Alloca, Maria Mangano, and Lena Faticanti brought to a successful conclusion the project to erect in 1987 the monument to honor the Italian immigrants of Lowell.

When the sense of an Italian cultural consciousness was very strong in the Italian community, musical bands were established like the Rossini Band (1920-1925) with 52 pieces directed by Maestro Giacinto Malagrifa and a much smaller one. The 60 piece Bergamino Band performed at the Commodore Club and entertained the citizens of Lowell at the Memorial Auditorium during the Mayor Ball for the sesquicentennial celebrations of the city of Lowell. The Roma Band was established because of disagreement and dissension from members of the Rossini Band. It lasted only one year and moved later to the Boston North End where it is still performing during the traditional summer “feste.” One of the members of the Rossini Band playing the “bombardino” was Giulio Paglieroni, a lifelong worker for the Prince Spaghetti Co. since he came to America in 1918. Paglieroni was famous for his vegetable garden and until his death in 1987 at the age of 92 he had one of the best vegetable patches in the Christian Hill section of Lowell, certainly continuing a tradition that most of the Italian Americans introduced to the city.¹⁶

Music, being one of the arts most appreciated by Lowellians, allowed Italian Americans to receive particular attention by the local press and the community at large. In this particular field, Miss Christina Beati, an accomplished pianist, received rave review by the local papers. The musical traditions of Italy were kept alive by several people: Sr. Elizabeth Solazzo, who put together a chorus of children, and still today by Vito Selvaggio, retired as music director for the Lowell Public Schools, who continues to direct the Lowell Opera Company, a group of music educated amateurs. The Lowell Opera Company performs two or three times a year, and sometimes in its repertoire there is an opera for the citizens of Lowell. The company includes several Italian Americans among them the tenor, Mr. Fusconi, trained and educated in the tradition of “bel canto.” In 1989 the Lowell Opera Company received a standing ovation by 350 scholars from Italy, Europe, Canada and United States in Lowell to attend to the IX International Conference of the American Association for Italian Studies sponsored by the University

of Lowell. In 1995 the Lowell Opera Company entertained 300 participants for the XXVIII National Conference of the American Italian Historical Association hosted by the University of Massachusetts Lowell. The topic of this conference was appropriately labeled “Labor, Technology, Industry, and the Italian American Communities.” On this occasion when tenor Fusconi sang the aria from the *Traviata*, the audience was brought again to its feet. Another artist with several local connections and shows at Brush with History, Whistler House Museum, state wide and national exhibitions, is Bernie Petruziello who lives in the Christian Hill neighborhood in the city.

Italian Americans in Lowell have joined others in participating in the life of the city and this includes political activities and organized labor. In Lowell, as perhaps in other cities in Massachusetts, the first timid political steps by Italians were taken in the shadows of the Irish political machine. It all began in the early years of the XX century when the Italian community began to take a new course of action dedicated to commit itself to the fuller process of Americanization whose major goal was citizenship. At this time the counsel and the direction of friend of the Italian American community, Richard Brabrook Walsh, was requested. He freely gave of his time and for several years he helped Italian Americans in chartering a new course that led many of them to accept and to attain the most cherished fruit of this country: citizenship. The new citizens understood quickly the workings of democracy by unselfishly dedicating their talents to the community at large - Brabrook Walsh for his interest and friendship was made an honorary brother member of the Italian American Citizens Club. From him the new citizens learned the importance of understanding the ramification and the fruits if political consciousness and organization.

Their integration into political machines began quite early for members of the community and still today Italian Americans work in their neighborhood for local, state and national political leaders, but signs of political growth have already appeared and Italian Americans have presented themselves for elected office. David Stecchi for city council in 1971, defeated in the primary; Vinnie Zabbo for sheriff of Middlesex County in 1980, defeated in the primary and for the city council in 1981 when he was defeated in the final election by less than two hundred votes. In the 1983 city elections, two candidates passed the primaries, Charles Gargiulo for city council, and Regina Faticanti

for school committee. Regina Faticanti, unlike Gargiulo, was elected and she is still serving on the school committee. Susan Fergola Rourke, daughter of the decorated veteran Frank Fergola, at the premature death of her husband Timothy, son of Ray Rourke, former councilor, major, state representative and transportation secretary for the Commonwealth, was nominated to fill her husband's term for the XVIII Middlesex district of the House of Representatives. She was elected to this office until 1992 when an anti-incumbent campaign she was defeated in the primary election.

Today several Italian Americans of Lowell are appointed members of municipal committees and review boards where they bring and give a high sense of dedication and commitment to a city that accepted their forebears. James Milinazzo, former Director of Planning and Development is now Executive Director of the Housing Authority and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Pollard Library; Spinelli with the Election Commission; and Mario Aste at the Lowell Housing Review Board from 1982-1985 is also the President of the Board of Directors of the International Institute since 1981, and President of the Massachusetts Society of Professors at the University of Massachusetts Lowell from 1988.

