



WITH LIBERTY FOR ALL

ITALIAN AMERICANS & CIVIL RIGHTS

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Commission for Social Justice
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A Report from

THE SONS OF ITALY COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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INTRODUCTION

FACT vs. STEREOTYPE

One hot summer evening in August, 1989, the Italian American neighborhood of Bensonhurst in Brooklyn, New York made national headlines when Yusef Hawkins, a 16-year old African American, was attacked by an angry mob of neighborhood youths.

One of them shot and killed Hawkins, a tragedy that released a tidal wave of racial tension that nearly culminated in a race riot when an African American activist, the Rev. Al Sharpton, led a protest march through the neighborhood.

The episode cemented in the nation's mind an image of Italian Americans as racists, despite the fact that Italian American leaders of the time as well as the vast majority of Bensonhurst's residents immediately condemned the crime and applauded the lengthy prison sentences its perpetrators received.

Since then, the stereotype of the Italian American-as-bigot has become accepted by the general public, thanks in large part to the U.S. entertainment industry, which routinely portrays its fictional Mafia characters as racists.

Equally at fault are the films of the African American writer and director Spike Lee, who has produced *Do The Right Thing*, *Jungle Fever*, *Summer of Sam* and other films that feature working class Italian American characters as ignorant and narrow-minded bigots.

While this stereotype is all too familiar, largely unknown to most Americans is the very real, very long and very impressive record Italian Americans have achieved in the field of civil rights.

The dearth of published research on Italian Americans and civil rights has led to many misconceptions and misinformation about the tolerance Italian Americans offer people of different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds.

For example, contrary to popular myth, Christopher Columbus was not a racist or an African slave-trader. Not one African American is in the United States today because of Columbus nor was a single American Indian ever harmed by him.

In fact, evidence indicates that Columbus admired the people he encountered in the

Caribbean. In a letter to the Spanish monarchs in February 1493, he described the Tainos as “...well-made with fine shapes and faces...their eyes were large and very beautiful...” and found them “trustworthy and very liberal with everything they have.”

Columbus’ initial friendly relations with the native tribes of the New World are often ignored by those who write the history books as is much of the work that men and women of Italian heritage have done in civil rights.

This report, believed to be the first of its kind, aims to shed some light on this issue. *With Liberty For All: Italian Americans & Civil Rights* offers a brief overview of the work that Italian Americans have done to ensure that social justice is extended to American Indians, African Americans, immigrants, workers, women, the poor and disabled. It is hoped that future researchers will explore this long-neglected subject in greater depth.

With Liberty For All: Italian Americans & Civil Rights consists of brief profiles of the most notable Italian Americans who worked to promote civil rights. They are arranged in chronological order. A star (*) next to a name refers the reader to the appendix where a more detailed biography is found.

This report was prepared by Dona De Sanctis, Ph.D., the deputy executive director of the Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA) with the invaluable collaboration of research assistant Krissy Ellison, OSIA Director of Communications Kylie Cafiero and intern Andrea Richards.

With Liberty For All: Italian Americans & Civil Rights was first released by the Sons of Italy Commission for Social Justice, OSIA’s anti-defamation arm in March 2006.

It can be downloaded from the Order Sons of Italy in America website, www.osia.org at “Studies in Culture” under Reports.



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June 2006

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STUDY HIGHLIGHTS:

- In the 18th and 19th centuries, **Italian Catholic missionaries** established schools for Indian children, taught the adults new farming methods and animal husbandry and educated them about ways to improve their health.
- Many Indian languages are known today thanks to 19th century Italian religious missionaries who wrote them down in bi-lingual dictionaries, vocabularies and grammar books.
- The first American Indian physician was Carlos Montezuma, a young Apache who had been rescued, adopted and raised by **Carlo Gentile**, a 19th century Neapolitan photographer of the American frontier and its Indian tribes.
- The dignity, independence and traditions of American Indians are captured in the paintings and sculpture of the noted contemporary artist **Gregory Perillo**, whose works are in many museums.
- The Hollywood writer and producer **John Fusco**, has created several landmark films on American Indian issues, including *Thunderheart* (1992), *Spirit of the Cimarron* (2002) and *Hidalgo* (2004) as well as the television mini series, *Dreamkeepers* (2003).
- **Caesar Rodney**, who signed the *Declaration of Independence*, was of Italian descent and an early opponent of slavery. He freed his own slaves and tried repeatedly to prohibit importing slaves to Delaware.
- Although most of his proposals were not passed until after his death, U.S. Congressman **Vito Marcantonio** of New York helped jump-start the civil rights movement by introducing anti-segregation bills that forced Congress to confront issues of race in the 1930s and 1940s.
- As director of the Illinois Department of Labor in 1948, **Frank Annunzio** enacted regulations that outlawed asking a job applicant's race or religion and eliminated the categories "black" and "white" from job applications. Annunzio later became a U.S. congressman representing Illinois.
- In 1948, when neighbors successfully voided the sale of property **Raphael and Joseph Urciolo** had sold to African American families in Washington, D.C., the brothers

took their case to the U.S. Supreme Court. They were represented by Charles Hamilton Houston, the prominent African American civil rights attorney, who won the case that made such so-called “restrictive covenants” in housing unenforceable in the U.S.

- U.S. Senator **John Pastore** of Rhode Island and U.S. Congressman **Peter Rodino** of New Jersey helped pass some of the most controversial parts of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1964 and 1968, including outlawing segregation in public places and in schools and guaranteeing voting rights.
- U.S. Congressman **Peter Rodino** of New Jersey authored the legislation that helped make Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday a federal holiday in 1983.
- In 1956, **Dante Fascell** was the only Democratic congressman from Florida, who refused to sign the *Southern Manifesto*, which opposed racial integration in public places.
- **Father Geno Baroni**, a civil rights activist priest in the 1960s and 1970s, marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. in the South and worked to promote better race relations in more than 300 inner city neighborhoods in 25 American cities.
- As governor of New York in the early 20th century, **Alfred E. Smith** strengthened laws to improve factory conditions, increase workers’ compensation and establish pensions for women. His paternal grandfather was Alfred Emanuele Ferrara.
- **Fiorello LaGuardia**, one of New York City’s most popular mayors in the 1930s and 1940s, also served in Congress where he co-sponsored the 1932 Norris-LaGuardia Act, which protects unions and prohibits injunctions to end strikes.
- One of the founders of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in 1936 was **Angela Bambace**, a factory seamstress and union organizer, who became the ILGWU’s first woman officer when she was elected vice president in 1956.
- **Peter Panto**, a longshoreman on the Brooklyn docks, paid with his life for trying to end corruption and drive organized crime out of the dockworkers’ union, the International Longshoremen’s Association. He was murdered at age 28 in 1939 allegedly by Mendy Weiss of Murder Inc.
- Union official **Anthony Mazzocchi** played a crucial role in the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, which established the Labor Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that enforces regulations to prevent work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths.

