

START WITH THE BASICS

Approach tracing your **Italian** ancestors the same way you would approach any other relative. Start with the same information, documents, and techniques you use in all genealogical research:

- Vital Records (birth, marriage, death)
- Federal and State Census
- Personal Records (family bible, wills, letters, etc.)
- Probate/Court Records
- Church Records
- Interview family members

Work your way back to the earliest Italian ancestor in America, then use what you know about that ancestor to figure out where to start your research with Italian records.

WHICH RECORDS TO USE

Due to Italy's long history of separate and distinct kingdoms, regions, and provinces, finding records in a particular area during a particular time may be difficult.

The availability of civil records is spotty throughout Italy's history, but church records were almost constant. However, using *church* or *parish records* means navigating free-form, handwritten Latin. *Civil records* are mostly a mixture of partially preprinted forms and handwritten information — all in Italian, which can be equally difficult if you don't speak the language.



CASS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY GENEALOGY BRANCH

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Hours

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10:00am — 6:00pm

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Tuesday & Thursday

12:00pm — 6:00pm

Wednesday

12:00pm — 8:00pm

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Research Inquiries:

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 CCPL Genealogy's Guide To:

ITALIAN ANCESTRY



Connect with your family history!

The Genealogy Branch has tons of resources and experienced genealogists to help you research your family history!

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Cass County Public Library System

BASIC RECORDS

There are two main types of records when it comes to Italian genealogical research.

Church Records

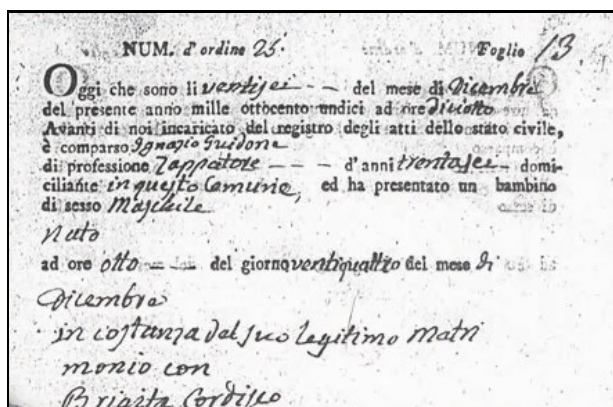
Births, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, marriage banns, deaths, burials, etc.

Civil Records

Births, marriages, marriage banns, deaths, probate, military, census, etc.

There was a lot of overlap in records between civil and parish records. Both types of records contain slightly different information, so it is worthwhile to check both. But remember, all these records are in Italian.

The presence of universal civil records in the area in which you are conducting research is dependent on when it became part of unified Italy. It could be as early as 1809 in the southern part of the country or as late as 1871 for Rome.



TIPS FOR ITALIAN

If you're a beginner, Italian records can be more than a little daunting. But the good news is that you don't have to be fluent to research your Italian ancestry! You only need to know a few key phrases that typically appear in civil records:

"è comparso" — "appeared," used before the name of the person registering, usually the father (or midwife) in birth records or the groom in marriage records. (Sometimes the midwife took the child to be registered, the father is then listed after.)

"fu" / "quondam" — "deceased," used in marriage records where the parents of the groom and bride are noted if they are already dead, includes date and place of death.

"professione" — "occupation," found in records where groom and bride's occupations are noted

"E" — "And," often seen before the bride's name on a marriage record.

It would also help to learn the basics of Italian numbers and how they denote years. They did not write years numerically:

"il di trenta de mese di Dicembre del presente anno mille ottocento otto"

The date above is the 30th of December, 1808. Sometimes dates are written in the reverse order depending on what kind of form was used since they varied drastically over the years.

FAMILY SEARCH

FamilySearch.org/Italy

Family Search is in the process of acquiring the rights to access and index over 250 million Italian records. Select collections are already indexed on Family Search including vital records dating from the early 1800s to the late 1900s, with some even reaching as far back as the 17th century.

This project could take up to 20 years to complete due to the nature of Italian record keeping. Some of the most valuable genealogical records are still kept locally by parish or in the provincial archives.



ONLINE RESOURCES

Family Search Wiki — Getting Started with Italian Research

<https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Italy>

Italian Genealogy Vocabulary List

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Italian_Genealogical_Word_List

Italian Records Instructional Guide (pdf)

<http://www.italiangenealogy.com/italian-records-extraction>

Ancestry

Card Catalog, Title Search: "Italy"