In the 90's while Lowell experienced a rebirth by means of a resurgence in local civic pride, the advancement of high tech firms and the working of the Lowell National Historical Park, the Italian American community, without a geographical base, became integrated with other ethnic groups and participated actively in the life of the city. In 1973 Cardinal Law appointed to the Regional Lowell office of the Archdiocese of Boston, Bishop Rocco, an Italian American. This was taken as another form of the prominence reached by the Italian American community both in Lowell and the Merrimack Valley. Though the Italian American community in Lowell was never a large one¹⁷, it did not impede those who came here to develop their talents to reach success in a modern industrial environment. Lowell was founded as an industrial and business center and in this atmosphere the development and growth of entrepreneurial ideas was not only possible but successful for those enterprising first generation Italian Americans possessing ambition and intelligence.

Chapter II

Entrepreneurial Spirit

In any type of society there is always a demand for many products and services recognizable by its members. Lowell is no exception. The Italian American community knowledgeable of its demands was looking for services and products familiar to its members. Among the new Italian immigrants there were those who had the skills and the willingness to work independently in order to advance into mainstream of the middle and gentry classes and they found golden opportunities in this city. The new world opened countless doors to those who were willing to pass through sacrifices and commitment to ideals into the economic realms of bourgeois' life. The surprising availability of opportunities made it possible for a number of Italian immigrants to enter into the world of business. Already in the first decade of the XX century, merely few years since their arrivals in Lowell,¹⁸ there is evidence in Lowell of businesses owned by Italian Americans.

The first independent companies were in construction and landscaping followed by others centering on service and distribution.¹⁹ This trend continued throughout the years till the present. Among the first businesses there were the Palotta Company, which built a state road in Ayer, Massachusetts, between 1917 and 1919; the Schiripo Company, established in 1902, after Mr. Schiripo's arrival from New York where he had been a stone cutter since 1887. Today the company is known as the New England Cement Company and operated from its headquarters in Dracut, Massachusetts; the Stecchi Company, now in its third generation and mainly devoted to remodeling and roofing, and the Solazzo Company, active in general construction and landscaping. Presently several of these have become much larger firms with regional and national and even international stature: The New England Cement Company provides construction products for the New England Seaboard; the De Mauro Construction Company was awarded contracts in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Far East, and Japan. Locally the company has developed a cluster of homes and estates and new condominiums in the exclusive Belvidere section of Lowell.

The entrepreneurial spirit of Italian immigrants was not limited to construction companies but expanded toward other businesses like barber salons: Casella on Rogers Street, tobacco stores and companies, e.g., Lucchesi and Mazzoni in 191, Andreoli Tobacco Co., with a building on Merrimack Street. This building is now part of St. Vincent De Paul Clothing Store in the next block next to St. Jean Batiste Church (now Nuestra Senora del Carmen Hispanic Parish); Albert H. Notini and Sons, Inc. (1890) very active in the city of Lowell and its immediate vicinity and Lynn. In the 90's the company was directed by Robert Notini (d.1995). He was part of the third generation of Notini; to run this family business founded by the grandfather John Notini. Albert H. Notini, John's son, changed the original name Notini Company to the present in 1930 when he took over the company. Albert H. Notini and Sons distributed cigarettes, cigars, tobacco, groceries, confectionary goods, health and beauty aids and frozen foods. Customers include convenience stores, supermarkets, small grocery stores, pharmacies and liquor stores. The company today employs 180 people (120 in Lowell and 60 in Lynn). In 1992 The Boston Journal listed Albert H. Notini and Sons, Inc., as Massachusetts 56th largest company with \$130 million in annual revenues.

Tailor shops also sprung in Lowell: "Fashion Tailors" on Central Street by the Alloca Brothers, Catherine and Vincenzo. The business was started in 1966 but the two brothers after having worked for a few years in the local mills. Today Vincenzo still operates from Central Street as "Fashion Taylor" while Carmine, after a few years of retirement, started a new store "Sarto Carmine the Tailor" on Bridge Street. Italian bakeries: The Roma Co., which moved a few years later to East Boston, and the one operated by Mr. Fantini, which moved to Lawrence in the middle 30's. In the same fashion, in order to provide needed services, grocery and butcher shops owned by Italian Americans surfaced in Lowell. Auralio De Vincenzo started as a peddler selling bread from door to door. This profession made it possible for him to own his house in 1930. Shortly after thrifty savings he opened a well known grocery store near St. Peter's church. In 1940, Carmelo (Charlie for his friends and customers) Ianuzzo had a grocery and butcher shop on Back Central Street and so did a Mr. Centurione who owned his own store on Gorham Street. A mention must be made of Carpenito Fruit Store (1910) on Gorham Street where the fruit was so fresh that the workers of Boote Milles would stop

there to buy their lunches. Several first generation immigrants attest to the veracity of this information. Mrs. Rosina Ianuzzo remembers the store where she used to go as a young girl in 1918 and so does Giulio Paglierono, who, when he arrived in Lowell as a young man in 1918, was taken there for a glass of water on his first day of residence in Lowell.

