



tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

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AUTUMN HARVEST FEASTS

In Italy, the autumn is the time of chestnuts and Indian corn. The chestnuts is used in a great variety of ways and very often transformed in flour for making cakes of both the sweet and salted variety. Corn is used widely in Italy for a dish that is basic to the local diet; polenta or corn meal mush. The town of Soriano nel Cimino in the province of Viterbo about 50 miles from Rome, holds a Chestnut Festival on the second Sunday in October. In the streets people parade in costume while historic tournaments and jousts take place. The festivities proceed with a parade of allegorical floats, which include one with a gigantic chestnut from which eventually other costumed people emerge. Other similar festivals are held in Lucolena, province of Florence; Momigno, in the province of Pistoia; Valdieri and Valgrana in the province of Cuneo and also in Costabissara in the province of Vicenza.

In the beginning of November the Polenta Fair is held in Casorzo, province of Asti. Four huge pots are put in the fire and an enormous quantity of polenta is prepared by expert cooks. When prepared the polenta is distributed to the crowd with a simple classic dressing of butter and grated cheese. In Gorgonzola, province of Milan the Polenta Festival takes place on the fourth Sunday of November, and is part of the celebration of St. Catherine's Day. The dressing in this case is the cheese which takes its name from the town, Gorgonzola. Another dish which give rise to gastronomic festivals is the bagna cauda, a very tasty dense sauce made of olive oil, butter, garlic and anchovies, which is served in special containers to keep it boiling and used as a dip for various raw vegetables, but principally for tender stalks of cardon. The cardon, in Italian cardo, is a late fall and winter vegetable, actually a variety of thistle, that looks like a gigantic celery without its top leaves, and has the taste of an artichoke. The Festival of the Cardon and Bagna Cauda takes place on November 4, at Nizza Monferrato in the province of Asti.

Adapted from Calendar of Autumn Attractions, Sonia Buldrin, L'OSSERVATORE, September 20, 1983, p. 52

ITALIAN FOLK COSTUMES SLIDES AVAILABLE

There is just one comprehensive book on Authentic Italian Folk Costumes. This was verified by Elba Gurzau when she visited the "Biblioteca delle Tradizioni Popolari" in Rome.

That book is *IL COSTUME POPOLARE IN ITALIA* by Enima Calderini. It has 200 large color plates and it was published in 1950 by Sperling and Kupfer in Milano.

The book is available in some of our public libraries in the United States.

IFafa ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 25-26-27

All roads will lead to Pittsburgh this year. Every member should plan to attend. Bring a friend or relative to our 8th Annual Conference. Things get bigger and better every year. Folk dance and song workshops are being planned. Tapes, detailed choreography, words and music will be made available so that upon completion participants will have a take-home reference of materials presented. Folk songs and dances for children groups will be taught and dialogue presented on how to stimulate interest and maintain their continuous participation.

The Saturday banquet will include the annual Festa Folcloristica featuring this year the nationally acclaimed I CAMPAGNOLI.

Place: Holiday Inn, Monroeville, PA at the intersection of PA Turnpike and Route 22.

\$46 per room, maximum occupancy of 4.

Registration Fee: \$65 for members \$75 for non-members. PLEASE REGISTER BEFORE OCTOBER 14th, by contacting Jane P. Ferro, 318 Lexington Court, Carnegie, PA 15106 - Phone 412-276-3314 or IFAFA 215/324-1250. Make checks payable to the Italian Folk Art Federation or IFAFA.

Date: **Friday October 25** - Registration begins at 5 P.M., Folk Dance Party at 8 P.M.

Saturday October 26 - Registration 8:30 A.M.

Workshops begin at 9 A.M. including Italian folk dancing, singing, costumes, instruments, and sessions on managing a folk group, instruction techniques, adapting materials for children groups, bobbin lace workshop (\$10 material included), etc. Festa Folcloristica at 6:30 P.M.

Sunday October 27 - Various business meetings beginning at 9:30 A.M.

From this book seventy slides were made of the most striking costumes of each region of Italy. It is accompanied by a description of each costume compiled by Elba Gurzau.

The collection is available to IFAFA members and friends. The cost is \$45.00 plus \$3.00 for mailing cost. If interested please contact:

Elba Farabegoli Gurzau, 1325 W. Roosevelt Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19140 - Phone 1-215/324-1250

We are grateful to Don Castronovo of BALLI D'ITALIA of Baltimore and to Adrian Gurzau of Philadelphia for photographing the color plates in the Calderini book.

THE ISLAND OF SARDINIA

(Where ancient tradition still lives)

Sardinia is so rich and untouched in its ancient tradition that one cannot do justice to it in a few words. It will interest the reader to learn that here one finds the best preserved unit of folklore, not only in Italy, but probably of all Europe. In Sardinia one can still see the practice of ancient customs, unchanged by modern influence, hear tunes elsewhere forgotten centuries ago, and speak a language rich in old words and sounds.

