



## A New Year of Learning About Our Culture and History

As we open this new year we are enthusiastic about the opportunities to fulfill our mission to preserve the history, culture and traditions of Craco.

Last year we set out a plan, with the other Federazione Lucana d'America member societies and other organizations to help descendants in the United States, whose ancestors arrived over 100 years ago, learn about their history.

During our work on that plan we encountered the project being developed by the Regione Basilicata that is now the "BASILICATÈ Exhibition," (see story page 4). This exhibition will take place in Argentina, Uruguay, and US during August and September 2024. It will have four elements, a documentary film about the San Rocco Feast celebrations, change in the Italian language, traditional and local recipes, and houses in the three countries. It will be a wonderful celebration of Basilicata culture

The Federazione Lucana d'America plan for 2024 complements the exhibition by filling gaps that are not addressed about the Lucanian experience in America. The Federazione requested 25,000€ from the Regione for programming but received a 5,000€ grant that was titled "Seminari e convegni educativi negli Stati Uniti che consentiranno di estendere la conoscenza delle ricchezze peculiarità della Basilicata", ("Project of educational seminars and conferences, to be held in the United States, in order to promote knowledge of the riches of Basilicata" in English).

The Federazione intends to use this grant, and hopefully obtain additional funding, to accomplish the objective of educating by the public about Basilicata past and present. We will be organizing panel discussions about immigrations,

*"Italian Americans are realizing a new desire to connect with their roots."*

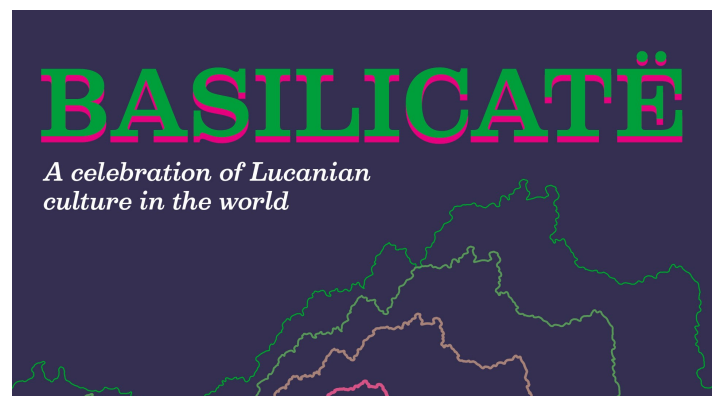
hold seminars about tourism and Italian citizenship, and media presentations about the impact Basilicata had on America.

There can be nothing more important than teaching the multiple generations, going on at least seven here, about our history and ancestry. The value of this is exemplified by the story of the Petraro family on page 3. As long as children pass along their knowledge of our history, culture, and traditions, our ancestors will continue to be alive.

We will be asking you to contribute to these programs with stories, family recipes, photographs, or material that help us all learn our shared history. My belief is that all of us from Craco are "cousins" and drives me to seek to learn more about each and every one of you through these stories. ■

**With best wishes for a Happy New Year.**

*Joseph Rinaldi*



*See the story behind the official exhibition name on page 5.*

# BASILICATÈ Exhibition Focus: Rocco Scotellaro

The BASILICATÈ Exhibition will include a section about language changes by using a Lucanian poem written by [Rocco Scotellaro](#). Scotellaro was born on April 19, 1923 in Tricarico, in province of Matera, Basilicata. He was the son of Rocco Vincenzo Scotellaro (b. 1884, d. 1942) and Francesca Armento (b. 1884, d. 1968). Both parents would have an influence on his poetry along with the conditions he observed in Basilicata. He was a writer, poet, socialist politician and farmer. Carlo Levi called him, “poeta della “libertà contadina” (poet of the peasant freedom) because of Scotellaro’s dealing with the problems of the peasants in Basilicata. He died suddenly on December 15, 1953. Almost all of his writings were published after his death and received literary acclaim.