A brother of Charlie Ianuzzo was a cobbler with a little store on Gorham Street. In 1940 he sold his store and managed the shoe shop on Prescott Street for the Lincoln Shoe Co. In the travel field, the Merrimack Travel Agency owned by Michael Spinelli on the banks on the Concord River in Andover Street is today very active. Old timers also point out that a Mr. Grasso managed a pool room in what today is the Rialto building on Central Street as a Mr. Vietri was the proprietor on the Crown Theatre on Middlesex Street. Mr. Vietri, who studied music in Boston and in Newport, was the leader of his own orchestra which played throughout New England. He composed numerous popular sounds including his famous "Howdy Pep" widely used by the Order of Moose. In the 80's in the nearby Dracut on Bridge Street just over the line from Lowell, the Antifonario family opened the Ravioli Factory where the customers can go and buy fresh made ravioli. Not too distant is also Scola Restaurant, an excellent restaurant that filled the void left by the closure of Prince Grotto Restaurant on the grounds of Prince Macaroni Co., on Prince Boulevard. This list is incomplete because it does not include and enumerate all those who worked as peddlers and as part-time entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, it gives an idea of the Italian American contribution to the economic life of Lowell.

These entrepreneurial Italian Americans searching for the American Dream are often remembered fondly by the old timers even those individuals that do not appear on any statistical chart. The difficulty in locating them is enhanced by the lack of any written record because they did not advertise their products or their business' existence. Amongst the peddlers remembered by the old timers there are Joseph De Prenda and Joseph Pilaro. Mario Malagrifa used to distribute bread and pastries for Roma Bakery, operated and owned by his brother. Of these early establishments, often attached to the proprietor's house and not too far removed from the core of the Italian American community, only a few emerged in the aftermath of the depression and World War II.

One produce delivery enterprise, the Lowell Fruit Company, began years ago as a one-man peddling operation by Joe Stagnone, is now a regional wholesale establishment. The company was the natural development of Mr. Stagnone operation started in the 20's. After the economic disaster of 1929, he was able to secure a loan from Appleton National Bank, now Bank Boston, to start his small fruit and vegetables store on Market Street. With a couple of thousand dollars loan he developed a thriving local business. Through hard work, intuition and keen economic sense he transformed his operation to a distribution center for fresh fruits and vegetables coming from several agricultural areas of the States. Today, part of the company's fleet of refrigerated trailers hauls produce and citrus directly from the orchards of Florida and vegetable and other fruits from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys of California.

The Lowell Fruit Company served in the past years the three hospitals of Lowell, several Chinese restaurants, and years ago several school districts, other small businesses and the former Alexander Markets chain. This company, being a wholesale distributor of fresh produce in the city of Lowell, assisted in the rise of the Demoulas (Market Basket) Supermarket chain in the first phase of expansion and development, especially when the first Demoulas Supermarket was opened in the Sunrise Shopping Center on Bridge Street. The growth of the company was further enhanced by the close business relationship of Stagnone with the Gordon Brothers, owners of the Alexander Markets for which the Lowell Fruit Company was the sole distributor of fresh produce. Because of this close relationship, Stagnone was planning to move out of Lowell to the neighboring town of Merrimack, N.H. This metropolitan area was growing at a much faster rate and considering that Alexander Markets expected to expand into new markets throughout southern New Hampshire, Stagnone felt that this move was necessary. In the late 1980 during their expansion Alexander Markets were acquired by Hannaford Corporation of Maine who wanted to expand the Shop and Save Supermarket chain into the Lowell area. The Lowell Fruit Co. had at this time an estimated yearly operation of \$3,000,000 and a fleet of twelve trucks, six trailers and four refrigerated trailers. The daily operation typically starts at 2:00 A.M. when the trucks go to the market produce of Boston, Chelsea and Everett to load the fresh produce bought at the auction, by 6:00 A.M. they are back at the home base where the distribution process of fruit and vegetables begins.

Mr. Stagnone, who died in 1995, during an interview few years back was looking forward to retirement and was willing to relinquish the helm of the company to one of his sons and retire for six months of the year to the much warmer climate of Porcupine Beach in Florida to void the New England winter. Mr. Stagnone was a well known and respected member of the community serving as chairman of St. John's Hospital (now Saints Memorial Medicinal Center) board of trustees, trustees emeritus of Washington Savings Bank, and as a lifetime member in other civic organizations. He certainly had achieved this status through hard work and a very strong business drive. He arrived to this country from Palermo at the age of six and he was one of seven children. His father came to Lowell after having worked as a welder from the Chicago Railroad Company, who after his arrival in the city, secured a job with the Woolen Company in Maynard, Massachusetts. At this point in hi life he called his family from Italy, and they settled in Lowell n Chapel Street and the America experience of Joe Stagnone began. With a 10th grade education he was able, from a small but well spent investment, to turn his break of self-sufficiency and business achievement into reality. He served as president of New England Produce Association and St. Francis Seminary Men's Council in nearby Andover. In December 1995 he would have celebrated his 68th wedding anniversary with his wife Helen (Finngan) Stagnone.