- As governor of New York between 1983 and 1995, **Mario Cuomo** reformed the city's welfare system and launched landmark programs to help the homeless, drug addicts, people with AIDS, the mentally ill and children.
- Before becoming a U.S. Congresswoman and vice presidential candidate, **Geraldine Ferraro** was a New York City district attorney in the 1970s. She started the Special Victims Bureau, which prosecutes sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence and violent crimes against senior citizens.

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I. PRESERVING AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE

OVERVIEW:

In the United States, men and women of Italian heritage have a long and significant record as champions of American Indians and their culture. In the years following Columbus' historic voyages, Italian missionaries in North America established schools for Indian children, taught the adults new farming methods and animal husbandry, educated them about ways to improve their health and fought to ensure their equal treatment under law.

The first to arrive were 17th century religious missionaries of Italian heritage, many of them Jesuits, who explored and mapped the American frontier. They were also skilled linguists who quickly learned the various Indian languages and wrote them down for posterity in bi-lingual dictionaries, vocabularies and grammar books.

During the 19th century, an estimated 350 Italian Jesuits ministered to American Indian tribes in the vast American Northwest. Beginning in 1840, they founded missions in what is today Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington State that served the needs of the Flatheads, Blackfeet, Nez Perce and other Indian nations.

After the religious came lay Italian Americans who used their talents to champion the rights of American Indians and preserve their languages and images for future generations. These include jurists, photographers, authors and artists.

The following brief profiles are of the most notable Italian Americans who worked among the various Indian tribes of the American frontier. A star (*) next to a name refers the reader to the appendix where a more detailed biography is found.

PROFILES:



*** FATHER EUSEBIO CHINO (1645-1711)**

One of the first European missionaries to North America, the Jesuit priest, [Father Eusebio Chino](#) (aka “Kino”) worked closely with the Indians of Mexico and the American West for 30 years until his death in 1711. He gave the Sobaipuris, Pimas and other native peoples their first domestic animals and taught them how to cultivate wheat. Most significantly, he learned, collected and wrote down the vocabularies of the Guaycura, Nabe and Cochimi Indians.

***FATHER GREGORY MENGARINI (1811-1886)**

The 19th century Jesuit missionary, [Father Gregory Mengarini](#) is best known for preserving the language, heritage and history of the Flathead or “Selish” tribe in Montana. He wrote a grammar book and an English/Selish dictionary of nearly 500 pages with more than 5,700 entries. He also published articles about the Flatheads’ history and culture in scholarly sociology and anthropology journals.

*** FATHER SAMUEL MAZZUCHELLI (1806-1864)**

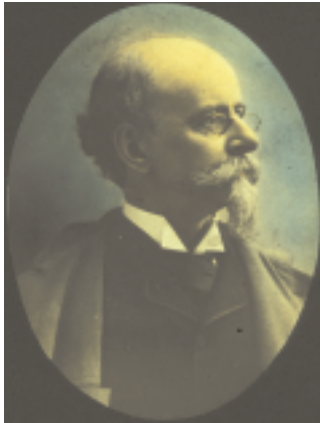
The Dominican priest [Father Samuel Mazzuchelli](#) worked as a missionary in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin from 1828 to his death in 1864. In 1833 he published an almanac in Chippewa, the first printed document in that language and published a prayer book in the language of the Winnebago Indians, whom he also represented and defended against government removal policies.

FATHER JOSEPH GIORDA (1823-1882)

The Jesuit linguist and noted scholar, [Father Joseph Giorda](#) came to the United States in 1852 to work with the Blackfeet, Nez Perce and Yakima tribes in the Pacific Northwest. He learned their languages as well as those of the Flatheads, Kootenai, Gros Ventre and Kalispel.

Building on the work of other Jesuits, including the above-mentioned Gregory Mengarini, he published a two-volume dictionary of the Kalispel language of more than 1,100 pages in 1877. Kalispel is considered by experts to be “one of the most difficult spoken languages of any of the tribes of North America,” according to the Society of Jesus Indian Language Collection.

*CARLO GENTILE (1835-1893)



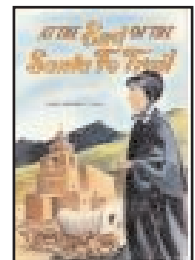
A pioneering photographer from Naples, [Carlo Gentile](#) preserved on film the native tribes of the Pacific Northwest, leaving behind a visual record of the now-vanished American frontier and its native peoples. He also adopted and sent to medical school a young Apache boy whom he named Carlos Montezuma, the first American Indian physician.

FATHER JOSEPH CATALDO (1837-1928)

Born near Palermo in Sicily, [Father Joseph Cataldo](#) came to the United States in 1866 and spent 63 years among the Indian tribes of Idaho, Washington state, Wyoming and Alaska. He spoke 20 Indian languages and played a key role in peace talks between Chief Joseph and General Howard after the Nez Perce Indian War of 1877.

* SISTER BLANDINA SEGALE (1850-1941)

A lifelong champion of the rights of American Indians, [Sister Blandina Segale](#) also fought for laws to end child labor. Tiny (5'3") but strong-willed and resourceful, Sister Blandina taught Hispanic children, took care of the sick and worked among the Indians in Colorado, California and New Mexico, where she also founded the state's first public school. Her book, *At the End of the Santa Fe Trail* documents her work with American Indians.



ROBERT C. BELLONI (1919-1999)

A justice of the U.S. District Court for Oregon (1967-1999), [Robert Belloni](#) issued landmark rulings in favor of American Indians. In *Sohappy v. Smith* (1969), Belloni ruled that they were entitled to a fair share of the salmon harvest in the Columbia River under treaties signed in 1855. Previously, Oregon had refused to honor these treaties or recognize American Indian claims.

GREGORY PERILLO (b. 1931)

One of the foremost painters of American Indians and their now-vanished life, [Gregory Perillo](#) was drawn to his subject because of the prejudice and bigotry he faced as a child,



Indian Style (detail) by Gregory Perillo

growing up in an Italian immigrant family that lived in a predominately German and Norwegian neighborhood on Staten Island, New York.

His paintings and sculptures portray a cross section of Indian life that emphasizes their dignity, independence and traditions. His works are found in the Museum of the North American Indian, the Denver Museum of Natural History and in private collections.

HON. ARTHUR J. GAJARSA (b. 1941)

The Hon. Arthur J. Gajarsa is a U.S. federal judge on one of the 13 U.S. Courts of Appeals, which rank directly below the Supreme Court. In 2004, Gajarsa wrote the majority opinion that allowed the Shoshone and Arapaho tribes in Wyoming to sue the federal government for millions of dollars in a complex “breach of trust” case. [Shoshone Indian Tribe v. US]

Before becoming a federal judge in 1997, Gajarsa, who was born in Italy, represented various American Indian tribes before the U.S. Supreme Court and served as special counsel at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

JOHN FUSCO (b. 1960)

Writer and producer John Fusco has created several landmark films on American Indian issues. These include *Thunderheart* (1992), *Spirit of the Cimarron* (2002) and *Hidalgo* (2004) as well as the television mini series, *Dreamkeepers* (2003).

