

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY AUGUST 31



Organ grinder Guiseppe Boscio and his Capuchin monkey Giorgio performing at the first Italian Heritage Festival in Clarksburg

The first West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival began on August 31, 1979, in Clarksburg.

CSO: SS.8.26

Investigate the Document: (Clarksburg Italian Heritage Festival, 1982 Program; *Clarksburg Telegram*, 8/31/1979)

1. According to the statistics provided by the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation, how many immigrants were from southern Italy in the United States in 1907? What percentage of first-generation Italian-Americans married within their own group?
2. In the August 31, 1979 issue of the *Clarksburg Telegram*, what was mentioned as being one of the favorite “pick-up-and-carry” delicacies?
3. During the reading of the proclamation by Clarksburg Mayor Arch N. Benninger, he states that the festival reflects *what*?

Think Critically: What brought Italian immigrants to West Virginia?

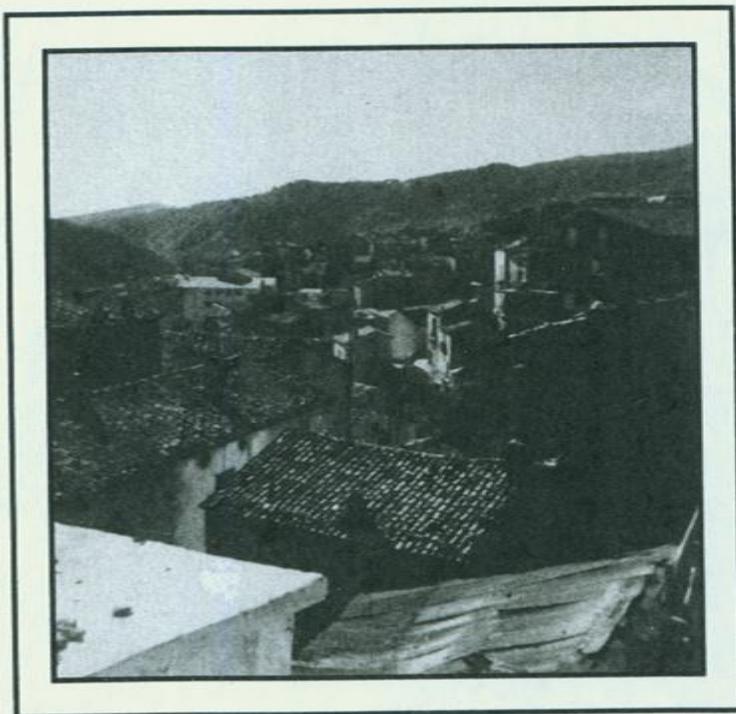
FAMILY AND CULTURE

The Pioneers

In 1910, one of the peak years of Italian immigration to the United States, the average immigrant arrived in New York City with the equivalent of \$17 total capital. He was probably from southern Italy, and he probably intended to return there some day.

According to figures compiled by the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation, from 1820 until 1879 most Italian immigrants, (never more than 10,000 a year), came from the north. In about 1880, the tide shifted. From that year until 1914, and again from 1919 until 1927, Italians came to this country at an unprecedented rate. More than 100,000 came after 1901, with the numbers increasing each year until 1913, when the flow crested at 376,776. In 1906, 45.5% of all immigrants to the United States were Italian.

In 1907, there were 227,346 immigrants from southern Italy. They tended to form close-knit communities and to intermarry, with one study showing that almost all—93%—first-generation Italian-Americans married within their own group. By the third and fourth generations, there was a 52.7% rate of intermarriage, the highest of all caucasian ethnic groups surveyed. This tendency accounts for the remarkable survival of clearcut Italian-American identity.



If anyone knows who the first Italian immigrant or family of immigrants was in the Harrison-Marion County area, the information is not yet officially recorded in the West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival genealogy files. A look at the birthdates of the immigrants to this area indicates they generally were part of the tremendous influx to the United States between 1901 and 1913. A very large percentage of them were from the province of Calabria, and even more specifically, from the village of San Giovanni in Fiore, or St. John.

This period coincides with the time when coal companies were recruiting thousands of men to work the deep mines of West Virginia, a state that still boasted virgin forests and a handful of rowdy settlements that rivaled any on the western frontier.