The expression of Italian entrepreneurial spirit and his talent is justly found in all of the above described business enterprises but one in particular is the most striking example of opportunity and achievement: the establishment and growth of the Prince Macaroni Company. Pasta manufacturing provided to the founders of the company and to Mr. Joseph Pellegrino in particular, the most fulfilling experience. This company, thanks to Mr. Pellegrino's entrepreneurial spirit, became the second largest pasta Company in the United States. Each major city of the Eastern United States where there was a large Italian community had at turn of the century not just one but several pasta manufacturing companies before consolidation, regionalization and competition limited their numbers.

The Prince Macaroni Company,**20** following this geographical pattern, was founded in Boston's North End in 1912. The founders were three "paesani," La Marca, Simonara, and Cantella, who used a small store on Prince Street in Boston from where

the name of the company. Years later in the same North End of Boston the company opened an Italian Restaurant, "The Prince Spaghetti House." This tradition was in the late fifties carried into Lowell with the establishment of the "prince Grotto Restaurant," a landmark of Italian cuisine in the Merrimack Valley for more than 35 years, until the time when the company was acquired by Borden, Inc.

The owners of Prince Macaroni, because of the quality of their products and the flourishing of their business, decided to move to bigger quarters on Commercial Street and Atlantic Avenue in 1917. In the 1940s, chartering a new course in the opposite direction of the flow of Italian immigrants and the business community, they moved to Lowell in an industrial building on Gorham Street. The building they bought was a bleachery made vacant by the business depression in the area. In these years many Italian immigrants were leaving Lowell for Boston. The textile industry searching for cheaper labor in the South, had begun the movement to leave the city.

This move to Lowell was a recognizable sign that the executives of the company felt that the transitory status of the product of the company had passed and a new era was looming ahead and therefore the company was ready to serve the new and bigger markets created by the consumption of pasta by a diversified clientele. These were the years in which American's love for pasta products began to grow. Still today the pasta industry is considered a growth industry. In fact the per capita consumption of pasta is increasing faster than any other carbohydrate food.

The person behind the growth of Prince Macaroni is Joseph Pellegrino, who was the Chairman of the Board until his retirement. He was born in Sicily in 1905, his mother died in childbirth and his father was already in the States working in New York as a stone cutter. Because of his mother's death and his father's absence, he had to spend his childhood and youth under the care and protection of an uncle. In 1924 he was able to come to America where he met his father working at the time on the construction project of the Rockefeller Center. Joseph Pellegrino understood quickly the necessity of work especially after the death of his father, shortly after his arrival, when he began to shine shoes in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Later he started a peddling business by selling shopping bags until he decided to become an ice cream vendor at Coney Island. It is at this time that he met his future wife, the daughter of a Sicilian immigrant that owned

a small corner grocery store. He began to work for his father-in-law as a store manager and in 1932, after his marriage, he became sales manager and partner of the Roma Macaroni Company, a wholesale distribution company for pasta and other groceries founded in 1894 in Brooklyn. It is in this capacity that he established the first contact with the Prince Macaroni Company. These contacts were strengthened after 1939 when a fire totally destroyed the Roma Macaroni Company. The company did not have insurance so it was a total loss. The fire happened on Christmas Eve and he saw it with his wife from the 59th Street bridge while returning home in his car.

In 1941 Joseph Pellegrino experienced difficulties and erratic supplies in the delivery of pasta from Prince Company so he decided to come to Lowell and receive first hand information on the nature of the problems. After an examination of company sale practices and production techniques, he realized that the company was on the verge of bankruptcy and thus he proposed to the three partners that he be appointed at the helm of the company for a trial period of 30 days at the end of which, if an improvement was shown on sales and on the values of stocks, he would be taken in as partner on the Prince Macaroni Company. This trial period was successful and he became a partner in the Prince Macaroni Company. In the coming years he bought out the partnerships of La Marca and Simonara while Cantella continued to remain a partner in the company. The heirs of Cantella used to share in this management of the corporation before the acquisition of the company by Borden, Inc., in the late 1980's.

The fifties were years on continuous growth for Prince Macaroni especially in the face of rapidly expanding demands and the economic recovery and the boom years after the war. The rapid growth of pasta products had already begun during the war and Pellegrino was able to seize the moment and the opportunity. He improved the growth of his company by acquiring a new market first on a regional basis, Connecticut and Rhode Island, and then moving into other geographical areas serviced by other pasta manufacturing companies starting thus a process of consolidation and regionalization that would reach national dimensions. In these years he acquired the Cardinal Macaroni Company of Brooklyn, N.Y., the Meisezahl Macaroni Company of Rochester, N.Y., and the Roma Macaroni Company of Chicago. With this acquisition he was able to open new markets in the mid-west; Michigan Macaroni Company of Detroit. This rapid process of

growth was also accompanied by the opening of several distributorship and brokerage firms in Washington, D.C., Roanoke, VI, Cincinnati, OH, San Juan, Puerto Rico, and a warehouse in Miami, FL.²¹

