

Summer Issue  
Buona estate e buone vacanze!

*The Newsletter of the  
Lancaster Italian Cultural Society*

Volume 23 & Issue 2 June 2021



# L'Osservatore Lancastriano

## *Interview with Rossella Bagley*

In April, Rossella Chiolini Bagley presented PARTS 1& 2 of the Evolution Of Italian Language to the LICS' membership on Zoom. We thank her for her expertise, time and generosity.

We thank John Day for interviewing her for the newsletter.



## **What brought you to the US?**

I have always had a passion for everything foreign, especially from England, and my husband actually was from England. We met in Italy. We were tired of being in Italy; we wanted to do something a little bit different. He was homesick for California. For me it was an opportunity to go to America, to do something different. We both left our jobs, and without any jobs, we went to America. That started out our great adventure; we had a great experience.

## **Were you married in Italy?**

No, we actually married in America. When we came, we were just dating. After a year, I knew he was the right person, and we decided to do this adventure together. Obviously, all the people that knew us in Italy were thinking, "These guys are crazy. They are leaving a steady job, and for what? What are they going to do in America?"

## **Did you feel at all that you were being led by God to make the move?**

I think so. I believe in God. The whole universe was helping us to realize that. Obviously, being the only child, it was a shock for my parents. But it was good for all of us. Basically, I cut the cord, symbolically, with my mom, with whom I'm very close. Even for her, it was good. Because now she could start her adventure with my father, instead of always taking care of me, in a certain way. After all, I was 30-something years old.

## **Did your parents come over for your wedding?**

No, but they came over for my Master's, my graduation, and have been here three or four times. But the wedding, no. I had a simple ceremony with my husband.

## **No Italian wedding? Peccato!**

No, no, we had a very simple wedding ceremony. It was private.

## **Do you have any family here in the US?**

I have my husband's family, mainly in Los Angeles, and I have many wonderful friends. I am grateful for all the friends I have. They are fantastic people I keep in contact with. I consider them my family as well.

## **When traveling, the Alps are nice and Lago di Como is wonderful, but it's the people you meet and travel with that make traveling fun, for me.**

Exactly so, if you are able to keep in contact with them. For me it was quite easy. And from teaching, I met so many wonderful students, who actually became my friends. And the range of students was from college students to 90-year olds. Fantastic.

## **What was your Master's degree in?**

My Master's degree was in Spanish Literature. I loved Spanish a lot, and was lucky enough to have teachers from various areas, with different pronunciations and meanings. It was wonderful.

**My wife was a French and Spanish teacher, but she wouldn't teach me French, because I was such a slow learner.**

I spent 5 years learning French, and was quite fluent. Now I am out of practice.

**What made you step out and be a teacher?**

For me, I love what I do. Teaching is like a hobby. It gives me so much satisfaction. When I see the students learning so much, and some from scratch. It's something that gives me pleasure and so much satisfaction.

**At what levels do you teach?**

I teach at all levels, in both Italian and Spanish. And I teach adults. And I can create different courses, like "Grammar for Dummies", "Italian with Music", "Italian with Movies". I try to do different topics, to make the classes a little more interesting.

**Do you have an Italian class for travelers?**

I created a course in Italian for travelers, but there hasn't been much demand for it. I could do it again if it was needed.

**How often do you go back to Italy?**

I go back twice per year, because my parents are alone. I like to spend 2 or 3 months, especially in the summertime, and also for Christmas, so I can stay with them. Now, with Covid, I've been

here a long time, helping them. I'll stay here now for the whole summer.

**Are you doing classes on Zoom now?**

Yes. Even before Covid, I did courses on Zoom and Skype. There are businessmen that don't have much time, and they could do it on Skype in their own time. The college required me to take a course so that I could teach online.

**What characteristics did you inherit from your parents that you admire?**

My parents were very generous, and I got that from them. Also, to be good with people, and I try to be good to people. My father always talked about integrity. He was one of those people who when he said something, he had to follow through. His word was important. So, if I give my word to someone, I always respect it.

**Being from the north of Italy, what is your favorite white wine?**

You know, it's funny. Being an Italian, I don't drink wine. I use white wine just when I cook risotto. I prefer water. I know I'm very atypical. I don't eat garlic; my system doesn't digest garlic. People from northern Italy, we use onions more than garlic. And I prefer rice over pasta. Our region grows rice, so I'm used to it.

**What is your favorite mother's dish?**

My grandmother was a great cook, and my mom learned from her. Being a child in the kitchen with them, I learned by osmosis. My grandmother didn't want me to touch any dish when she was cooking. So I was just watching all the time. I consider myself a good cook, too. But there are generational differences. My grandmother used a lot of butter and lard. At the time it was popular. My mom started to use more olive oil. And I do the same. I use more olive oil than butter. So the 3 generations changed the way we cooked.

