

THE AMERICAN ITALIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION AT THE MILLENNIUM

by Frank J. Cavaoli

The formation of the American Italian Historical Association in 1966 by a small group dedicated scholars provided the foundation and impetus for the rise of Italian American Studies in the twentieth century and beyond. For more than fifty years, before 1966, work had been accomplished on the history and culture of Italians in the United States, but that work was impressionistic, filiopietistic, lacking institutional support, and without a sustaining network of scholars. Today, at the beginning of the millennium, under the guidance of dedicated scholars and a rising Italian American intelligentsia, much has changed; a systematic program of Italian American Studies stands on its own merits as an academic discipline worthy of scientific research and constant revision in search of objective knowledge. As a result, the gathering of data and documents in archival centers, the accumulation of contemporary publications, and the universe of original research in Italian American Studies have supplied present and future students a solid foundation on which to nurture seminal studies and to compose a much needed definitive synthesis on Italian American history.¹

Herein is a chronicle of the origins and growth of the American Italian Historical Association. Before surveying that record, a look back at its antecedents will provide the groundwork for historical continuity, so necessary to understand the present.

The pioneer of Italian American Studies was Giovanni Schiavo.² Though he was not part of the academic world his dedicated labor produced over thirty volumes of documentation on the subject. This remarkable man was born May 28, 1898, at Castellamare del Golfo, Sicily, then migrated to Baltimore in 1915 where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Johns Hopkins University in 1919. He went on to take graduate courses in banking and economics at Columbia University and New York University. At the height of the Great Depression, he was unable to complete his doctoral studies because he did not have the money to publish his dissertation. Schiavo worked briefly for the *Baltimore Sun* and six years later, 1926, founded *Il Corriere del Wisconsin*, which failed soon after. Later, from 1932 to 1934, he worked on the editorial staffs of the *New York Herald Tribune* and *Il Progresso Italiano*, the influential Italian American newspaper which was the first Italian language daily in the United States with a circulation of 127,000 in 1920 and which was purchased by Generoso Pope in 1929. Schiavo returned to Chicago to begin a lifetime of research in recording the Italian American experience, an achievement from which past and current scholars continue to draw inspiration and guidance.

Among his major contributions was his first volume which appeared in 1928: *The Italians in Chicago, A Study in Americanization*, with a Preface by Jane Addams. The following year his second book was published: *The Italians in Missouri*. In this book Schiavo sought to present a chronicle of the new "immigrants to the State of Missouri."

In 1929 he wrote the pamphlet, *What Crime Statistics Show About the Italians*, in which he attempted to correct the public's misconception of crime in America.

He established the Vigo Press in 1934, which served as the outlet for his work. From this point on, Schiavo devoted himself exclusively to the study of the Italians in the United States, and he was assured of a publisher for the fruits of his labor. Thus, in that year of 1934, the first book he published by the Vigo Press was *The Italians in Chicago Before the Civil War*, an important book because it focused upon the Italians who played a major role in contributing to the founding of American civilization. In the 1920s and 1930s he believed too much attention had been placed on the so-called problems of the four million Italian immigrants, mostly from the mezzogiorno, who had settled here since 1880 during a period of rapid industrialization and urbanization amid sentiments of nativism and xenophobia. He provided a major thrust in the battle to overcome stereotypical images of this large ethnic group. Nevertheless, because of the lack of an intelligentsia and a penetration into the powerful American institutions, any real gains by Italian Americans would have to wait for more than a generation. Schiavo worked at a time when there were no affirmative action programs and civil right laws to assist his ethnic group. He stated that the "book is an attempt to rescue from oblivion the names of Italians who helped build the Republic." He always maintained that the Italians' contributions to early America had gone unnoticed, and after Columbus's discovery of America there was a great leap forward to the post-1880 period of massive immigration. Research needed to be done on the contributions made by Italians in the colonial, revolutionary, and nineteenth century periods to fill in these major historical gaps.

Peter Sammartino (1904-1992), a friend of Schiavo and founder of Fairleigh Dickinson University, expressed a similar view when he edited *Seven Italians Involved in the Creation of America* (Washington, DC: The National Italian American Foundation, 1984). Essays in this volume detailed the remarkable accomplishments of Father Eusebio Chino, Enrico Tonti, Machiavelli and the U.S.A., Beccaria and the Reform of Criminal Justice, Mazzei's Constitutional Society of 1784, and Alfieri's Five Odes to "Free America." In attacking the myth that Italians did not come to the United States until after 1880, Sammartino stated: "If we take the sum total of the influences, of philosophy, of government, and in jurisprudence, discoveries, exploration, the influence on literature, on music, on art, on architecture and on science, then America would not have been the country it is without the contributions of Italians, and this stretches from the thirteenth century to the nineteenth centuries."³

Other important books by Schiavo and published by the Vigo Press that are pertinent to the beginnings of Italian American studies are:

The Italians in America Before the Civil War, 1934.

Italian American History: Italian Music and Musicians in America Since 1757; Directory of Musical Biography; Public Officials, Vol. I, 1947.

Italian American History: The Italian Contribution to the Catholic Church in America. Vol II, 1949.

Philip Mazzei, One of America's Founding Fathers, 1952. (With 43 illustrations and facsimiles and 244 footnotes and bibliographical references.)

Four Centuries of Italian-American History, 1952. (Re-published in 1993 by the Center For Migration Studies, New York.)

Italian Dining and Shopping Dictionary, 1953.

The Italian-American Who's Who, Editor, 1935-1967, 21 editions.

Antonio Meucci: Inventor of the Telephone, 1958.

The Truth About the Mafia and Organized Crime in America, 1962.

The Italians in America Before the Revolution, 1976.

Committing himself to this intellectual endeavor in those early years must have been a lonely experience for Schiavo. Lacking an academic base, there were no graduate students to assist in gathering data, no colleagues to evaluate or critique his work, and no professional organization to promote his work.

Nevertheless, toward the end of his life, the achievements of Giovanni Schiavo did not go unnoticed by the newly-formed American Italian Historical Association. During its Twelfth Annual Conference at Rutgers University, New Jersey, October 26-27, 1978, where he was guest of honor, the AIHA granted him its Certificate of Merit in appreciation for his work in Italian American Studies. In the plenary session, Schiavo presented the opening paper in which he reviewed his life, work, and what needed to be done. He said, "About the research that I have done and that which must be done in the future I can tell you that my convictions are not the product of my imagination, but the product of sixty years of contacts with Italians in all parts of the United States. I have been in every Italian American community with the exception of Tontitown, Valdese, and Cumberland in Minnesota."⁴

Just before his death on March 4, 1983, at the age of 85, his collection of books and papers were purchased by the American Italian Renaissance Foundation, the archival center in New Orleans. Professor Remigio U. Pane of Rutgers University memorialized Schiavo at the plenary session of the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the AIHA held in Albany, New York, November 11-13, 1983. Professor Pane spoke reverently of his long-time friend and colleague, chronicling his life and achievements. He said, "With the passing of Giovanni Schiavo we Italian Americans have lost our best champion, he has left us a rich legacy in his books and a great role model of tireless and devoted researches."⁵

Contemporary scholars owe a debt of appreciation to Giovanni Schiavo for his pioneering work in Italian American Studies. It is also true that other studies had been completed during his lifetime and before the formation of the AIHA. But such work, important though it was, had also lacked a systematic pattern of development and acceptance of Italian American history and ethnicity as a legitimate aspect of American life.

There were some important studies, however, that attempted to set a trend. Robert E. Foerster's *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), embodied the early classic model of Italian American Studies. This historian wrote with an understanding lacking by others of the Italian emigration and their contact with a new culture. His volume contained vital information on the great Italian mass migration throughout the world from 1876 to 1919 and delineated significant aspects of Italian immigrant life in the United States. Other representative early works were: Eliot Lord, *The Italians In America* (New York: Buck, 1905); Antonio Mangano, *Sons of Italy: A Social and Religious Study of Italian Americans* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1917); L. C. Odencrantz, *Italian Women in Industry* (New York: Russell Sage, 1919); Giovanni Perilli, *Colorado and the Italians in Colorado* (Denver: Smith Books, 1922); and Olga Peragallo, *Italian American Authors and Their Contribution to American Literature* (New York: S. F. Vanni, 1949). After her death, Peragallo's work was completed by her mother and brother. The WPA Federal Writers Project produced many important studies such as *The Italian Theater in San Francisco, 1939* and *The Italians of New York, 1939*.⁶

This trend not only continued following World War II but actually accelerated as Italian American scholars now possessed a viable organization in the AIHA to sustain their work and provide an essential networking system. A pre-AIHA volume was written by Lawrence F. Pisani, *The American Italians: A Social Study and History* (NY: Exposition Press, 1957). Several important books emerged in the 1970s: Joseph Lopreato's *Italian Americans* (NY: Random House, 1970) was a sociological examination; Luciano J. Iorizzo and Salvatore Mondello's *The Italian Americans* (NY: Twayne, 1971) (revised 1980) was a thorough study by two professional historians who "attempted to present the Italian immigration as an integral part of American history rather than as an isolated social phenomenon;" and Erik Amfitheatrof's *The Children of Columbus: An Informal History of the Italians in the New World* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973). Rose Basile Green's *The Italian-American Novel: A Document of the Interaction of Two Cultures* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated Presses, 1974) detailed a literary/historical approach that analyzed the work of seventy-five authors. In 1976 Gary Null and Carl Stone produced a compilation of 600 biographical sketches in *The Italian Americans* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole). Another volume emerging in this period was produced by Monsignor Alberto Giovannetti, a diplomat in the service of the Vatican. His knowledge of the American scene (he became an American citizen) resulted in a well written history since the time of Columbus, *The Italians of America* (NY: Manor Books, 1979) in which he described the struggles and success of Italian Americans. Salvatore J. LaGumina's *From Steerage to Suburb: Long Island Italians* (NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1988), presented a seminal examination of the Italian experience in the archetypical suburban setting with an emphasis on the enduring quality of Italian ethnicity.

As the foundation of Italian American Studies was established, other books followed. Helen Barolini's *The Dream Book: An Anthology of Writings Italian American Women* (NY: Schocken Books, 1985) compiled the writings of fifty-six Italian American women authors as represented by their fiction, poetry, drama, essays, memoirs, and other nonfiction. Barolini, as editor, gathered these writings from the perspective of gender and ethnicity. Included in this volume was her fifty-three page "Introduction" expounding the role and significance of Italian American literary history and reativity. Mary Jo Bona reconstructed a literary history through an analysis of the narrative techniques of eight Italian American women's novels from 1940 to the present in *Claiming a Tradition: Italian American Women Writers* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1998). Anthony J. Tamburri, Paolo A. Giordano, and Fred L. Gardaphe edited another pivotal book from the point of view of Italian American writers in seeking an understanding of the Italian experience in America: *From the Margins: Writings in Italian Americana* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1991). Fred L. Gardaphe's *Italian Signs, American Streets* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) presented a critical overview of Italian American literary history in the twentieth century, with a view of understanding the recent past. Gardaphe, president of the American Italian Historical Association from 1997 To 2000, along with Green, Barolini, and others, pointed out that Italian American literature had been too long neglected and merited a rightful place in the canon of American literature. This list is by no means exhaustive; it merely attempts to present examples of the increasing work in the field as interest and study accelerated.