The 60s were years of integration and consolidation. The activities of these years were necessary to establish and prepare Prince Macaroni for a new era of marketing and growth. The structure of the company, was divided into three divisions:

a) engineering; b) paper and packaging; c) food production and pasta. As a result of the 60s and 70s acquisition of related companies, Prince began to diversify. Roselli Foods of Pennsauken, New Jersey, Inc., became the manufacturing center for Prince sauces and prepared foods. The Gleuhorn Folding Box Company, now known as Prince Packaging Corporation, began to supply Prince's needs for folding cartons. Prince became a 51% partner in the Prince-Gattuso Macaroni Co. in Montreal, but in 1968 sold its interests and built a new plant in Boucherville, Canada, known as Prince Macaroni on Montreal, Limited. Prince Lithographers, formerly LeClair & Company, Inc. and the A&D Fabricating Company were acquired and so in 1975 Chem-Tech International also became part of Prince. In the following year, 1966, Michigan Macaroni Company of Warren, Michigan. Their combined operations became known as Prince Macaroni of Michigan, Inc. The Dutch Maid Macaroni Company in Allentown, Pennsylvania, was acquired in March of 1971 followed in 1972 by the Viva Macaroni Company of Lawrence, MA. In the same year, Prince established the W-R Packaging Machinery Company.²²

Pasta production begins with durum wheat and the "semolina" that is obtained from it. Prince used to get its "semolina" from the International Mill at the grain exchange in Midland, South Dakota, but things changed after on October 4, 1984, when the company opened a new mill in Ayer, Massachusetts. The mill is a 50% venture together with "Italgrani" of Berga, Italy. This new venture was essential for the company operation and delivery of "semolina." The venture was created to be cost effective and to save Prince 25% of the new line cost and to make the company more competitive in the national and international markets.

Following basic traditions from Italy, Prince classifies 24 pasta products as Naples' style (spaghetti, macaroni, ziti, elbows, etc.) and 17 pasta products as Genoa cut

(lasagna, cannelloni, manicotti, etc.) But pasta is not the only retail line of Prince. In addition, the company produces and markets: a) egg noodles; b) superoni, a line of macaroni containing 22% protein; c) spaghetti sauce in several varieties; d) pizza sauce; e) bread crumb mix; f) macaroni and cheese dinner; g) grated cheeses (parmesan, romano and a blend of the two; h) ten cans of special products such as sauces, spaghetti, ravioli, corned beef hash, chili con carne, sausage and meat balls, ravioli and tortellini imported from Italy.²³

At the turn of the century Prince Macaroni was founded to accommodate the dietary traditional needs of early Italian immigrants and to express and fulfill the dream of hard-working immigrants searching for a better life in this country. At the time of the Borden acquisition, the company was one of the largest manufacturers in the world with a yearly production of three billion pounds a year. A quick perusal of the sales volume of the company in the last forty years gives an indication of the company growth and economic base: a) 1941, \$6,000,000 in sales; b) 1960, \$17,000,000 in sales; c) 1971, \$25,000,000 in sales; d) 1984, \$2000,000,000 in sales.

The enterprise as surely grown, but Mr. Pellegrino never lost his personal touch with his employees and customers. He was a committed philanthropist and he has helped several organizations with his contributions. The establishment that has received the most help from his in the Don Orione Fathers of East Boston for their work with the elderly and the orphans. Many immigrants of Italian, Portuguese (the largest group employed in the Lowell plant) and Indochinese origin have found in the Prince Macaroni Company a sure haven in their search for the American dream of self-sufficiency though hard work. From 1972 to the Borden acquisition, Joseph Pellegrino, Jr., who graduated from Harvard University in American Labor History and had served in the Marines, has been the president of the company. Like his father, he has risen through the ranks of the corporate structure: plant manager, sales manager and president. Sophisticated management and creative marketing techniques already present during the war years continued with confidence in order to face the challenges of the future with the traditions and pride of old.

Lowell, Massachusetts, the showpiece of American industry, was certainly the most appropriate center to house the headquarters of the Prince Macaroni Company. The

city leaders well aware of the economic impact of the company on the life of the city, made possible the construction of an access road, Prince Avenue, to accommodate the constant traffic of trailers from and to the plant, thus assuring the commitment of the company to stay in Lowell for many years to come. Today Borden has renewed this pledge and even with corporate downsizing the Lowell Plant and corporate cutbacks the Prince division of the company seen to withstand any economic downturn with profitable ventures.

Chapter III

Permanent Presence

Today Italian Americans in Lowell belong mostly to 3rd generation residents even though some individuals in the 2nd are still present, only few can be counted amongst the 1st. The memory of the Italian culture milieu is often found only in the family name whose existence, because of legal customs, is carried only through the male line. Many women today, being more conscious of their ethnic heritage, carry their hyphenated Italian surname to denote and enhance their cultural affiliation. The heritage of a people continues in a variety of ways. The most common and obvious are the vital elements of customs, dress, life choice and retention of language; the less obvious ones are culture, attitudes, beliefs and preference in lifestyles.²⁴ As the population grows, scatters and intermarries, it becomes more difficult to denote Italian ancestry, but one of the telling ways to denote Italian roots is to go back to one's family name received from ancestors.

American society seems to guarantee some ethnicity continuity. As "foreign" ways become part of a more sophisticated, tolerant and curious native population, each ethnic group finds encouragement in the interest taken in its festival, cuisine, language and search for roots. By looking at one's family name, the children and grandchildren of the early settlers in Lowell can declare themselves the beneficiaries of a simple but at the same time great legacy left by their ancestors.