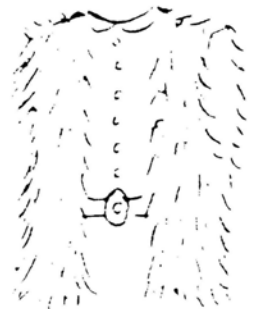
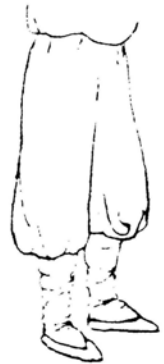
The Sardinians, like other ancient people, had a period of exploration when their boats roamed all the Mediterranean coasts. Conversely, the Carthaginians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Spaniards, all came to Sardinia, and all left their mark on the island.

In certain villages one can still see the women wearing a veil, or head cloth draped over the mouth and nose reminiscent of the Orient, while the men's leggings, metal ornaments and hats tied under the chin plainly show the Spanish influence. Then, too, the Sardinian "ragas" or "bragas" have their counterpart in the Scottish kilts, and the Greek foustanelle for men, which are like skirts.

The natural fur coat "mastrucca" which the men wear goes back to pre-Roman times as recorded by Greek and Roman authors. Dante, the great Italian poet who lived in the thirteenth century, describes the Sardinian apparel and it is exactly as we see it today.

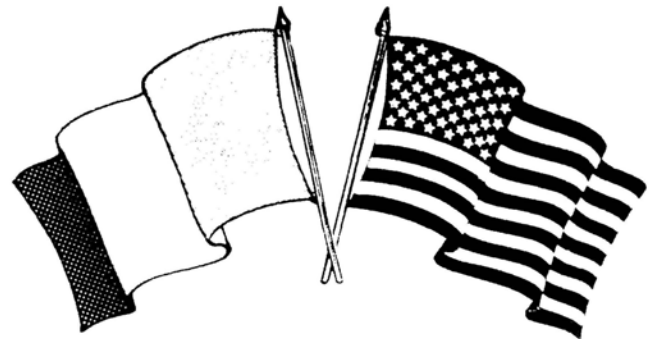
I purposely say "today" for Sardinia is one of the few spots in Italy where ancient apparel is still worn. In fact, one of my informants told me that the women of certain villages still wear their beautifully embroidered skirts the wrong side out on working days and the right side out on festive occasions.

REPRINTED FROM FOLK DANCES, COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS OF ITALY BY ELBA F. GURZAU



ITALIAN AMERICAN PROJECT

The Balch Institute, Philadelphia, in conjunction with IFAFA and the Italian American Advisory Council has undertaken a special project to interpret and document the Italian American Experience. Part of the project consists of a Permanent Exhibit which will open October 1, 1985 and continue for four months. All our readers are encouraged to learn more about the project and to offer suggestions as far as possible. Please plan to visit the exhibit.



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Josephine Greco, Palisades Park, NJ

Art Director
Elba F. Gurzau, Philadelphia, PA

Legal Advisor
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THE AMERICAN LABOR MUSEUM

Located in Haledon, New Jersey, the Botto House is the first Italian-American site to be listed as a national landmark.

The house served as a headquarters to labor leaders and as a meeting place for workers during the historic Paterson Silk Strike of 1913. When a mass arrest ordered by hostile city officials made it impossible for strikers to assemble in Paterson, crowds of more than 20,000 gathered in the streetcar suburb of Haledon to hear such leaders as Carlo Tresca, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and John Reed (of Reds movie fame) speak from the balcony of the Botto home.

Though their demands—including an eight-hour workday, a five-day work week and workman's compensation for on-the-job injuries—are now taken for granted in the American work-place, they were considered revolutionary at the time. The strike made international headlines but failed after a six-month struggle.

During happier times the Bottos, natives of Italy's Piedmont region, operated their 12-room house as an inn, complete with a large grape arbor, a bocci court and card tables.

In May, the house opened as headquarters of the American Labor Museum. It has been restored to the look of 1913, when Pietro Botto and his four daughters worked twelve-hour days at the Paterson mills and Maria Botto cooked for nine boarders and did piecework at home.

John A. Herbst, executive director of the museum, says that it does mark a new awareness of the contribution of "the little guy."

"Usually you go to historic homes and see where George Washington slept or where Vanderbilt lived," says Herbst. "This is one of the first attempts to preserve the ethnic heritage of the American worker."

The Botto House is now the American Labor Museum

REPRINTED FROM "ATTENZIONE"

JERRE MANGIONE WINS SICILIAN LITERARY AWARD

Jerre Mangione, author and Professor Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania, has been awarded the Premio Nazionale Empedocle for the newly published Italian edition of his book, *Mount Allegro*.

The literary prize, presented to Mangione in two-day ceremonies in Agrigento, Sicily, was decided by a jury of Italian authors and critics that included the noted novelist Leonardo Sciascia, who had won the award in 1983. Mangione is the first American author to receive it. Dr. Giuseppe Cassini, the Italian Consul General in Philadelphia, describes the award as "the most important prize for literature given by the government of Sicily."

Mount Allegro is the story of Mangione's growing up among Sicilian American relatives in Rochester, NY.

