

ITALY'S NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE "for their suffering brethren at home"

by Maria Tence

In 1866 a committee was formed in Melbourne to collect funds for war-wounded soldiers who fought for Italian independence. The president of the committee, Cav. Giuseppe Biagi was the first appointed Italian Consul in Melbourne.

The manuscripts relating to the 1866 community fundraising are held in the Society's Diplomatic Archives and serve as an excellent reference of surnames of Italians living in Victoria at that time. There appears to have been four lists of contributors but to date the Society has been able to locate only three.

The collection was an attempt to raise funds to further the campaign for the unification of Italy by liberating the Veneto region and resulted in £147.9.0 being raised equivalent to Lire3,686.25. Even though contemporary accounts state that it was "not a great amount considering that at the time there were almost two thousand Italians in Australia", the manuscripts reveal that the donations, in the main, came from the districts of Daylesford and Guildford where a large number of Swiss Italians had settled and should in fact be seen as a generous effort by that community.

It was not a first attempt to raise funds for a patriotic cause. An earlier fundraising effort was held in 1861 to raise money for a sword of honour that was presented to Garibaldi in recognition of his contribution towards the unification of Italy. This appeal which raised £358 received extensive financial support from Melbourne's commercial firms and the general public, not to mention the diamond for the sword's hilt donated by an Australian jeweller².

The sentiments behind both campaigns reflected substantial support for a liberated Italy not only from expatriates who saw the efforts as a measure of their patriotic commitment but also from the wider colonial community which endorsed Italy's liberation from foreign dominance.

It is interesting to understand why the Italian speaking pioneers who emigrated to the distant colony of Victoria felt compelled to support the Unification of Italy, considering that the majority

of them at the time were predominantly Swiss Italians, mainly from Ticino.

The Ticinesi shared a strong sense of national identity with Italians, given their common language and cultural traditions³.

The inhabitants of Ticino and the Alpine areas of northern Italy were accustomed to seasonal emigration, and as a "consequence of the political upheavals of 1815, 1821 and 1831.... thousands of patriots and political refugees left Italy for other European cities and continents"⁴. This, with the worsening economic climate experienced by Italy and indeed many parts of Europe, in addition to consecutive years of poor agricultural conditions, forced many in the Alpine valleys to seek alternative destinations.

The gold discoveries of Victoria of the 1850s lured many fortune seekers and discontented northern Italians and to the colony. Those from Ticino were particularly eager to emigrate as their sources of itinerant work and interaction with Lombardy were halted by its Austrian rulers who had closed the borders with Switzerland⁵.

Because of inadequate record-keeping methods it is difficult to determine exactly how many Italians were present in Victoria at the time of the fundraising. There have been many attempts by various scholars to arrive at a plausible estimate. According to Caroline Alcorso, the total population of the colony of Victoria in 1868 was 600,000 and it was estimated that of these 1,600 were Italian⁶. In contrast, Jacqueline Templeton points out that only 772 Italians were recorded in the 1871 census⁷. Charles D'Aprano, on the other hand, claims that "there were approximately 6,000 Italian speakers in the colony by 1860"⁸.

The Italian consul at the time, Giuseppe Biagi, kept records on the numbers of Italians in the colony. He did this by implementing a register which required Italians to attend the Consulate and list their names and addresses. As described in the following extract from a report dated 24 February 1866 from Consul Biagi to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Florence, the register was by no means accurate:

On the subject of the list of Italian nationals in Victoria.....,there are,..... allowing for departures, the number of Italians registered in the colony is reduced to 95, a further 230 who have not bothered to register; thus the total of Italians in Victoria should be at least 325, but could be considerably larger, allowing for those scattered over the colony⁹.

Maintaining a record of the numbers of Italians arriving, departing and living in the colony was not a simple exercise. The requirement to be registered with the Consulate was disseminated by word of mouth and obviously those Italians who had settled in rural areas, itinerant workers and miners, were able to evade registration. Consul Biagi himself had scoured the countryside in an attempt to find unregistered Italians.