However, it is important to cite a revisionist work that offered a challenging thesis to the concept of enduring Italian ethnicity. In his carefully-researched book, *Italian Americans, Into the Twilight of Ethnicity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985), Richard D. Alba, a member of the AIHA, asserted that Italian Americans (and other European ethnic groups) have become so structurally assimilated as to make them similar to the dominant white Anglo Saxon culture. He argued that the transition to third and fourth generations cast descendants beyond the Old World influences of grandparents and parents. Alba employed general survey polls and census data on which to base his theories. Central to this thesis was his use of quantitative studies showing the high rate of intermarriage between Italians Americans and other ethnic groups. Alba further asserted that ethnicity had declined because of macrosociological changes in the larger society, such as immigration restrictions from 1921 to 1965, and because of social and economic advances made by Italian Americans since World War II. Finally, Alba concluded that the ethnicity that does exist today is merely symbolic, nostalgic, and serves as a leisure activity. Future developments will determine the validity of his thesis. Nevertheless, the AIHA continues to do the work it has set out to do.

The raw creative power of early Italian immigrants set down their story in prose and poetry upon their arrival in what they judged to be an alien land. Much can be learned from their personal stories, as in Constantine Panunzio's *The Soul of An Immigrant* (1921) and Pascal D'Angelo's *Son of Italy* (1924), as well as in later generations of Italian Americans who focused on their ethnic heritage in their writings, such as Jerre Mangione's classic, *Mount Allegro* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1943), which is a vivid narrative of Sicilian life in Rochester, New York. Valuable though they are, and in many

ways anecdotal, they were essentially personal and lacked the objectivity of the historian's craft.

Remigio Ugo Pane, an Executive Council member of the AIHA for many years, produced a useful survey of doctoral dissertations on Italian Americans that revealed the paucity of comprehensive research on Italian American studies in the early part of the twentieth century. However, as time progressed his survey detailed an acceleration of guided research in the field.⁷ Pane recorded 251 dissertations from 1908, when the first was completed, to 1977, the last year of his survey. Up to 1920, there were only three dissertations completed; in the 1920s there were eight; the 1940s had twenty-three; the 1950s had thirty-four; the 1960's had sixty-five; and from 1970 to 1977 a total of ninety-seven were completed. There were nineteen academic departments represented, ranging from anthropology to folklore to history to sociology to urban planning, history recording the highest number with seventy-three, sociology second with forty-three, and education with forty. Such work helped to prepare for the formation of a scholarly organization such as the AIHA in formalizing and centralizing relevant studies.

Concurrently, the rise of the New Social History generated interest in ethnic and immigration history. Often referred to as history "from the bottom up," as opposed to chronicling developments of elites, now the role of the inarticulate masses in society was studied and analyzed. The immigrant and the ethnic American, along with workers, children, families, women, slaves, and other neglected persons, were given voice in the historical record.

Similarly, the rise of the New Political History, which directed scholars to re-evaluate previous historical interpretations, also influenced ethnic history. Newer methods and materials were applied to examine issues and problems. The New Political History, along with the New Social History, emphasized Interdisciplinary work, comparative inquiry, and analysis of continuity and change. Quantification of data through the application of the computer played a major role in understanding political behavior.⁸ Massive data were gathered and programmed from census reports, church histories, directories, local government, and statistical publications. By combining election results with social and economic data, a more accurate Picture unfolded of civic behavior. The New Political History concentrated on ordinary people who comprised the mass of society, as opposed to the exclusive study of elites.⁹

Along these lines, Samuel P. Hays' approach to the social analysis of politics called for the study of human activities which were concerned with the allocation of power. Seeking to expand the scope of politics, political historian studied the "structure and process of every type of human relationship," with an emphasis on working people and ethnocultural forces.¹⁰ Thus, an ethnocultural synthesis resulted in determining political attitudes which preceded electoral behavior. According to this view, nationality, race, and religion form the basis of political beliefs.¹¹

Since the 1950's, the United States has increasingly been regarded as a nation of unmelttable ethnics. Harvard historian Oscar Handlin has expressed this concept:

"American society is pluralistic in organization. The immense size of the country, its marked regional differences and diversity of antecedents, have sustained complex patterns of association and behavior and have inhibited tendencies toward uniformity. Social action in the United States, therefore, is presumed to come not within large unitary forms but within a mosaic of autonomous groupings that reflect underlying dissimilarities in the population."¹²

There has always been interest in ethnic groups; and subcultural groups have existed from the colonial period to the twentieth century. But after World War II, ethnicity was revitalized. The Supreme Court's historic decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954, outlawing segregation based on race, generated considerable attention; so did affirmative action programs that followed. The school of Consensus History as advocated by David M. Potter, Daniel Boorstin, and Louis Hartz was being replaced by a new history which emphasized the diverse nature of the American character and experience.

Certain other forces accelerated this shift. Samuel Lubell astutely pointed out in *The Future of American Politics* (1951) that the beginnings of civil rights legislation coincided with the maturing white "urban underdogs," Italians, Irish, Scandinavians, Poles, Jews, and other southern and eastern European Americans. New findings in the research of Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan emerged in their influential book, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963) and Michael Novak's *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (1972) poignantly described the importance of ethnic America. Richard Gambino's personal and poignant memoir, *Blood of My Blood* (1974), captured the spirit of being Italian in American society by combining scholarly sources with his own ethnic experiences. This successful, widely-read book helped to set the agenda for Italian Americans in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Even Vatican II under Pope John's leadership led to an unprecedented probing of religious differences, and contributed in directing scholars to investigate Catholic congregations, adjustment of different waves of immigrants, conflicts within the Church, and the plural background of the faith. This motivated Silvano M. Tomasi, then Director of the Center for Migration Studies of New York, to state in 1972 that "Italian Americans are just footnoted in textbooks on ecclesiastical history . . . and [their] religious experience . . . is largely uncharted territory."¹³

The Black Revolution provided the catalyst as millions of African Americans sought to learn of their roots in the struggle for equal treatment. Other minorities became activated. Even academia legitimized ethnicity as a discipline. Civil rights laws, judicial decisions, administrative judgments, immigration legislative reform, affirmative action, and the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act profoundly charted the course for national policy. The Bicentennial celebration stimulated Americans to explore the sources of their identity and nationality.¹⁴

The social analysis of Andrew M. Greeley at the Center for the Study of American Pluralism at the National Opinion Research Center called for the investigation of European ethnics because social scientists had either ignored them or had written them

off from their systematic studies. The minimal research on ethnic America through the 1960s had produced few theories, methodologies, and data. One conclusion from Greeley's research asserted that ethnicity constituted an important variable in American society.¹⁵

Briefly summarized, these were the important factors that provided the impetus to fill the need for an Italian American scholarly organization of leaders who emerged from the post-World War II era possessing the necessary education, skills, and financial resources. Though it was asserted by some that Italian cultural retention had declined or disappeared beyond the first and second generations because of macrosociological factors resulting from World War II, a group of qualified leaders did arise to validate Italian American history.¹⁶

Thus, the formation in 1966 of the American Italian Historical Association marked a milestone in the cycle of ethnic success in the United States.¹⁷ Americans of Italian descent became the last large group to organize a scholarly organization. Population figures helped as the 1990 Census counted 14,665,550 Italian Americans.¹⁸ The AIHA constitution clearly defined the purposes of the non-profit Association to promote Italian American studies, to collect, preserve, develop, and popularize the Italian American experience in the United States and Canada.

The descendants of Italian immigrants now had the resources to uncover, record, and analyze their own historical roots. Though the Association's members did not claim exclusivity in this area, they definitely were more motivated. The Association is not engaged in filiofetism, anti-defamation, political partisanship, or even in high Italian culture. It is not a literary association. There are numerous worthy organizations devoted to these important enterprises. Through scientific and objective methodologies, the AIHA systematically studies and records the Italian experience in North America. To emphasize its uniqueness: no other organization can make this claim, nor match the achievements of the Association. The work of the AIHA endeavors to gather, record, compare, analyze, and revise the latest research of this important ethnic group. The published articles in its Proceedings by leading scholars presented at its annual conferences become part of the permanent record of that ethnic experience.

The origins of the American Italian Historical Association date back to modest beginnings in the summer of 1965 and continued to December, 1966, when its formation was completed. The driving forces behind the concept were educator and civic leader Leonard Covello and Rudolph J. Vecoli, then professor at Rutgers University. They firmly and correctly believed that the pluralistic nature of American civilization had been neglected, and through the objective investigation of the ethnic-immigration past American history could be more accurately understood. The AIHA Archives at the Center for Migration Studies in Staten Island indicate that on the evening of August 6, 1965, Covello and Vecoli convened with Francesco Cordasco in the New Jersey residence of Covello to plan the enterprise.

At the Association's 32nd annual conference in San Francisco, November, 1999, founder Salvatore J. LaGumina recalled the underlying fundamentals of the AIHA's formation: The AIHA formally came into existence in December, 1966, amidst a decade that social scientists acknowledge a time of ethnic consciousness, with particular reference to the rise of black awareness and attendant violence. Although the preoccupation was on the activity of non-white minorities and on expressions such as "black is beautiful" and "black power," another phenomenon was taking place among ethnic and nationality groups like Italian Americans. Ethnic awareness on the part of Italian Americans, as among others, began to focus on their own heritage. It was against this background that the AIHA was born.

LaGumina continued with his recollections of the early years of the AIHA: Simultaneously and from different academic and scholarly perspectives, four people (Vecoli, Covello, S. M. Tomasi, Cordasco) met to plan the inaugural meeting of the AIHA to see if indeed Italian Americans were genuinely interested in unearthing their history in an objective manner. A chance call to the esteemed Covello in connection with my doctoral research topic on Vito Marcantonio led to an invitation to attend the organizational meeting at Covello's East Harlem office on East 116th Street, New York City, December, 1966, along with the aforementioned and several others (Nofi, Silveri, Paolino). The event was covered by *Il Progresso Italo Americano* whose photographer took a picture that the newspaper published. Having previously been disappointed after attending meetings of other similar-named organizations such as the Italian Historical Society, I was pleasantly surprised with the caliber of attendees at the AIHA inaugural meeting, their demeanor and seriousness. I immediately perceived the AIHA as composed of a small number but earnest individuals who could very well move to fill the great void in Italian American Studies. If some see a deficiency in Italian American Studies in 1999, then it was much more so in the mid-1960s; that is with certain exceptions, the field was virtually bereft of erudite and seminal studies. To connect and interact with others who were of similar mind regarding the need to mine the taproot of the Italian American experience with those willing to undertake objective and piercing investigation of this ethnic background was of immense encouragement to me and to other early AIHA members. Always meager in numbers, we nevertheless constituted a dedicated corps of people from within and without academia and representing various disciplines and interests, we strove to translate our concern into laying meaningful foundations for the organization that would eschew filiopietism in favor of vigorous, impartial and judicious research that merited notice on its own. We utilized proven organizational formats and objectives of respected extant scholarly organizations such as the American Norwegian Historical Association and the American Jewish Historical Association. Indeed, Rabbi Meyer, secretary of the American Jewish Historical Association was a member of the first AIHA executive council where he provided valuable counsel and guidance.