"The award pleases me for several reasons," Mangione said. "It indicates that what I wrote about Sicilians so many years ago is still alive and has the approval of my Sicilian literary peers. I also found it exciting to receive the award in the native area of my mother and father, who are the heroes in *Mount Allegro*. I only wish that they were still alive to share the honor with me."



EDITORS NOTE: There is a growing custom of presenting the local library with a book in memory of a recently departed friend or relative. Our readers may wish to consider this custom. We would suggest you purchase a book on the Italian American Experience, or one written by an Italian American. Frequently our smaller libraries lack a good representation of the growing Italian American Literature. If you need any suggestions call: **814/472-8612** — **DR. J.J. BENTIVEGNA, LORETTO, PA.**

WE NEED YOUR HELP

FIRST: Inform us if you have changed residency. Send us your new address. We would like to know if you receive more than one copy of **TRADIZIONI**.

SECOND: If you are not already a member of IFAPA we invite you to join our fast growing association. Learning Italian folk songs and dances is a productive way of preserving our heritage.

THIRD: To produce this Newsletter and to conduct IFAPA activities we assume considerable expenses. We ask that you make a donation to assist us. We feel a strong commitment to promoting a positive image of the Sicilian and to conduct our heritage-oriented activities.

RECENT CONTRIBUTORS

\$100. OR MORE

Eleanor Allen, James Glenn, Elba F. Gurzau and D. and F. Desmond.

Other

Anthony Armao, Alfred F. Alberico, Pat & John Civitate, Anna Chairetakis, Gian Dentino, Deiro & Frances Desmond, Domenick A. Jannuzzi, G. & E. Tummo, Giovanna Ferrante Holt, Madeline Batusto, Aldo Re, Edward A. Conte, Albert D. Cavaliere, F. Joseph Leone, Yolanda D'Amelio, Pasquale G. Tato, Rosalie F. Catena-cio, I. Batterini Rusticani, Gina Carano

Please Make It Possible For Us To List Your Name As A Contributor In The Next **TRADIZIONI**.

LOOKING FOR A NEW PROJECT?

One notes the increasing interest in Italian Folk Festivals. Very large numbers of people representing diverse ethnic backgrounds share a special enjoyment at these affairs. Good food, beautiful music, heritage exhibits and lectures, games, costumes, folk dancing, old memories and renewed friendships highlight the festivals. We commend those individuals who make the special effort to participate in the production of these festive events. The planning, organizing, working, risking bad weather conditions call for a very special commitment to one's ethnic heritage. In our review of a number of these events we find that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find authentic musicians who know and play a more genuine Italian folk music. If any of our readers are looking for a new idea to keep their organizations actively productive it might be suggested that they undertake the responsibility to organize a small group of musicians and vocalists. They should begin by doing some basic research in the folk music and dances of Italy. If you need any assistance please feel free to contact IFAFA. We know groups who have recently undertaken this type of project and they are having a lot of fun learning, sharing and making new and interesting friends. You can start by the simple purchase of FOLK DANCES, COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS OF ITALY \$9.50. An Educational Cassette with music is available for the dances, \$5.00. Add \$1.00 for handling and postage for the first book and cassette; add 50 cents for each additional book. Make check or money order payable to: ELBA F. GURZAU, 1325 W. ROOSEVELT BLVD., PHILADELPHIA, PA 19140 Ph: (215) 324-1250.

FROM THE EDITOR

It is with great pleasure that I introduce my collaborator for this issue, Dr. J.J. Bentivegna. He is an interesting, fascinating and knowledgeable individual proudly committed to Italian Folk Art.

A brief review of his credentials reveals that he received his B.A. from Penn State and then studied in Italy for an academic year. He was employed by the Italian Charities of America, NYC, while completing his studies for a M.A. at Columbia University (TC). He has committed more than twenty years to higher education in the specialties related to underachieving and disadvantaged youth. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh while concentrating on the vocational rehabilitation of the handicapped. His wife, Patricia Bentivegna, Ph.D. is Professor of Spanish at St. Francis College, Loretto, PA. They have three children, Joseph F. Bentivegna, M.D., NYC, Nicholas Bentivegna, Esq. Pasadena, Calif; and Anthony Bentivegna, J.D. candidate, San Francisco, Calif. In accepting the editorship Dr. Bentivegna stated, "It gives me great pleasure to work with Dr. LePera, Elba Gurzau and Rita Tonitto and others as we continue the outstanding progress of IFAFA. I solicit the cooperation of all those who read this newsletter. I see the great strides being made within the Italian Community and feel this publication should serve as a major vehicle in communicating the achievements of our compatriots in the area of Italian Folk Music and Dance."

I extend to Dr. J.J. Bentivegna my sincerest best wishes as he assumes the editorship of TRADIZIONI and assure him of my continued assistance.

Dr. A. LePera

The Italian Folk Federation of America, Inc., is a non-profit educational federation. Its purpose is to research, preserve and foster interest in the various aspects of Italian folklore.

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