Fusco is an Italian American from Waterbury, Connecticut, who, as an adult, was “adopted” by the American Indian tribe of the Oglala-Lakota in 1989 and has learned to speak Lakota.

II. SUPPORTING AFRICAN AMERICANS AND CIVIL RIGHTS

OVERVIEW:

Italian Americans have traditionally been sympathetic to those who face discrimination because they suffered similar mistreatment both in Italy and in America.

Nearly all the nation's estimated 26 million men and women of Italian heritage are descended from people who had lived for centuries in tiny villages and towns in southern Italy where they knew great hardship, poverty and social injustice at the hands of local and state authorities.

To find a better life, many left Italy for the United States during "The Great Migration" between 1880 and 1923 only to be met with considerable prejudice and discrimination because of their Catholic religion, inability to speak English, foreign customs and appearance.

They looked so different, in fact, that social scientists of the time considered them "the missing link" between the black and white races. As a result, in the North they were paid less than black and white workers and forced to live in tenement ghettos, now colorfully called "Little Italys."

In the South, they settled in or near black neighborhoods, where they eventually opened grocery stores and other businesses that were frequented by African Americans.

The children and grandchildren of these early immigrants have established an admirable record for their championship of social justice for African Americans, both as lawmakers and as activists in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

U.S. Senator John Pastore of Rhode Island, for example, helped pass some of the most controversial parts of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which included among its provisions laws that banned segregation in public places as well as discrimination in employment, voting requirements and education.

On the House side, U.S. Congressman Peter Rodino of New Jersey authored the legislation that helped make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a federal holiday in 1983. Two decades earlier, he was the floor manager of the above-mentioned 1964 Civil Rights Act, was one of the main sponsors of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and was instrumental in the passage of the fair-housing law in 1966.

Another U.S. congressman, Dante Fascell of Florida, was the only Democratic congressman from his state who refused to sign the Southern Manifesto in 1956, which opposed

racial integration in public places.

The legendary Father Geno Baroni marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. in the civil rights demonstrations of Selma and Montgomery, Alabama and other southern states and helped King coordinate his famous March on Washington in 1963.

Their contributions and those of other notable Italians and Italian Americans in U.S. civil rights history are profiled below.

PROFILES:

* **FILIPPO MAZZEI (1730-1816)**

A close friend and neighbor of Thomas Jefferson, who fought in the American Revolution, **Filippo Mazzei** is believed to have inspired Jefferson's famous phrase "All men are created equal" because among his writings, which predate the *Declaration of Independence*, is found the phrase "All men are by nature equally free and independent."



CAESAR RODNEY (1730-1783)

One of the earliest opponents of slavery in the United States was **Caesar Rodney**, who signed the *Declaration of Independence*. A descendent of the Adelmare family in Treviso, Italy, Rodney cast the tie-breaking vote for the 13 colonies' independence from the British Empire and fought in the revolution. After freeing his own slaves, Rodney tried repeatedly but unsuccessfully to have the Delaware legislature pass a law prohibiting the importation of slaves into the state.

CHARLES C. DeRUDIO (1832-1910)

Forced to flee his native Italy for fighting to reunify his country, **Charles DeRudio** (born Carlo Camillo di Rudio) came to the United States in 1864 and joined the Union Army. As a second lieutenant, he helped lead the 2nd U.S. Colored Troops Regiment and defended his troops against the Klu Klux Klan in Louisville, Kentucky.

***LEONARD COVELLO (1887-1982)**

Committed to educating minority children and promoting racial tolerance, **Leonard Covello** established Benjamin Franklin High School in 1934. It was the first public high school to serve East Harlem, a teeming New York City community of 250,000 Italian,

Puerto Rican, African and Jewish Americans.

As its first principal (and New York's first Italian American principal), Covello created Franklin's Committee for Racial Cooperation, made up of teachers, students and community agencies to deal with racial tensions through intercultural educational experiments and classroom projects. He was its principal for 22 years.

***VITO MARCANTONIO (1902-1954)**



A U.S. Congressman from East Harlem in New York City in the 1930s and 1940s [Vito Marcantonio](#) introduced proposals that forced Congress to confront race issues, helping to jump-start the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Though little of his legislation was passed during his term, after his death in 1954, many of his measures, including anti-segregation laws and laws guaranteeing fair employment practices and the right of workers to organize became the law of the land.

Vito Marcantonio (L.) with a petitioner.

***JOHN ORLANDO PASTORE (1907-2000)**

One of the earliest proponents of civil rights legislation was U.S. Senator [John Pastore](#) of Rhode Island. The first Italian American ever to serve in the U.S. Senate, he was elected in 1950 and helped pass some of the most controversial parts of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, including outlawing segregation in public places and requiring companies that wanted federal contracts to have a pro-civil rights charter.

MICHAEL DiSALLE (1908-1981)

As governor of Ohio (1959-1963), [Michael DiSalle](#) signed into law a 1959 bill creating the Fair Employment Practices Commission of Ohio (later re-named the Ohio Civil Rights Commission), charged with eliminating discrimination in employment. Subsequently, DiSalle sponsored legislation that added equal opportunity provisions to housing, college admissions and hotel policies. DiSalle also championed a badly needed revamping of the state's mental institutions.

***PETER RODINO (1909-2005)**

An early and strong supporter of civil rights legislation, especially in housing and voting rights, U.S. Congressman [Peter Rodino](#) of New Jersey authored the legislation that helped make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday in 1983.

He also supported the historic Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1964 and 1968, acting as floor manager for the 1964 bill, which outlawed unequal application of voter registration requirements, discrimination in places of public hospitality industry (hotels, motels, theatres, and restaurants), segregation in public schools and discrimination in employment.



ANTHONY J. CELEBREZZE (1910-1998)

While serving in John F. Kennedy’s presidential cabinet, [Anthony Celebrezze](#) used his position as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to support the 1964 Civil Rights Act, urging Congress and the White House to take immediate action to desegregate all public institutions, especially hospitals and healthcare institutions.

Anthony Celebrezze (L.) with Robert Kennedy

***RAPHAEL URCIOLO, Ph.D., Esq. (1911-1994) & JOSEPH URCIOLO, Esq. (1920-1995)**

In 1948, the brothers [Raphael](#) and [Joseph Urciolo](#) were part of a landmark Supreme Court case that helped end discrimination in housing when two courts voided their sale of property to African Americans in all-white neighborhoods in Washington, D.C.