These were LaGumina's impressions and recollections on what prompted a small group of scholars to form an Italian American organization that was distinct from any other. Leonard Covello was the former principal of Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem, an Italian American community in New York City and one of the largest in the nation; he had promoted the practical idea of involving the community in the educational

system in the context of an urban setting. Covello straddled two cultures. He stated, "It was my aim to bring the community into the school, so our youngsters might better grow into understanding and participating citizens."¹⁹ He wanted to go beyond the child-centered and subject-oriented school to what he termed the community-centered school. Covello wrote and lectured extensively on the social and family background of Italians in the United States as the key to understanding immigrant subcultural values. His intellectual breadth and sensitivity continues to shine forth in his autobiography, *The Heart Is the Teacher* (1958), and his massive study, *The Social Background of the Italo-American School Child* (1967).

Vecoli was encouraged by Covello's support of the idea to collect documents and record the Italian experience in America. He had established his reputation in 1964 as a major scholar in ethnic studies with the publication of a seminal article, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of The Uprooted."²⁰ Having studied the Italians in Chicago, Vecoli regretted that much of the historical evidence had been lost. He believed what remained could be saved. He stated: "As an historian I am acutely aware of the absolute necessity of having documents; it is simple, no documents, no history. I further believe as an historian that we will never be able to understand the Italian American experience or the Italian American today unless we study the process of cultural and social change historically."²¹

Planning continued that year, but became more difficult because Vecoli had taken a new position at the University of Illinois at Champaign. Nevertheless, he had received letters of encouragement from Edward Corsi of New York, Judge Felix Forte of Boston, and others.²² In the meantime, he was offered the position of Associate Director for the Institute for Immigrant Studies at Brooklyn College under Director Clarence Senior. He refused the offer because it came too late. Though he missed living on the east coast, he was unable to move his family again, and he enjoyed his work at Illinois.²³

By the spring of 1966 other persons had been suggested who could help in the project: Giovanni Schiavo, now living in Texas; Peter Riccio of Casa Italiana at Columbia University; Salvatore Mondello of Rochester Institute of Technology; Salvatore J. LaGumina of Nassau Community College, Albert Nofi, a graduate student at Fordham University. Vecoli was unable to travel east in the summer because of a teaching assignment at the University of Minnesota. He suggested a meeting in December, 1966, during the American Historical Association conference in New York City for a planning session of the "Italian American Historical Society." Covello met with Silvano M. Tomasi, CS, of the Center for Migration Studies, November 12, 1966, to lay the groundwork. Finally, December 27, 1966, was the date agreed upon in New York City where the American Association of the Teachers of Italian conference was also being held. Ernest F. Falbo, of Gonzaga University and Secretary of the AATI, had expressed an interest in the new organization and was invited. An agenda was drawn up for the historic December 27, 1966, meeting at the LaGuardia Memorial House in East Harlem.²⁴

Thus, the American Italian Historical Association was founded. The founding group of historians, sociologists, and educators included John Cammett, Francesco Cordasco,

Leonard Covello, William DeMayo, Francis X. Femminella, Luciano Iorizzo, Salvatore LaGumina, Virginia Yans McLaughlin, Isador Meyer, Salvatore Mondello, Louis Romano, Jean Scarpaci, Louis Silveri, Silvano M. Tomasi, and Rudolph J. Vecoli. The first slate of officers for two-year terms were: Vecoli as President; Cordasco as Vice President; S. M. Tomasi as Secretary Treasurer; Nofi as Recording Secretary; and S. M. Tomasi as Curator. Two days later, December 29, at a meeting at the New York Hilton Hotel during the American Historical Association conference, an Executive Council was elected: John Cammett of Rutgers University; Ernest Falbo of Gonzaga University; Peter Riccio of Casa Italiana; and Louis Silveri of Assumption College, Massachusetts. The Constitution and By-Laws were drafted. In January, 1967, the Association was incorporated in New York State as a non-profit group and received both New York State and Federal tax exemption.²⁵

At the outset, the Association began its collection of documents. The Curator announced in early 1967 that he had received the papers of the late Dr. Mario E. Cosenza, past President of the AATI, covering the period 1921 to 1938, and first Italian American to become a dean at an American college, Brooklyn College; the papers of the late Edward Corsi, former Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island, ex-Director of LaGuardia Memorial House, and former New York State Industrial Commissioner; and the papers of Vincent Anfuso, the late Brooklyn Congressman and New York State Supreme Court Judge. The collection continued to grow and would include the many of the papers of officers and members of the AIHA.

The leaders had originally intended to affiliate with the Casa Italiana at Columbia University, but because of differences in objectives, this plan did not materialize. The Casa Italiana focused on the high Italian culture and language of the Old World while the AIHA's goal was to study and record the experience of the massive numbers of ordinary Italian immigrants in America. The Association's headquarters, which had been temporarily located at 319 East 116th Street, New York City, was moved to the Center for Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, New York. Through the generosity of the Center and the Scalabrinian order, space was been granted to the AIHA for an office, storage of the Proceedings, and its ongoing records. The AIHA Archives are located in a separate collection of the Center for Migration Library.

As the Association grew, greater demands were made on the resources of the Center for Migration Studies, and it became clear that after three decades a new office had to be found. Also, the part-time secretary that administered the AIHA office was no longer hired to conduct daily administrative matters. For several years the leaders searched for a new site that would be accessible to researchers, house the Proceedings, and maintain the ongoing correspondence. At the Executive Council meeting held in New York City during the 31st Annual Conference, November 12, 1998, it was decided to make "a 1 year commitment to use the office space of Com.It.Es [in New York City] with no rent or other costs other than its own office equipment and staff expenses, with an option of extending our stay for an additional year." This motion was adopted by the Executive Council: 14 for, 7 opposed, and 1 abstention. The split majority vote indicated that eight

members of the Council had reservations of the move to the Com.It.Es location. This arrangement was conditioned on the favorable recommendation of the AIHA attorney.

The office would be run by a temporary staff worker for about 15 hours a week, and space was available for about seventy-five people for conducting meetings and seminars. Sylvana Mangione, President of Com.It.Es, who was present at the meeting, explained that the organization was an elected body of the Italian government charged with protecting the rights of Italian citizens in its jurisdiction, fostering Italian language and culture, and working with the Italian American community. She indicated that such cooperation with the AIHA is typical of its work and that the Com.It.Es Assembly had already approved a one-year proposal with a one-year extension. However, after a brief six-month trial period the AIHA Executive Council meeting of April 24, 1999, unanimously voted not to move forward with the proposal to establish a permanent office at the New York City Com.It.Es location because of unstable political conditions with that organization.

After a difficult year without a permanent home, the AIHA Executive Council voted at the 33rd Annual Conference in Lowell, Massachusetts, November 9, 2000, to appoint Dominic Candeloro to the newly created position of Executive Secretary. A former president of the Association, Candeloro would direct the day-to day operations for a stipend. The Council, voting unanimously with one abstention, believed that such a pivotal move was critical for the success of the AIHA. The permanent office would relocate to Chicago, where Candeloro was based. The Proceedings would eventually be moved there. Candeloro suggested a photographic history of Italian Americans be written by members of the Association as a fund raiser. The Council members believed that this new structural change would stabilize the Association, generate new members, retain present members, and provide greater service to the community in the area of Italian American Studies.

During its early years, the Association placed public notices of its formation in Italian and Italian American newspapers. A fund raising committee was set up to solicit Italian American organizations and leaders for assistance. These attempts to get support from the Italian American community failed, as did later attempts. Generally, up to this time, no large donor has provided any continuous major financial assistance, and it appeared that the AIHA would not generate a large mass membership because of the special educational requirements and rigors required for objective research work.

Nevertheless, some minor support has come from many groups within the Italian American community, and that support, small though it may be, has contributed significantly to the ongoing success of the AIHA. One group in particular, the National Italian American Foundation, has extended financial assistance for consultation services and has underwritten expenses for several conferences. Other contributors and supporters for conducting the conferences and printing costs of the Proceedings have included the Italian Government, Embassy, and Consul Generals of Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York and San Francisco; Italian American Club of Duluth, St. Paul, UNICO Chapter, Italian American Club of Hibbing, Jenos, Inc., Columbus Memorial

Association, AIHA Stella del Nord Chapter, Settima Vecoli Memorial Fund, all of Minnesota; Italian American Community Center of the Albany Capital District; Agnelli Foundation; Consortium of Italian American Organizations of Rhode Island; Italian American Executives of Transportation, Italo-American National Union, Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans, Fra Noi, Amerital Unico Club, Italian Cultural Center, Italian Cultural Institute, all of Chicago; John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of CUNY; New England Chapter of NIAF; Italian American Historical Society of Greater New Haven; Italian Federation of California; American Italian Renaissance Foundation of New Orleans; AIHA Long Island Chapter; Center for Italian Studies at SUNY Stony Brook; Forum Italicum; Italic Studies Institute; Dante Foundation; Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh; L.D. Astorino & Associates; Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania; the Italian American Cultural Foundation of Cleveland; Italian Cultural Institute of New York City; the Italian American Foundation of the East Bay, San Francisco; Museo Italo Americano; and the institutions of higher learning, listed below, where the annual conferences were held.

An important AIHA activity has been the publication of the NEWSLETTER which began publication in 1967. The NEWSLETTER has continued to inform the members of the latest activities of the Association and has served as a clearinghouse for an Italian American studies agenda. In recent years it has achieved the objectives of what former president Rudolph J. Vecoli called for at the outset: the NEWSLETTER should include "current bibliography, review essays, and descriptions of research in progress."²⁶ Jean Scarpaci, Ernest Paolino, Virginia Yans McLaughlin, Joanne Pellegrino, Nick Falco, Albert Grande, Thomas Vesce, Phylis Martinelli, George E. Pozzetta, Gary Mormino, Dominic Candeloro, Rose Ann Rabiola, Emma Parillo, Jerry Krase, Joseph Velikonja, Anthony Julian Tamburri, and Paul S. Giamo have served as editors over the years. The NEWSLETTER has provided the communications link between the membership and leadership, and has chronicled the many extraordinary accomplishments of the Association. The editors through this vehicle have dutifully recorded AIHA activities and other relevant ethnic information.

