



# THE CRACO SOCIETY

## FEBRUARY IN CRACO VECCHIO

### CONTENTS CONTENUTO

- February in Craco Vecchio
- Craco's Ancient Property Records
- In Memoriam
- Domenico Borgia
- Society Financial Report
- Membership
- [Contact us-  
Contattateci](#)



Craco Stemma

In the cycle of life in Craco Vecchio that was tied to the land and church February was a quiet month as the earth remained silent and cold. Cracotans prepared for the Lenten season and the fasting that accompanies Lent.

The Earth: In the fields, the grain and “fave” would be hoed with the “zappa”.

The Church: “Carnevale” continued until Mardi Gras when all cooking utensils were washed in a pot of hot ashes to remove all traces of fat. Ash Wednesday would start the Lenten season with fasting.

The photo above, although not a February scene serves to illustrate the topography of the area. Looking at it, the rolling countryside is clearly the main feature. A closer look reveals that the vegetation, including cactus that is typical of the semi-arid conditions around Craco. Yet the soil supports cultivated crops producing wonderful harvests of some of the finest wheat. This explains why the Craco stemma shows an arm holding stalks of wheat in front of a rolling hillside. And reportedly it is the reason Craco was originally called Montedoro (Hill of Gold) because of the abundant grain harvest even back then.

With immigration to America at the turn of the 20th Century, Crachesi found the metropolitan locations they settled impacted their annual cycle. There weren't many fields to hoe in Lower Manhattan and no jobs there as farm labourers. However, within a decade, as people moved to the suburbs they invariably all planted gardens of kitchen crops and fruit trees.

The church cycle was easier to keep as the events were universal. The difference may have been that rather than celebrating these events in their isolated hilltop village they were now exposed Italians from other areas with different traditions.





## CRACO'S ANCIENT PROPERTY RECORDS

The Society has three property records that are genealogy tools helping to identify individuals in the town during the years the documents were created. They were all presented to the Society during the 2008 visit to the town.

### 1830 Catasti Onciari

Although only the first volume of the 1830 Catasti has been indexed by the Society it contains records for the surnames beginning with letters A-M providing 272 images with details about property owners. Additionally, on these records are the names of other individuals inhabiting the town who were involved in transactions with the property owner either from a transfer or rent. In totality there are 705 names of individuals on this segment of the records. Some are duplications representing individuals owning more than one piece of property. The remaining segment from N-Z, although not indexed yet, is available to provide information about property owners with surnames in those letters.

The document is in ledger form with pre-printed columns and headings to record items that were tabulated in the records. At the top of a page was a handwritten name for the property holder in alphabetical sequence by surname. This heading line also contains the first name and other details to identify the individual. Below that line are preprinted headings that identify the location of the property, describe the property, other tangible assets, and values.

The index is on the Society [GENEALOGY](#) webpage. Members can access the list of names and request copies or assistance by contacting: [memberservices@thecracosociety.org](mailto:memberservices@thecracosociety.org)

### 1807 Registro Contribuzione Fondiaria

In the Kingdom of Naples, during the "decade of French" (1806-1815), the state delivered a series of reforms,



**1807 Map of Craco** — The map shown above is from the 1807 Registro Contribuzione Fondiaria. This beautiful watercolor on parchment, showing the main roads and churches in the town, is fully described on the [Society website](#).

including tax reform. Laws abolished the many old and cumbersome contributions replacing them with a single land tax. In order to apply the new legislation a first register of land records of contributions were written by special enforcement officers.

The Craco 1807 Registro Contribuzione Fondiaria represents this instrument and is divided into six geographical sections for the town. Property owners are listed in each area they owned taxable property.

Though not indexed these records are available to members and can be researched on request by contacting: [memberservices@thecracosociety.org](mailto:memberservices@thecracosociety.org)

### 1753 Catasti Onciari

Copies of the records for any of the 1263 names listed in the indexed file of this oldest of the public property records is available to members. To access the index go to the Society's [GENEALOGY](#) webpage.

**1830 Catasti Record** — shown left is an example of a record for Pasquale LoCaso, illustrating the heading and tabulated columns identifying the individual and information about him; a shepherd (pastore), a small land owner (piccolo), residing in the Santa Lucia section of town.