The case eventually came before the U.S. Supreme Court where it was argued by the Urciolos’ lawyer, Charles Hamilton Houston, a prominent African American civil rights attorney, known as “the man who killed Jim Crow.”

On May 3, 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the decision of the lower courts, making such so-called “restrictive covenants” unenforceable in the United States.

FRANK ANNUNZIO (1915-2001)

Before his election to the U.S. Congress where he represented Illinois from 1965 to 1993, [Frank Annunzio](#) was director of the Illinois Department of Labor. Appointed in 1948 by Gov. Adlai Stevenson, Annunzio enacted regulations to prevent employers from asking prospective employees their ethnicity and/or religion and eliminated the categories “white” and “colored” from job applications.

The son of Italian immigrants, Annunzio was a steel-worker and union organizer, who attended college at night to become a high school history teacher before entering public service. As a U.S. congressman, he supported policies that protected workers' rights and social services for the poor.

FRANK SINATRA (1915-1998)

The popular entertainer [Frank Sinatra](#) became a champion of civil rights during World War II when his performance of the song, *The House I Live In*, was featured in a short film about intolerance shown around the country as part of the war effort. During his long career, he supported African American performers both financially and artistically and refused to stay or sing at hotels that discriminated against his friend, the multi-talented African American entertainer, [Sammy Davis, Jr.](#) Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr.



***DANTE FASCELL (1917-1998)**

In 1956, U.S. Congressman Dante Fascell was the only Democratic congressman from Florida who refused to sign the Southern Manifesto, which opposed racial integration in public places. In all, 96 southern Democratic legislators (19 Senators and 77 Representatives) signed the Manifesto.

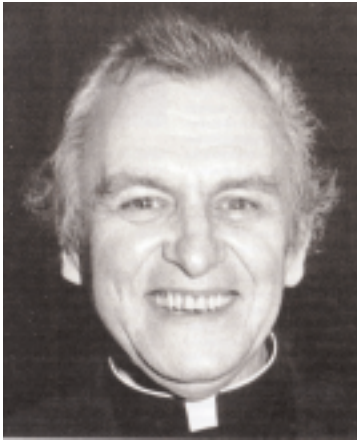
The son of Italian immigrants, Fascell also authored the civil rights portion of the 1975 Helsinki Accords that requires all participating nations to guarantee their citizens the basic human rights regardless of race, ethnicity or gender.

***ELLA T. GRASSO (1919-1981)**

The first woman ever elected governor in her own right, [Ella Grasso](#) of Connecticut was a supporter of civil rights. In 1958, as Connecticut's secretary of state, she worked on civil rights, mental hospital reform and day care issues.



After serving in the U.S. House of Representatives, she was elected governor of Connecticut in 1975. There she created a program to study and improve conditions for native Spanish speakers and appointed the civil rights activist Robert Levister as the first African American judge on Connecticut's Superior Court.



***FATHER GENO BARONI (1930-1984)**

One of the leaders of the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, [Father Geno Baroni](#) helped coordinate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 March on Washington and marched with King in the civil rights demonstrations of Selma, Montgomery and other southern cities.

In 1971, he founded the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, dedicated to rebuilding inner city neighborhoods and improving community race relations in 25 cities and 300 communities.

In 1977, he became President Jimmy Carter's assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development where he campaigned against unfair federal welfare regulations, supported legislation to help the urban poor and urged programs that would preserve and improve inner city neighborhoods. [See Appendix II for an excerpt from his last public speech.]

FATHER JAMES E. GROPPI (1930-1985)

The discrimination he experienced as child of Italian immigrant parents in Milwaukee led [Father James Groppi](#) to a lifelong fight for social justice. After his ordination in 1959, he was assigned to a nearly all-black parish and began working in civil rights. He later participated in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 March on Washington and supported King in Selma, Alabama.

For two years (1967-1969) he picketed the homes of Milwaukee judges who belonged to the Fraternal Order of the Eagles, which excluded non-whites from membership. He also worked on the campaign to eliminate discrimination in the buying and renting of homes, which resulted in the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

MARIO SAVIO (1942-1996)

Student spokesman for the Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley in 1964, Mario Savio joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) Mississippi Summer Project where he helped poor black sharecroppers register to vote.

He returned to Berkeley to help organize the non-violent student campaign, which forced the university rules to permit political speeches on campus. Later, as a professor of mathematics, physics and philosophy at San Francisco State University, he championed immigrant rights and affirmative action.

III. PROTECTING WOMEN, WORKERS AND THE POOR

OVERVIEW:

Although the U.S. Census Bureau reports that today two-thirds of the Italian Americans in the workforce hold white collar positions, most of their grandparents and great-grandparents who immigrated to the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries found only the lowest paying and most dangerous jobs as miners, construction workers and seamstresses in factory sweatshops.

Like most new arrivals, the Italians settled in cities that had industries and factories. Their working conditions were marred by dirt, disorder, overcrowding, bad lighting and poor ventilation. The labor unions and laws protecting workers from such harsh conditions were still to come. Many of these reforms would be initiated and supported by the children and grandchildren of these Italian immigrants.

For example, as governor of New York in the early 20th century, Alfred E. Smith strengthened laws to improve factory conditions, increase workers' compensation and establish pensions for women. His paternal grandfather was Alfred Emanuele Ferrara, an Italian immigrant from Genoa.

A decade later, during the Great Depression, U.S. Congressman Fiorello LaGuardia, co-sponsored the 1932 Norris-LaGuardia Act which protects unions and prohibits injunctions to end strikes. He was the son of an Italian immigrant father and a Jewish immigrant mother.

Among the many Italian Americans who helped form labor unions was Angela Bambace, one of the founders of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in 1936, who was herself a factory seamstress. She later became the ILGWU's first woman officer when she was elected vice president in 1956.

Far less fortunate in his attempt to bring reforms to his union was Peter Panto, an Italian immigrant and longshoreman on the Brooklyn docks, who paid with his life for trying to end corruption and drive organized crime out of the dockworkers' union, the International Longshoremen's Association. He was murdered at age 28 in 1939 allegedly by Mendy Weiss of Murder Inc.

Three decades later, a union official named Anthony Mazzocchi played a crucial role in the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, which established the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that enforces regulations to prevent work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths.

Their contributions and those of other notable Italians and Italian Americans in the labor movement are profiled below.

PROFILES:

CHARLES BONAPARTE (1851-1921)

History will remember [Charles Bonaparte](#) as the founder of the FBI, but he also was a key figure in civil service reform. In 1904, as chairman of the National Civil Service Reform League, he ended politicians' use of the spoils system in hiring government employees by helping states develop laws requiring government job applicants to take competitive examinations.