Another important method of improving communications among its members has been through the recent development of the internet. In 1996, Dominic Candeloro provided the Association the opportunity to establish a web site, the H-Itam Home Page as part of the Humanities OnLine initiative. H-ItAm is an interactive network/forum for scholars and others dealing with the Italian American experience, as well as the ethnic culture of Italians throughout the world. A major goal of the H-ItAm is the advancement of the "study, appreciation, and advancement" of Italian history and culture at all levels of society, but especially in academia. Subscribers are invited to "submit syllabi, outlines, handouts, bibliographies, guides to term papers, listing of new sources and archives, and reports on new software, datasets and cd-roms." H-ItAm is moderated by Dominic Candeloro, Jerome Krase, and Fred Gardaphe who manage its daily activities. An Editorial Board consists of Anthony Julian Tamburri, Donna Gabaccia, Angela Danzi, Richard Juliani, Pasquale Verdicchio, Edviga Giunta, and Fred Misurella. The Editorial Board develops its long-term policies while the AIHA leadership views this internet initiative as an opportunity to promote the Association.²⁷

Joseph Velikonja, editor of the Newsletter from 1989 through 1992, in an analysis of the membership through the NEWLESTTER uncovered some revealing data concerning the makeup of the Association. In 1992, to take one year as an example, he reported that four issues were published with a total of seventy-six pages. The NEWSLETTER was circulated to 550 members and to additional friends, institutions, and publishers. To be more specific, the October, 1992, issue was distributed throughout the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Hong Kong, and three foreign countries in the following numbers: NY-169; CA-64; NJ-59; MN-32; PA-30; IL-25; MA-20; Md-18; CT-17; MI-12; IN-11; LA-10; NC-8; WI-8; OH-7; RI-7; DC-7; TX-6; CO-6; FL-5; WA-5; VA-3; OK-2; VT-2; MO-2; OR-2; AZ-1; UT-1; NE-1; AR-1; AL-1; NH-1; NV-1; ID-1; TN-1; MS-1; SC-1; Italy-18; Canada-2; United Kingdom-1; Hong Kong-1. Thus, for the October, 1992, issue, there was a total of 570 Newsletters mailed out: 548 domestic, 22 foreign.

When comparing the numbers at the time Velikonja assumed the editorship in June, 1989, to October, 1992, certain changes occurred that will be highlighted here. In the south, southwest, and northwest, where the Italian population was meager, the numbers remained stable. In the case of New York, membership dropped from 188 to 169 in this period. California witnessed an increase from 51 to 64. Louisiana increased from 2 to 10. Illinois decreased from 44 to 25. Minnesota dropped from 42 to 32. The other states remained the same or fluctuated very little. In the case of Italy in this period, membership increased to 18 from 15, and it reflected a greater visibility in the relationship between the AIHA and Italian scholars in the field of Italian American Studies.

A few explanations may be offered for these changes in what amounted to membership volatility. When the AIHA conducted a conference in a particular city, the level of interest increased because of the rise in interest and research in Italianita, particularly at a local level. Moreover, the numbers confirm the point that membership was drawn from those states with sizable Italian American populations. The reverse is true in those states with a smaller Italian American population, resulting in scant interest in Italian American Studies. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that the AIHA is a national organization and is international in scope with an obvious Italian interest and participation.

In his presentation at the 31st Annual Conference of the American Italian Historical Association, November 13, 1998, titled "Who We Are: A Survey of the AIHA Members," sociologist Joseph M. Conforti found that nearly half of the AIHA members were over the age of sixty years old, and almost three-quarters were over the age of fifty. He acknowledged, however, that since 1995 more and more younger people were attending the annual meetings. There also had been a shift in academic disciplines--from history and the social sciences to the fields of literature and communications. Such a development had produced an infusion of new-found energy, as well as an expansion of the "largely social science base to incorporate additional perspectives," he said.

Conforti's survey found that the level of members' level of education was noteworthy. Only one-fourth achieved an education of lower than the graduate level. Of course, the

AIHA is essentially a scholarly organization whose members are college professors. As a result, almost three-quarters of the membership surveyed were at the professional level. It is important to point out that those in the combined semi-skilled and skilled groups comprised fewer than those who did not get past a high school education. As for annual income distribution, nearly half the respondents earned \$60,000 or more. Conforti added that this figure would have been higher had it not been for the considerable proportion of older members who were retired. The survey confirmed that the lowest incomes were associated with the youngest and the oldest (retired) members who responded.

The Conforti survey revealed the urban residence of its members at 46.6 percent, compared to the national average of 30 percent. It has been long established that Italian Americans have been slow to leave the city, as Rudolph J. Vecoli has stated that they "have demonstrated a tenacious attachment to place." Nevertheless, being highly educated and affluent they could well afford the greater cost of urban residency and an urbane lifestyle in the "proper" neighborhoods. Over 75 percent of the membership lived in the northeast quadrant of the United States; very few members resided in the cities of the Sunbelt states.

Conforti's survey also reflected the view that AIHA members were far more invested in the retention of Italian ethnicity than other Italian Americans in the general population. It is obvious that as AIHA members they have a vested interest in ethnicity and will benefit in ethnicity by teaching, writing, and serving as consultants in the field. From an intellectual perspective, they therefore could internalize and articulate a greater sense of ethnic consciousness. Further demonstrating their ethnic commitment, nearly all AIHA members also belonged to other Italian American organizations.

Conforti's 1994 and 1995 survey has added further understanding of the status of the Association at the time of the millennium. His data concluded what had been obvious to most participants at the annual conferences and executive council meetings: "AIHA members are aging."

In a further attempt to understand its development, the Association grew from the original 130 paid members in 1968, to 516 in 1981, to nearly 600 in 1986. There were regional chapters that effectively functioned under the aegis of the national organization to allow for greater membership participation; in this way geographical barriers were overcome. It also allowed for each chapter to develop its own style and to engage in its own local research and conduct its own programs, always remembering to carry out the goals of the national charter. The regional chapters are listed here:

- Maryland/Washington, D.C.
- Illinois/Wisconsin/Indiana
- Long Island
- Western Pennsylvania
- Stella del Nord, Minnesota

- Cristoforo Colombo, Ohio
- New York City Metropolitan
- Central New Jersey
- Central New York
- Detroit

The record has shown, however, that the regional chapters have had varying success in conducting conferences, generating archival collections, publishing newsletters, and popularizing Italian American history. The most active chapters have been Long Island, Western Regional, Stella del Nord, and Central New Jersey. The Long Island Chapter has long conducted an annual spring luncheon (its 25th in 2001), in addition to two other conferences with prominent guest speakers expounding on some topic of the Italian American experience. It publishes an ongoing newsletter. Its work has also led to the formation of the Italian American Center at Nassau College, where a one-day conference is held during the month of October. Salvatore J. LaGumina is its director. The Western Regional has effectively developed the Italian American Collection in the San Francisco Public Library; it has also researched and published articles on the violation of the civil rights of Italian Americans at the beginning of World War II in *Una Storia Segreta*, which has also received funding for conducting a traveling exhibit that has met with wide success.

For several years in the 1990s the Association failed to retain and gain many new members. This was primarily caused by the lack of a permanent membership chairman. At the same time, it became clear that the national office that had been provided by the Center for Migration Studies in Staten Island would not be available for use in the future. As a result, new member requests, renewals, purchase orders for copies of the AIHA Proceedings, and responding to correspondence and telephone calls could not be effectively executed. Many of these matters had to be forwarded to the president and several other key leaders who did their best to administer the Association. The resulting delays caused confusion and a loss of membership.

These events of the 1990s influenced the ongoing development of the AIHA. In the past, there had been a stable membership of over 500, a permanent national office, and a part-time secretary who handled most of the correspondence, mailings, and renewals. Budgetary constraints caused the secretary to be released. Officers who lived in the New York City region traveled to Staten Island to process the ongoing administrative affairs. The burden fell heaviest on the president who carried on these matters from his home and professional office. When Edward A. Maruggi became the permanent membership chairman in 1995 he acknowledged the challenge of stabilizing the Association. In his reports to the Executive Council on November 12, 1998, and November 9, 2000, he presented the following membership figures:

- 1994 338
- 1995 202

- 1996 368
- 1997 372
- 1998 359
- 1999 302
- 2000 323 (Pre-conference count.)

Maruggi worked diligently to reorganize the membership process, develop a computer-based system, and apply other effective management techniques, thereby stabilizing and even increasing the membership.

In his Membership Committee Report for the AIHA Executive Council meeting of April, 1999, Maruggi stated that the total number of members for 1998 was 359 (up for the pre-conference number of 298). The total life members reached sixty-two. Sixty-six persons who were on the 1998 annual conference program had not paid dues. In a further examination of the records, he found that there had been over 900 persons who were members at one time or another. A core of dedicated members has worked, participated, and continued to renew membership over the years. However, beyond that core group renewing other members has been a persistent problem. Maruggi has recognized this problem and determined to solve it. Also, perhaps at the millennium the younger members that were reported in the Conforti survey will lead to increased growth. The acceptance of Italian American Studies in academia should also help, as well as other strategies mentioned throughout this essay.

The elected leadership has represented various regions of the nation. Rudolph J. Vecoli, of the University of Illinois and later Director of the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, was elected first president from 1967-1970, for two terms, and Francesco Cordasco, of Montclair State, held the position of vice president for a short period. Vecoli set the high standards of scholarship and administrative guidance that provided the model for others to follow. The Association Constitution limits an individual to two consecutive elected terms in office. Salvatore J. LaGumina, of Nassau Community College, SUNY, served as vice president during Vecoli's second term and became president in 1971; he was re-elected to a second term. LaGumina's vice president was Luciano J. Iorizzo of the State University of New York at Oswego. In 1975, Iorizzo became president and was reelected to a second term; Jean Scarpaci of Maryland's Towson State College and Richard N. Juliani of Villanova University each served as his vice president. George E. Pozzetta, of the University of Florida, and Frank J. Cavaioli, held the presidential and vice presidential offices, respectively, from 1979 to 1980. Francis X. Femminella, of SUNY Albany, was president from 1981 to 1982, with Cavaioli serving as vice president. Cavaioli was elected to the presidential office for 1983-1984, and Dominic Candeloro, of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle and later at Governors State University, became vice president. Candeloro filled the presidential office for two terms, 1985-1988, and Juliani filled the vice presidential office in this period. Juliani was elected to two terms as president, 1989-1992, and Jerome Krase, of Brooklyn College, as vice president. The membership elected

Krase to the presidential office for two terms, 1993-1996; his vice president was Fred Gardaphe, formerly of Columbia College in Chicago and presently at SUNY Stony Brook. Gardaphe served as the next president for two terms, 1997-2000. Elizabeth Messina, a New York licensed psychologist and researcher, became vice president during this period.

These officers assumed leadership positions while simultaneously meeting their regular professional responsibilities. Their institutions contributed in various ways in support of the AIHA: mailings, travel expenses, printing costs, telephone use, computers, and secretarial help. They were assisted by key members of the elected executive council and a part-time secretary (until the mid-1990s) at the national headquarters in Staten Island, New York.

The most important function in implementing the Association's goal has been the sponsorship of the annual conference, of which there have been thirty-three. The conference brings together scholars and other interested persons to generate new research and to re-evaluate and compare previous work in the field of Italian American Studies. That research has become part of the permanent record in the publication of the conference Proceedings which are available throughout North America and the world. The quality and quantity of scholarship have increased enormously, from 36 pages in the first volume to the 378 pages in the latest published volume (the 30th held in Cleveland in 1997), and serve as an outlet for the work of the leading scholars in the field. Papers that are included in the Proceedings are refereed. The conferences cover new topics and also include renewed analysis of earlier studies. The comprehensive list that follows designates the topic, title, place, and date of each conference, its published Proceedings, and editor(s). The differences in dates below represent a delay in the production of the proceedings compared to the actual time when the conference was held.

