

# Produced by the former European Interest Group of the NZSG



## RESEARCH IN ITALY

2020

Determine the place of origin of your ancestor.

Italian records are not centralized therefore before any research can be undertaken, you need to first establish the exact town or village (*comune*) and province / county (*provincia*) that your ancestor was born in or that a particular event occurred in.

The golden rule of genealogy is to always work back from the known to the unknown. Therefore, the place of origin of your ancestor should be looked for in New Zealand records, or if your family came via Australia or Britain then in those records.

The place of origin of your ancestor should be mentioned on N.Z. birth and death certificates after 1876 and on N.Z. marriage certificates after 1882. It should appear in naturalisation papers so if your ancestor became naturalised then the full file for this should be applied for.

It may also appear in an obituary, on a headstone, in army records, shipping lists, as well of course as family sources. If the family were in Britain then the census there may show the place of origin.

The two most important types of records for Italian research are civil registration and church records.

### Civil Registration

State registration of births, deaths and marriages began in many areas in 1806 with the arrival of Napoleon. As Napoleon gained control the new system was introduced over most of Italy. After his defeat in 1815 many areas discontinued civil registration.

Napoleonic records were kept in:

- the Papal States comprising Molise, Abruzzo, Lazio, Umbria, Marche and Emilia Romagna, and in Toscana for the period 1810 to 1814.
- Napoli, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria for the period 1810 to 1814.
- Veneto and Lombardia for the period 1806 to 1815.
- Piemonte for the period 1804 to 1814.

After 1815 civil registration continued in Napoli, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Toscana and Abruzzo. It began again in 1839 in Ducato di Savoia (part of Piemonte). Registration began in Sicilia in 1820. In areas under Austrian rule such as Veneto, Trento-Alto-Adige and parts of Lombardia the parish priests took over civil registration.

Civil registration for the whole of Italy began with its unification in 1866.

Civil registration is done at the local registrar's office (*anagrafe*) of the *comune* where the event took place. Registrations are recorded in duplicate. Ten-year indexes (*indici decennali*) are usually produced.

Napoleonic records and records up to 1865 are now held in the *tribunale* (county court) and the provincial archives. Most have been filmed by LDS.

Events since 1866 can be found in the *comune* at the *ufficio di stato civile* and in the *tribunale*, which is where the duplicate copies have been sent. The records are progressively becoming available on FamilySearch and Ancestry.com.

Copies of births, deaths and marriages, when requested from a civil registry, can be in one of two formats. In the case a birth, there is the Civil Birth Certificate (*certificato di nascita*) and the Extract of Civil Birth Act (*estratto per riassunto dell'atto di nascita*). The Extract contains more information. Extracts of Civil Birth Acts frequently have marginal notes (*annotazioni marginali*) recording when the person married, died or emigrated.

### Details in civil registers

**Births (*nati /nascite*):** will show the child's name, sex, place, date and time of birth; the names of the parents (the mother in her maiden name), birthplaces, ages, occupations and the family's place of residence. The baptism date is usually included in the civil birth record.

**Marriages (*matrimoni*):** include the date and place of marriage; the names of the couple, their ages and place of birth, addresses and occupations;

names of their parents and whether deceased or alive; and the names of the presiding priest or town official and of witnesses.

**Marriage Banns (*pubblicazioni, notificazioni*):** include supporting documents such as records proving the birth details of the couple and their parents.

**Deaths (*morte/morti*):** will show the deceased's name, place, date and time of death; their age, birthplace, residential address and occupation; and the names of their spouses and parents.

### Parish Registers

The Roman Catholic Church was the state church. Church records (*registri ecclesiastici*) of baptisms, marriages and burials generally survive from 1595 and are usually located in the individual parishes. They are under the supervision of the parish priest. Occasionally records have been moved to the diocesan archives (*curia vescovile*). Duplicates, when they exist, are normally located in the diocesan archives.

### Details in parish Registers

**Baptisms (*battesimi*):** from the early 1800's these are in pre-printed volumes and include the date of birth and baptism, the child's names (middle names can be that of a saint) and the names of the parents (the mother in her maiden name). The act was witnessed by the two godparents.

**Marriages (*matrimoni*):** from the early 1800's include the full names of the couple, details of the banns, parent's names and two witnesses.

**Burials (*sepolture*):** recorded the date of death, the deceased's names, age and profession, the names of spouses and sometimes parents. The act was signed by two witnesses.

**Church Census (*stato delle anime*):** list all family members living in a household. The records were required for tax purposes.

## What you already know

Surname

Christian name

Country

County/Province

Town/Parish

Birth date

Marriage date

Arrival in NZ

Year

Children born not in NZ

Parents

## NZ Certificates to obtain

Birth .....

Marriage .....

Death .....

Naturalization ....

Military in NZ ....

## Check List

Hamburg Passenger Lists

UK Census

UK Alien Arrival

UK Naturalization

Archives

## Map of Italy showing Present day Regions

Each Region is divided into Provinces (*Provincia*).

There are 103 Provinces.



### European Interest Contact

Send research queries to the Contact on the **European Interest Contact** page at [www.genealogy.org.nz](http://www.genealogy.org.nz)

A group meets on the 1st Friday of most months at the Family Research Centre at 159 Queens Rd, Panmure from 4pm- 10pm. Continental advice is usually available, however please first check with the Contact to be quite sure.

### Websites

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) FamilySearch

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) Pay to view

### Recommended Reading

Cole, Trafford R., *Italian Genealogical Records : How to Use Italian Civil, Ecclesiastical & Other Records in Family History Research*.

**FamilySearch.org** Research Wiki for information on records, how to use them and links to various archives.