At first the men came alone. When they had saved enough money, they sent for their wives and children, their sisters, the daughters of men they knew in Italy or had met here, beginning the long and often difficult process of creating a unique and virile breed of native West Virginians.

Left: A snapshot taken in 1979 from a porch in San Giovanni in Fiore.

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FRIDAY EVENING, AUGUST 31, 1979

Section 1 of 2

PRICE: FIFTEEN CENTS

Festival Crowds Surprise Officials

Downtown Area Becomes 'Midway'

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"That's Italian!"
And there was no one who doubted it as thousands of persons jammed the "midway" on Main Street around the Courthouse today for the start of the West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival.
Even officials were surprised at the large turnout for the start of the three-day affair.
Irish Dan McCarthy, president of the Harrison County Commission, fittingly gave the address of welcome to his Italian neighbors and friends.
"Someone spoke of 30,000 or 50,000 people coming here for the festival," said McCarthy and he predicted: "Tomorrow there will be 70,000 here."
They came, young and old; mothers leading youngsters and telling them it was "too early to eat a pepperoni."
The older visitors walked more sedately and were selective as they viewed Italian glassware and art.
The brilliant Italian colors — red, white and green — reflected the bright sunlight. The weatherman cooperated

for the opening, giving the area its first "real" summer in weeks.
Men walked around, smiling, with buttons of invitation: "I'm Italian. Kiss me."
Young girls were more appealing with white tee-shirts and red letters, spelling out the same message.
The festive, happy air of the noon-hour was filled with the aroma of Italian cooking. Meals were in demand in keeping with the time of day. One of the favorite pick-up-and-carry delicacies was "Italian Hillbilly Hot Dogs," Mountaineer style.
Nothing was missed to give the setting an Italian flavor. Even the garbage cans were painted red, white and green.
The focal point for the opening ceremonies was the Courthouse plaza which was jammed with several thousand persons, gathered to hear the welcoming addresses and witness the crowning of Miss Mary Frances Beto as Regina Maria I by Secretary of State A.
(Continued 2-A, Col. 5)

City Streets Marketplace Of Old Italy

P You could get a "shine" and sip a glass of wine, all at the same time on Third Street in Clarksburg this afternoon.
The weatherman, surely a descendant of Italian prophets, smiled on the City and the breeze carried aromas reminiscent of Italian kitchens. Colorful stands lined the streets and delighted festival goers greeted each other in traditional accents. Everything palatable was prepared and served to the hungry crowds:
Early Friday morning, area businesses were busy setting up their stands along Main and Third Street. Luscious peaches were available, crisp red



MAIN STREET JAMMED—Even Clarksburg's officialdom was amazed today at the size of the crowds which jammed Main Street and the Harrison County Courthouse plaza, above, for the start of the West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival. Thousands crowded the plaza area for opening ceremonies. One of the novelty attractions, left, was organ-grinder Joe (Boscio) Buch of Willingboro, N. J. With his white-faced Capuchin monkey, "Guiseppe," a real crowd pleaser. The festival will continue Saturday.

Barber Verdict Said 'Ludicrous'

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Plans for appeals were on the lips of J. Richard Barber's attorney just after he learned the former state li-

President Home For Weekend

PLAINS, Ga. (AP) — President Carter is home



BUS VICTIMS TREATED—First aid is administered to one of the 16 persons (foreground, right) injured Thursday when a Greyhound bus turned over on its side on U. S. Route 19, near West Milford, after being forced off the

highway by an unidentified car. Not far away, near Jackson's Mill in Lewis County, a 31-year-old mother and her three children were rescued after their car plunged into the West Fork River. See picture of car on Page 2-A.

Mother, 3 Children Trapped

Downtown

(Continued from Page One)

James Manchin.

Other events occupied the throngs during the afternoon hours.

One of the main attractions was the booths, bearing Italian wares, which lined both sides of Main Street from the Sheraton Inn to Fourth Street. Most were well-patronized.

The Italian Gardens featured \$7 dinners with foods to suit the taste of even the most discriminating. Authentic Italian cooking by Clarksburg's own Italian families, the sign said.