In America, my friends were different, some vegan or vegetarian, and others with certain problems, so I had to adapt to different kinds of dishes. I also cook for health. One of my favorite dishes is apple pie, la torta di mele. My grandmother prepared it with lots of butter. I'm using the same recipe, but with olive oil, and it comes out very well.

**Anything else that you would like to share?**

I like to work late at night. I'm not an early bird. I have my best concentration in the evening. And I eat very late at night also, in comparison with California normal. I basically kept my Italian clock.

**Eating Out in Italy - Mangiare fuori in Italia.** Here is a list of the types of Italian eating establishments:

**Bar / caffè**, the perfect place for a morning cappuccino or for an espresso any time of the day.

**Tavola calda**, (literally hot table), prepared hot dishes that you can eat on the premises or take away.

**Pizzeria**, at a pizzeria al taglio, you buy pizza or focaccia by the "cut" or slice. **Paninoteca**, a sandwich shop.

**Birreria**, the Italian version of a pub, where you can have sandwiches and salads.

**Osteria or taverna**, an informal restaurant serving simple, inexpensive dishes.

**Trattoria**, a mid-priced restaurant, often family-run, with a cozy atmosphere and local specialties.

**Ristorante**, a more formal and expensive restaurant, serving high-quality Italian or international cuisine.

**President's Message**

Ciao Membri,

Thank you to all who have renewed their membership. We currently have 150 members.

Don't forget to solicit new members now that you have a LICS card to pass out. Let me know if you would like another. You may download a membership form from our Website, too.

The 2-installment presentation provided free of charge to our membership via Zoom, "Evolution of Italian Language" was well received by those who attended the presentation. Our thanks to Rossella for a fun and informative program. John Day interviewed Rossella for this issue of the newsletter.

Rossella's Website: [www.illuminalanguages.com](http://www.illuminalanguages.com)

We are working on a FACEBOOK page, and hopefully it be up and running this month. We are also working on setting up the LICS' Summer Picnic. Stay tuned for more details.

Wishing everyone good health, a happy July 4<sup>th</sup>, and a great summer!

Saluti,

**Rosemary LaFata**

Members, if you have family news, births, deaths, marriage announcements and honors or awards that you would like to share with the membership, please email them to [licsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:licsnewsletter@gmail.com). Or call Pat Valenzo at 717-569-9798.

If interested in advertising your business in the newsletter, contact Pete Costanzo by email: [pcostanzo@janney.com](mailto:pcostanzo@janney.com), and forward your Digital Business Card copy and business slogan. Your AD will appear in both the mailed Newsletter copy and the Emailed Bollettino. 12 times a year for \$150.00. Please make check payable to LICS.

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**Member News -**

Condolences to the Steven and Judy Iovino on the passing of their daughter-in-law Mary. Steve and Judy's son Brian is her husband.

Condolences to Richard Bernhardt and the Celia family on the passing of his uncle Francesco "Franco" Antonio Celia. Born in Gasperina, Italy, Franco was the son of the late Innocenzo and Rosie Grace (Martello) Celia. He immigrated to United States in 1953. He was a long time member of the Lancaster Italian Cultural Society, and the Lancaster Bocce League.

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This issue, we wish to thank **Charles F. Snyder Funeral Home** for their long time support of both the Newsletter and the Lancaster Italian Cultural Society in numerous other ways.

In a recent conversation, Chip Snyder, the son of the founder, shared some of his many memories from childhood to the present. When asked how he was connected to the Cultural Society, he shared that he had, in fact, been a member of the Italian-American Citizens Club when it was still active. When the Lancaster Italian Cultural Society was formed, it just made sense to Chip to continue the relationship.

Chip talked about his memories from childhood and the relationship his father built and nurtured with the Italian American community. He explained that in 1959 his father decided to expand the space, mostly because of requests from the Italian Americans who wanted more space for their large gatherings during viewings and services for their loved ones. He recalled helping his father with the flowers for the services. There were always racks of floral arrangements that stretched from floor to ceiling.

When asked whether the Snyders had any Italian heritage, Chip said, "No, but our involvement with the community showed me, growing up, such a warm, extensive, and welcoming community that I felt like we were part of a large family – a feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood that developed over the years."

Chip also remembers, of course, the wonderful food that came with these relationships. Near his father's location on East King Street, was the P&J Café, owned by Paul and Josephine Severino. Chip's father craved Josephine's meatballs. He went there almost every day to get some of them. Finally, Mrs. Severino came to their kitchen, which was on the second floor above the Funeral Parlor, and taught Chip's mother how to make those meatballs. Years later, when Chip married Doreen Vlassis, his mother taught his bride how to make them. "So, I could still have the meatballs I loved," Chip said, "I got to enjoy the wonderful Mediterranean cuisine from both great cultures, the Greek and the Italian."