***VINCENZO SELLARO, M.D. (1868-1932)**



The young Sicilian physician, [Vincenzo Sellaro](#) came to America in 1897 and opened a medical practice in New York's Little Italy. Realizing the language barrier was a threat to his immigrant patients' health care, he helped found the Columbus Italian Hospital in 1902 where all the staff spoke Italian.

In 1905, he founded the Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA), to help Italian immigrants learn English, become citizens, find work and receive aid when stricken by illness or the death of the wage-earner.

ALFRED E. SMITH (1873-1944)

Both as a state lawmaker and later governor of New York, [Alfred E. Smith](#), whose paternal grandfather was Alfred Emanuele Ferrara, crusaded for the underprivileged all his life.

As governor of New York (1918-1920; 1922-1926), Smith strengthened laws to improve factory conditions, protect children and women workers, increase workers' compensation, establish women's pensions and help the poor and mentally ill. In 1928, the Democratic Party chose him as its presidential candidate. He lost the election, but became the first Catholic ever to run for the U.S. presidency.

***FIORELLO LaGUARDIA (1882-1947)**

The U.S. congressman and later popular mayor of New York, [Fiorello LaGuardia](#) was a lifelong champion of the less fortunate. In Congress (1917-1932) he opposed a 1924



immigration act that discriminated against Italians and Jews. He later co-sponsored the 1932 Norris-LaGuardia Act, which protected unions and prohibited injunctions to end strikes.

Elected mayor of New York (1934-1945), LaGuardia used federal dollars to build public housing, schools, highways, hospitals and health centers. These public works projects also gave many of the poor jobs. The son of Italian and Jewish immigrants, he spoke both Italian and Yiddish.

***ANGELA BAMBACE (1898-1975)**

A dressmaker by trade and union organizer by passion, [Angela Bambace](#) helped form the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in 1936. As a worker in a New York City garment factory at age 17, she began protesting the low pay and dangerous working conditions.

For the next two decades Bambace organized strikes and was even arrested for leading union efforts to improve women's working conditions. In 1956, she was elected ILGWU vice president—the first woman to hold a leadership position in a union whose members were predominately women.

***PETER PANTO (1911-1939)**

A longshoreman and union activist, 28-year-old [Peter Panto](#) paid with his life when he tried to end corruption and drive organized crime out of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in 1939.

After organizing a series of meetings that attacked corrupt ILA President Joseph Ryan and others, Panto was murdered allegedly by Mendy Weiss, a member of Murder Inc., the execution arm of Meyer Lansky's crime syndicate. His body was found in New Jersey, but his presumed murderer was never prosecuted.



***PANFILO JULIUS ("P.J.") CIAMPA (1920-1981)**

The union organizer [Panfilo Julius \("P.J."\) Ciampa](#), of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and other union organizers represented primarily black sanitation workers in Memphis in 1968 who were striking to protest unsafe,

unhealthy working conditions and low wages.

Ciampa joined forces with representatives from the NAACP, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other black leaders in negotiations with city officials. The 65-day strike became one of the most important events in the Civil Rights Movement because it forged a coalition between organized labor and the Civil Rights Movement.

***ANTHONY MAZZOCCHI (1926-2002)**

As a leader of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW), [Anthony Mazzocchi](#) played a crucial role in the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, which established the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal agency that seeks to prevent work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths by issuing and enforcing rules for workplace safety and health.

***MARIO CUOMO (b. 1932)**

During his three terms as governor of New York (1983-1995), [Mario Cuomo](#) reformed the state's welfare system, including a health insurance plan for children of low-income families. He also launched one of the nation's largest homeless housing assistance programs and supported an expensive drug treatment network, a nationally recognized plan to deal with AIDS, the largest program in the United States for the mentally ill, and a revolutionary ten-year commitment to New York's children called *The Decade of the Child*.

***GERALDINE FERRARO (b. 1935)**

As a New York City district attorney in the 1970s, [Geraldine Ferraro](#) started the Special Victims Bureau which prosecutes sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence and violent crimes against senior citizens.

Elected to Congress (1978-1984), Ferraro sponsored the 1984 Women's Economic Equity Act, which ended pension discrimination against women, helped displaced homemakers find work and allowed homemakers to open Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs).



ELEANOR CUTRI SMEAL (b. 1939)

A leader in the women's equality movement in the early 1970s, [Eleanor Cutri Smeal](#) pushed for equality in Social Security and pensions and supported abortion rights. In 1971

when she was elected president of the National Organization of Women (NOW), she lobbied Congress to pass landmark legislation protecting women, including the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Equal Credit Act, Civil Rights Restoration Act, Violence Against Women Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1991.

MATILDA RAFFA CUOMO (b. 1932?)

Dubbed the “most active First Lady of New York State” (1983-1995), Matilda Cuomo developed and promoted programs for children, women and families. One of her most successful was Mentoring USA, now in five states, which helps pair children needing help with their schoolwork with volunteers.

It features the Bias Related Anti-Violence Education project (BRAVE) to promote respect and tolerance for oneself and others. The program also encourages children to read books about their own ethnic heroes who have fought against racism and prejudice.

(In alphabetical order)

ANGELA BAMBACE (1898-1975)

Among the many strikes of garment workers that Angela Bambace helped organize was one of 75,000 seamstresses in New York City, most of whom were Italian American, who walked off the job in 1933—one of the biggest strikes of the Depression. Protests like this helped Bambace and other union activists form the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in 1936.

Born in Santos, Brazil, to Italian parents, Bambace came to the United States with her family in 1906, when she was eight. She went to work in a New York City garment factory at age 17. After protesting low factory wages and unsanitary, dangerous working conditions, she was arrested during the 1919 Dressmakers and Waist-makers Strike. She later helped organize the 1932 Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union strike in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Bambace went on to a career in union management. As the ILGWU regional manager for Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, she traveled incessantly to convince workers to join the Union. In 1956, she was elected ILGWU vice president—becoming the first woman to hold a leadership position in a union made up primarily of women workers. She retired in 1972.

FATHER GENO BARONI (1930-1984)

One of the leaders of the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, Father Geno Baroni helped coordinate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 March on Washington and marched with King in the civil rights demonstrations of Selma, Montgomery and other southern cities.

In 1971, he founded the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs through which he helped rebuild 300 inner city neighborhoods and improve relations between blacks and whites living together in 25 cities.

He also campaigned against unfair federal welfare regulations and for legislation to help the urban poor. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter appointed him as assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (1977-1981), the only Catholic priest ever to hold this position. There he championed programs to preserve and improve inner city neighborhoods, which he called “the building blocks of cities.”

“There's never been a Federal policy that respected neighborhoods,” he once said. “We destroyed neighborhoods in order to save them.” [See Appendix II for excerpts from his last public speech.]