As mentioned above, both the 1861 and the 1866 collections were generously supported by the wider community possibly because of the traditional cultural rapport that then existed between England and Italy. The English had given financial support to the unification effort and received Giuseppe Mazzini during his political exile. There was also a general appreciation of Italian culture and history amongst the more educated and travelled in the colony.

The following lists of contributors mainly from the goldmining region of Victoria, show a significant number of non-Italian donors. A possible explanation for this is that even though it would be many years before Australian settlers would experience unification of the colonies into a nation state, there seemed to exist a solidarity amongst the gold miners (of whom a significant number were Italian). This comradeship was reinforced during the riots over the mining licences which culminated with the Eureka Stockade.

The consensus amongst scholars is that the majority of Italians in Victoria emigrated from the northern regions of Italy: from the valleys of Piedmont, provinces of Lombardy and the neighbouring Swiss Cantons of Ticino and Grisons. They were largely attracted to the environs of Daylesford, where a number remained to form a thriving and dynamic community.

These lists which give the names of donors, country of birth and place of residence are

reprinted here and will be of great value to those wishing to trace their ancestry.

ENDNOTES

¹ Cresciani G, 1988, *Migrants or Mates: Italian Life in Australia*, Knockmore Enterprises, Sydney, p. 13

² Randazzo N & Cigler M, 1987, *The Italians in Australia*, AE Press, Melbourne, p. 64.

³ D'Aprano C, 1995, *From Goldrush to Federation*, Int Press, Victoria, p. 6

⁴ Cecilia T., 1987, *We didn't Arrive Yesterday*, The Sunnyland Press, Victoria, p. 45

⁵ D'Aprano C, p. 24

⁶ Alcorso C, 1992, "Early Italian Migration and the Construction of European Australia 1788-1939" in Castles S, Alcorso C, Rando G and Vasta E (Eds), *Australia's Italians: Culture and Community in a Changing Society*, p. 8.

⁷ Templeton J, 1995, "The Swiss Connection: The Origins of the Valtellina-Australia Migrations" in *Australian Historical Studies*, April 1995, p. 393.

⁸ D'Aprano, p. 11.

⁹ Diplomatic Archives, Affari Esteri, 1861-1887, Busta 253 (891), 24 February 1866.



Italy at the end of 1866. The Papal State was annexed in 1870 and the region of Trentino after the First World War.

MANIFESTO.

L'ITALIA è giunta ormai alla prova suprema per compiere la sua Nazionale Indipendenza. La miglior parte dei suoi figli combatte col Re Galantuomo per la sospirata rivendicazione della Venezia. Ad ingrossare l'Esercito, gran numero di Volontarj accorse sotto il comando del prode Generale Garibaldi.

Ogni altro affetto, ogni altro interesse sacrificarono i generosi alla Nazione, risoluti tutti a dar per essa il sangue e la vita; e già molto sangue fu sparso, molte vite furono spente, molte famiglie prive dei loro sostegni furono ridotte nella miseria.

Gli Italiani che si trovano lungi dalla Patria, negli ansiosi momenti in cui se ne decidono le sorti, non possono a meno di sentir vivo il bisogno di manifestare attaccamento alla causa comune, e pietoso interesse pei fratelli che soffrono.

Un Comitato Italiano è stato formato in Melbourne per raccogliere nella Colonia di Vittoria contribuzioni in soccorso dei feriti in guerra per l'Indipendenza Nazionale e delle loro famiglie bisognose.

Il Comitato ha sede presso il R. Ufficio Consolare d'Italia (36, William-street), ed è composto dei signori:—

BIAGI CAVALIER GIUSEPPE, R. Console,
Presidente.
CAMPI ANGELO.
CUTOLO MAESTRO CESARE.
DARDANELLI BARTOLOMMEO.
DINON MASSIMILIANO.
KING ACHILLE.
MARTELLI DOTTOR ALESSANDRO.
COSSU AVV. CARLO, R. Vice-Console,
Segretario.

Le somme ricevute dal Comitato sia diretta-

ITALY has at length arrived at the supreme juncture which promises to complete her National Independence. The greater part of her sons have taken up arms with her Gallant Sovereign, in order to secure the ardently desired recovery of Venice. To swell the army, numbers of Volunteers have flocked to the standard of the intrepid General Garibaldi.