AIHA CONFERENCES AND PROCEEDINGS

1. *Ethnicity in American Political Life: The Italian American Experience*. Salvatore J. LaGumina, ed. 1968. 36 pp. Casa Italiana, Columbia University, New York. October 26, 1968.
2. *The Italian American Novel*. John M. Cammett, ed. 1969. 35 pp. Casa Italiana, Columbia University, New York. October 26, 1969.
3. *An Inquiry Into Organized Crime*. Luciano J. Iorizzo, ed. 1970. 87 pp. Casa Italiana, Columbia University, New York. October 24, 1970.
4. *Power and Class: The Italian American Experience Today*. Francis X. Femminella, ed. 1973. 58 pp. Kosciuszko Foundation, New York. October 23, 1971.
5. *Italian American Radicalism: Old World and New World Developments*. Rudolph J. Vecoli, ed. 1972. 80 pp. The North End of Boston. November 11, 1972.

6. *The Religious Experience of Italian Americans*. Silvano M. Tomasi, ed. 1975. 133 pp. Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. November 17, 1973.
7. *The Interaction of Italians and Jews in America*. Jean A. Scarpaci, ed. 1975. 117 pp. Towson State College, Baltimore, Maryland. November 14-15, 1974.
8. *The Urban Experience of Italian-Americans*. Pat Gallo, ed. 1977. 177 pp. Queens College, Flushing, New York. November 14-15, 1975.
9. *The United States and Italy: The First Two Hundred Years*. Humbert S. Nelli, ed. 1977. 242 pp. Georgetown University, Washington, DC. October 8-10, 1976.
10. *The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America*. Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney, and Lydio F. Tomasi, eds. 1978. 386 pp. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. October 28-29, 1977.
11. *Pane e Lavoro: The Italian American Working Class*. George E. Pozzetta, ed. 1980. 176 pp. John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio. October 27-28, 1978.
12. *Italian Americans in the Professions*. Remigio U. Pane, ed. 1983. 290 pp. Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. October 26-27, 1978.
13. *The Family and Community Life of Italian Americans*. Richard N. Juliani, ed. 1983. 191 pp. Chicago, Illinois. October 24-25, 1980.
14. *Italian Americans in Rural and Small Town America*. Rudolph J. Vecoli, ed. 1987. 204 pp. Landmark Center, St. Paul, Minnesota. October 30-31, 1981.
15. *The Italian Americans Through the Generations*. Rocco Caporale, ed. 1986. 263 pp. St. John's University, Jamaica, New York. October 29-31, 1982.
16. *The Interaction of Italians and Irish in the United States*. Francis X. Femminella, ed. 1985. 308 pp. Albany, New York. November 11-13, 1983.
17. *Support and Struggle: Italians and Italian Americans in a Comparative Perspective*. Joseph L. Tropea, James E. Miller, and Cheryl Beatti-Repetti, eds. 1986. 312 pp. Washington, DC. November 9-11, 1984.
18. *The Melting Pot and Beyond: Italian Americans in the Year 2000*. William Egelman and Jerry Krase, eds. 1987. 318 pp. Providence, Rhode Island. November 7-9, 1985.
19. *Italian Americans: The Search for a Usable Past*. Richard N. Juliani and Philip V. Cannistraro, eds. 1989. 304 pp. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. November 14-15, 1986.

20. *Italian Ethnics: Their Languages, Literature and Lives*. Dominic Candeloro, Fred L. Gardaphe, and Paolo A. Giordano, eds. 1990. 478 pp. Chicago, Illinois. November 11-13, 1987.
21. *Italians Americans in Transition*. Joseph V. Scelsa, Salvatore J. LaGumina, and Lydio F. Tomasi, eds. 1990. 283 pp. John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of CUNY. New York. October 13-15, 1988.
22. *Italian Americans Celebrate Life: The Arts and Popular Culture*. Paola A. Sensi Isolani and Anthony Julian Tamburri, eds. 1990. 180 pp. Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco, California. November 9-11, 1989.
23. *To See the Past More Clearly: The Enrichment of the Italian Heritage, 1890-1990*. Herral E. Landry, ed. 1994. 285 pp. New Orleans, Louisiana. November 1-3, 1990.
24. *Italian Americans and Their Public and Private Life*. Frank J. Cavaioli, Angela Danzi, and Salvatore J. LaGumina, eds. 1993. 240 pp. New Haven, Connecticut. November 14-16, 1991.
25. *New Explorations in Italian American Studies*. Richard N. Juliani and Sandra P. Juliani, eds. 1994. 256 pp. Washington, DC. November 12-14, 1992.
26. *Italian Americans in a Multicultural Society*. Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena, eds. 1994. 302 pp. St. John's University, Jamaica, New York. November 11-13, 1993.
27. *Through the Looking Glass: Images of Italians and Italian Americans in the Media*. Mary Jo Bona and Anthony Julian Tamburri, eds. 290 pp. Chicago, Illinois. November 10-12, 1994.
28. *Industry, Technology, Labor and the Italian American Communities*. Mario Aste, Jerome Krase, Louise Napolitano-Carman, and Janet E. Worrall, eds. 1997. 291 pp. University of Massachusetts at Lowell. November 9-11, 1995.
29. *A Tavola! Food, Tradition, and Community Among Italian Americans*. Edvige Giunta and Samuel J. Patti, eds. 137 pp. Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. November 14-15, 1996.
30. *Shades of Black and White: Conflict and Collaboration Between Two Communities*. Daniel Ashyk, Fred L. Gardaphe, and Anthony Julian Tamburri, eds. 378 pp. Cleveland, Ohio. November 13-15, 1997.
31. *Italian American Politics: Local, Global/Cultural, Personal*. Philip V. Cannistraro, Jerome Krase, and Joseph V. Scelsa, eds. Pending. Hunter College CUNY. New York City. November 12-14, 1998.

32. *Italian Americans: A Retrospective on the Twentieth Century*. Paola Sensi-Isolani and Julian Tamburri, eds. Pending. Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco, California. November 11-13, 1999.

33. *Greece and Italy: Ancient Roots and New Beginnings*. Mario Aste, ed. Pending. University of Massachusetts at Lowell. November 9-11, 2000.

Some of the early volumes of the Proceedings have been out of print for a number of years. The remainder are stored in the AIHA office at the Center for Migration Studies, Staten Island, New York, and will be transferred to Chicago. While he was president, Jerry Krase decided, with the support of the Executive Council, to distribute sets of the Proceedings to various libraries, universities, and archives throughout the country. The recipient paid the shipping costs. This policy has met with success, as students and scholars now have the opportunity to access the resource material and published scholarship contained in the Proceedings.

The conference sites mirror the broad geographical outreach of the Association in its attempt to widen its exposure and to increase interest in its work among professional and lay people. In the early years, the northeast registered the most sites where annual conferences were conducted because that was where initial support emerged and where the largest Italian American population resided. But once the Association became more broad based, there has been an attempt to include all areas of the nation to hold the national conferences to generate research at all levels to achieve a true understanding of the Italian American experience. The conferences held at San Francisco in 1989 and 1999 and New Orleans in 1990 signified a breakthrough geographically, as well as gaining community support in those cities that had substantial Italian populations. Ten conferences have been held in New York State (nine in New York City and one in Albany). Three met in Chicago, two in Cleveland, one in Minnesota, and one in Pittsburgh. There were three held in Washington, D.C.; one each in nearby Baltimore and Philadelphia, and two in New Jersey. Boston, Providence, New Haven, and Lowell (2) provided sites for the New England region. The conference held in Toronto has been the only one that met outside the United States. It must be stressed that the purpose of meeting in different cities is to generate research on the Italian American experience in that area, to add to the scholarship on the Italian American experience, and to gain wider visibility and membership in the Association. It has also led to greater cooperation among Italian American organizations.

An examination of the Proceedings of the first conference held at the Casa Italiana, Columbia University, October 26, 1968, revealed the extent of the early leadership's work and priorities in the Association's first publication: *Ethnicity in American Political Life, The Italian American Experience*, edited by Salvatore J. LaGumina. It is important to identify and credit the first leaders. The officers were: Rudolph J. Vecoli (University of Minnesota), president; Salvatore J. LaGumina (Nassau Community College), vice president; Rev. Silvano M. Tomasi (Editor of the *International Migration Review*), secretary-treasurer; Albert A. Nofi, secretary; Leonard Covello (former Principal of Benjamin Franklin High School and Lecturer at New York University), curator; and

Ernest Paolino (Rutgers University), editor of the NEWSLETTER. The legal advisor was Vincent Vellella. The Executive Council consisted of the following: Rev. Paul J. Ascioffa (Editor of *Fra Noi*); Rev. Henry Browne (Cathedral College); John Cammett (John Jay College); Frank Cordasco (Montclair State College); John Duff (Seton Hall University); John Faggi (Casa Italiana, Columbia University); Ernest Falbo (SUNY College at Buffalo); Luciano J. Iorizzo (SUNY College at Oswego); Arthur Mann (University of Chicago); Isidore S. Meyer (American Jewish Historical Quarterly); Salvatore Mondello (Rochester Institute of Technology); Leonard Moss (Wayne State University); Peter M. Riccio (Casa Italiana, Columbia University); Andrew Rolle (Occidental College); and Louis Silveri (Assumption College).

Many of the above scholars participated in the program of this one-day (1968) conference. About seventy-five persons attended. There was one morning session and one afternoon session. The morning session, entitled "The Political Practitioner and Ethnicity," featured presentations by Joseph F. Carlino, former Speaker of the Assembly of New York from Long Island, and Alfred Santangelo, former New York City congressman. John Cammett chaired this panel. The commentators on the Carlino and Santangelo presentations were John Duff and Luciano J. Iorizzo.

The afternoon session, chaired by Silvano F. Tomasi, was entitled, "The Academician and Case Studies of Italian American Politicians." The lead speaker was Salvatore J. LaGumina who analyzed developments in ethnic political leadership and then presented studies of those Italian American politicians who represented New York in congress up to the period of 1950. Arthur Mann commented on this presentation by focusing on the persistence of ethnicity in politics. President Vecoli cited this conference as a catalyst for "creative work" in the AIHA. The challenge, indeed, was great, and he called for an increased membership and participation in the work. He said these Proceedings were "the first fruits of the labors of the AIHA in the vineyard of Italian-American history." More would follow.

There were no women participants in the first conference, nor were there any women officers and Executive Council members. But this would change. The feminist movement of the 1960s linked gender studies with the rise of the new ethnicity and Italian American Studies. A new group of scholars probed the past from the "bottom up" in the context of social history, interdisciplinary studies, and literature. It was at this time that women began to play leadership roles in the Association. In those early years, Betty Boyd Caroli and Jean Scarpaci each served as vice president and each would have assumed the presidency if it had not been for other professional commitments that compelled them to resign. Later, in 1997, Elizabeth Messina was elected vice president and served for two terms. She assumed an influential role in the formation of the Strategic Planning Committee that helped to re-direct the Association to new beginnings. Their scholarship, and that of other women, has added to the canon of Italian American Studies. Accordingly, the conference on the Italian immigrant woman, held in Toronto, 1977, marked a dramatic advance in ethnic studies. The publication of its Proceedings became an important part of the scholarship in the field, and has become one of the most referenced of all the AIHA Proceedings. During the 1980s a women's caucus was formed

and met at several conference sites, including the 2000 Lowell conference. The resulting women's networking increased their membership and the assumption of greater leadership roles.