FATHER EUSEBIO CHINO (1645-1711)

One of the first European missionaries to North America, the Jesuit priest, Father Eusebio Chino arrived in the New World in 1681 from Spain. An explorer, cartographer, mathematician and sociologist, he worked closely with the Indians of Mexico and the American West for the next 30 years until his death in 1711.

Although he was born in the northern Italian town of Segno, he changed the spelling of his last name to “Quino” (today frequently written as “Kino”), which is the Spanish version of his Italian surname, because he was traveling with Spanish priests.

His work helped preserve the Pima Indians’ language and culture. He also drew maps of what is now Arizona and California and helped several Indian settlements protect themselves from hostile tribes.

Father Chino introduced the Indian tribes to agriculture. He gave the Sobaipuris, Pimas and other native peoples their first domestic animals: cattle, horses and mules. He taught them how to raise the animals and how to use them in farming. He also brought wheat to the Indian settlements of Pimeria Alta and Yuma in the late 1680s and taught the tribes how to cultivate it.

Father Chino learned to speak several Indian languages. He collected and wrote down the vocabularies of Guaycura, Nabe and Cochimi. In Father Chino’s last mission he founded a settlement at Santa Maria Magdalena de Buquivaba in Sonora, Mexico where he died and is buried. The settlement has since been renamed Santa Maria Magdalena de Kino in his honor.

PANFILO JULIUS (“P.J.”) CIAMPA (1920-1981)

When two black workers in Memphis were killed as a result of faulty garbage disposal equipment in 1968, the city’s primarily black sanitation workers went on strike for safer working conditions and higher wages.

Panfilo Julius (“P.J.”) Ciampa, of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and other union organizers represented the workers in negotiations with the mayor along with representatives from the NAACP, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other black leaders.

During one of the demonstrations, the police sprayed mace on Ciampa, who also suffered cuts and bruises and was arrested. The 65-day strike became one of the most important events in the Civil Rights Movement because it forged a coalition between organized labor

and the Civil Rights Movement.

LEONARD COVELLO (1887-1982)

The career of Leonard Covello is marked by his commitment to educating minority children and to promoting tolerance and inter-racial understanding.

In 1934, he established the all-boys Benjamin Franklin High School in New York's East Harlem, a teeming community of 250,000 Italian, Puerto Rican, Black and Jewish Americans.

It was East Harlem's first high school and the model for what Covello called "the community-centered school" which had classes and recreational programs for both students and adults, including English as a foreign language, citizenship classes, evening high school and summer programs.

As the school's first principal and New York's first Italian American principal, Covello also established a Committee for Racial Cooperation, made up of teachers, students and community agencies to deal with racial tensions through intercultural educational experiments and classroom projects. In the 1940s, Covello invited Frank Sinatra to come to the school to help him improve race relations. Covello was its principal for 22 years.

When Puerto Rican immigration drastically rose in the 1940s and 1950s, Covello implemented programs for Puerto Rican students and later was a consultant for the Puerto Rican Migration Division.

Born in Basilicata, one of Italy's poorest southern regions, Covello came to America at age 9 in 1896 with his family. They settled in East Harlem where he lived nearly all his life. Covello graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Columbia University where he majored in French. He began his teaching career at De Witt Clinton High School, a prestigious public school on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

MARIO CUOMO (b. 1932)

During his three terms as the longest-serving Democratic governor of New York (1983-1995), Mario Cuomo promoted social welfare reforms that helped the poor, disabled, mentally ill and children.

His landmark reforms of New York's welfare system that included Child Health Plus, a health insurance plan for children of low-income families, have served as models for later federal programs.

As governor he also launched one of the nation's largest homeless housing assistance programs and supported an expensive drug treatment network, a nationally recognized plan to deal with AIDS, the largest program in the United States for the mentally ill, and a revolutionary ten-year commitment to New York's children called The Decade of the Child.

Cuomo's innovative approach to AIDS included specialized and integrated services to meet the differing needs of gay men, IV drug users, women and children, minorities and homeless people who have contracted HIV/AIDS.

A supporter of diversity, he appointed to New York's Court of Appeals—the highest court in the state—its first two women as well as the first Hispanic and the first African American judge to serve a full term. His memorable keynote address at the 1984 Democratic National Convention accused the Reagan administration of failing the poor and disabled.

The son of Italian immigrants who had a grocery store in Queens, New York, he returned to private law practice in New York after his tenure as governor.

DANTE FASCELL (1917-1998)

For 38 years, Dante Fascell represented Florida in Congress as a Democratic member of the House of Representatives. In 1956 he was the only Democratic congressman from Florida who refused to sign the Southern Manifesto, which opposed racial integration in public places. It was written by legislators in the U.S. Congress to counter the landmark Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which integrated all public schools.

In all, 96 Democratic legislators from the South (19 Senators and 77 Representatives) signed the Manifesto. Fascell was one of 10 southern Democrats, including Albert Gore, Sr. (TN); Estes Kefauver (TN) and Lyndon B. Johnson (TX), and four Republicans, who rejected the proposal.

The son of Italian immigrants and a World War II veteran who served in the African and Italian campaigns, Fascell dedicated his life to public service. As chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, he authored the civil rights portion of the 1975 Helsinki Accords that requires all participating nations to guarantee their citizens the basic human rights regardless of race, ethnicity or gender.

During his 19 consecutive terms in Congress, Fascell supported other progressive policies, earning him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

GERALDINE FERRARO (b. 1935)

The first and only woman vice-presidential candidate on a national party ticket, Geraldine Ferraro also served as a New York City district attorney and U.S. congresswoman. The daughter of Italian immigrants who grew up in Queens, New York, she put herself through law school at night and taught elementary school by day.

As a Queens district attorney, she started the Special Victims Bureau which prosecutes sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence and violent crimes against senior citizens.

Elected to Congress in 1978 where she served three consecutive terms, Ferraro earned a strong voting record on civil rights. She was an advocate for the elderly, fighting proposed cuts in Social Security and Medicare and spearheaded efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, guaranteeing women the same rights as men under the Constitution.

She sponsored the 1984 Women's Economic Equity Act, which ended pension discrimination against women, helped displaced homemakers find work and allowed homemakers to open Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). She also supported non-discrimination in housing and schools and promoted applying affirmative action to assist small businesses.

In 1984, Walter Mondale chose her as his vice presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket. They were defeated by Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. In 1994 President Bill Clinton appointed her United States Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission where she served until 1996. Ferraro also served as vice-chair of the U.S. Delegation at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995.

CARLO GENTILE (1835-1893)

A pioneering photographer, who preserved on film the native tribes of the Pacific Northwest, Carlo Gentile also adopted and sent to medical school a young Apache boy whom he named Carlos Montezuma, the first American Indian physician.

Gentile devoted his life to photographing the American Indian and his heritage. Thanks to him we have a visual record of the now-vanished American frontier and its native peoples.

