

Database Will Feature Italian Immigrants
Project an effort to connect descendants with their past
Thursday, March 9, 2006

By Daniel DeVries
Staff writer
The Schenectady Gazette (Schenectady, NY)

Montgomery County's earliest Italian immigrant fought in the Civil War and was awarded citizenship after being wounded, said Peter Farina, a city man indexing historical records of Italians in the area.

After flipping through dusty pages of documents at the Montgomery County Department of History and Archives this summer, Amsterdam resident Peter Farina found that the earliest Italian immigrant on file, Rego Carazza, came from Northern Italy in 1861 and earned his citizenship in 1865.

"He was wounded [in the battle of Cedar Run in Virginia,]" Farina said.

"And after being mustered out in 1865 he was granted citizenship and lived in the town of Mohawk," Farina said of his findings.

Farina's work, indexing all of Montgomery, Schoharie, Fulton, and Hamilton counties' Italian immigrants is taking shape.

"The database is going to be completely free and online this summer for those four counties," Farina said. **[You can view them on his website at www.UpstateNYItalians.com.]**

"Basically, I feel [that,] to preserve the Italian culture and get in touch with your roots, you [first] need to [know] where you came from."

Farina has been working to copy the names of each Italian immigrant who applied for citizenship in each of the four counties.

With each name comes the village or town they came from, what boat was taken to arrive in the United States, and where they lived at the time, Farina said.



Above, Pete Farina scours Montgomery County Department of History and Archives' records for information on residents of Italian descent in this 2005 photograph.

“It’s an entire process, but the end product is this interactive database,” Farina said.

Farina will appear on **“The Salvatore Megna Show,”** an Italian theme show on radio station WVTL, 1570 AM, at 11:15 a.m. Sunday to discuss his work.

Farina will also appear on cable access channel 16 at 10:00 a.m. on Monday for **“Schenectady Today.”**

The broadcast will replay a 6 p.m. Monday.

Farina started the database project after creating a web-based newsletter to connect descendants of Guardiaregia, a small village of about 750 people in the province of Campobasso.

Farina said the newsletter, **“MondoGuardiaregia”** [available free at www.Guardiaregia.com,] has grown to include more than 300 recipients.

[To contact Farina or to see online versions of the radio and Television broadcasts, you can visit his website at: www.italyMONDO.com]

Reach Gazette reporter Daniel DeVries at 843-2830 or ddevries@dailygazette.net