*“Carlo Levi called him  
‘poeta della libertà contadina’  
(poet of the peasant freedom) ...”*

He was the gifted son of a very poor family and his parents made sacrifices so he could attend Rome University to study law. With WWII, and then the death of his father, he left without completing his degree. He was among the young Italian generation that felt the post-war years were an opportunity to establish an egalitarian society and to improve the lives of the poor. At age 23 he was elected as socialist mayor of Tricarico where he became engaged in the struggle for land reform. This brought him into conflict with landowners. The victim of a political vendetta, he was imprisoned in Matera on false charges and was acquitted after two months. He resigned as mayor and left for Portici, near Naples, where he studied agrarian economics. It was in Portici that he died.

Although not widely known by Italian Americans, he is well known to the current generation of Italians. His prolific poetry has been translated into English and is available in two books, “[The Dawn is Always New: Selected Poetry of Rocco Scotellaro](#)” and “[Rocco Scotellaro Your Call Keeps Us Awake: Selected Poems](#).”

Besides the problems he saw in Basilicata that are reflected in his poetry, Scotellaro was influenced by his father and mother. Dante Della Terza, a reviewer, points out “his father, the generous and picturesque shoemaker dominates many of the poems in *È fatto giorno* (It’s Light Now) ...” and his mother, “... a woman of great imagination and personal strength ...” who filled the gap when his father died.

For Italian Americans, there is an important connection to Scotellaro’s poetry (see story on page 3). His father was a “bird of passage,” traveling back and forth between Tricarico and New Jersey between 1905 and 1914 staying away from his family for years. His experiences were sources for his son’s poetry. ■

SERENATA AL PAESE	SERENADE TO THE TOWN
Ma le case sono, hai voglia!, e le scale ancora zeppe di gente e di lumi, e sempre al paese fanno Natale, Capodanno e Carnevale. Ed io, che pure me ne sono andato, penso a loro e sono nominato: amici e compagni, vicini e lontani, cancelli e amore avevo salutato, di tutti quanti voi m’ero scordato. Ma il paese continua la sua storia “sotto il cielo stellato foglia a foglia” per chi parte se vuol ricordare.	But the houses are there for sure!, and the stairs still crowded with people and lights, and in the town they always do Christmas, New Year and Carnival. And I, although I have left, I think of them and they call me: friends and companions, near and far, to gates and love I had said goodbye, and have since forgotten about you all. But the town continues its story “under the starry sky leaf by leaf” for those who leave if they wish to remember.
(1952)	(1952)

**BASILICATÈ Poem**

This poem will be the example of the work of Scotellaro. It will be read in Italian by volunteers from different generations in Buenos Aires, New York, and Montevideo.

**Join the Project**

We are looking for readers of the poem. Please contact us by email at: [memberservices@thecracosociety.org](mailto:memberservices@thecracosociety.org)  
Or by phone: 774-269-6611



# Scotellaro in America

Although Rocco Scotellaro may not be known to many Italian Americans today there is no doubt Scotellaro and millions of other Italians knew America.

During planning for the BASILICATĒ Exhibition, Stephen Lean, Director, American Family Immigration History Center, at The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, shared two immigrant ship manifests with Rocco Scotellaro's father listed as a passenger (shown right).

This revelation lead to further research and revealed an important aspect of our history.

*continued on page 4*



## Living History - the Petraro Family

*“The story of the Petraro family exemplifies and energizes the Society's mission to preserve the history, culture and traditions of Craco.”*

We usually list new members simply but the Petraro family offer us a special opportunity to welcome them to the Society and reevaluate our mission and future vision.

Jessica Fusco Petraro contacted the Society for help in applying for Italian citizenship. She compiled many records from her family history but was looking for some guidance to complete the process. The story that emerges about the Petraro family exemplifies the importance of the Society's mission to preserve the history, culture, and traditions of Craco.

