

FAMILY HISTORY

Family history is an absorbing and rewarding undertaking. There is an increasing and enthusiastic interest from people of all ages compiling their family trees. Yet for the descendants of immigrants of a non-British background there are few aids for this type of research. Early in 1990 we will issue an **Italian Family History Research Kit** to assist people with their research in Italy and Australia. We invite readers who have already begun their family histories to share their experiences and findings with us and with readers.

OBTAINING FAMILY RECORDS FROM ITALY: Two places to begin research are the relevant Italian comune, and the local parish.

Comune (Council) Records:

Since the unification of Italy, each comune has kept records of births, deaths and marriages. The local comune is a most accessible and useful starting point, although in some comunes the records were destroyed during World War II. Your request should be in Italian and addressed to: Ufficio Stato Civile, Comune di.....(name of town, e.g. Teglio) (.....Province capital, e.g. Sondrio). The comune will issue a certificate providing basic information, similar to those illustrated below:


CIVITAS TEMPLI
COMUNE DI TEMPIO PAUSANIA
PROVINCIA DI SASSARI
UFFICIO STATO CIVILE
Certificato di Nascita

IL SOTTOSCRITTO UFFICIALE DELLO STATO CIVILE

CERTIFICA

Che Cossu Simona

nacque in TEMPIO PAUSANIA (frazione _____)

il giorno 2 del mese di dicembre

dell'anno 1886

come risulta dal relativo registro al N. d'ordine 204 parte I

serie - Ufficio I

atto trascritto a Tempio Pausania - Anno _____ N. _____ parte _____

per uso di _____

Tempio Pausania, li _____



L'UFFICIALE DELLO STATO CIVILE

PROVINCIA DI SASSARI - TEMPIO PAUSANIA

Birth Certificate

N. 32/6


CITTÀ DI LA MADDALENA
PROVINCIA DI SASSARI

UFFICIO DELLO STATO CIVILE

Certificato di Morte

L'Ufficiale dello Stato Civile sottoscritto
CERTIFICA

Che Cossu Simona

nato il 2 Dicembre 1886 Atto N. 204 p. I*

in Tempio residente in La Maddalena

e che era vedova di VIGGIANI Antonio

è deceduto in questo Comune il giorno quattordici

del mese di giugno dell'anno 1971

come risulta dai registri dei morti dell'indicato anno millenovecento
settantuno al N. d'ordine 32 Parte I*

Si rilascia in carta libera da valere per uso Amministrativo.

La Maddalena, li 12 Novembre 1971

G.O.



L'Ufficiale dello Stato Civile DEL
Robanna DIANA

Death certificate

Parish Records:

The most fruitful source of information in Italy is to be found in parish registers. Many of these date back as far as the 15th century. These records are kept in the priest's house, which is adjacent to the church in most villages and towns. Details of all the births, deaths and marriages in the village or town over the generations are recorded and kept here. If you have the opportunity it is likely to be more successful to visit in person than to request information by post, as the parish priest usually does not have many resources for answering correspondence. The Society's Curator well remembers her last year's visit to Monte Magre, a very small village on a hill-top near Schio in Vicenza. The priest ushered her into a room lined with massive old book cases, crammed with registers of different shapes and sizes, some going back to 1450, all carefully arranged in chronological order. After locating the birth record of her great-grandmother, Maria Dalla Vecchia, the priest transcribed the information by hand. Many parish priests have photocopying machines in the presbytery, and are happy to provide a copy of the relevant pages. Of the six parishes visited by the Curator, all had a photocopier except Monte Magre, which was too small to require one.

It is essential to have accurate dates and names, as the priest has his usual duties which leave limited time to search through endless entries for the correct one. If you request information from the parish priest in writing, it would be advisable to send your letter in Italian, addressed to: Reverendo Parroco, Parrocchia di.....(town e.g. Teglio), (.....Province capital, e.g. Sondrio). As a gesture, a small donation to the church could be considered.

A sample of the type of information recorded in parish registers is given below. It is part of a page from a baptism register from Codogne in Treviso.

Il 7° Giugno 1844

2- Antonio Battiston di Bortolo di Domenico, e di Paola Zaia di Pietro, conjugi domiciliati in g^{ra} Parrocchia, e' nato jeri alle ore 5: pm, ed oggi fu batt^o dall'aveg^o d^o cur^o Barbini, e: riveduto al sacro Fonte Gregoria Moret-

It reads:

The 7th June 1844

Antonio Battiston of Bortolo (father) of Domenico (paternal grandfather) and of Paola Zaia (mother) of Pietro (maternal grandfather), married couple residents of this parish, was born yesterday at 5 pm and was today baptised by the dean, Fr. Antonio Barbini, carried to the holy water font by Gregoria Moret.

Before you contact authorities in Italy, collect as much specific information, especially dates, as possible. Much information can be found in family papers in Australia. Australian Birth, Death and Marriage certificates, and where applicable, Naturalisation documents will help you estimate birth dates and places in Italy. In later issues we will discuss Australian records.

Some of the published Family Histories held at the Society include those of the following families: De Piazza, Filippini, Maffescioni, Villa and Rossi, Tomasetti and Raffa.

We are keen to build up our collection of family histories, whether published or not, and invite your assistance.