Gentile was born in Naples but left in 1860 never to return to Italy. His sympathy for the American Indian led him to rescue a little Apache boy who had been captured and enslaved by a band of Pima Indians. He adopted and raised the child, whom he named Carlos Montezuma, and eventually sent him to study at the Chicago Medical College. The first American Indian physician, Montezuma was also an advocate for Native American rights and education.

ELLA T. GRASSO (1919-1981)

The first woman ever elected governor in her own right, Ella Grasso of Connecticut had a long career in public service, distinguished by her championship of civil rights.

Her political involvement began in 1943 when she joined the League of Women Voters. Elected to the state legislature in 1952, she later became Connecticut secretary of state, where she worked on civil rights, mental hospital reform and day care issues. She also used her office as “a people's lobby” where ordinary citizens could air grievances or seek advice regardless of color or ethnicity.

In 1970, she was elected to the U.S. Congress where she served until 1974, when she successfully ran for governor of Connecticut. During her term, she launched the state’s Urban Action Program which funded housing, mass transit, day care and programs for the elderly. She also created a Governor’s Council to examine and improve opportunities for native Spanish speakers.

In 1976, she appointed the civil rights activist Robert Levister as the first African American judge on Connecticut’s Superior Court. Her life was cut short by cancer in 1981.

FIORIELLO LaGUARDIA (1882-1947)

A longtime social activist for immigrants, the working-class and the poor, Fiorello LaGuardia led progressive legislative reforms both as a U.S. congressman and later as mayor of New York, where he transformed the city’s politics, infrastructure and social welfare programs.

In 1916, LaGuardia ended the 60-plus-year political domination of New York by the Tammany Hall Democrats when he defeated them for a seat in the U.S. Congress where he served from 1917 to 1932.

There he fought against racism when he unsuccessfully opposed a 1924 immigration act that set quotas on immigrants from the southern Mediterranean region and Eastern Europe most of whom were Italians and Jews.

In 1932, LaGuardia co-sponsored the Norris-LaGuardia Act which prevented employers from forcing workers to pledge not to join a union and prohibited courts from issuing injunctions to end strikes.

After leaving Congress, LaGuardia was elected mayor of New York (1934-1945). During the Harlem race riots of 1935 and 1943, LaGuardia went to the embattled East Harlem neighborhood he once represented in Congress to unite community leaders in response to

the riots.

He reduced political corruption and tore down slums to build public housing and over 50 playgrounds and 60 parks. LaGuardia's friendship with President Franklin D. Roosevelt brought the city millions of dollars in federal aid through New Deal Programs which built public housing for the poor, schools, highways, hospitals, and health centers.

These public works projects not only benefited the poor but also gave them jobs on many of these projects. LaGuardia's initiatives improved the overall health and sanitary conditions of the city.

He was the son of an Italian immigrant, Achille Luigi LaGuardia and a Jewish immigrant, Irene Cohen, from Austria-Hungary. LaGuardia grew up speaking Italian and Yiddish.

VITO MARCANTONIO (1902-1954)

As a U.S. Congressman from East Harlem, New York in the 1930s and 1940s, Vito Marcantonio introduced proposals that forced Congress to confront race issues, helping to jump-start the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Many of his initiatives were passed after his early death in 1954 at age 52, including anti-segregation laws and laws guaranteeing fair employment practices and the right of workers to organize.

Born and raised in the New York City working class neighborhood of East Harlem, Marcantonio was a student of Leonard Covello, who later became his mentor. (See profile above.) After serving as an aide to then-Congressman Fiorello LaGuardia, Marcantonio was himself elected to Congress where he served seven terms from 1934 to 1936, then again from 1938 to 1950 as a tireless crusader for civil rights.

FILIPPO MAZZEI (1730-1816)

Among the architects of the American Revolution was Filippo Mazzei, a Tuscan physician and a close friend and neighbor of Thomas Jefferson in Virginia, who fought in the American Revolution. Mazzei taught Jefferson Italian and introduced him to the cultivation of vineyards.

Mazzei also is believed to have inspired Jefferson's famous phrase "All men are created equal" because among his writings, which predate the Declaration of Independence, is found the phrase "All men are by nature equally free and independent."

In 1779 he served as Virginia's agent in Europe and returned to the U.S. after the colonists

had written Virginia's new constitution. From that point, Mazzei continuously referred to it as the "Bill of Rights," becoming one of the first people to use that term. In 1980, the U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp, designating Mazzei "an American patriot."

ANTHONY MAZZOCCHI (1926-2002)

As a union leader and former worker in the steel, auto and construction industries, Anthony Mazzocchi pushed all his life for occupational safety and healthcare for all Americans.

He joined the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) in the 1950s and rose steadily through the ranks to become its national vice president.

As OCAW legislative director in Washington, D.C., Mazzocchi played a crucial role in the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, which established the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal agency charged with issuing and enforcing regulations to prevent work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths.

In 1996, Mazzocchi helped found the Labor Party of America, which petitioned for national health care insurance and free college educations for all. He worked easily with many different groups from government officials and union members to women's and civil rights groups and environmental activists.

In 1982 he was named one of Ms. Magazine's "40 Male Heroes of the Decade" after publicizing the compulsory sterilization of American Cyanamid's female workers. One of his last crusades resulted in the founding of Alice Hamilton College in Washington, D.C. in 1992, a "school-without-walls" to help union members with their education.

SAMUEL MAZZUCHELLI (1806-1864)

The Dominican priest Father Samuel Mazzuchelli arrived in the United States in 1828 and for the next 36 years was a missionary in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin.

In 1833 he published an almanac in Chippewa that was the first printed document in that language and possibly the first printed document in all of Wisconsin. He also published a prayer book in the language of the Winnebago Indians, who along with the Menominee, invited him to hunt and fish with them.

Mazzuchelli eventually represented and defended various American Indian tribes against government removal policies. He died at age 58 in 1864 from an illness he contracted

while visiting a sick parishioner in Benton, Wisconsin. The Roman Catholic Church is considering him for sainthood.

GREGORY MENGARINI, S.J. (1811-1886)

The 19th century Jesuit missionary, Father Gregory Mengarini is best known for preserving the language, heritage and history of the Flathead tribe in Montana. After nine years in Montana, he went to California, where he helped found Santa Clara University, the state's oldest university.

Father Mengarini arrived in the United States in 1840. A year later, he helped found St. Mary's, the first mission among the Flathead Indians in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana.

Skilled in medicine, Father Mengarini also knew Latin, Greek, Italian, French and Spanish. His linguistic talents allowed him to become fluent in the Flathead or "Selish" language, which he preserved by writing a grammar book and an English/Selish dictionary of nearly 500 pages with more than 5,700 entries. He also later published articles about the Flatheads' history and culture in scholarly sociology and anthropology journals.