Jessica's father, Vincent J. Fusco (b. 1943, Brooklyn, NY) was the son of Domenico Fusco (b. 1921, Tursi, Matera, Basilicata, Italy). Their Craco connection comes in with Domenico's parents, Vincenzo (b. 1890, Tursi) and Maria Francavilla (b.1896, New York). Vincenzo and Maria married in Craco on March 25, 1920 before coming to the US.

During the process of learning about their ancestry the six Petraro children became enthralled with the information about their ancestry and Craco. Eleven year old Mia, was motivated to create a video about Craco, ([\(1\) Craco Memory by Mia Petraro - YouTube](#)) which is now on the Society's YouTube Channel along with other video segments related to the town.

Then, Mia's younger brother Luke was asked by his teacher to share any immigration stories they had. Luke's grandfather recorded a video telling their story and fascinating the children in Luke's class. Mia's film was also shown and the word got around at the school. Another classroom asked if they could see it too.



*Petraro children celebrating Christmas and their family history.*

So, why are we so passionate about our mission? The children, whether they come from Craco or not, are telling us that knowing your history matters. If they know about Craco so will the next generations. As long as that memory is alive then so will our ancestors.

**Bravo Petraros!**

# Scotellaro in America *continued from page 3*

Rocco Scotellaro's father, and as it was discovered, along with several other relatives were, "birds of passage" - the term used to describe men who made multiple trips back and forth between Italy and the Americas to find work.

This part of the immigration story, especially as it relates to Basilicata, is important to us because it is not well known. The Federazione Lucana d'America identified an opportunity to provide information about this since the BASILICATÈ Exhibition does not cover immigration. Developing panel discussions with institutions during the Exhibition period will serve to complement and expand the knowledge of the Region.

A unique study by Dr. Victoria Calebrese, focuses and highlights the historical record about this in Basilicata. Titled, "[Land of Women: Basilicata, Emigration, and the Women Who Remained Behind, 1880-1914](#)" published in 2017 as her dissertation and issued in book form in 2022, it is the only work about the impact of family life in the Region during this period.

The information developed while researching Rocco Scotellaro's father and is an excellent example of the effects of the birds of passage to Italy and the individuals.

Rocco Vincenzo Scotellaro was born on Oct. 24, 1884 in Tricarico, province of Matera, Basilicata, Italy. He was the son of Nicola Maria Scotellaro, a shoemaker and Antonia Primavera. Rocco Vincenzo began his relationship with America as a single 19 year old shoemaker, arriving in New York Harbor on September 10, 1905.

He was going to join a cousin, Michele Scotellaro, a tailor, living in Newark, New Jersey. Rocco Vincenzo was seeking work in shoe factories in the Newark and Patterson New Jersey area where wages then were between \$12-15 weekly, considerably more that could be earned in Tricarico if employment could be found there.

Rocco Vincenzo returned to Tricarico sometime in late 1907 or early 1908. He married Francesca Armento (b. 1884, Tricarico) on December 31, 1908. Their first child, Antonietta was born on Dec 11, 1909. Rocco Vincenzo then left Tricarico and arrived in New York on April 29, 1910. Francesca remained at home with their 18-week-old daughter. On this trip, Rocco Vincenzo indicated he was going to live with his brother-in-law, Rocco Panarella (b. 1883), the husband of Annunziata Scotellaro (b.1882, Tricarico), who was Rocco Vincenzo's older sister. Rocco Vincenzo remained in America until 1914 when he returned home for good.