DENOMINAZIONE della natura e delle colture, delle proprietà.	DENOMINAZ. delle PROPRIETA' o de' luoghi in cui sono situate.	ESTENSIONE DELLE TERRE			RENDITA NETTA		RILANCIO.	MOTIVI di CARICO o DICARICO.
		1. Class.	2. Class.	3. Class.	Colonna di carico.	Colonna di sicario.		
7. 261. Piccolo	Spina				2.96			

## IN MEMORIAM



† *With Our Ancestors*  
*Angelo Grossi*

*January 29, 1946 - January 7, 2022*

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Angelo Grossi one of our Founding Members.

Angelo was born in Craco on January 27, 1946. He and his wife Caterina attended the Society's events and meetings regularly. Besides impacting his family, Angelos's passing is a great loss to all of us in the Society.

His kind smile and warm personality will be missed by us whenever we gather.

## DOMENICO BORGIA—SCULPTING OUR HISTORY



Domenico Borgia, 1906

Janice Carapellucci, a commercial artist and author, who has been following the story of a relative, the noted artist [Donatus Bongiorno](#), provided us with additional information about the history of The Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood.

Carapellucci, is working on a new book, tentatively titled, “Art in the Church” hoping to publish it in 2022. Included in the material are sections about Saint Joachim Church, Roosevelt Street, and St. Joseph’s (San Giuseppe) Church along with the Most Precious Blood Church.

During the research she uncovered the story of [Domenico Borgia](#) and posted it on the website she maintains.

Janice describes Borgia as, “*Design-build architect and sculptor Domenico Borgia ran a highly successful family business providing a specific item—works in marble—to the construction trades in New York City circa 1900, perhaps working primarily with Italian speaking clients: priests buying altars for churches, undertakers needing head stones and mausoleums, general contractors needing showpiece marble fixtures, such as elaborate staircases.*

*Like mural painter Donatus Buongiorno (though exponentially more successful, financially), he was another educated, technically skilled Italian American business man who was trained in Italy before migrating and had a successful career in the U.S., though possibly invisible to the general populace, because he often worked in non-English-speaking U.S. communities, probably in his native Italian language.*

His connection to our history is through the Most Precious Blood Church. Janice’s blog explains, “*In 1903–1904, Borgia provided a collection of marble fixtures for Most Precious Blood Church on Baxter Street in New York City for \$5,750.00 (all extant): a marble altar with multiple steps and columns, crowned with a freestanding Crucifixion sculpture on top, and with a bas relief Last Supper sculpture on the front face of its base, decorative mosaic patterns overall, and a supporting brick work foundation in the base-*



Altar, Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood, New York, New York. Photograph ©2017 William Russo, all rights reserved.

*ment below. Also in the sanctuary are a communion rail and patterned floor of similar designs, most likely by Borgia, though not articulated in his contract with the church. Now removed, in the past there was a sculpted pulpit which was presumably provided by Borgia.”*

Janice also suspects that Borgia was responsible for the altar at St. Joseph’s Church (now closed) because of the use of multiple colors of marble, 3-tower design, sculpted figures, and mosaic insets which characterized his style. Although she has not been able to document that it is interesting that Borgia was involved in building the churches that were to house our statue and relic of San Vincenzo Martire di Craco.

As she is finishing off the research on the forthcoming book she invites anyone who has information, photographs, or stories about the churches or their construction to contact her. Janice can be reached through her [website](#) or by [email](#).

## NEW MEMBERS

Michael (LoSinno/Colabella) Curtotti—Narrabundah, Australia  
Gerald Lepis—Jersey City, NJ  
Sally (Guariglia) Oberly—Honolulu, Hawaii



## SOCIETY FINANCIAL REPORT

The year ending 2021 marks the fourteenth year of the Society’s operations. During last year the Society reduced Operating Expenses. Income declined due to the lower dues participation and no San Vincenzo fund raising event because of Covid restrictions. Annually, the Society files required state and federal regulatory reports but for members’ interest we are providing the following information for the past ten years.

