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Robert Corbo. ITALIAN SETTLEMENTS IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY.  
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Geography.

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze an Italian-American cultural community in Newark, New Jersey. All too often urban ethnic communities are viewed as remnants or manifestations of the foreign-born generation that will soon pass away. In Newark, the Italian-American population is exerting influences on the local American society. The study of urban culture, therefore, can uncover additions to North American culture and reveal much about the former culture of the immigrants who came to settle in this country.

Examination of the changing residential pattern of Italian-Americans in Newark, 1910-1970, served to delimit an area for investigation. Five cultural practices were discovered to be characteristic of areas inhabited by the Italian-American population. A cultural distinctiveness was associated with all generations of Italian-Americans in Newark, as shown by religious, culinary and recreational practices.

As an exercise in cultural geography, a cultural history is provided for the five cultural traits uncovered. The cultural history of each trait facilitates an understanding of differences inherent in the Italian-American population in Newark.

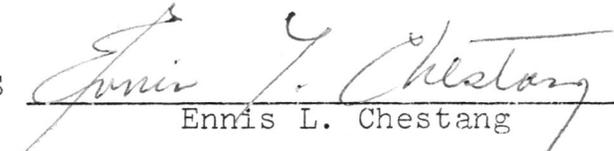
ITALIAN SETTLEMENTS IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	iv
LIST OF FIGURES . . . . .	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
<u>Statement of Problem</u> . . . . .	1
<u>Hypothesis</u> . . . . .	3
<u>Study Area</u> . . . . .	4
<u>Objectives and Needs</u> . . . . .	6
II. ITALIANS IN THE UNITED STATES. . . . .	10
III. THE DISTRIBUTION OF ITALIANS IN NEWARK . . . . .	22
<u>Nineteen Ten</u> . . . . .	23
<u>Nineteen Forty</u> . . . . .	27
<u>Nineteen Seventy</u> . . . . .	32
IV. ITALIAN CULTURE IN NEWARK. . . . .	40
<u>Region of Origin</u> . . . . .	43
<u>Cultural Traits Identified</u> . . . . .	45
<u>Religious Festivals</u> . . . . .	46
<u>Vegetable Gardens and Fig Trees</u> . . . . .	49
<u>Boccie Courts</u> . . . . .	54
<u>Grape Arbors and Wine Presses</u> . . . . .	58
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	64
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	68
APPENDIX I. . . . .	72
APPENDIX II . . . . .	80
APPENDIX III . . . . .	82

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. The Italian Population of Newark, New Jersey, 1910-1970 . . . . .	7
2. Italian Immigration Into the United States, 1850-1880 . . . . .	11
3. Italian Return Migration (From the United States) . . . . .	12
4. States with the Highest Italian Population, 1910 and 1970 . . . . .	15
5. Italian Immigration Into the United States, 1900-1970 . . . . .	19
6. Italians in Newark, 1870-1910 . . . . .	24
7. Italian Settlements in Newark, 1940 . . . . .	29
8. Italians in Newark, 1910-1940 . . . . .	31
9. Ethnic Groups in Newark . . . . .	35
10. Population Shifts for Select Census Tracts. . .	37
11. Italian Immigrants Entering Newark, 1960-1970 . . . . .	39
12. The Italian Cultural Area of Newark . . . . .	41
13. A List of Crops Mentioned During Interviews . .	51

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1.	The location of Newark, New Jersey. . . . .	5
2.	The distribution of Italians in the United States, 1910 and 1970 . . . . .	16
3.	The distribution of Italians in Newark, 1910. .	26
4.	Lusk's map of ethnic groups in Newark, 1910 . .	28
5.	The distribution of Italians in Newark, 1940. .	30
6.	The distribution of Italians in Newark, 1970. .	33
7.	The distribution of ethnic groups in Newark, 1970. . . . .	38
8.	Areas of field investigation. . . . .	42
9.	Region of origin. . . . .	44
10.	Open air markets in Newark. . . . .	52
11.	Fig trees canvassed in winter . . . . .	55
12.	Boccie courts . . . . .	57
13.	Grape arbors. . . . .	60
14.	Cellar wine press . . . . .	61

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Many immigrants who came to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries chose to live in cities. They differed from earlier immigrants in their selection of an urban rather than a rural home. One such group was the Italians. About four-fifths of all Italian immigrants to the United States were classified by the 1910 census as urban.<sup>1</sup> In their new environment the Italians were urban pioneers who formed distinctive communities. The settlement patterns and house types characteristic of the lands from which they came were forfeited, but other cultural traits were not.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, the Italian urban community frequently bears the imprint of the settlers' native culture.

#### Statement of Problem

Cultural geographers interested in ethnic traits and

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Foerster, The Italian Emigration of Our Times (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), p. 329.

