



The Crachesi in New York 1901-1910

The massive wave of Crachesi arriving in the first decade of the 20th century were part of 8.8 million immigrants arriving in the US during this period.

In New York City, public and private projects provided improvements in living conditions and the infrastructure of the city while offering work to many immigrant laborers.

Subway construction on two new rail lines scheduled for completion in 1915 were designed to further open access to the Boroughs of the Bronx and Queens. Trains had been running to Brooklyn since the mid-1860s.

Although health conditions improved with sanitary systems that reduced illnesses like cholera and typhus, there were still problems with diseases stemming from the crowded living conditions. In Manhattan, 70% of the population was living in 83,000 tenement buildings. During this 10 year period the major causes of death in NYC were tuberculosis, scarlet fever, measles, and also included 32,000 infant deaths.

With all the new immigrants arriving, marriages in the City grew to 38,000 from 1901-1905 and then to 45,000 from 1906 – 1910. Consequently, births grew to 129,000 and 144,000 during these same time periods.

The Crachesi contributed to these statistics with many new families being formed in this era. Following the old practice of marrying someone from your “paese” (village) there were ample opportunities in New York with more Cracotans living in the City than in Craco. During this period there were also trips back to Craco by single men that resulted in weddings there and a return to America with a new wife. The families formed during this period would become the foundation for the American born children who were the beneficiaries of changes and opportunities that emerged in the 20th century.

“For the Crachesi immigrants, New York City provided a world of opportunities...”

For the Crachesi immigrants, New York City provided a world of opportunities including entrepreneurship in many forms. Many started in a small way as pushcart men selling fruits, vegetables, groceries, or collecting scrap and junk and were able to grow and establish retail stores, restaurants, saloons, or become paper stock and rag dealers. Others with skills used them to start their own ventures in construction, barber shops, and medicine.

But life in New York still revolved around the same time tested characteristics of the Crachesi—family and church, but instead of the farming traditions, a new social entity took its place, the mutual aid society. These were formed by many immigrants to maintain their traditions and to meet each other’s needs with assistance. Many of these organizations still survive to this day in the form of social clubs or charitable organizations (i.e., San Felese Society of NJ, San Rocco Society of Potenza).

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Who is looking at you? See the story of the Crachesi businessmen in this picture on page 3.

Basilicata: Parks and Nature Preserves

In the northeast corner of the area is the regional [Parco Naturale di Gallipoli Cognato e Piccole Dolomiti Lucane](#). Known as the Dolomites of the Lucania, the geological formations of the area provide visitors with intriguing and fantastic shapes. Within the protected area is the Gallipoli Forest with rare tree species.

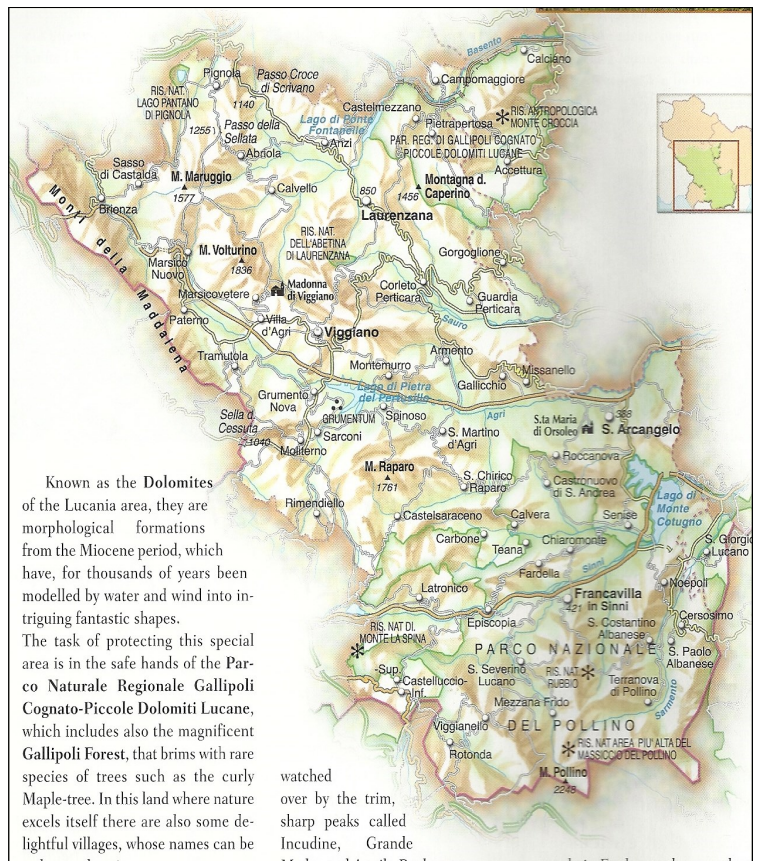
At the southern end of the area is the national park, [Parco Nazionale del Pollino](#) which was established in 1992. Stretching over rural districts in Basilicata and Calabria, it contains unmatched vegetation including a unique pine species. The other national park in the area is, [Parco Nazionale dell'Appennino Lucano Val d'Agri - Lagonegrese](#) which is the newest of the Italian National Parks, opening in 2007. It is situated between the other two parks creating a connection between them.