Italian music was the only thing missing during the morning hours and that was taken care of later in the day.

Opening ceremonies of the festival began with an invocation by the Rev. Father Emil Dobosz, the singing of the American National Anthem by Charles Freeman and the reciting in unison of the Pledge of Allegiance.

This was followed by the introduction by emcee John Peters of Clarksburg, Mayor Arch N. Benninger, who read a proclamation, signed by City Manager Patsy Trecost and members of Clarksburg City Council, stating that the festival reflects the bravery of Italian ancestors who left their homeland to come to the United States.

The city officials proclaimed they are "proud to be part of this ethnic folk revival" and "we urge all to take part in the festivities."

Benninger presented the proclamation to Frank Iaquina, president of the festival committee, who said: "Benvenuto!... You have responded as I knew you would... All I have to say is 'enjoy yourself!'"

Members of the court of Regina Maria I, including the maid of honor, princesses, maids of honor, crown bearer and scepter bearer, were then presented, followed by the introduction of the queen herself, Miss Mary Frances Beto.

West Virginia Secretary of State A. James Manchin, who was next introduced to crown Regina Maria I and greeted the thousands of spectators in Italian, said: "In the name of the people of West Virginia and on behalf of the festival committee, I do hereby crown you, Regina Maria Uno, to reign over all that is beautiful and good... You are the pride of America, the pride of Italy, the pride of West Virginia."

"Queen Mary, you are now an ambassador of good will of the State of West Virginia."

Manchin concluded, saying, "Viva Italia! Viva America!"

Other dignitaries, including Gov. Jay Rockefeller and U. S. Senator Jennings Randolph, along with baseball Hall-of-Famer Joe DiMaggio as grand parade marshal and the Most Rev. Joseph Hodges, bishop of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese, will be on hand Saturday during the parade.

Also Saturday, Rockefeller and Randolph, who are expected to be joined by

Senator Robert C. Byrd, will be using the festival as an opportunity to make an announcement regarding the purchase of Brockway Glass Co. by the Anchor Hocking Co. in the main courtroom of the Harrison County Courthouse at 1 p.m.

The three-day event, which has attracted Gov. Jay Rockefeller, baseball great Joe DiMaggio, the Most Rev. Bishop Joseph H. Hodges, Bishop of the Wheeling-Charleston diocese and others, has been described as the city's most notable community effort in recent years.

Hotels and motels in the area were reported "sold out," as visitors arrived by plane and car as well as by the bus load.

Even the weatherman appeared to be cooperating as partly cloudy skies were forecast with only a 20 percent chance of rain for the inaugural parade on Saturday. The chance of rain today, at opening ceremonies, is 10 percent.

DiMaggio, will be honorary parade marshal and will ride with Rockefeller. Also participating will be Bishop Hodges, U. S. Senator Jennings Randolph, Rep. Robert C. Mollohan and A. James Manchin, Secretary of State.

The organizing committee for the festival, whose members estimated the number of visitors, said response to the event has been so outstanding that they plan to make it an annual affair. Next year's festival will be "bigger and better," they say.

With West Main Street blocked off from Fifth Street to the Sheraton Inn, there was some confusion as early morning travelers arrived in the downtown area. But this was resolved as they took alternate routes. Main Street will be opened to normal traffic on Sunday.

The Romona Rose Dancers were to appear on the courthouse stage at 11:30 a.m. today and there was to be a puppet performance on the stage from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

The Grande Costume Show from 19 Provinces of Italy were to be held 2-3 p.m., while jugglers, dancers, an organ grinder, music, food, wine tasting, free hot air balloon rides and arts and crafts were featured after this until 5 p.m.

Performing at 5 p.m. were to be the Calabrian Singers & Dancers of New York City, with free hot air balloons rides resuming at 6:30 and continuing until 8 p.m. The Renaissance street festivities will take place between 7 and 8:30 p.m. with the free Jerry Vale concert on Main Street to begin at 9 p.m.

A fireworks display will be provided at the conclusion of the concert at about 10:45 p.m. The fireworks will be set off from Lowndes Hill.

Saturday's events will begin at 11 a.m. with the parade, followed by the awards ceremony on the courthouse plaza.