All other feelings, all other interests have been surrendered by her generous children to the Nation, each being resolute to shed his blood, and to sacrifice his life, in her cause. Already, indeed, much blood has been spilt and many lives have been lost, and many families, deprived of their mainstay, have been reduced to misery.

Those Italians who are far removed from their native land, cannot but feel, in this hour of her trial, an earnest desire to manifest their attachment to the common cause, and their sympathy for their suffering brethren at home.

An Italian Committee has been therefore formed in Melbourne, to collect in the Colony of Victoria, contributions for the relief of the wounded in the war of National Independence, and of their distressed families.

The Committee meets at the office of His Majesty's Consul for Italy (36, William-street), and is composed of the following gentlemen:—

BIAGI CAVALIER GIUSEPPE, Consul,
President.
CAMPI ANGELO.
CUTOLO MAESTRO CESARE.
DARDANELLI BARTOLOMMEO.
DINON MASSIMILIANO.
KING ACHILLE.
MARTELLI DOTTOR ALESSANDRO.
COSSU AVV. CARLO, Vice Consul, *Hon.*
Secretary.

The sums collected by the Committee, whether

mente, sia dai collettori in altri luoghi della Colonia, saranno, insieme colle liste dei contribuenti, spedite in Italia a cura del R. Console.

La spedizione delle somme pervenute al Comitato sarà disposta tre giorni prima della partenza dell'ordinario postale; quelle che giungeranno in seguito saranno spedite coll'ordinario successivo.

Il Comitato si adunerà perciò il giorno 25 alle ore tre.

CARLO COSSU,
Segretario.

MELBOURNE, 18 Agosto, 1866.

directly, or by the Collectors in different parts of the Colony, will be forwarded to Italy, together with a list of the Contributors, by His Majesty's Consul.

The amount received up to the 25th inst. will be sent by the outgoing mail; subscriptions which come to hand afterwards, will be transmitted by the succeeding mail.

The Committee will meet on the 25th of each month at three o'clock.

CARLO COSSU,
Hon. Secretary.

MELBOURNE, 18th August, 1866.

Ammontare della 3^a Lista di contro — L. st. 12. 12. 6

pari a L. ital. 315. 62

Spese dal 26 Settembre al 25 Ottobre —

Pubblicazioni —	L. st. 1. 9. 0	
Posta —	" 0. 1. 0	
	L. 1. 10. 0	= 31. 50
		L. ital. 278. 12
Prov. di cambio 1/2 p. 8		" 4. 17
		L. ital. 272. 95

Riepilogo al 25 Ottobre 1866.

Somme raccolte

1 ^a Lista —	L. st. 56. 18. 0	
2 ^a —	" 62. 1. 0	
3 ^a —	" 12. 12. 6	
	L. st. 131. 11. 6	= L. ital. 3288. 12

Posta de spese occorse fin qui riscuote a — " 270. 52

L. ital. 3017. 60

Somme spedite

In agosto —	L. st. 1422. 50
Settembre —	" 1321. 15
Ottobre —	" 273. 95

L. ital. — 3017. 60

**COLLECTION FROM ITALIANS RESIDING IN THE COLONY OF VICTORIA
IN AID OF THE [soldiers] WOUNDED IN THE WAR FOR
NATIONAL INDEPENDANCE AND THEIR FAMILIES IN NEED**

Note: The lists of donors have been reprinted in the order and manner in which they appear in the original manuscript. To assist the reader, we have included the major Italian city nearest to the town reported in the document. For Swiss-Italian towns we have added the country.