Among the original Italians²⁵ who set roots in Lowell are: Armando Alberghini – coach at Lowell High, Keith Academy and Dracut High. Born September 23, 1903, in Casomaro, Ferrara. He came to America at the age of seven after his education and early work experience he moved to Lowell in 1940.

Theodore Andreeoli – born in Borgo Mozzano, Lucca, came to America in 1895, was among the pioneer Italian American settlers of Lowell. He was the first show shiner in the city. Later he worked at the Parker Bobbing Shop for 30 years. His self-educated son, Peter Andreoli, born March 27, 1890 in Borgo Mozzano, came to America in 1903 and by 1924 he was in the business world at first working for 18 years with Samuel Scott Tobacco Co. and then creating his own business as a wholesale and retailer at 415

Middlesex Street. Married Laura May Pierce, May 25, 1912. He was a member of the Masonic bodies of York Rites and the Elks.

Silsio Bernardini, born in Piano di Coreglia, Lucca, April 13, 1888, was educated in his native town's school before coming to America in 1903. After a stint working in his brother's fruit business, in 1911 he began employment with the American Telephone company. He was a member of council 72 (4th degree) Knight of Columbus. Married Eunice McNally, January 29, 1913.

Angelo Carnevale from Barile, Potenza, married to Grace Rapone, came to America in 1901, settled in Lowell where he was a foreman for the East Massachusetts Railway Co. and later as general contractor for 26 years.

Leo Anthony De Grandis, born in Popoli, Pescara, March 27, 1899, was brought to America in 1904 and educated in Lowell. Before he was employed in charge of Production at Balfe Printing Co. for ten years, he was proprietor of Art Service Press since 1932. He was a member of Typographical Union and the Italian American Citizens Club. Married Mary Mose of Clinton, November 20, 1922. His father, Paolo De Grandis, was a school teacher in Italy and came to America in 1902 and settled in Lowell where he was engaged in mill work for 40 years.

Ricardo Di Zoglio, born in Vairano, Naples, February 10, 1893, brought to America in 1895, settled in Lawrence, where his father Michele had been since 1893. Educated in the public schools he was in the grocery business from 1922. Married Antonia D'Arezzo of Lowell, June 6, 1920, member of Italian American Citizens Club and St. Anthony of Padua Society,

Adolfo Faticanti, born in Ardia, Rome, January 1889, educated in Italy, came to the states in 1907, settled in Leominster. In business since 1917 and proprietor of Italian Specialty Restaurant. Married Paolina Giorgio of Lowell in 1913. Father of Victor, Elena, Francis, Louis and the twins, Rose and Carmela. Grandfather of Regina Faticanti, current member of the Lowell School Committee, daughter of Francis.

David Frediani, born in Ghivizzano, Lucca, October 29, 1885, educated in public schools, came to America in 1903, settled in Lowell, working as a plumber with Consolidated Remodeling Co., since 1904, married Assunta Barbieri of Ghivizzano

February 18, 1909. His father, Carmelo, came to America in 1894, served in the California Railroad Co. before settling in Lowell after seven trips back and forth to Italy.

Albert Henry Notini, born in Hartford, Connecticut, March 21, 1888. Settled in Lowell in 1902, when his father moved to the city from Hartford where he had settled in 1874, and where he married Mary Coffey. He came from Piano di Coreggia, Lucca. In Lowell he went into business with his father and from 1928 he went on his own. Educated in Lowell at the Bartlett School and Kimball Commercial College, studied violin with Pietro Papanti and Emile Lavergurie, he played in several symphonies and he was concert master of the Lowell Philharmonic Society, He was a member of the Knights of Columbus and married Rose Marie La Chance and had three children, Albert Henry, Mrs. Maria D'lorio and Mrs. Charlotte J. Looney.

Mauro Rapone, born in 1894, in Rapolla, Potenza, Italy, settled in Lowell in 1910, married Serafina Lodato of Lowell, June 20, 1915. His son, Anthony, who graduated from Lowell High, while serving in the Air Force, was killed in action in Indochina in 1944, had a street Rapone Pl. Dedicated to him. Mr. Rapone was a tonsorialist, a musician and a composer. He has his own orchestra known as Rap-One String Orchestra heard over WLLH radio station in Lowell. He composed the nationally known compositions "Mississippi," "Storm," "Oriental Tango," "Spindle City," "Anna Maria" (mazurka), "Beautiful Naples" (foxtrot, "Lover's Tempest's Waltz" (waltz)

Antonio Solazzo, general contractor and landscaper, born on February 22, 1890 in Barile, Potenza. Came to the United States in 1909, in landscaping business since March 17, 1919. Married Nicoletta Nigro of Lawrence, also a native of Barile on April 19, 1915. His daughter Elizabeth became a Sister of Charity and served in St. Peter's Parish.

Angelo Spinelli, born in Frosinone on December 17, 1896 and educated in professional trade schools in Arpino, Italy, came to the United States in 1911 settled in Lowell 1926 where he worked for Christier Co. and married Lucy Sdoia of South Barre, Vt. He was a prominent bandmaster, graduated from St. Cecilia Music Conservatory of Rome, Italy. After his arrival in the United States he taught music and was a bandmaster of Philadelphia.