	31-Dec-21	31-Dec-20	31-Dec-19	31-Dec-18	31-Dec-17	31-Dec-16	31-Dec-15	31-Dec-14	31-Dec-13	31-Dec-12
Cash	\$ 271	\$ 844	\$ 962	\$ 2,412	\$ 1,865	\$ 2,679	\$ 2,987	\$ 4,626	\$ 2,629	\$ 4,451
Other Assets	\$ 28,148	\$ 28,133	\$ 28,133	\$ 28,197	\$ 30,644	\$ 30,556	\$ 28,442	\$ 3,402	\$ 1,080	\$ 1,005
Surplus	\$ 22,211	\$ 23,460	\$ 23,578	\$ 26,543	\$ 30,211	\$ 32,610	\$ 33,009	\$ 8,028	\$ 3,684	\$ 5,456
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 6,232	\$ 4,665	\$ 9,980	\$ 10,716	\$ 7,992	\$ 13,076	\$ 16,915	\$ 10,797	\$ 14,099	\$ 8,302
Operating Exp.	\$ 3,072	\$ 3,240	\$ 3,475	\$ 4,751	\$ 4,080	\$ 7,240	\$ 5,341	\$ 6,522	\$ 5,691	\$ 4,677
Other Exp.	\$ 3,160	\$ 1,425	\$ 6,504	\$ 5,965	\$ 3,912	\$ 5,836	\$ 11,574	\$ 4,275	\$ 9,166	\$ 3,605
<b>Income</b>	\$ 5,689	\$ 4,460	\$ 9,250	\$ 11,632	\$ 8,382	\$ 12,289	\$ 16,319	\$ 14,395	\$ 11,825	\$ 9,414
Dues Inc.	\$ 1,660	\$ 2,635	\$ 3,520	\$ 1,949	\$ 2,872	\$ 3,225	\$ 3,800	\$ 4,058	\$ 3,477	\$ 3,950
Event Inc.	\$ 935	\$ -	\$ 3,925	\$ 6,331	\$ 3,180	\$ 6,360	\$ 3,025	\$ 4,850	\$ 7,315	\$ 3,673
<b>Oper. Gain/Loss</b>	\$ (543)	\$ (205)	\$ (730)	\$ 916	\$ 390	\$ (787)	\$ (596)	\$ 3,598	\$ (2,274)	\$ 1,112
<b>Members</b>	\$ 531	526	518	506	492	487	484	474	463	438

# Annual Membership

# Annual

Support from members allows The Craco Society to **Preserve the Culture, Traditions and History of the Ancient Town of Craco, Italy** in North America. We are looking for you to join us too in continuing that effort.

Recognized by the World Monuments Fund as a Watch List Site, the Historic Center of Craco (Centro Storico di Craco) now has global recognition. If you or your ancestors come from this millennium old village, consider the importance of exposing your family to the unique heritage of this town and its people.

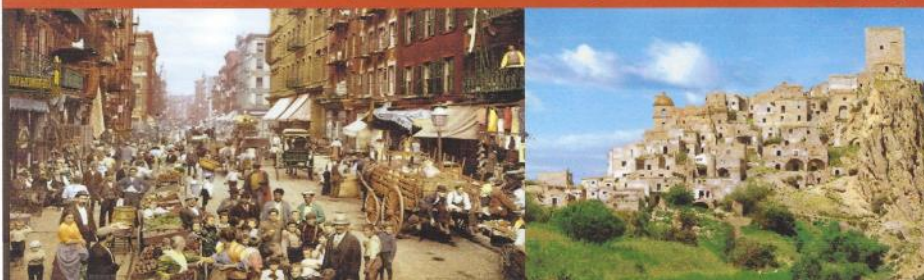
**Do You Have Craco in Your Blood?  
You Need The Craco Society in Your Life!**

## Member Benefits

- Monthly eNewsletter subscription
- Assistance with Geneology Research & Craco Family Tree Database
- Access to Historic Documents & Italian Property Records
- Invitation to Annual San Vincenzo Mass & Feast in New York

Individuals \$25 | Households \$50 | Extended Families \$100

Renew / Join Us <https://cracosociety.net/Membership.php>



THE CRACO SOCIETY

*Thank you to all those Members who have made their dues payments.*

*If you haven't made your payment for this year, please take the time to do it now.*

HOW TO CONTACT US—COME CONTATTARCI



The Craco Society  
14 Earl Road  
East Sandwich, MA 02537 USA



www.thecracosociety.org  
E-mail: memberservices@thecracosociety.org

