



Italian Genealogical Records & Strategies for Success

Mary M. Tedesco

Mary Tedesco is a professional genealogist, speaker, and author. She is a Co-Host / Genealogist on the PBS television series “Genealogy Roadshow” and the Founder of ORIGINS ITALY, a research company specializing in Italian genealogy and heritage travel to Italy. Mary speaks fluent Italian and travels to Italy to conduct client genealogical research and visit family. She is the co-author of “Tracing Your Italian Ancestors,” an 84-page Italian research guide published by Moorshead Magazines. Mary holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Boston University and a Certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University’s Center for Professional Education. In addition to her Italian ancestry on her father’s side (Calabria, Trentino-Alto Adige, and Tuscany), she also has deep American roots on her mother’s side (German, Irish, Danish & English). Mary is a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and is the First Vice Regent of the Paul Revere Chapter, NSDAR. She is a Councilor of New England Historic Genealogical Society and a member of a number of local and national genealogical societies. Mary can be contacted at www.originsitaly.com.

I. KEY REPOSITORIES FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN ITALY

- a. *Ufficio dello Stato Civile / Ufficio Anagrafe* – Offices for Civil Registration and Demographics at the town level.
 - i. *Ufficio dello Stato Civile* is the custodian of the Civil Registration records (birth/marriage/death) for your ancestral town.
 - ii. *Ufficio Anagrafe* is the demographics office.
- b. *La Chiesa / Archivio Diocesano* – The Church / Diocesan Archive
 - i. The Parish Church in your Italian ancestral town typically holds ecclesiastical baptismal, marriage, and death records.
 - ii. The contents of Diocesan Archives vary by location. Diocesan Archives may conserve parish registers, *acta matrimonialia* records, *Status Animarum*, and many other record types.
- c. *Archivi di Stato* – Provincial Archives in Italy
 - i. The Italian Archival System has an Online Card Catalogue. Check to see if the Civil Registration, military records, or other record types you need are at the Archive. <http://www.archivi-sias.it/>
- d. *Biblioteca* – Library
 - i. Visit the local library to see if they have any historic photos of your ancestral town (and the people – maybe your ancestors!).
 - ii. Italian Libraries are also great places to research the local history of your ancestral town.

II. ITALIAN RECORDS ONLINE AND ON MICROFILM

- a. FamilySearch: digital records & microfilm. www.familysearch.org
- b. Antenati: digital records. www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it

III. RESEARCH BY CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Fantastic way to begin or continue your Italian genealogical research.
- b. Email is your new best friend. Try emailing your ancestral town to request records.
 - i. How do you find the email address for your Italian ancestral town?
 1. GOOGLE "COMUNE DI ___(insert your town)___
 2. Once on the town's official website, look for the section that says "Stato Civile" and/or "Anagrafe" to find an email. If you can't find those pages, try sending a message to the general email address for the town.
 - ii. Emailing the *Archivio di Stato*.
 1. GOOGLE "ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI ___(insert your province)___
 2. The first or second result should be the official *Archivio di Stato* website. An email address should be on this page.
- c. Don't forget to stay in contact with the people you are corresponding with in Italy, especially if they have gone out of their way to send you documents!

IV. MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH TRIP TO ITALY

- a. Check that your trip does not coincide with a national holiday in Italy.
<http://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/?country=13>
- b. Set some reasonable research goals for your trip and create a research plan.
- c. Do as much research as you can via correspondence and/or Family History Library microfilm before leaving home. <https://familysearch.org/>
- d. Bring a completed pedigree chart and family group sheets with the information that you have so far (or store this information on your smartphone or iPad).
- e. Contact family members or other connections in your ancestral town.
<http://paginebianche.it/>
- f. Email or call ahead to all repositories you intend to visit (*Ufficio Stato Civile*, *Archivio di Stato*, Parish Church, etc). It is best to make an appointment for the first or second day you arrive, especially if you will not be onsite very long. This will allow the maximum potential research time.
- g. Visit local museums, archives, and other local sites and learn more about the area. This helps place your ancestors into context.
- h. Knowing a little Italian goes a long way.
- i. Remember that patience is a virtue.
- j. Be flexible with your schedule.
- k. Keep a detailed research log and take photos (if allowed) of the records you view.
- l. Send handwritten thank you notes to everyone who assisted with your research in Italy.

V. RESOURCE FOR ITALIAN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

- a. Tedesco, Mary M. and Marcia Iannizzi Melnyk. *Tracing Your Italian Ancestors*. Ajax, ON, Canada: Moorshead Magazines, 2015.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR ITALIAN RESEARCH ADVENTURE!