Throughout the years, Chip was always impressed at the funerals of members of the Italian American community by the support, the large numbers of people coming to pay their respects, and the kindness and overall respect shown by everyone towards one another.

Chip feels that over the years the Italian American families in Lancaster have come to know Charles F. Snyder and to trust them to handle these arrangements with care and respect for each family's individual requests. He remembers that the Italian American community provided his father with support that greatly helped him as he grew his business. It became a loyal, family connection and his father never forgot that. He would always try to be sure to stop in at each of the funerals to make sure that all was as it should be. Chip tries to continue this tradition himself.

Chip recalled a recent time when he was working with an Italian-born gentleman to make pre-arrangements. Chip asked him, "Would you like to have an Italian flag at your service?" With pleased surprise, he answered, "Yes, we do want that."

Thank you to Chip, his family, and the many caring employees who carry on the Snyder tradition of care, respect, and consideration for the families they serve.

(Interview by Mary Cae Williams)



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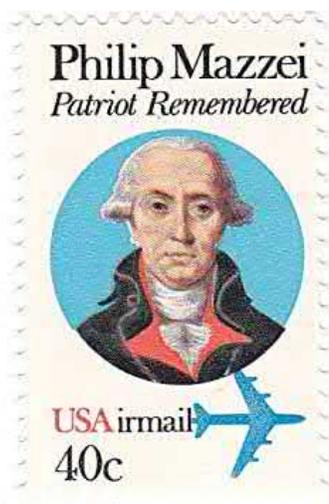
### Funeral Traditions in Italy

Death is treated in a practical, realistic and dignified way by Italians.

Italian funerals are traditionally open for everyone in the village or town to attend. Often, posters are prepared and are hung throughout the town to alert people of the deceased's passing and details of when the funeral will be.

A large majority of Italians were, and still are, Catholic so many Italian funeral traditions are consistent with Catholicism. This will include the last rites, the vigil or prayer ceremony, a funeral liturgy, and the proper Mass being performed. Pall bearers are a common practice in Italian funerals. In some cases, the funeral service will end with family members or friends speaking from the heart about the deceased.

## Italian Americans around the time of the War of Independence: Filippo Mazzei by Marian Caroselli



This period saw a small stream of new arrivals from Italy. Some brought skills in agriculture and the making of glass, silk and wine, while others brought skills as musicians. Let's spend some time looking at the lives of a few of these important men. We will begin with Philip Mazzei, who distinguished himself in several areas.

Philip Mazzei (Filippo

Mazzei) was a Florentine surgeon, merchant, horticulturist, winemaker, author and arms dealer. In London he worked as a teacher of Italian language and met the Americans, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. While doing work for Franklin, Mazzei shared his idea of importing Tuscan products, wine and olive trees to the New World.

On September 2, 1773 Mazzei boarded a ship from Livorno to Virginia bringing with him plants, seeds, silkworms, and 10 farmers from Lucca. While visiting Jefferson at his estate, the two became good friends and Jefferson gave Mazzei a large allotment of land in Albemarle County, on the south side of Monticello, for an experimental plantation. Mazzei purchased about 700 more acres by 1778 and named his farm Colle Mazzei. Mazzei and Jefferson started what became the first commercial vineyard in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unfortunately, a severe frost destroyed the dream of a thriving enterprise.

On the political front, Mazzei began to establish his reputation as a patriot. By 1778, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, George Mason and others decided that Mazzei's efforts would be most useful abroad. To kindle interest in the American cause in Italy he translated many of Jefferson's public speeches and letters and he worked to improve provisions for U.S. merchants in Italian ports. Mazzei was sent to borrow money for Virginia from the Grand Duke of Tuscany and to gather useful political and military information for Governor Jefferson. He purchased and shipped arms to them until 1783. Having become a naturalized citizen of Virginia, Mazzei returned to America in hopes of receiving a consular

post, but he was disappointed. He left Virginia for the last time in 1785. His wife stayed at Colle until she died in 1788. She was buried in the Jefferson family graveyard at Monticello.

Mazzei traveled throughout Europe and became an unofficial roving ambassador for American ideas and institutions. He wrote the first history of the American Revolution to be published in French. The book became known as a source about the truth of the American Revolution, a counterweight to British propaganda and French misinformation. The success of his book led to Mazzei's appointment as the Polish chargé d'affaires in Paris. Later, he became acquainted with Polish liberal and constitutional thought and King Stanislaus II appointed Mazzei to be Poland's representative in Paris, where he again met Jefferson.