PETER PANTO (1911-1939)

A longshoreman and union activist, Peter Panto, an Italian immigrant, paid with his life for attempting to reform the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in 1939.

During the Depression, Panto and fellow dock workers organized the Brooklyn Rank and File Committee to protest the dangerous and unfair working conditions of Brooklyn longshoremen, most of whom were Italian, as well as the control of the ILA union by the execution arm of Meyer Lansky's crime syndicate, Murder, Inc.

At that time, longshoremen were forced to give hiring bosses as much as 25% of their pay or risk not working steadily. They also were expected to shop at certain local stores that charged higher prices, pay for haircuts they never received, contribute to fictitious banquets and dances organized by ILA officials and vote as union leaders directed them to.

Panto began holding meetings on the docks that were attended by a growing number of longshoremen. In July 1939, Panto spoke at a meeting that targeted the corrupt leadership of ILA President Joseph Ryan and was cheered by 1,500 workers.

After repeated warnings and bribes failed to silence him, Panto was lured to a meeting on July 14, 1939 where he was murdered allegedly by Mendy Weiss, a member of Murder, Inc. His body was later found in New Jersey, but his presumed murderer was never pros-

ecuted and his reform movement died with him. Panto was 28 years old.

Arthur Miller's screenplay, *The Hook* is about Panto's doomed attempt to overthrow the underworld's control of Brooklyn's docks.

JOHN ORLANDO PASTORE (1907-2000)

As a U.S. senator from his native Rhode Island, John Orlando Pastore helped pass the first nuclear-test ban treaty and some of the most controversial parts of the 1964 Civil Rights Act including the prohibition of segregation in public places and the requirement of a pro-civil rights charter for companies that wanted federal business.

Pastore grew up on Providence's Federal Hill, the city's working-class "Little Italy." His parents were poor immigrants raising five children. His father died when Pastore was nine. With no money for college, he worked by day and took night classes, earning a law degree from Northeastern University.

A gifted speaker, Pastore was eventually elected to the Rhode Island General Assembly where he served for four years before becoming state assistant attorney general for five years. He became the state's first Italian American governor in 1945 and the U.S. Congress's first Italian American senator in 1950.

PETER RODINO (1909-2005)

History will remember Peter Rodino for his masterful chairing of the House Judiciary Committee during the Nixon impeachment hearings in 1974, but he deserves equal recognition for his strong support of civil rights. Rodino served 40 years in the U.S. Congress where he represented New Jersey's 10th Congressional District from 1948 to 1988.

He was an early advocate of civil rights legislation, especially in housing and voting rights. He strongly supported the historic Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1964 and 1968, acting as floor manager for the 1964 bill, which outlawed unequal application of voter registration requirements, discrimination in places of public accommodation (hotels, motels, theatres, and restaurants), segregation in public schools, and discrimination in employment.

He also was one of the main sponsors of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and was instrumental in the passage of the fair-housing law in 1966.

In the 1980s, Rodino fought successfully against congressional factions that attempted to pass legislation limiting the scope of civil rights laws. He also authored the legislation that helped make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday in 1983.

SISTER BLANDINA SEGALE (1850-1941)

A lifelong champion of the rights of American Indians, Sister Blandina Segale also fought for laws to end child labor. Born in Cincinnati of Italian heritage, she went west in 1872 to teach school, traveling by train and stage coach. From 1872 to 1894 she served in Colorado, California and New Mexico.

Tiny (5'3") but strong-willed and resourceful, Sister Blandina taught Hispanic children, took care of the sick and worked among the Indians. In Colorado, she built a school and an orphanage and opened a hospital for railroad workers. In New Mexico, she founded the state's first public school.

Her book, *At the End of the Santa Fe Trail*, which first appeared in 1893, documents her work with American Indians and is believed to be the first book ever published by an Italian American woman.

VINCENZO SELLARO, M.D. (1868-1932)

As a young Sicilian physician, Vincenzo Sellaro came to America in 1897 and opened a medical practice in New York's Little Italy, home to thousands of new Italian immigrants. Realizing that their inability to speak English was affecting their medical care, he helped found New York's Columbus Italian Hospital in 1902 where all the staff spoke Italian and he was the chief gynecologist.

In 1905, he founded the Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA) to help Italian immigrants learn English, become citizens, find work and receive aid when stricken by illness or the death of the family wage-earner.

Today, OSIA is the oldest and largest national organization in the U.S. for men and women of Italian heritage. By its 100th anniversary in 2005, it had given more than \$93 million to medical research, disaster relief and education.

RAPHAEL URCILOLO, Ph.D., Esq. (1911-1994) & JOSEPH URCILOLO, Esq. (1920-1995)

In 1947, in a joint case entitled *Hurd et al v. Hodge et al* and *Urciolo et al v. same*, the brothers, Raphael & Joseph Urciolo, who were both attorneys, along with others, appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of African Americans and their right to purchase a home when the property carried a "restrictive covenant."

The case came about when the Urciolos and others ignored laws in Washington, D.C. that restricted the sale of homes in certain neighborhoods only to white people. Instead, they

and others sold properties they owned in these neighborhoods to African American families. The other homeowners filed suit with the District of Columbia district court in an attempt to void the sale of these properties.

When the D.C. district court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia sided with the respondents, Joseph Urciolo took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. He and his brother worked closely with the prominent African American civil rights attorney, Charles Hamilton Houston, known as “the man who killed Jim Crow,” who argued the case on behalf of the Urciolos before the U.S. Supreme Court.

On May 3, 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the decision of the lower courts, making restrictive covenants unenforceable in the United States.

Raphael Urciolo earned two Ph.D. degrees (Linguistics and French) as well as a J.D. from Columbus Law School (later George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C.). He taught business law as a professor at Howard University, an historically black private institution in Washington, D.C. and French for the University of the District of Columbia. Among his publications is a book on Haitian Creole proverbs and a Haitian translation of Pinocchio.

Joseph Urciolo also taught at Howard University as a professor of business law from 1948 to 1968 after earning his law degree from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. He and his brother also had a private law firm and a real estate business in Washington, D.C.

APPENDIX II:

The following are excerpts from Father Geno Baroni's address to the American Italian Historical Association one of the last times he spoke in public before his death from cancer in 1984.

I started the Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs and I worked in 25 cities and 300 communities in changing neighborhoods between blacks and whites and Hispanics. And I said either we're going to make it together or we're going down together.

We live in an intercultural village, and tolerance for diversity is necessary for survival. We are valued variants of a common identity and in being those valued variants of a common identity, we know that we're the same—only different; and we need to know our story and we need to share that story.

We have a Bill of Rights, we have a Constitution, we have a Declaration of Independence, but what we don't have is a national sense of our diverse heritage.

I'd like to also point out ... that America is not a melting pot. We're the most ethnically, racially, lifestyle, regionally, politically, religiously, diverse country in the world. Let's celebrate that diversity.

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