



# THE CRACO SOCIETY

## APRIL IN CRACO VECCHIO

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April in Craco Vecchio was dominated by the Lenten observance and the celebration of Easter. The work relating to the fields and earth was minimal as the planting was completed for the first crops.

However, the activity level at the church was greater.

Holy Week was a very special time of religious observation. There were special foods made during Holy Week: “biscotti con finocchio”, “biscotti con le uova”, “pupa” (doll-shaped cookies for kids) or “borsette” (purses) made with hard boiled eggs.

On Holy Thursday, 12 young boys would have their feet washed by the priest at the church as a symbol of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.



**Good Friday Procession**—this procession in front of the houses belonging to the Lapilla, Montemurro, Colabella, Grieco, and Consoli families.

Good Friday always commemorated the death of Jesus by a “processione”. This started as two separate processions – one led by a man symbolizing Jesus, the other, led by a woman symbolic of his mother Mary. Winding through laneways past the Church of the Madonna del Monserrato, they joined in the piazza as a symbol of Jesus

meeting his mother as He carried the cross to His death. The photographs, provided by Filippo Francavilla, to the left and below show these events in 1962.

During the procession timeless chants were sung. On Easter Sunday it was customary to eat hard boiled eggs and “soppressata” for antipasto, then “capretto” (goat) or agnello (lamb) would be served, always followed by a “dolce” (cake). Children would kiss the hands of the elders who would give them hard boiled eggs or money.



**Women's Good Friday Procession**—starting from the Chiesa Madre (Church of San Nicola)



## QUANDO VEDI CRACO NON CREDI AI TUOI OCCHI



### WHEN YOU SEE CRACO YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES

[Basilicata Turistica](#), the organization billing themselves as, “The official Facebook page for those who love Lucania and holidays in Basilicata” recently posted a series of Facebook images of the region. Included in them was a wonderful image of Craco (above) with a tantalizing heading.

### NEW MEMBERS

Christopher Rossini—New Windsor, NY

Jennifer Rossini—New Windsor, NY

Lauren Rossini—New Windsor, NY

Matteo Rossini—Ballston Lake, NY

Tyler Rossini—Ballston Lake, NY



## LEONARD COVELLO—A SAVIOR OF ITALIAN AMERICAN CULTURE

Leonard Covello was a New York City educator known for his innovative work and observations of the Italian experience in America.

Recently, Joe Rinaldi, the Society president was contacted by Carmen Petruzzi, a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the University of Foggia about Covello and a program being developed there to recognize his contributions.

Leonard Covello (originally Leonardo Coviello, born 1887, Avigliano, Potenza, died 1982, Messina, Sicily) immigrated with his parents in 1896 settling in the East Harlem section of the Borough of the Bronx in New York City.

Against great difficulties, he was able to progress through the education system graduating from Columbia College. He served in WWI as a translator and entered teaching at DeWitt Clinton High School in New York City.

His experiences there developed his philosophy that the bilingualism and biculturalism he observed were the means to facilitate the transition of children from immigrants to integrated citizens without separating them from their native communities or culture, and arousing in them the pride of their roots.

In 1922 he created the Department of Italian at DeWitt Clinton High School and became First Assistant in Modern Languages. In 1934, he was given the responsibility, under then New York City Mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia, of creating a community centered neighborhood high school organized around his educational principles. That was the foundation of Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem, one of the centers of Italian immigration in New York City at that time.

Covello was not only the school's principal but committed to a vast amount of activity disseminating his educational theories through lectures and establishing Italian cultural groups. During this period he served as an Adjunct Professor at New York University, from which he received his doctorate in 1944. His doctoral thesis, "The Social Background of the Italo-American School Child" was also published in book form.

Besides his educational work he was heavily involved in the Italian community founding or influencing most of the prominent Italian organizations in the City at the time.

By the end of the 1940s the East Harlem neighborhood was changing with the growing presence of Puerto Ricans. He fought in favor of racial integration and also adopted the same principles towards this community that

he had developed and experimented in the 20s and 30s for the Italian one.

In 1956 he retired as principal of Franklin High School and accepted a consulting position at the Migration Division of the Puerto Rican Department of Labor. He also engaged in social work for the elderly of the neighborhood.

In 1972 at the invitation of [Danilo Dolci](#), an Italian non-violent social activist, he returned to Italy, and applied his educational methods to the Sicilian boys Dolci's Center for Study and Action. Covello died on August 19, 1982 in Messina.

The recipient of numerous awards, his achievements might be best summarized by Columbia University Medal for Distinguished Service awarded in 1970 which says, "Declared by generations of his professional peers to be one of New York City's greatest educators, having demonstrated a quarter of a century ago that a large urban high school can serve its whole community; a man who throughout his career as teacher, principal, and consultant has demonstrated vitality of our great ideal of equal, excellent, integrated education for people of all races, creeds, and conditions..."

Covello's life and work is told in his 1958 autobiography, "[The Heart is the Teacher](#)." This book is still seen as a resource to deal with similar challenges today for thinking about both immigration and education. His reflections about supporting families, helping balance them with new American cultures and with old traditions are insightful. In addition, Covello's stories from his time as a student and teacher demonstrate that while school and community could increase tensions in immigrant families, they could also serve as centers of assimilation.

### International Conference September/October 2022

The University of Foggia, in collaboration with the Federation of Lucanians in America, the City of Avigliano, the Calandra Institute of New York, and in partnership with public and private entities, is organizing an international conference on the 40th anniversary of the death of Leonard Covello.

Currently, planned are two days of conference meetings held between the University of Foggia Department of Humanities and the Municipality of Avigliano which will be attended by invited guests to highlight the history of Southern Italian migration and the work of Leonard Covello.