List No. 2 - Collection from 25th August to 25 September 1866

**COLLETTA
DEGLI ITALIANI DIMORANTI NELLA COLONIA DI VITTORIA
IN SOCCORSO DEI FERITI IN GUERRA PER L'INDIPENDENZA NAZIONALE,
E DELLE LORO FAMIGLIE BISOGNOSE.**

Lista No. 2. Offerte raccolte dal Sig. 25 agosto al 25 Settembre 1866

NOME E COGNOME.	PATRIA.	DIMORA.	SOMMA PAGA.
1. Aldwell W. B.	<i>Irlanda</i>	<i>Melbourne</i>	<i>1</i>
2. Barassi Giuseppe	<i>Italia</i>	<i>Guildford</i>	<i>5</i>
3. Barbieri Giuseppe	<i>Rovegno</i>	<i>Guildford</i>	<i>2</i>

NAME	HOMELAND	RESIDENCE
Aldwell W. B	Ireland	Melbourne
Barassi Giuseppe	Italy	Guildford
Barbieri Giuseppe	Rovegno [Genova]	Guildford
Bardi Giovanni	La Spezia	Guildford
Barnasocchi Pietro	Switzerland	Guildford
Basili Giuseppe	Orvieto [Terni]	Daylesford
Basto Antonio	Portugal	Melbourne
Bath T.	England	Guildford
Bedola Brothers	Switzerland	Hepburn
Belgio Luigi	Intra [Novara]	Hepburn
Bell George	England	Guildford
Benada Giacomo	Ticino [Switzerland]	Sandhurst
Biaggi C. A.	Switzerland	Guildford
Blackson Joseph	Melbourne	Springfield
Blair W. A.	England	Melbourne
Bollito Lorenzo	Asti	Hepburn
Bonetti Giuseppe	Switzerland	Guildford
Bonetti Tobia	Switzerland	Guildford
Borsa Battista	Switzerland	Hepburn
Bouveret	France	Daylesford
Bracesco Francesco	Italy	Sandhurst
Brambilla Paolo	Asti	Daylesford
Breliano Giuseppe	--	Whim Holes

Brigliadori Giovanni	Rimini [Forli']	Guildford
Brocco Carlo	Switzerland	Guildford
Brocco Pietro	San Martino [Switzerland]	Guildford
Brown & Tough	Scotland	Melbourne
Callegari Giovanni	Muceno [Varese]	Guildford
Campana Giovanni	Colla [Switzerland]	Guildford
Campili Michele	Switzerland	Guildford
Canna Pietro	Casale [Alessandria]	Melbourne
Casinelli Angelo	Genova	Daylesford
Cassarino Geatano	Italy	Sandhurst
Celle Antonio	Castiglione Chiavarese [Genova]	Taradale
Ceroli Luigi	Gurro [Novara]	Hepburn
Cima Carlo	Monza Milano]	Hepburn
Cooking S.	England	Melbourne
Costantini Francesco	Cassano Valcuvia [Varese]	Guildford
Cox T.	England	Guildford
Crippa Fabrizio	Monza [Milano]	Hepburn
Dellagana Mansueto	Aurigeno [Switzerland]	Guildford
Delmenico Giovanni	Ticino [Switzerland]	Guildford
Dolphin William	England	Guildford
Downic Charles	Melbourne	Melbourne
Edgard James	England	Melbourne
Falconer G. G.	Ireland	Melbourne
Fanzi Giuseppe	Albiolo [Como]	Guildford
Fasoli Eugerio	Como	Daylesford
Fasoli Vincenzo	Como	Hepburn
Favaloro Giuseppe	Sicily [Italy]	Guildford
Finley David	Ireland	Guildford
Fisher Robert	England	Guildford
Franzi Ludovico	Intra [Novara]	Guildford
Gaffeny W. J.	Ireland	Guildford
Gagiero Lorenzo	Carcare [Savona]	Springfield
Gagioni Giacomo	Switzerland	Hepburn
Gambirasi Giovanni	Italy	Sandhurst
Garbarino Giuseppe	Italy	Sandhurst
Gentle E.	--	Daylesford
Gervasoni Giovanni	Bergamo	Daylesford
Giambone Pietro	Italy	Guildford
Gianelli Michele	Castiglione Chiavarese [Genova]	Taradale
Giovanetti Costantino	Switzerland	Guildford
Godfrey George	England	Guildford
Graham James	Scotland	Melbourne
Hanson A.	Germany	Melbourne
Hick W.	Victoria	Melbourne
Impariali Pasquale	Italy	Guildford
Irwin S.	Ireland	Daylesford
Jaetwell Roger	England	Hepburn
Katzenstein Isaac	Cassel [?]	Melbourne
King Achille	Milan	Melbourne
Kitto R. L. M.	England	Freyerstown (?)
Lang William	Scotland	Melbourne
Lavezzolo Giovanni	Chiavari [Genova]	Daylesford
Leone Giuseppe	Switzerland	Guildford
Lertora Battista	Italy	Guildford
Lobb William	England	Guildford
Lockeyear A.	London	Guildford
Mantico Ambrogio	Monza [Milano]	Hepburn
Martelli Alessandro	Turin	Lilydale
Martin Charles R.	England	Melbourne
Martin T. James	England	Melbourne

