

## ITALY RESEARCH GUIDE

### ANCESTOR'S BIRTH LOCATION UNKNOWN

Because Italians emigrated to many different countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it may be helpful to start searching for your ancestors in their new countries as that is often where they gave birth to their children and reared them. Always try this first and you may be surprised by what you can find. Information gained from church and civil records in these countries will possibly tell you the region of Italy where they originated.

**FamilySearch Indexed Records:** Try searching in the indexed records for the name of your ancestor if they were born before 1900. Try a variety of searches with your ancestor's name, or with parent's names, or just by parent's surnames AND using the option to limit locality by the country "Italy" and the name of the region in Italy. If you find nothing, it means his/her records have not yet been indexed.

**Contact Family Members:** If you do not have even a minimal amount of information AND have no idea of where and when to look, you need to contact family members who might have that information. This could be older aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

### ANCESTOR'S BIRTH LOCATION AND NAMES OF PARENTS, SPOUSE, OR CHILDREN ARE KNOWN

Civil registration began at different times across Italy. Because of that, civil registration records have been divided into the following three groups:

1. **Napoleonic Records (1806-1815):** Civil registration record kept by all areas of Italy that were conquered by Napoleon. These records can usually be found in the Italian state archives.
2. **Restoration Records (1815-1866):** There was no central Italian government, meaning civil registration was kept by local authorities in various ways (and sometimes not kept at all) across Italy. These records can be found in Italian state or parish archives.
3. **Italian Civil Registration (1866-present):** The records of the Italian government began in 1866, bringing uniformity in birth, marriage, and death records throughout Italy.

**FamilySearch Indexed Records:** Try searching first in indexed records as explained above.

**FamilySearch Browsable Images:** If there are no results from your previous search for your ancestor or any siblings, you will have to browse images for the locality. On the **Search** page, click the **Continental Europe** portion of the map then select **Italy** from the list of countries. Select a record collection from **Image-Only Historical Records** and browse the collection page-by-page for your ancestor.

**FamilySearch Catalog:** Not all records for Italy are online, be sure to check the catalog before giving up on finding records. On the FamilySearch home page, hover over **Search** and select **Catalog**. Type in **Italy**. At the top of the page, click on **Places within Italy** to narrow your search and select the appropriate region to see what is available.

**Antenati Browsable Images:** The Italian state archives have digital copies of many of their birth, marriage, and death records at their central website. Go to [www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it/?lang=en](http://www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it/?lang=en) and click Browse the Registries. Select the state where your ancestor lived, the civil registration period, and the

record type to access the records.

## RESEARCH STRATEGIES

**Who to Search For:** If you don't know the names of the parents, but you know the name of the spouse and/or the names of some of his children, begin with a marriage search (if they married in Italy and you know the place). Or begin with a search for the birth/baptism record for one of their children (if you have an approximate birthdate and place).

**FamilySearch Wiki:** Under Search on the home page select Research Wiki. On the FamilySearch home page, hover over **Search** and select **Research Wiki**. Type **Italy** into the search bar and press enter. The wiki page for Italy contains many useful articles, especially the Italian genealogical word list, and birth, marriage, and death document translation tools.

**Indettaglio:** This website [italia.indettaglio.it](http://italia.indettaglio.it) has two primary uses. First, contains a list of all the town and villages in Italy. Each town or village page includes the local parishes and contact information for the civil registrar. After clicking **Italian Names**, you can search for a last name within one of the regions of Italy to find out the towns where people with that last name currently live. For more information on using Indettaglio, read the **Civil Registration Records Online: Antenati** guide on the FamilySearch Wiki.

**FamilySearch Community:** You can get immediate research and handwriting help from a community of researchers through the FamilySearch Communities. Go to <http://community.familysearch.org/> and click **Groups**. Search for **Italy Genealogy Research**. On the group page, you can post research questions and upload documents to get translation help.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

**Antenati:** [www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it/en](http://www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it/en)

Records for most regions of Italy

**Indettaglio:** <http://italia.indettaglio.it/>

Italian surnames by region and city as well as information on comuni and frazioni.

**Italian Genealogy:** [www.italiangenealogy.com](http://www.italiangenealogy.com)

Italian genealogical resources (small subscription required)

**Italian Genealogical Group:** [www.italiengen.org](http://www.italiengen.org)

Italian genealogical resources primarily for New York City (small subscription required)

**Cyndi's List** – [www.cyndislist.com/italy](http://www.cyndislist.com/italy)

An overview of many good Italian websites

**Italy Heritage:** [www.italyheritage.com/genealogy](http://www.italyheritage.com/genealogy)