Leonard Covello

### CAN YOU HELP?

The conference organizers are looking for help in developing background material about Covello.

Do you have:

- Films or photographs of Benjamin Franklin High School
- Stories or personal experiences about Leonard Covello
- Something related to Italian American culture, family histories or documents related to Leonard Covello

Please contact:

Carmen Petruzzi  
PhD Fellow Researcher

University of Foggia

Email: [carmen.petruzzi@unifg.it](mailto:carmen.petruzzi@unifg.it)

## ITALIAN INTERNMENT CAMPS IN THE US

Recently, the Washington Examiner published an article about the lack of awareness of Italian Americans being interned in the US during WWII.

On Feb. 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued an Executive establishing internment camps. Many today cite this as government racism, with internment of the Japanese. However, the plight of interned people of Italian descent, people from a country that, unlike Japan, did not attack U.S. soil before the war, is often ignored.

By January 1942, at least 600,000 Italians and Italian Americans, some of them legal residents or even U.S. citizens, were classified as enemy **aliens**. About 1,600 Italian citizens, were put into internment camps in Missoula, Montana, and Ellis Island. As a result of security concerns in coastal areas, about 10,000 Italian-Americans were forced to relocate from their homes along the California **coast** and move inland.

Even though the number of interned people of European descent was considerably less than the nearly 110,000 Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans interned, it should not be overlooked the way it was. In 2004, the "Treatment of Japanese-American Internment During World War II in U.S. History Textbooks," a study by Masato Ogawa, was **published**. Ogawa writes that history textbooks "exclude the information that nationals of Germany and Italy were interned."

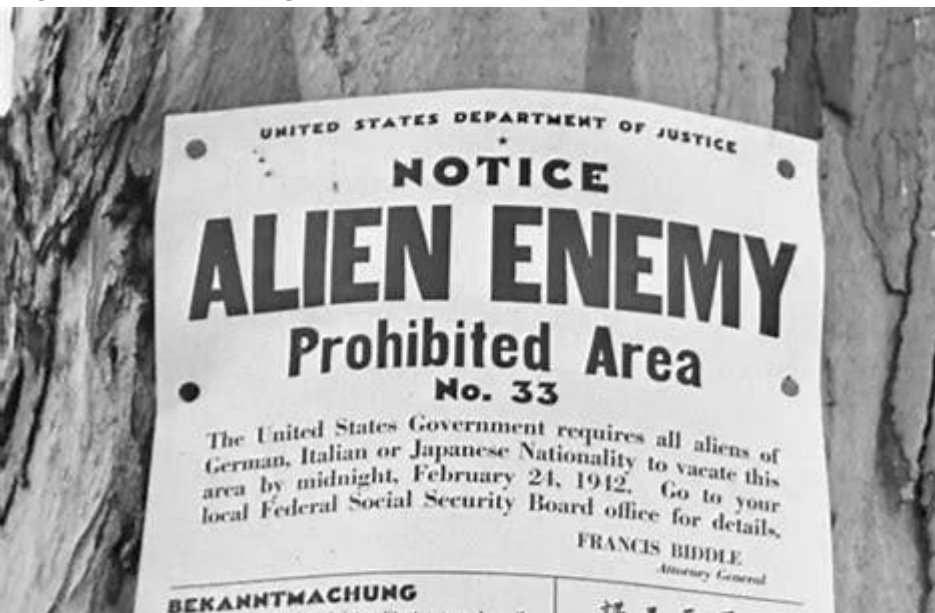
When discussing the basis of internment in the U.S., it is prudent to acknowledge the different acts of war committed against the U.S. by Japan (which attacked U.S. soil) and by Germany and Italy, which declared war on the U.S. after that attack.

There have been efforts to right the historic wrongs of internment. In 1988, for example, the U.S. government officially apologized for the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II blaming "race, prejudice, war hysteria, and failure of political leadership." **Survivors were paid** \$20,000 each in reparations.

In 2000, the **106th Congress** passed the Wartime Violation of Italian American Civil Liberties Act. It urged the "President, on behalf of the Government, to formally acknowledge that these events during World War II represented a fundamental injustice against Italian Americans." It was signed by President Bill Clinton on Nov. 7, 2000, although no reparations were offered.

In November 2003, then U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer submitted a **resolution** to support the goals of "the Japanese American, German American, and Italian American communities in recognizing a National Day of Remembrance to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the restriction, exclusion, and internment of individuals and families during World War II."

As of February 2022, the interned people of German, Czech, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian descent have yet to receive any apology or acknowledgment from the U.S. government.



### BUONA PASQUAI!

With Easter arriving on April 17th the Society extends warmest wishes for a Happy Easter. We pass along a traditional recipe enjoyed by Cracotans during this season.

#### PIZZA RUSTICA



##### Dough

2<sup>1/2</sup> lbs. flour

1tbsp. salt

1<sup>3/4</sup> sticks butter melted then cooled

Crumble butter into flour & salt then make well in the center and add

4 beaten eggs

2 oz. olive oil

1 cup warm water, add more if needed

Knead until smooth ball forms

##### Filling

3 links semi-dry sausage cut in small pieces without casings

3lbs. Ricotta

<sup>3/4</sup> lbs. mozzarella

<sup>3/4</sup> lbs. wet basket cheese

<sup>1/2</sup> lbs. dry basket cheese

6-8 eggs+2 egg whites (reserve yolks)

Fresh parsley

Grated Romano cheese

Mix well in a bowl

Use a deep 12" pizza pan. Roll out enough dough to cover bottom and sides of pan. Fill with mixture. Roll out remaining dough to form cover for the pan. Crimp edges, prick with a fork and brush with the beaten reserved egg yolks. Bake 1 hour.

Enjoy!

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