On his trips to America, Rocco had traveling companions who were also "birds of passage," illustrating the importance of the practice. Dr. Calabrese, in her dissertation points out the conditions in Basilicata behind these decisions to leave. She includes a quote, "chi è scontento, se può, va in America, se no si rassegna a soffrire" ("he who is unhappy, if he can,



**Scotellaro Gravesite in Tricarico**—This 1960 photograph shows Rocco Scotellaro's mother, Francesca Armento at the family gravesite. Interred there are her husband Rocco Vincenzo and her sons Rocco and Nicola. She would join them in 1968. The tomb commissioned by Carlo Levi, financed by Adriano Olivetti, and designed by Ernesto Nathan Rogers. It is a work of art, cited in architectural manuals and has the inscription, "Sempre nuova è l'alba" (the dawn is always new).

goes to America, if not he resigns himself to suffering). She says, "Emigrants from Basilicata were mostly young, working-age males, many of them either newlyweds or only married a few years ... These men often had their own families which they had the obligation to support, and knew that going abroad to work would most likely allow them to do that. Despite the separation and the long journey, they believed they would be able to provide for their family better than if remaining in Italy. Emigration was a family decision made between husband and wife. Ideally, the husband would emigrate to work, with full intentions of returning, and in the meantime the wife would stay behind, care for the family's interests and receive money that the husband sent in remittances."

The other individuals in Rocco Vincenzo Scotellaro's "birds of passage" circle and whose stories would have also had an influence on the poet Rocco included:

**Pancrazio Cistaro** (b. Apr. 15, 1876, Tricarico), traveled with Rocco Vincenzo to the US in 1905. Before that, in 1899, he married Maria Giuseppa Cucciniglia (Note: The surname, "Cucciniglia" which is dialect for the Italian word "Cocciniglia" meaning ladybug is very unusual. Maria Giuseppa was an abandoned newborn and given that surname because there was a ladybug on the blanket she was found in). When Pancrazio departed for America, Maria Giuseppa was left with two daughters under the age of 4 and was pregnant. Pancrazio returned in time for the birth in 1906 but left for America again in 1908. Records show him in New York City in 1910 but if he ever returned to Tricarico is not known at this time.

*continued on page 5*



## Scotellaro in America *continued from page 4*

**Michele Archangelo Scotellaro**, (b. 1879) Rocco Vincenzo's older brother was a shoemaker too. In 1900, he married Antonia Maria Panarella (b. 1877, Ferrandina). He arrived in the US on March 17, 1906, with a destination of Newark, NJ to live with his brother Rocco Vincenzo. Michele Archangelo returned in 1907 to Tricarico but returned to the US on March 18, 1908 to reside with his brother-in-law Rocco Panarella. He returned to Tricarico in 1909 where he encountered the tragic death of an infant son and then his wife Antonia Maria Panarella.

**Rocco Panarella** (b. 1883), was the husband of Annunziata Scotellaro (b.1882, Tricarico), Rocco Vincenzo's older sister and the brother of Antonia Maria Panarella, the wife of Michele Archangelo Scotellaro. Rocco Panarella and Annunziata Scotellaro married on Oct. 6, 1904, in Tricarico. On April 27, 1906, their first child, Pietro was born, but the next month on May 23, 1906, Rocco boarded a ship in Naples for America, leaving Annunziata with a newborn. He arrived in New York Harbor on June 10, 1906, to reside with his brother-in-law Rocco Vincenzo Scotellaro. Panarella returned home in 1907 remaining there until arriving back in New York on June 24, 1909. However, before leaving Tricarico, his second son, Nicola was born on April 27, 1909. Panarella was leaving his wife Annunziata again with an infant and a 3-year-old. Rocco Panarella made other trips back to Italy, returning to New York for the last time about 1922, where he died on April 8, 1927, of Chronic Ethanolism (alcoholism). He was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Queens, NY. His wife, Annunziata never left Tricarico and on December 27, 1929, married Domenico Ortalano.