“Throughout this area are numerous delightful villages that contain interesting and historic backgrounds.”

Throughout this area are numerous delightful villages that contain interesting and historic backgrounds. Among them are: Abriola, Accettura, Armento, Brienza, Calvello, Campomaggiore, Castelluccio Inferiore, Castelluccio Superiore, Castelsaracceno, Castronuovo di Sant'Andrea, Cersosimo, Chiaromonte, Fardella, Francavilla in Sinni, Gallicchio, Grumento Nova, Guardia Perticara, Latronico, Laurenzana, Marisco Nuovo, Marsicovetere, Missanello, Moliterno, Montemurro, Noepoli, Pietrapertosa, Pignola, Rotonda, San Chirico Raparo, San Costantino Albanese, San Giorgio Lucano, San Martino d'Agri, San Paolo Albanese, San Severino Lucano, Sant'Arcangelo, Sarconi, Spinoso, Teana, Terranova di Pollino, Tramutola, Viggianello.

Other towns in the area include:

- Corleto Perticara — this holiday resort holds 7th century BC ruins in the Serra d'Eboli.
- Episcopia—bearing a name from the early Byzantine era (meaning diocese) it was inhabited by Greek farmers but disappeared until it became a fortress in the Early Middle Ages. The main church dating back to the 16th century contains several historic works of art.
- Roccanova—is the site of an ancient Norman fortress on the slopes of Corzo delle Punte. With origins in the 6th century BC, artifacts found here are in the Policoro Museum indicating the town's connections to the Ionian Coast and the unique pottery of the “Pittore di Roccanova” dating back to 360BC.



Known as the Dolomites of the Lucania area, they are morphological formations from the Miocene period, which have, for thousands of years been modelled by water and wind into intriguing fantastic shapes. The task of protecting this special area is in the safe hands of the Parco Naturale Regionale Gallipoli Cognato-Piccole Dolomiti Lucane, which includes also the magnificent Gallipoli Forest, that brims with rare species of trees such as the curly Maple-tree. In this land where nature excels itself there are also some delightful villages, whose names can be

watched over by the trim, sharp peaks called Incudine, Grande

Located in the western edge of Basilicata is an area of parks and natural preserves encompassing Gallipoli Cognato, Val d'Agri, and the Pollino National Park. The area is unspoiled and has exceptional splendor and beauty with hoards of wild boars, flights of falcons, and enchanting colors in the heart of Basilicata.

- Viggiano—developed on two hills, it dominates the Agri Valley. Well known for ancient cultural, musical and religious traditions, it also was the home to several intellectuals. The village celebrates an annual procession taking the “Black Madonna” to a mountain top shrine in the spring and back to the village in the fall. This Madonna di Viggiano was crowned as Queen of the Lucanian people in 1892 and in 1991 by Pope John Paul II.