Miller M.	Tasmania	Melbourne
Monotti Giacomo	Switzerland	Daylesford
Monti Angelo Bartolommeo	Cuzzago [Novara]	Springfield
Monti Carlo	Cuzzago [Novara]	Taradale
Moresi Francesco	Ticino [Switzerland]	Guildford
Muschialli Domenico	Como	Dry Diggins
Nardi Francesco	Fermo [Ascoli Piceno]	Guildford
Newman James	Ireland	Guildford
Nobili Oreste	Bologna	Melbourne
Paganetti Albino	Switzerland	Daylesford
Panosetti Giovanni	Vergobbio [Varese]	Guildford
Parravicini Giovanni	Vill'Albese [Como]	Guildford
Peers F. W.	Scotland	Melbourne
Pelascini Guiseppe	Como	Melbourne
Pincini Guiseppe	Switzerland	Guildford
Prais H.	Switzerland	Campbell's Creek
Quintaba Domenico	Ancona	Guildford
Rappaccioli Francesco	Piacenza	Daylesford
Ravenna Giulio	Lavagna [Genova]	Guildford
Reanda Abbondio	Switzerland	Guildford
Rooke W. H.	Wales	Melbourne
Rolino Ambrogio	La Spezia	Guildford
Rossi Domenico	Italy	Sandhurst
Rotanzi Francesco	Switzerland	Hepburn
Rusconi Carlo	San Martino [Switzerland]	Guildford
Sammes David	England	Guildford
Sartori Lazzaro	Switzerland	Yandoit
Schunke Adolfo	Prussia	Guildford
Sciallero Fortunato	Italy	Sandhurst
Sciallero Sara	Sydney	Sandhurst
Selfe James	England	Melbourne
Smith James	England	Guildford
Spigalia Battista	Switzerland	Guildford
Stanbridge W. C.	England	Daylesford
Strana Giovanni	Catania	Guildford
Tirinzani Pasquale	Cannobio [Novara]	Guildford
Togni Antonio	Switzerland	Hepburn
Traverso Luigi	Genova	Guildford
Vanotti Giovanni	Switzerland	Guildford
Vittorelli Cesare	Vicenza	Daylesford
Wallworth S.	England	Melbourne
Welsh H. P.	England	Melbourne
Whear Thomas	England	Guildford
Wickers Edward	England	Melbourne
Wilkie Joseph	England	Melbourne
Wittver G. G.	Switzerland	Guildford
Wright John	England	Guildford
Zignago Francesco	La Spezia	Guildford

List No. 3 - Collection from 26th September to 25th October 1866

Alexander W. M.	Scotland	Daylesford
Anderson Robert	Scotland	Dromana
Appleton N.	--	--
Austin, Miss	--	Melbourne
Basili Guiseppe	Orvieto	Daylesford
Bateman N.	--	Melbourne

Breliano Giuseppe	--	Whim Holes
Buckley R.	--	Melbourne
Campbell John	Canada	Dromana
Cobianchi Pompeo	Intra [Novara]	Hepburn
Cryghton John	Scotland	--
Dennis N.	--	Melbourne
Dixon S. W.	England	Dromana
Hailes N.	--	--
Haldan Alexander	Scotland	Dromana
Handfield N.	--	Melbourne
Handfield M. M. P	--	Melbourne
Healy Daniel	Ireland	Hepburn
Horsley N.	--	--
King E. T.	--	Melbourne
Lucini Pietro	Intra [Novara]	Hepburn