**Innocenzo Scotellaro**, Rocco Vincenzo's 23-year-old younger brother, arrived in New York on August 15, 1910. Innocenzo, also a shoemaker, indicated he was going to stay with his brother Rocco Vincenzo in Patterson, NJ. Innocenzo remained in the US until 1914 when he returned to Tricarico and married Maria Romano. Innocenzo then entered the US again on October 4, 1921. He was going to stay with a brother-in-law, Giuseppe Perrone in Patterson, NJ and remained there until 1926 before returning home. After a year in Tricarico, he arrived in New York on October 1, 1927 and was heading to Patterson, NJ. How long he remained this time is not known but he returned to Tricarico where he died on February 5, 1977.

**Pasquale Armento**, (b. 1883) was the brother of Rocco Vincenzo's wife, Francesca Armento. He arrived in New York on May 20, 1909. He was a laborer, going to reside with his cousin Giuseppe Riviello at 34 Mulberry St., NYC. Tragically, he died on July 27, 1909, of pulmonary edema in Staten Island and was buried in Brighton, NJ.

Although we have an awareness of what the "birds of passage" activities here, we know little of the hardships of Maria Giuseppa Cucciniglia, Annunziata Scotellaro, Antonia Maria Panarella, Maria Romano, and Filomena Armento. Dr. Victoria Calabrese's publication is an insightful document providing us with many of the aspects of their lives that would not be considered by us with our 21st century perspective.

## BASILICATĚ - A Name Reflecting the Exhibition Values

# BASILICATĚ

*A celebration of Lucanian culture in the world*

As the plans for the exhibition for the celebration of Lucanian culture in the world become more defined a final name for it was adopted. It reflects a subtilty reflecting the uniqueness of the dialect. In the Lucanian dialect, the gender of a noun is established by the article and not by the noun itself. Nouns all end with the phonetic sound of ě. Articles are "a" for the feminine, "u" for the masculine, or "lě" for the plural. For example: a sediě, u paně, lě tazzě, lě librě.

The Lucanian dialect pronunciation of the title was chosen to imbue the word with both singular and plural meanings. The singular form pertains to Basilicata as a single region, while the plural form aligns with the various Lucanian communities in the participating countries of Argentina, Uruguay, and the United States. ■

# Basilicata Education: Federazione Lucania d’America 2024

The Federazione Lucania d’America is planning an education program in 2024 that helps members of the organizations in the federation learn about the history of Basilicata immigration. Additional programs are being developed to provide information on dual-citizenship, visiting Basilicata, and property ownership there.

The member organizations are collaborating in these programs along with other Societies that share the objectives. Additionally, they are supporting the BASILICATÈ Exhibition by providing access to their houses, family recipes, and reading poems. Their input is making the exhibition a reflection of their heritage.

The member organizations are:

- ASSOCIAZIONE BERNALDESI D’AMERICA  
Domenico Colonna, President  
Staten Island, NY
- ASSOCIAZIONE LUCANI (BASILICATA) OF AMERICA - A.L.B.A.  
Michele Rubino, President  
Tinley Park, IL
- THE CRACO SOCIETY  
Joseph D. Rinaldi, President  
East Sandwich, MA
- SOCIETÀ DI MUTUO SOCCORSO “SAN ROCCO MONTESCAGLIOSO”  
Angelo Carrozza, President  
Fairfield, NJ
- ASSOCIAZIONE POTENZA LODGE – SOCIETÀ NATIVI DELLA BASILICATA  
Frank J. Percey, President  
Denver, CO

## Federazione Lucana d’America



Additionally, two other organizations that are rooted in Basilicata have also joined in support of the projects:

- SAN FELESE SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY  
Thomas Frascella, Esq., President  
Trenton, NJ
- SAN ROCCO SOCIETY OF POTENZA  
Stephen S. LaRocca, Esq., President  
Brooklyn, NY

Under development are several events that will cover topics including:

- Panel discussions about:
  1. Immigration from Basilicata before 1880
  2. Immigration from Basilicata 1880-1924
  3. Immigration from Basilicata after 1945
- Return to Basilicata workshop and event for people seeking dual citizenship or property in the region
- Traditional music and dance
- Films and documentaries

These events will be scheduled during the BASILICATÈ Exhibition to complement it and maximize visibility. ■

## BASILICATÈ Exhibition Focus: Homes

One element of the BASILICATÈ Exhibition will be to show how our houses reflect our heritage. The Italian team developing the project rightly feels the way we live in our homes reveals the places from which we came.