Although not within this area, Basilicata has one other regional park, Parco Archeologico Storico Naturale delle Chiese Rupestri del Materano, a UNESCO identified World Heritage site that encompasses Matera and the rupestrian churches within the prehistoric caves and settlements. ■



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“In October 1901, the New York Times reported in a story that 2,000 attendees celebrated the San Vincenzo Feast.”

The Società di San Vincenzo Martire di Craco served this role for the Crachesi until WWII. Chartered in 1899, it became fully active in 1901 when the organization signed a contract with St. Joachim's Church to provide a statue, a relic, and hold an annual feast. In October 1901, the New York Times reported in a story that 2,000 attendees celebrated the San Vincenzo Feast (see New York Times article to the right).

The Società continued with its activities and grew as more immigrants arrived. In 1904 they published a booklet with the nine day novena for San Vincenzo and maintained the regular celebration of the feast.

It was during this period that Giovanni Curcio, a barber with a shop on Broome Street near the police headquarters in Manhattan wrote a piece that gives an example of the adjustment the Crachesi were making in adapting to their life in America. The verse to San Vincenzo makes reference to being in America and striving “...to be an example to the people of America.”

In the next decade, following onto Giovanni Curcio's hope, Cracotans would make contributions showing the people of America their commitment to their newly adopted homeland. ■

ITALIANS' GAY CELEBRATION.

Fireworks and Illuminations in Honor of St. Vincenzo Martry.

The church edifice of the Church of the Precious Blood, at Canal and Baxter Streets, which is being reconstructed, and is now about half built, was gay last night with many colored lanterns and fluttering Italian flags, surmounted by the Stars and Stripes. In front of the church fireworks of many hues were set off, and the neighborhood of Mulberry Bend was kept ablaze until a late hour. Two thousand Italians, young and old, who are members of Father Berardini's parish surrounded the church and quietly enjoyed the spectacle, their faces lighted up by the flare of the fireworks and swinging lanterns.

The occasion was the celebration by the Societe Militaire d' St. Vincenzo Martry of the natal day of its patron saint. The celebration began Saturday evening and was continued last night. The Italian Rifle Guard of New York assisted in commemorating the occasion. The members of both societies attended vespers last evening as a preliminary. They were in full uniform and carried their rifles. Later in the evening a salute of twenty-one guns was fired, and many wheels of red, blue, and yellow fire were touched off. The band of twenty-four pieces of the Societe d' St. Vincenzo was seated on a raised platform in front of the church, and played many airs, both grave and gay.