When Napoleon overthrew that government, Mazzei returned to Pisa, where he retired in 1792. He married Antonina Tonini in 1796, and had a daughter named Elisabetta in 1798. Mazzei often contemplated returning to America, but instead he established himself as a gardener and died in 1816, three years after completing his memoirs. After his death the remainder of his family returned to the United States at the urging of Jefferson. They settled in Massachusetts and Virginia. Mazzei's daughter married a nephew of John Adams.

The contribution of Philip Mazzei to the Declaration of Independence was acknowledged by John F. Kennedy in his book, **A Nation of Immigrants**, in which he states: The great doctrine "All men are created equal" and incorporated into the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson, was paraphrased from the writing of Philip Mazzei, an Italian-born patriot and pamphleteer, who was a close friend of Jefferson. A few alleged scholars try to discredit Mazzei as the creator of this statement and idea, saying that "there is no mention of it anywhere until after the Declaration was published". This phrase appears in Italian in Mazzei's own hand, written in Italian, several years prior to the writing of the Declaration of Independence. Mazzei and Jefferson often exchanged ideas about true liberty and freedom. No one man can take complete credit for the ideals of American democracy.

Mazzei has received little attention for his contributions to the nation's founding. His face was placed on a 40-cent U.S. airmail stamp in 1980. His name was also given to a World War II-era Navy cargo ship.

For more information about the article suggesting a statue of Mazzei vs. one of Columbus:

<https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/stories/forget-columbus-filippo-philip-mazzei-is-the-historical-figure-italian-americans-deserve.14591>

## Did you know?

Thomas Jefferson planted vineyards, but never actually made a wine. Jefferson partnered with Philip Mazzei, an Italian vintner, and began planting vineyards at his Monticello estate. The venture didn't fare well however. Most of the vines were destroyed by phylloxera and then the Revolution demanded most of his attention. They never produced a wine, but his dream lives on today at Jefferson Vineyards, located nearby at Mazzei's former estate.

Mazzei, then 43, had been trained a surgeon in Florence, worked as a ship's doctor, then practiced in the Middle East before settling in London, where he had been a wine merchant for many years. A well-known horticulturist, he had sailed to Virginia to introduce the culture of grapes, olives and whatever fruit trees would flourish there, and had brought his own crew of Italian vineyard (vignoble) workers with him.

Jefferson indulged some of his favorite activities: building, gardening, buying and selling land. He drew up the charter of a joint stock company for his new friend and neighbor, Philip Mazzei, buying a fifty-pound sterling share in a scheme to cultivate silk, grow wine grapes, and raise olive trees on Mazzei's slopes near Monticello, all without slave labor and relying on Italian vignoble (workers) imported from Tuscany.

From April 1774, Jefferson's notebooks were crammed with plans and expenditures to produce wine in the first large-scale viticulture experiment in North America. That he was not alone in this inability to foresee events is testified by the other shareholders, who included both George Washington and Lord Dunmore. According to local legend, Jefferson was able to greet the thirty vignoble (workers) in their own Tuscan accent. The men, who had heard only English for many months, wept.



### Early Years - Mazzei House - 1773

Convinced by Benjamin Franklin and under the sponsorship of Thomas Jefferson's merchant friend Thomas Adams, on September 2nd, 1773 an Italian viticulturist from Tuscany named Filippo Mazzei (or Philip Mazzei) set off to Virginia with European vines. Mazzei was headed to Augusta County, where the Virginia Legislature had promised him land. En route, Mazzei and Adams stopped at Monticello, where Thomas Jefferson convinced Mazzei to become his neighbor and gave Mazzei 193 acres south of Monticello. The following year Mazzei purchased an additional 281 acre tract of land from Edward Carter. Mazzei built himself a house which he called Colle, and put his men to work clearing the land and planting vines.



**View of the current Jefferson Vineyards, on the original Mazzei land. The winery is located at 1353 Thomas Jefferson Pkwy, Charlottesville, VA 22902**

<https://www.jeffersonvineyards.com/>

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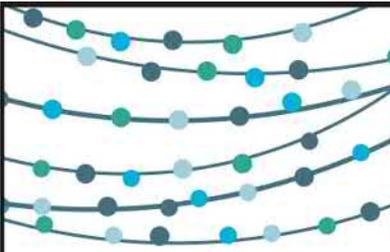
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L'OSSERVATORE LANCASTRIANO June, 2021

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### **Upcoming LICS Events**

**As the current Covid-19 guidelines and restrictions appear to be ending,  
we are planing in person events at this time.**

**We are hopeful that we will be able to schedule the  
Summer Picnic for September 2021.**

**Please check the LICS Website for updates.**

**[www.lancaster-italian-cultural-society.org](http://www.lancaster-italian-cultural-society.org)**