AIHA President Luciano J. Iorizzo (1975-1978) frequently pointed out that the Association was dedicated to discovering, preserving, and disseminating information on Italian Americans in North America, and that the conference in Canada enhanced the level of Italian American scholarship. The conference overcame any doubt that there was not enough serious scholarship being done on Italian American women. Iorizzo stated emphatically that the Toronto conference in 1977 was a beginning. "The story of Italian women in North America is worth pursuing," he wrote in the Preface to that conference's Proceedings, at a time when it was not fashionable to do so.

An examination of the contents of the major topics that were published in the Proceedings of the Toronto conference, *The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America*, edited by Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney, and Lydio F. Tomasi, revealed the state of scholarly endeavors. The volume consisted of 386 pages, organized into five parts:

- I. Women in the Old World
- II. Early Years in North America
- III. Italian American Women: Generations, Roles, and Attitudes
- IV. Women, Kinship, and Networks of Ethnicity
- V. Images of Italian Women in the Arts

Women dominated this conference by virtue of the panels presented and the articles published in the Proceedings. More than twice as many women than men had their research published, 17 to 8. The poems contained at the end of the volume were composed by one woman and two men, each setting down sentiments on the migration of Italians from one continent to another.

Many other women have served in leadership positions as officers and Executive Council members and have contributed to annual conferences in significant ways. In 1990, women comprised one-third of AIHA membership and more than fifty women had contributed to the Proceedings.²⁸ At least nine women had chaired conferences and edited the Proceedings. By 1994, of the 25 Executive Council members, nine were women; and of the five officers, two were women. In 2000, two women were among the five officers of the Association.

By the time of the millennium, the Italian American Women's Collective was active in promoting creative, intellectual, cultural, and political projects. Formed in 1998, this group, whose members were an essential part of the AIHA, was founded by Edvige Giunta and Elizabeth G. Messina to support and legitimize intellectual and creative endeavors by and about Italian American women. The Women's Collective conducted a series of lectures at Fordham University in the spring of 1999 and participated in a series of monthly panels from March through June, 1999, at the New York City office of COM.IT.ES (Committee for Italians Living Abroad), in cooperation with the AIHA,

FIERI, and the Italian American Writers Association. Their work continued throughout 2000.

Further, from 1968 to 1996, an examination of the conferences and published Proceedings revealed that eleven women served as chairpersons or co-chairpersons and 168 contributed articles to these conferences. The chairperson of the successful 1999 conference was the same woman, Paola Sensi-Isolani, who chaired the 1989 conference which was also held in San Francisco.

In the first six years of the AIHA, each conference lasted one day and was held in the New York City area. The first two-day conference was held at Towson State University, in Baltimore, Maryland, 1974. The program chairperson was Jean Scarpaci who edited the conference's 117-page Proceedings titled: *The Interaction of Italian and Jews in America*. This conference was co-sponsored with the American Jewish Historical Society. As was typical in other similar situations, financial support came from Italian American organizations: the Dr. Frank C. Marino Foundation, Associated Italian American Charities of Maryland, Baltimore Women's Division of the American Committee on Italian Migration, and the Apian Society.

At the 25th AIHA annual conference held in Washington, DC, in 1992, Donna Gabaccia identified an important trend in Italian American women's studies. In compiling a bibliography on immigrant women studies, she discovered that so much already had been written. She concluded: "It is not uncharted territory." Approximately 100 books and articles on Italian American women's lives had been published up to 1988, but little was known about them.²⁹ As related research work continued, it will take time before the latest findings would find its way into publication and be available for reference and analysis.

The 30th Annual Conference of the AIHA held in Cleveland, November 13-15, 1997, offered more evidence of the widening scope of the Association's intellectual reach with its titled theme, *Shades of Black and White: Conflict and Collaboration between Two Communities*. This conference was the third with another ethnic group; the other two were with the Irish and Jews. More reasoned research was presented that challenged the stereotypical image of conflict between Italian Americans and African Americans that has often been conveyed by the popular media. Also, the fallacy of race was challenged. The intelligentsia that had developed by these two ethnic groups examined relations between Italian Americans and African Americans in an attempt to convey a greater understanding of inter-ethnic relations in a society conscious of its diversity.

There were nearly 200 participants at this Cleveland conference. The weather was cold and snowy. The presentations ranged from "Geno Baroni: Italian-American Civil Rights Priest," to "African-American and Italian-American Relations in the Light of the Harlem Riots of 1935," to "Race, Crime, and Social Mobility: Black and Italian Undesirables in Modern America," to "Is Stereotyping Spike Lee's Way to Do the Right Thing, or Just a Spiked Case of Jungle Fever?" The keynote speaker at the annual banquet was The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones, Circuit Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit,

an African American who spoke about his growing up with Italian Americans and the cooperation he received from them in the struggle for civil rights.

The last conference of the twentieth century, the 32nd, met in San Francisco at the Marriott Hotel at Wharf, November 11-13, 1999. The theme was "Italian Americans: A Retrospective on the Twentieth Century." The program was chaired by Paola Sensi-Isolani. Over 200 attended. A special reception was held at the Museo Italo Americano where an exhibit was held honoring the Ghirardelli Family, 1849-1999. This brand-name Italian American family founded and ran a successful chocolate business for over a century and spawned artists, community leaders, bon vivants, and even a few eccentrics. The keynote speaker at the plenary session was Emeritus Professor Andrew Rolle of Occidental College. He spoke on "The Immigrant Experience: Reflections of a Lifetime." Professor's Rolle's classic study of the Italian in the west, *The Immigrant Upraised* (1967), was republished with a new title, *Westward the Immigrant: Italian Adventurers and Colonists in an Expanding America* (1999). He was a member of the first AIHA Executive Council.

Some of the panel topics conducted at the 32nd conference were: Italians in the Gold Country; Italian Women and Men Writers of the West; Sicilians Vision; Teaching Italian American Studies; Building the West; Italian American Fishing in the West; Empirical Studies of Italian Americans; The American Italian Historical Association: Origins, Achievements, and Retrospective; Italian Americans in Popular Culture; Italian Americans in the Second World War; Italian Americans in Jazz and Popular Music; Italian Americans in Two World Wars; and The Ideological Press.

The AIHA has granted various awards over the years for the best essay in Italian American studies. The Leonard Covello Award was a cash prize for the best article-length manuscript on the Italian American experience. It could include synthesis, original research, or new interpretation. There was also the Vincent Visceglia Award, named after the philanthropist and founder of Summit Associates. This award was given to the author of the best paper presented at the annual conference. It has been discontinued since the late 1980s. Because of the low interest in this competition in 1992 no award was granted. However, under the astute leadership of Luciano J. Iorizzo, the AIHA Memorial/Scholarship Fund has supplanted these awards. This Fund has grown to the point where two \$500 awards is given to graduate students in any discipline whose work focuses on the Italian American experience. Iorizzo reported on November 3, 2000, that the total assets in the Fund had grown to \$21,381.72. Most of the money has come from small donations in the name of a deceased friend or relative, plus accrued interest.

In attempting to bring young collegiate students into the Association, a Graduate Student Committee was formed in 1998 by President Fred Gardaphe at the urging of Michele Fazio of the University of Massachusetts at Boston. The AIHA exposure to graduate students had been limited and the Committee under Fazio's direction sought to promote a community of graduate students within the Association to benefit their emerging academic interests, as well as to engage themselves in the field of Italian American

Studies. It would allow students to meet with senior scholars, serve on committees, and do networking.

The Association has been active in conducting special programs in education and culture. It has sponsored or co-sponsored meetings, film and book symposia, speakers bureau, and in-service courses. After holding the first joint conference of the AIHA and the American Jewish Historical Society at Towson State College, Maryland, 1974, a second one was held at Brandeis University, March 27-28, 1977. An in-service course, "Italian Americans in Contemporary Society," under the leadership of member Nicholas Spilotro, was offered at the Italian Cultural Institute and approved by the New York City Board of Education in the fall of 1971.

The Association over the years also has coordinated some of its activities with the American Association of the Teachers of Italian, Sons of Italy, American Institute of Italian Studies, John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of the City University of New York, National Italian American Foundation, UNICO, Kosciuszko Foundation, Center for Migration, Canadian Italian Historical Association, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Ancient Order of Hibernians, and American Jewish Historical Society. AIHA Members have been invited to speak in foreign countries and at Harvard and Yale and other universities, and such professional groups as the American Historical Association, American Sociological Association, American Literature Association, and the Modern Language Association.

The AIHA has cooperated in the continuing publication of *Italian Americana*, a cultural and historical review founded in 1974 by Ernest S. Falbo and Richard Gambino, now edited by AIHA member Carol Bonomo Albright with the assistance of associate editor Bruno A. Arcudi. Many of its members contribute to this publication and to *VIA: Voices in Italian Americana*, a semiannual literary and cultural review edited by AIHA members Anthony J. Tamburri, Paola A. Tamburri, and Fred Gardaphe.

The AIHA members have sought the cooperation of Italian scholars in the exchange of ideas and research projects. In May, 1969, a symposium on the "Emigration and Experiences of Italians in the United States" was held at the Institute of American Studies of the Facolta` di Magistero of Florence University that exemplified the cooperation of scholars of both nations. AIHA members who presented their research were Rudolph J. Vecoli, Salvatore J. LaGumina, Silvano M. Tomasi, Leonard Moss, and Paul Asciola. The 1976 conference, "The United States: The First Two Hundred Years," held in Washington, DC, during the Bicentennial year, brought eight scholars from Italy to present their research on the program. There have been Italian scholars who have shared their scholarship at this and other AIHA conferences, among them being Giorgio Spini and Anna Maria Martellone, Universita` degli studi di Firenze; Ennio Di Nolfo and Elena Aga-Rossi, Universita` degli studi di Padova; Alberto Aquarone and Francesco P. Cerase, Universita` degli studi di Roma; Luigi Di Comite and Michele Di Candia, University of Bari; Patrizia Audenino, University of Turin, to name a few. Franco Mulas of the University of Sassari in Sardinia, Adele Maiello of the University of Genova, and Carol Bradley of the Centro Linguistico d'Ateneo of the University of Florence have enriched

many AIHA conferences with their fresh perspectives, as has Stefano Luconi of the University of Florence. Other cooperative ventures have included the Molise program, the work of Pietro Russo of the University of Florence, and Gianfausto Rosoli of Centro Studi Emigrazione in Rome. Another AIHA member and internationally famous writer, Giose Rimaneli, has been an important link between the AIHA and Italy.