Joseph Stagnone, born in Comittini, Agrigento, on January 6, 1905, came to Lowell in 1913 where he was educated in the public school. In the fruit business since

1925. Married Helen M. Finnegan, January 23, 1927. His father was a native of Casteldaccio, Palermo, who came to Lowell in 1910. He engaged soon the grocery and food business beginning as a peddler by selling the home grown vegetables raised in a parcel of land located in the neighborhood of St. Marie Church in South Lowell.

List of Italian family names in Lowell since the turn of the century.

Alloca	Dalli
Amatista	D'Arezzo
Andreoli	Dentino
Aste	De Luca
Barbieri	De Mauro
Beati	De Ruma
Belli	De Vincenzi
Benedetti	Di Domenico
Bergamuni	Di Modana
Botti	Di Zoglio
Calora	Fantini
Capotosto	Faticanti
Caputi	Fransconi
Cardella	Frediani
Carnevale	Fusconi
Carpenito	Gardini
Casekka	Gioiosa
Castellano	Grandini
Cavalli	Grossi
Cirasella	Grosso
Ciaccia	Innamorati
Lacedra	Santarelli
Lenzi	Santilli
Licata	Saracino
Lunetta	Sepe
Maestri	Simone
Meastrini	Solazzo
Malagrifa	Spinelli
Marotta	Stagnone

Milinazzo
Mondazzi
Palermo
Pallotta
Petullo
Peretti
Pierotto
Pilato
Pisano
Pozzi
Prepatino
Prestopino
Priori
Quattrocchi
Rapone
Roberto
Romagnolo

Stecchi
Tanini
Tarallo
Traverso
Valorose
Volonino
Visocchi
Zabbo
Zanini
Zannoni

Unveiling of Italian American Monument – October 12, 1987

Columbus Day is here again as a special milestone for the Italian Americans of Lowell who today celebrate in a special way their experience. Who are the Italian Americans according to the 1980 U.S. Census? For the first time in history the question was asked: “What is your ancestry?” Some twelve million answered “Italian” thus indicating that Italian Americans are about 5% of the population. They have become the sixtieth largest group in the country. The responses were based upon self-identification. That 12,000,000 claimed Italy as their land of origin is significant; they could just as easily have said “American.” Doubtless some did. It is not an unreasonable estimate that the active number of descendants of Italian immigrants is closer to 20 million. We would dearly love to know more about these 12,000,000 self-confessed Americans of Italian descent. Of one thing we can be certain: the greater majority is composed by individuals belonging to the 3rd generation or to other even further removed from their immigrant forebears. This makes our task of identification and understanding more problematic since we know so little about these past generations. Unfortunately, the Census did not ask its respondents: what does your Italian ancestry mean to you? How does it affect your values? Your attitude? Your behavior? Are you an Italian American?

Lacking historical and psycho-analytical evidence we must turn to history to find our answers. If we move them from a national level to a local one we find it much easier to understand and to comprehend. Turning our eyes to Lowell we are not at all surprised that the population of Italian ancestry in the city reflects the national trend being 4.5% contributing the 8th largest group. The Italian American identity of those who live in Lowell as well as for the nation is only understood if we keep a perspective that encompasses the experiences of three generations. The immigrant generation and here we include: to those who were the trail blazers (one person in particular comes to our mind, Charlie Ianuzzo, who left us last year. He was a true and proven leader of the Italian American Community of Lowell); the children of the immigrants and especially the many who are still among us today; and the grandchildren of the immigrants who now occupy position of leadership, social and economical pre-eminence in the

community. About 100 years ago the first Italians came to Lowell followed by a continuous, albeit small stream.

Today their descendants and those few who are new immigrants open a new chapter in the history of this city. A monumental sculpture will be unveiled and forever future generations will know that we too as Italian Americans have contributed to the history of this city not only with our strong backs, our willingness to work and commitment to values and family, but also for the richness of our heritage and our intellectual capabilities. The national trends of prominent and successful Italian American citizens are reflected also in Lowell. Just look around the city and its revitalization and we see Italian Americans of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd generations taking position of leadership as elected and appointed city officials, educators, artists and business leaders. There was a time in this country when Italian Americans changed their names to feel at ease and more accepted in their community. I have to confess that twenty years ago the thought that crossed my mind. But today there is a new pride in our names whose pronunciation remains uncommon, difficult to understand, somehow outside the establishment even at a time when our personal achievements are acknowledged.

Like Columbus the first of all future Italians who made the Atlantic crossing we must continue to remind ourselves of the value of our heritage, of our richness of the contributions that we have made to culture, to science, and to the dignity of humankind. We must feel good about ourselves and our ancestry. We must hold our heads high in any arena in which we found ourselves, be at school, at home, at work and any other place. We must believe in ourselves before we can convince anyone else of the real merits and our potential to contribute more and more to our community and our new nation. Our forefathers believed in themselves and to them we owe our debt of gratitude for having dispelled stereotypes and prejudices and open the mind of others in order that we may be better understood in our commitment to be the best and most productive citizens of these United States of America. They provided us with a better life and we must, as they, provide a better life for those who will follow us. This is at the very core of the immigrant experience.