24	Miller N.			0.1.0
25	Mc Lear George		Dromana	0.5.0
26	Moline N.			0.1.0
27	Motherwell N.			0.3.0
28	Mueller Car. Got. Ferdinand	Denimarc	Melbourne	5.0.0
29	Mullen N.			0.1.0
30	Murray Smith N.			0.1.0
31	Reymer Giovanni Carlo	Australia	Dromana	0.2.6
32	Rhys E. N.	Wales	Hepburn	0.5.0

Martinoni Rocco	--	--
McCrea Dr. N.	--	--
Miller N.	--	--
Mc Lear George	--	Dromana
Moline N.	--	--
Motherwell N.	--	--
Muller Dr Ferdinand,	Denmark	Melbourne
Mullen N.	--	--
Murray Smith N.	--	--
Reymer John Charles	Australia	Dromana
Rhys E. R.	Wales	Hepburn
Ridgway N.	--	--
Russ N.	--	--
Walsh N.	--	--
Watkin Richard	England	Dromana
Wilkie Dr. A.	--	--
Wilkie N.	--	--
Williams S. John	Wales	Daylesford
Windson F. E.	England	--

List No. 4

Nome e Cognome	Patria	Dimora	Somma pagata		
1. Bertola Giovanni	Sondrio	Clunes	"	2	6
2. Bolla Felice	Svizzera	Daylesford	"	5	"

Bertola Giovanni	Sondrio	Clunes
Bolla Felice	Switzerland	Daylesford
Bonetti Giovanni	--	Daylesford
Breliano Giuseppe	Italy	Whim Holes
Brusaschi Giovanni	Tirano [Sondrio]	Clunes
Buttola Pietro	Teglio [Sondrio]	Maldon
Cabasso Giacomo	Tirano [Sondrio]	Maldon
Campana Alessandro	Scotland	Walhalla
Colonelo Martino	Grosotto [Sondrio]	Maldon
Daoro Pietro Antonio	Italy	Daylesford
Del Colombo Gabriello	Volterra [Pisa]	Melbourne
Dentella Giacomo	Italy	Daylesford
Dollar Maria	--	Daylesford
Dunchi Bernardo	Teglio [Sondrio]	Maldon
Eccles G. H.	Ireland	Walhalla
Fogar Francesco	Messina	Melbourne
Funzi Giacomo	--	Daylesford
Galli Luigi	Italy	--
Gervasoni Antonio	Bergamo	Yandoit
Giani Giovanni	Italy	Daylesford
Giani Giuseppe	Italy	Daylesford
Giudicatti Agostino	Lovero [Sondrio]	Maldon
Giupponi Carlo	San Giovanni Bianco [Bergamo]	Melbourne
Invernizzi Ambrogio	Bergamo	Yandoit
Langlands & Co	Scotland	Melbourne
Lertora Antonio	Italy	Daylesford
Lucetich Francesco	Velosca [Milano]	Melbourne
Marca Giuseppe	Italy	Daylesford
Milesi Angelo	Lombardy [Region of]	Yandoit
Miolini Giacomo	Sondrio	Clunes
Monteagresti Michele	Florence	Walhalla
Moreschi Bernardo	Colico [Como]	Maldon
Morgan D. Tommaso	Wales	Yandoit
Nani Battista	Bergamo	Yandoit
Pallascio Domenico	Ticino [Canton of - Switzerland]	Yandoit
Pansura	Switzerland	Daylesford
Pedrini Vincenzo	Ticino [Switzerland]	Yandoit
Rees M. Guglielmo	Wales	Yandoit
Reghenzani Pietro	Teglio [Sondrio]	Maldon
Righetti Serafino	Switzerland	Daylesford
Rismondo Giorgio	Rovegno [Genova]	Melbourne
Serenofio Fortunato	Italy	Sandhurst
Serenzio Giacomo	Sondrio	Clunes
Tripp Margaret	England	Melbourne
Valli Francesco	Teglio [Sondrio]	Maldon
Valli Luigi	Teglio [Sondrio]	Maldon
Zampatti Tommaso	Lovero [Sondrio]	Maldon

Copies of selected pages from the above manuscripts can be ordered from the Italian Historical Society at \$3.50 per page including postage (maximum 3 pages).