An example of the continuing expansion of research endeavors was the establishment of a Statistical Research Committee to promote demographic studies on Italian Americans under the leadership of Vincenzo Milione, Assistant Director of Research and Education of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of CUNY, and Nancy K. Torrieri of the United States Bureau of the Census. The Executive Council created this committee in November, 1993, during the annual conference at St. John's University. This action was a recognition that the field of Italian American Studies was relying increasingly on quantitative techniques to address such issues as social and economic demographic profiles, educational studies, geographic studies, occupational studies, and language studies of this ethnic group. The advance of computer technology and the availability of recent U.S. Census reports have provided a major research opportunity to apply these tools to gather more reliable scientific data and to subject the data to further analysis. The Statistical Research Committee shares its findings with the AIHA.³⁰

The early personal experience of Fred Gardaphe, president of the AIHA from 1997-2000, illustrates what many others have suffered in their initial attempt to study Italian American history and culture. He has stated that his first contact with the AIHA motivated an interest in Italian American Studies. As an avid reader he tells of his reading Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*, the first book with which he identified. It influenced him to write a senior thesis on the Mafia at his Irish Catholic prep school. Though the thesis was well written, he received a "C" grade. His graders informed him that since he was Italian he lacked objectivity and depended too much on Italian source material! Nevertheless, he sought out other books by and about Italian Americans. He ventured into fiction writing, but this too led to rejection by editors, one reason, they told him, Italians did not buy and/or read books. The problem was that there seemed to be no literature beyond the Mafia. Though his master's thesis was on Walt Whitman, and as he continued his graduate studies, he learned that there were courses on African American, Jewish American, and Native American literature, but none on Italian American literature. The result of Gardaphe's experience was "nearly twenty years of reading, thinking, interviewing, and writing about Italian American literature" that resulted in his writing a comprehensive narrative of that literature: *Italian Signs, American Streets* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996). Because of his work, including the work of a rising Italian American intelligentsia, and along with such noted journals as *Italian Americana* and *VIA*, Italian Americans can now pursue study in ethnic history and culture with greater facility. Though slow to change, Academia has learned that Italian American Studies deserved its rightful place with other ethnic specific groups. 31

The work of the AIHA, then, has had a far reaching and profound influence in the affirmation of ethnic pluralism in American society. One of the most distinctive features of contemporary society has been the escalating sensitivity to ethnic diversity during the

last half of the twentieth century, and an awareness and appreciation of the contributions of the nation's many ethnic groups. And it appears that this trend will not abate in the new millennium. One result has been the development of curriculum materials in the educational system. The "unmeltable ethnics" who gained power after World War II exercised that power by demanding recognition for their contributions to American civilization. The results were revolutionary as educators accepted these changes despite charges of "tribalism," "balkanization," and "politicization" of the schools. In some cases these charges had legitimacy when political agendas took precedence over more scholarly endeavors. Not only were new elements added to the educational curriculum, at a time when government assumed a public policy of integration, separate courses such as Black Studies, Native American Studies, Asian American Studies were adopted, which were followed by various other ethnic studies courses, including The Italian American Experience. In addition, gender studies courses were developed and implemented.

With the rise of an Italian American intelligentsia in ethnic studies, a concerted effort was made to avoid the filiopietism of the past. These scholars wished to probe the past to uncover and record their historical/cultural heritage to achieve a greater understanding of Italian American contributions in a multi-ethnic nation. They knew that a true and objective chronicle based on serious research would offset the negative stereotypes cast upon them. They also realized that an understanding of the past would strengthen their own personal makeup and lead to greater tolerance of other ethnic groups. Understanding one's ethnic heritage tends to lead to greater empathy to others. Educator Leonard Covello, especially as Principal of Benjamin Franklin High School in New York City's East Harlem, fully understood the impact that the lack of information of the Italian past in the curriculum had on the Italian American school child. Towards the end of his life he said: "Through my whole elementary school career, I do not recall one mention of Italy or the Italian language or what famous Italians had done in the world, with the possible exception of Columbus, who was pretty popular in America."

Thus, Italian Americans articulated this need. Having gained power and influence in the second half of the twentieth century, they set out to do their part in developing curriculum guides for the schools. In 1979, the Italian American Studies Committee, with the cooperation of the United Federation of Teachers, AFL/CIO, published a special educational work, *Study Guide on Italian Americans*. Project Director Nicholas Spilotro and Editor Mary Spilotro led a group of Italian American educators in producing the 374-page volume that was distributed throughout the New York City and New York State schools. The guide included sections on "The New Pluralism," "Who Are the Italian Americans," "The Coming of the Italians to the New World," "Early Encounters with America," and "From Italian to Italian American." These topics, and more, were joined by Lesson Guides and Activities. Relevant Readings and Documents, Illustrations, and Bibliography completed this useful curriculum guide that served to enrich young students in the overall understanding of Italian American history and culture.

A further validation in the advance of Italian American Studies was the 1995 New York State publication of the comprehensive 544-page Study Guide entitled, *Italian Americans: Looking Back-Moving Forward*. It contained such useful materials as "Unit

Outlines," "Historical Overview," "Background Readings," "Archival Materials," and "Resources." What made these educational materials even more valuable was the fact that many of them were not easily accessible to the average student. It also improved on the earlier guide because it was interdisciplinary in scope "designed to integrate Italian American heritage and culture into educational programs for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12." The unit entitled "Historical Overview" was adopted and revised from the "Study Guide" published by the United Federation of Teachers in 1979. Multi-media references helped to broaden its pedagogical effectiveness.

As in the earlier guide, members of the AIHA played a central role in its creation and production. Much of the content, which emanated from research in the intervening years by a maturing Italian American intelligentsia, now emerged in a format designed for specific educational goals and a wider audience. This new guide was distributed to Superintendents, Principals, Chairpersons of Departments of Foreign Languages, Social Studies, and Bilingual Education, and Teachers of Public and Non-Public Schools.

In the critically-acclaimed history of the Italians in America, *La Storia, Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience* (New York: Harper, 1992), authors Jerre Mangione and Ben Morreale in their "Acknowledgment" section admitted that "at the outset we were fortunate to have a mine of scholarly information already developed by the researching members of the American Italian Historical Association." Mangione and Morreale cited at least forty AIHA members for their assistance in producing a book that deserves to be classified as the most definitive account, up to this time of the millennium, of Italian American history and culture. It serves as a ready reference and as a basic textbook in courses on the Italian American experience. Particularly helpful in gathering accurate and recent data for their volume was the series of Proceedings that included articles that were presented at the annual conferences. As prominent writers, both Mangione and Morreale had already emphasized their ethnic roots in their novels and memoirs. Mangione was an active participant at AIHA conferences, and he was honored at its Fifteenth Annual Conference held at St. John's University, October 29, 1982.

The capstone of all the work of the last half of the twentieth century on the history and culture of the Italians in the United States was the publication of *The Italian American Experience: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 2000) edited by four long-time active members of the AIHA: Salvatore J. LaGumina, Frank J. Cavaioli, Salvatore Primeggia, and Joseph Varacalli, the first two named being former presidents. Here was the first authoritative account summarized in over 400 entries by 166 scholars in Italian American Studies, nearly all of whom have involved themselves in the work of the AIHA. Over six years in the making, this volume of 735 pages contains more than 100 original photographs, extensive bibliography, and useful index. Looking into the future, it will be the basic reference work for those seeking historical and cultural information about Italian Americans from the colonial period to the present on such topics as the arts, early explorers, religion, family, work, unions, radicalism, settlement patterns, women studies and the changing role of women, education, population data, organizational life, archival depositories and research centers, poetry, literature, popular culture, politics, wartime military and home front activities, discrimination, the mafia mystique, science and

technology, inventors, social mobility, assimilation, ties with Italy, immigration policy, entrepreneurship, sports, and biographical entries. Such a thorough and monumental work could not have been accomplished before 1968. The American Italian Historical Association has served as the catalyst and vehicle in its conception, creation, and production. It will take its place alongside other encyclopedias in libraries and research centers throughout the nation, Italy, and other parts of the world.

A persistent issue that arose in the 1990s was that of a name change for the Association, an issue discussed extensively at Executive Council meetings, general meetings of the membership, and in the NEWSLETTER. Pointing to that issue, Donna R. Gabaccia, Charles H. Stone Professor of American History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, noted in late 1992 a "fundamental transformation" had taken place since her involvement in 1977 in the Association: there were increased initiatives in cultural studies, literary criticism, feminism, post-modern theories, and gender studies. From her observations she underscored what the Conforti survey had revealed in its conclusions that younger scholars were emerging as important contributors in the work of the Association. As many of the original members continued their dedicated work in adhering to the association's goals, and as the AIHA had become more interdisciplinary and had taken in a greater number of younger scholars, a serious debate over a name change ensued. 32

The debate continued for several years. At the Executive Council meeting of May 16, 1997 the leaders discussed the issue of the name change and believed it was time to seek a resolution. In support of a name change, Joseph Mitrano had suggested in a letter such names as Association for the Study of Italian Americans, National Italian American Studies Association, Organization of Italian American Studies. Carol Bonomo Albright, editor of *Italian Americana*, offered American Italian Historical and Humanities Association because it reflected what she considered to be the true interdisciplinary nature of the organization. Former AIHA president Frank J. Cavaoli had written a brief essay in the April 1997 issue of the NEWSLETTER accepting the evolving changes over the years, but insisted the AIHA had a long series of successful conferences, published the annual Proceedings, and that the work of the Association has been "systematic, scientific, and objective; no other Italian American organization could match its achievements. Indeed, a tradition had been established whereby the AIHA was widely respected as a legitimate scholarly organization." He suggested the present name be retained with a subheading added: "An interdisciplinary association devoted to the objective study of the Italian experience in North America."³³

In the President's Message section of the AIHA NEWSLETTER of April, 1997, Fred Gardaphe argued that the "AIHA has been a major reason why Italian American Studies has achieved greater recognition." He stated that since the Association had altered its original identity, a name change would be in order to reflect the various disciplines of current and future members. Separately, Mary Jo Bona, Philip Cannistraro, and Dawn Esposito agreed by stressing the growing diversity of the Association. In fact, many of the newer, younger members whose expertise centered on humanities studies supported a name change. They believed that a new name such as Italian American Studies suggested

the evolution of a field of study that captured the intercultural and interdisciplinary quality of the subject matter. The term "history" was seen to be reflective of only one specific field of study. Also, the words "American Italian" did not reflect the true concept and status of persons of Italian ancestry. A new name would indicate the modern and current status of an organization that was more encompassing, according to this view.

A founder of the AIHA and its second president, Salvatore J. LaGumina, opposed a name change and offered three reasons for his position. First, the Association followed other ethnic groups such as the Norwegian Historical Association and the American Jewish Historical Association in using the term "history" as an umbrella term designed to be all-encompassing, not exclusive. Since its founding, the AIHA had encouraged all persons in the various disciplines to join and serve as leaders, even those not in the academic world. Second, he said to change the name would lead to a loss of identity, cause confusion, and result in discontinuity. Third, a name change would also cause the loss of identity for the local chapters. LaGumina argued for retention of the current name, but he recommended adding a subheading acknowledging the multiplicity of disciplines.