It was not only assumed by our immigrant parents and grandparents that the next generation would have it better, it was a basic philosophy of life for them. To this they

committed themselves unselfishly and they performed their tasks with such worthiness that their initials could be printed in their deeds. They were concerned as much with the immediate and temporary rewards that would come from their day to day labors, but much more with an exemplary life that would leave behind a standard for others to use, to enjoy and to respect. As we look and admire in future days and years the beautiful and inspiring sculpture soon to be unveiled, let's keep in mind that we too must have faith in the future like them, well aware that we can help shape it and like our forebears print our initials in our work. Our Italian heritage focuses on life as a journey, as a search for truth and fulfillment. That is why a future was always a better place to be, and that is why our ancestors lived – and died – so that we might be more comfortable and better educated. Our tradition must be upheld in the face of collapsing values and morals. There is so much of our Italian heritage that is good: loyalty, compassion, empathy, hard work, enjoyment of life, honesty, shared values, family life – these must never leave us, they are at the heart of our immigrant experiences as they are at the core of the democratic experience of the United States.

I am a proud Italian American and I am sure that many here today share the same feeling. I am proud because I am steeped in my heritage, and now, because of my immigrant experience, I feel genuinely privileged to share a small place in the history of two great nations. I can speak freely because I know well that while Italian immigrants gained from the opportunities of this great nation, they also have contributed to its development. Whenever I hear “America” being sung, I find myself taken back in time and recall an early August morning of 21 years ago when I glanced at the Statue of Liberty for the 1st time from the deck of the ship “Michelangelo”. Overcome by emotions I wonder what life would be like in this country especially fully aware that I did not know a single person and I was worried about the language of my new country. Now in retrospect and we look back at the collective experience of our Italian ancestors in this city, they, like us, would be very proud for all their accomplishments. We too are proud of them and as their descendants, we are also proud of this great nation and especially this city that has opened her doors, arms, and heart to those “huddled masses yearning to be free.” How fortunate we all are! Let us never forget it.

NOTES

1. The Irish came to Lowell as part of work gangs at the beginning of the XIX century. In 1843 Kirk Boott gave them an acre of land where St. Patrick's Church was built. The name "Acre" still remains today to indicate the whole neighborhood around the church, cfr. Author L. Eno, *The Cotton Was King*. Lowell: New Hampshire Publishing Co., 1976.
2. St. Peter's Church was demolished by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston because of major structural problems with the building and also because of dwindling parish population in Spring 1996.
3. St. Peter's School closed its door to students in 1976 and later in the 80's was transformed into condominiums.
4. The local papers, *The Lowell Sun* and *The Lowell Courier-Citizens* abound of such remarks and references. This patronizing attitude was also prevalent in the whole Merrimack Valley and Nashoba Valley, cfr. William Wolkovich-Volkavicious, *Immigrants and Yankees*, Littleton, 1982.
5. The activities and impact on Italian immigration of the Stabile Bank are analyzed in John Briggs, *An Italian Passage*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1978. Mrs. Rosina Ianuzzo confirmed the existence of the Lowell office of the Stabile Bank, where she used to go as a child with her father in around 1920.
6. Cfr. Thomas Lowell, *Ethnic America*, Harper Torchbook, New York, 1981, and John Briggs, *An Italian Passage*, op. cit.
7. From Carmelo Ianuzzo's speech – he was one of the founding members of the club.
8. The records of the international Institution clearly show how extensive was the return migration. This pattern was common to other Italian communities in the states, cfr. Salvatore L. Gumina, *The Immigrants Speak*, Center for Migration Studies, New York, 1979.
17. Lawrence ten miles down the Merrimack River, became in the last 80 years a haven for Italian immigrants who wished to work in the wool mills.
18. In this report, the Italian American community was not different than any other city in which there was a colony of Italians, e.g., John W. Briggs, *An Italian Passage*, Yale University Press, 1978. Similar studies about other cities confirm the patterns established at Lowell.

19. Cfr. William Wolkovich – Valkavicious, *Immigrants and Yankees*, St. James Church, Groton, Mass., 1981
20. The Prince Macaroni has published in 1975 a pamphlet highlighting the history of the company. The pamphlet was prepared by Total Communications, Inc., Newton, Mass., copyrighted on October 29, 1975.
21. Most of this information is obtained from “The Story of Prince Macaroni.” *The Macaroni Journal*, January 1976.
22. “The Story of Prince Macaroni,” *The Macaroni Journal*, January, 1976, p.13.
23. “The Story of Prince Macaroni,” Total Communication, 29, October, 1975, pp. 8-9.
24. Cfr. Vincenza Scarpaci, *A Portrait of the Italians in America*, Scribner and Sons, New York, 1982.
25. Some of the information on the following families is obtained from oral interviews. The rest is derived from Joseph William Carlevale *Americans of Italian Descent in Massachusetts*, Memorial Press, 1946.