The way we live and decorate our houses reveals our traditional thinking about relationships with family, friends, religion, or intimate moments. These silent signs tell of a domestic characteristic common to all Lucanians around the world, which transforms each person’s home into a piece of everyone’s home.

To show this they are seeking to collect photographs of homes that depict typical homes of Lucanians. We will be asking you to send photographs of your homes, telling us how they represent your Lucanian feelings in the world you live in today.

These will be used to create a display for the exhibition to show how the culture has been integrated to everyday lives in Argentina, Uruguay, and the US.



# Presepe from Basilicata at Our Lady of Pompeii Church, NY

The evening of December 6th in New York City was highlighted by a special event at Our Lady of Pompeii Church celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception with a solemn Mass and then the unveiling of the Presepe from Basilicata.

Described by John Napoli, in his blog [Il Regno](#), as “Afterward, members of the clergy, visiting dignitaries from Basilicata, and the local Lucanian community unveiled the monumental Nativity Scene (Presepe) created by artisan Franco Artese from Grassano, Matera. The crèche’s dramatic scenery and figures were inspired by the religious and cultural history of this ancient and storied Southern Italian region. Following the inauguration, the congregation was treated to a magnificent musical performance of traditional Christmas and religious songs from Basilicata by Nicola Scaldaferrì, Professor of Ethnomusicology, Vincenzo Di Sanzo, traditional instrumentalist, and vocalist Francesca Esposito.”

The Presepe will be on display at the church located at 25 Carmine St., Manhattan until Feb. 2, 2024. ■



Vincenzo Di Sanzo, Francesca Esposito and Nicola Scaldaferrì



A miniature depiction of the Sassi di Matera



Left: Giovanni Battista Scalabrini. Right: Emigrant leaving, or, if you are more optimistic, joyfully returning to Basilicata.



Left: Towering bell towers of San Pietro Caveoso and the Cattedrale di Matera in the background.

All photographs courtesy of John Napoli, [Il Regno](#).

## About Il Regno:

Il Regno is not a formal membership organization. We are a circle of like-minded individuals based in Brooklyn, New York, who volunteer our time and efforts to preserve and promote our Duosiciliano (Southern Italian) heritage, culture and faith. The title of our journal is an allusion to the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which was often simply referred to as Il Regno, or the Kingdom. We are Catholic, Monarchist and support the Neobourbon cause.



# Feast of San Nicola in Craco - December 6, 2023

The 2023 Feast of San Nicola in Craco was a captivating celebration that blended religious solemnity with the joyous spirit of the holiday season. The event commenced with a reverent holy mass, where the community gathered to honor San Nicola, the patron saint of the town, followed by the illumination of Christmas lights and a torchlight procession through streets of Craco Peschiera. Upon the return of the procession, the feast continued with a traditional "Pettolata."



## 2023 Christmas Card Story

The image on the Christmas card this year was provided by Antonio Nicoletti, General Manager, APT Basilicata. It is a scene from the Presepe, "The Nativity Scene from Basilicata" that went on display at the Shrine Church of Our Lady of Pompeii in December. It will remain on display until February 8, 2024.

The setting in the classic Presepe presents images underling the historic connections to our roots. The Society continues to appreciate the support, efforts, and creativity on our behalf by everyone who assists us throughout the year and especially for giving us these heartwarming stories and imaginary during this magical time of the year.



**We all have been blessed.**

### Notice:

**Your 2024 membership dues notice went out last week. Please remember to send your dues.  
The Society relies on you for support.**



#### How to contact us - Come contattarci

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