At the May 16, 1997, Executive Council meeting a motion was made and seconded to change the name of the Association to Italian American Studies Association. It carried by a vote of 15 in favor, and 3 opposed.. At the November 13, 1997, Executive Council meeting in Cleveland further discussion took place on this issue, including the need for a constitutional change and reincorporation in New York State if the name were changed. The Council supported its previous position by voting 13 for and 2 opposed to change the name to the Italian American Studies Association. A ballot on this question, with summary arguments for and against, would go out at the same time the election ballot was sent to the membership later in the year. When the ballots were cast and counted the official results showed: 75 supported the name change; 109 opposed. Thus, the American Italian Historical Association name would be retained, underscoring the original intent of the founders and its constitution.³⁴

Conscious of the traditional goals of the AIHA and the widening field of Italian American Studies research, Vice President Elizabeth G. Messina offered a proposal to its officers and Executive Council members for the formation of a Strategic Planning Committee in 1997. She argued that the AIHA was at a new stage of growth and that strategic planning was an important approach to the development of detailed plans at all levels through brainstorming and mutual discussions. Messina suggested that strategic planning would provide an opportunity for the AIHA to clarify its fundamental mission, review its activities, and assess its need for an executive director and fund raising. At the Executive Council meeting in Cleveland, November 13, 1997, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to form a Strategic Planning Committee with Messina as its chairperson.

The Strategic Planning Committee held its first meeting in New York City on February 7, 1998, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:p.m. and was facilitated by Dr. Ronald P. Esposito, a paid consultant in the field of Executive Development, Human Resource Management, and Organizational Change, and Professor in the Graduate Department of Applied

Psychology at New York University. In attendance were President Fred Gardaphe, Vice President Elizabeth G. Messina, Treasurer Mario Aste, Secretary Dawn Esposito, and Council members John Arcudi, Robert Marchisotto, Edward Maruggi, and Anthony Tamburri. Others unable to attend in person sent in comments and recommendations to the Committee. Overview of the process was presented by the facilitator as follows: Formulation of Mission and Philosophy, Formation of Goals and Objectives, Development of Marketing and Financial Strategies, Development of an Action Plan, Schedule for Implementation, Evaluation, and Refinement. Examination of these topics were covered during the day. Further sub-committees were formed. Such was the preliminary plan that represented the first step in strategic planning. The second step involved the development by each committee of clear strategies to accomplish and implement those goals. Each committee was to meet as often as necessary in the Spring, Summer, and Fall and to report its outcomes and recommendations to the Executive Council at the annual meeting in November, 1998.³⁵

Implementation of this Plan began to take shape. The By-Laws committee, chaired by John Arcudi, developed fundamental changes that were adopted by the Executive Council and by those members voting at the business meeting at the 32nd AIHA annual conference held in San Francisco, November 11-13, 1999. The adopted changes follow:

- Article III was changed to read Duties of Officers and Executive Council Members;
- Article III, Section 3, was changed to read: The Standing Committees of the Association shall be: archives; conference; educational programs; constitution; elections; fund raising; marketing and publicity; newsletter; publications;
- add Article III, Section 4. Former president of the Association shall be included on executive council for three years (this had already been approved but was not included in copies of the By-Laws);
- add Article III, Section 5. All executive council members must attend at least one executive council meeting per year;
- add Article III, Section 6. All executive council members must serve on a minimum of one standing committee.

The increasing amount of research, documentation, and publications on Italians in the United States began to occupy an important place in the ethnic canon. Perhaps the most comprehensive analysis up to this time was the essay written by George E. Pozzetta (1942-1994), a former president of the AIHA from 1979 to 1980. This historiographical critique on Italian American history, entitled "Immigrants and Ethnic: The State of Italian-American Historiography," was published in the *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 9, Fall 1989: 67-95. He stated accurately that the "scholarly literature on immigration and ethnicity has increased dramatically in size and sophistication over the

past two decades." Pozzetta was a scholar in his own right and an outstanding teacher; he had contributed considerably to the field of Italian American Studies, and he advanced its status in academia. His carefully researched essay was documented in 130 end notes that detailed the progress made in this chronicle. A student will find it immensely useful as a guide in his/her research. Yet for some inexplicable reason there is not one mention of the work of the American Italian Historical Association. Pozzetta was a successful leader, participant, and contributor as an AIHA president and an editor of one of its Proceedings (*Pane e Lavoro: the Italian American Working Class*, 1980). The many hundreds of articles that had been published in the AIHA Proceedings and the gathering of scholars at the annual conferences offered real possibilities for analysis and reference. Yet none were identified, with the exception of several titles mentioned in endnotes, a fact that remains difficult to understand and explain. One may also wonder why the editors of the *Journal of Ethnic History*, a young emerging publication in ethnic studies, also overlooked this serious omission.

The members of the American Italian Historical Association can look back proudly on the many accomplishments in Italian American Studies. Though history has been its primary component and anchor, the Association has become more and more interdisciplinary and more sophisticated in its work, as have all of the social sciences in the modern era. The AIHA continues to reach out to all who are committed to its goals. A community of scholars has been brought together that has resulted in individual and collaborative projects. Books, articles, monographs, meetings, a whole new outpouring of research on the Italian American experience have become an integral part of the record. The work has carefully avoided filiopietrism, and has concentrated on adhering to the rigid guidelines of scholarship. The AIHA today is recognized as a legitimate scholarly organization that has achieved an enviable record. Based on the record of the past three decades, it is apparent that the AIHA will never become a mass organization--the work is too hard, there is no financial reward, and requirements too demanding.

Former president LaGumina has pointed out that the AIHA was "designed not to be an exclusive organization and partial and agreeable only to professional historians and academics." He has reminded its members that with the exception of Vecoli (an historian) three of the other earliest organizers (Covello, S. M., Tomasi, and Cordasco) were not historians. The members were expected to commit themselves to researching and studying the "totality of the Italian American experience or to support the same." Each was expected to play a meaningful role. LaGumina continued, "We were also determined that this should not be a political or anti-defamatory organization. We worked at being a democratic body open to various suggestions acting upon the collective will of the majority as reflected in the executive council and larger membership."³⁶

Indeed, the AIHA has rejected elitism and has maintained its independence. From the start it has steadfastly refused all attempts to politicize the group. It also has rejected invitations to join "umbrella" Italian American coalitions, whose main purpose is usually political. Former president Jerry Krase has stated that the "AIHA must not become an ethnic advocacy group."³⁷ At the Executive Council meeting in Cleveland, November 13, 1998, President Fred Gardaphe reported he had received a bill for \$800.00 for an

unsolicited invitation to join the Coalition of Italian American Organizations in Washington, DC. The AIHA was asked to sign a petition making certain political demands on President Clinton. Council members stated emphatically that the policy of the AIHA was not to endorse anything of a political nature. Arguments for such a policy are best summarized by Richard N. Juliani and Philip V. Cannistraro: "We are not an Italian American organization but rather a scholarly association devoted to the study of the Italian experience in North America and open to anyone who shares that interest."³⁸ That these are not empty words can be seen in the fact that many non-Italian Americans grace the membership rolls, have participated in the annual conferences, and have authored articles found in the annual Proceedings. Moreover, in viewing the AIHA activities of the late 1970s, Donna R. Gabaccia has observed that the "methodologies drawn from social sciences, from literary criticism, and from cultural studies have not divided this organization as they have others."³⁹ The issue over the proposed name change was debated openly and settled democratically as the membership closed ranks to implement the goals set forth at the time of the Association's founding. Finally, it must be remembered that the AIHA was formed as a reaction against an insular, biased filiopietism that frequently passed as ethnic history. The AIHA is not an advocacy group, is not an anti-defamation league, is not a political group, is not a literary association. There are many worthy organizations that seek to advance a legitimate Italian American agenda, just as there are intellectual organizations that deal with specific Italian American disciplines. The AIHA has attempted to maintain the high standards of objectivity and scholarship since its inception.

Remarkably, the research and publications since 1966 have been greater in quality and quantity than in all previous years combined. Founding AIHA President Rudolph J. Vecoli stated: "Over the past quarter century, the field of Italian American history has attained maturity. A library of Italian American history which in 1965 would have occupied one small shelf now includes scores of monographs and hundreds of articles."⁴⁰

The pioneering work of dedicated people like Giovanni Schiavo, Leonard Covello, and other immigrants and the children of immigrants, has been fruitful. The vision and implementation of that vision by such creative leaders as Rudolph J. Vecoli, Silvano M. Tomasi, Salvatore J. LaGumina, Lydio F. Tomasi, Luciano J. Iorizzo, Francis X. Femminella, Jean Scarpaci, Betty Boyd Caroli, Carol Bonomo Albright, Bruno A. Arcudi, and Richard N. Juliani helped to make the AIHA a success. Others who followed and those in leadership positions today should also be recognized for their contributions. The relationship between the past and the present has never been more evident. Indeed, the efforts of serious students in Italian American history and culture have led to the successful formation of the American Italian Historical Association, a milestone event. The resulting record has revealed a tradition of hard work and significant scholarship. More must be done, but much has been accomplished. Descendants of the first Italian immigrants now possess the talent, resources, education, and commitment to study their ethnic past. At the millennium, Italian American history and Italian American Studies share their successful development with the concurrent advances made in the new social-political history, immigrant-ethnic history, interdisciplinary studies, literary studies, women's history, and post-modern studies. Italian Americans' rapid social, economic, and

political mobility after World War II was essential to such changes. With their rightful place in society they are able to document and weave that long-neglected narrative into the true history of American civilization.

Association founder LaGumina who has served as vice president, president, and continuing member of the executive council, and who has witnessed the development and growth of the AIHA since 1966, summed it up best when he wrote:

In undertaking this work we would not only become knowledgeable regarding the Italian American ethnic experience, but even more important add a significant dimension of the American experience that had hitherto been dimly understood and largely ignored. To concentrate on the experiences of Italian Americans was a concept not easily understood, being readily confused and identified with studying the culture and language of Italy. While the latter estimable goal was willingly acknowledged, the history of Americans of Italian descent received lesser attention. It was precisely to fill the gap of knowledge and information about Italian Americans that animated the founders of the AIHA and that served as its *raison d'etre*. Thus, while we honored and encouraged the study of Italian culture and language, we viewed that interest not as an end in itself but as a vital background for understanding the heritage of millions of Americans of Italian descent.⁴¹

NOTES

1. Joseph Velikonja, "The Scholarship of the AIHA: Past Achievements and Future Perspectives," *Italian Ethnics and Their Languages, Literature and Lives*, eds. Dominic Candeloro, Fred L. Gardaphe, and Paolo A. Giordano (NY: American Italian Historical Association, 1990), pp. 109-124. For a summary of historiographical writings, with 130 notes, on Italian American history, see George E. Pozzetta, "Immigrants and Ethnics: The State of Italian-American Historiography," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 9 (Fall 1989): 66-95. Regrettably, this essay does not address the work of the American Italian Historical Association.
2. Remigio U. Pane, "In Memoriam, Giovanni Schiavo (1898-1983)," *Italians and Irish in America*, ed. Francis X. Femminella (NY: American Italian Historical Association, 1985), pp. 5-11.
3. Peter Sammartino, "Preface," *Seven Italians Involved in the Creation of America* (Washington, DC: National Italian American Foundation 1984), n. p.
4. Giovanni Schiavo, "Research on the Italian Americans; Accomplishments and Work to Be Done," *Italian Americans in the Professions*, ed. Remigio U. Pane (NY: American Italian Historical Association, 1983), pp. 1-7.
5. R. U. Pane, "In Memoriam, Giovanni Schiavo (1898-1983), p. 10.
6. For a useful bibliographical compilation of archives, collections, directories, periodicals, newspapers, research, and writings on Italian Americans, see Francesco

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