

FINDING THE PARISH

When the town of birth of a person is known but not the parish, consult microfilm 780,556, available at the European Reference Counter in the Genealogical Library. It lists towns in alphabetical order, names the Catholic parishes in these towns, and tells the names of the dioceses in which each parish is located. If the place of birth is a hamlet, see pages 313 to 400 in the Nuovo Dizionario dei Comuni e Frazioni di Comune to learn to what town it belongs. There are Italian parishes for many hamlets and most towns (comunes).

CATHOLIC RECORDS

Records of the Catholic Church in Italy are written nearly always in Latin. Records from areas which were once part of France or Austria may be written in French or German. Sample letters for requesting Church and Civil records are available at the European Reference Counter in the Genealogical Library.

CENSUS RECORDS

On microfilm for the Tuscany region (for 1841) and for the city and "Circondaria" (surrounding area) of Modena (1811-1813). Status Animarum records (clerical surveys or church censuses) were microfilmed in the Province of Parma.

FAMILY CERTIFICATES

Certificates of family status (Certificati di stato di Famiglia) are the first records to request from Italy if your ancestors left there after 1870. They give names, relationships, birthdates, and places of birth of each family member living at home at a given time. A sample letter in Italian to request these certificates is available at the European Reference Counter in the Genealogical Library.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Seeking a birth record when the names of the parents or brothers or sisters are unknown may give you an incorrect beginning on your Italian genealogy. You may accept the birth record of someone who is not your ancestor, making your whole pedigree in Italy pertain to people who were not your ancestors. To avoid this problem, parents or brothers and sisters of your ancestors should be identified through death certificates, censuses, church records or other sources before beginning Italian research. As you proceed in your research, always try to obtain a person's marriage or death record before seeking his birth record. They give age and normally parentage, helping you to know for sure that you have the correct birth record when you find it.

FINDING A RESEARCHER

Several persons have been accredited for Italian genealogical research, and some of them are named with their addresses in the U.S. or in Italy on the current address lists of accredited researchers. If no researcher is available where your ancestors lived, you may write to Provincial Archivists in Italy. A paper naming Italian Archives and their addresses is available at the European Reference Counter.

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