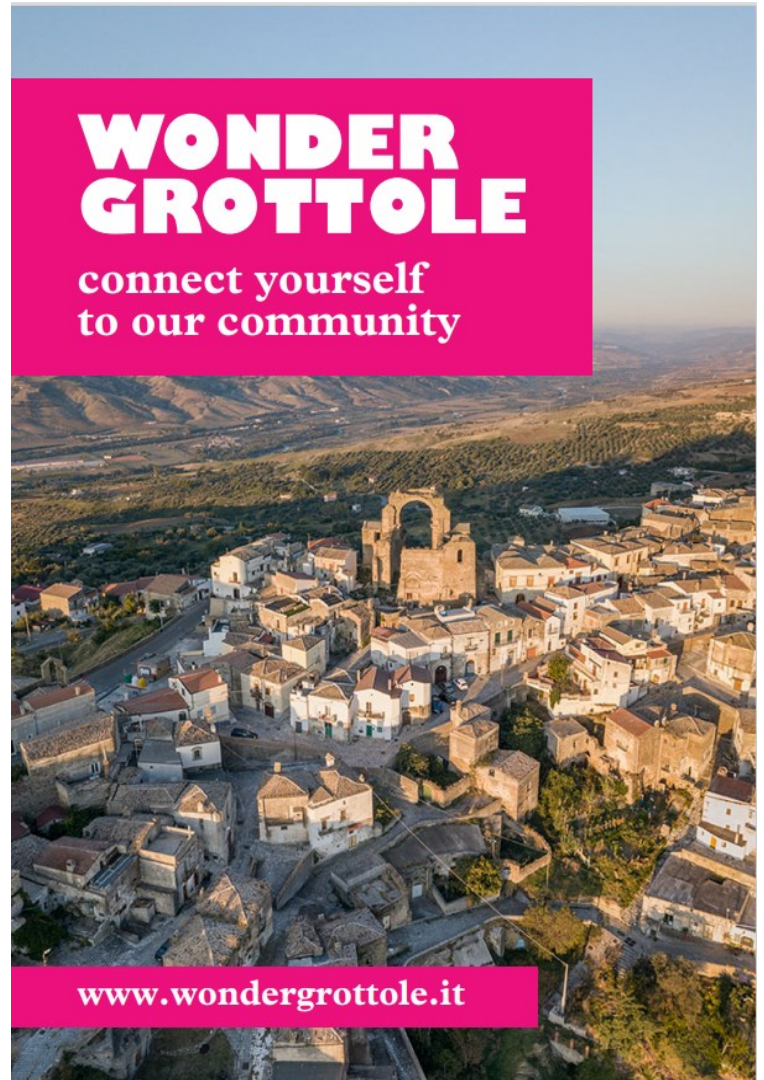
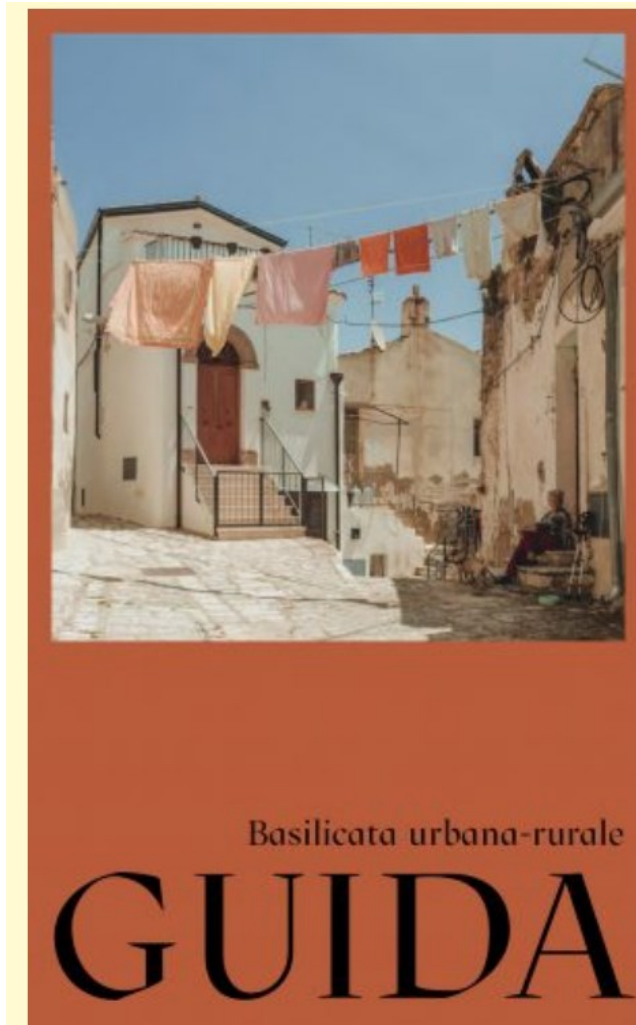
Stone Front Bar & Grill—The photograph above shows the interior of the Stone Front Bar & Grill that was located in Manhattan's Washington Market. It was owned by Domenico Rinaldi (above right) and is an example of how the Crachesi were able to find opportunities that would not have been available in Italy and create new lives for them and their families.

Focus Basilicata: GROTTOLE

The town of Grottole in the Bradano and Basento Valleys, lying on two panoramic hills, was highlighted in the April Newsletter.

[Andrea Paoletti](#), the cofounder of [WONDER GROTTOLE](#), contacted us about the project to promote the regeneration of the historic center of the village of Grottole (MT). Thanks to the recovery of some disused houses, combined with new entities from the outside, the local community created new looks and ideas. These created opportunities that can help generate trust and reactivate the local economy.

The website also has a Basilicata Guide (shown below) that is available in English and Italian. ■



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