<sup>2</sup>See Edward T. Price, "Viterbo: Landscape of an Italian City," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 54 (June, 1964), pp. 242-275 and "Rural Dwellings in Italy," Geographical Review, Vol. 51 (1961), p. 435-437; Hans Ahlmann, "The Geographical Study of Settlements: Examples from Italy, Germany, Denmark and Norway," Geographical Review, Vol. 18 (January, 1928), pp. 93-128; Robert McNee, "Rural Development in the Italian South: A Geographic Case Study," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 45 (1955), pp. 127-151.

their distribution have tended to neglect the urban immigrants and in some instances have intentionally ignored them.

Professors Wagner and Mikesell have stated:

The importance of transplanted cultural communities depends upon the maintenance of cultural integrity. Thus, the study of recent foreign immigrant groups in American cities, though it possesses great romantic appeal, will not uncover many important additions to North American culture and will not reveal a great deal about the former cultures of the immigrants, diluted and recast as they become in new surroundings.<sup>3</sup>

The movement of people in time and through space always deserves consideration. To agree with those who believe the urban immigrant is assimilated rapidly into the American society is to perpetuate the concept of the melting pot, a concept that has been under attack since the early nineteenth sixties. Works by many social scientists have recognized a distinctiveness associated with each urban ethnic minority.<sup>4</sup>

Geographers interested in urban ethnic minorities have focused on locational and distributional aspects of immigrant groups.<sup>5</sup> John Jakle and James O. Wheeler asserted that,

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<sup>3</sup>Philip Wagner and Marvin W. Mikesell, Readings in Cultural Geography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>See Herbert Gans, The Urban Villagers (New York: Free Press, 1962); Oscar Lewis, La Vida (New York: Random House, 1966); Donald Fellows, A Mosaic of America's Ethnic Minorities (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1972); Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963); Andrew Greeley, Why Can't They Be Like Us? (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1969).

<sup>5</sup>See David Ward, "The Emergence of Central Immigrant Ghettos in America," Annals, Vol. 58 (1968), pp. 343-359; R. T. Novak, "Distribution of Puerto Ricans on Manhattan

"The geographical literature largely treats ethnic ghetto emergence, ethnic group population distribution and distributional changes."<sup>6</sup> Immigrant inner city clusters have been scrutinized and factors of employment, income, housing and transportation have been uncovered as influential variables in ethnic group location. Geographers have directed little attention at cultural urban landscapes. Recent works by Doeppers, Pred, Harries, Meinig, Jakle, and Wheeler are exceptions.<sup>7</sup> The fact that the geographical literature of the last decade does not reveal extensive research pertaining to urban culture is surprising. Until there has been a number of studies dealing with urban minority groups, we cannot fully appreciate or evaluate the significance of urban ethnic communities and develop generalizations about them.

#### Hypothesis

A cultural area may be defined as a "territory inhabited at any given period by a human community characterized by a

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Island," Geographical Review, Vol. 46 (1956), pp. 182-186; H. M. Rose, "Metropolitan Miami's Changing Negro Population, 1950-1960," Economic Geography, Vol. 40 (1964), pp. 221-238.

<sup>6</sup>John A. Jakle and James O. Wheeler, "The Dutch in Kalamazoo," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 59 (1969), p. 443.

<sup>7</sup>D. Doeppers, "The Globeville Neighborhood in Denver," Geographical Review, Vol. 57 (1967), pp. 506-522; Keith D. Harries, "Ethnic Business Patterns," Annals, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 61 (1971), pp. 736-743; Allan Pred, "Business Thoroughfares as Expressions of Urban Negro Culture," Economic Geographer, Vol. 39 (1963), pp. 236-260; S. W. Meinig, "The Mormon Cultural Region," Annals,

particular culture based upon the distribution of cultural traits."<sup>8</sup> It is hypothesized that an Italian cultural area can be delimited within the confines of a major urban complex. Like all cultural areas, the region delimited should exhibit a cultural landscape representative of the particular culture inhabiting the area.

### Study Area

The choice of Newark, New Jersey, as the study area for this paper, is based on a number of criteria (Appendix, p. 83). Located within twenty miles of New York's Ellis Island, Newark has traditionally been attractive to newcomers of many nationalities (Fig. 1). David Ward's book, Cities and Immigrants, describes Newark as a leading receiver city of immigrants. The base years of 1870 and 1910 show Newark as having a foreign-born population above the mean percentage for major cities of the United States. Newark (1870) was one of nine cities of 100,000 people or more to exceed the mean of 34% foreign-born. Again in 1910, Newark, along with eight other cities of 250,000 people or more, exceeded the mean of 29% foreign-born.<sup>9</sup>

The census figures for 1960 and 1970 show that Newark

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Association of American Geographers, Vol. 55 (1965), pp. 191-220; Jakle and Wheeler, pp. 441-460.

<sup>8</sup>Wagner and Mikesell, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>David Ward, Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 75-81.

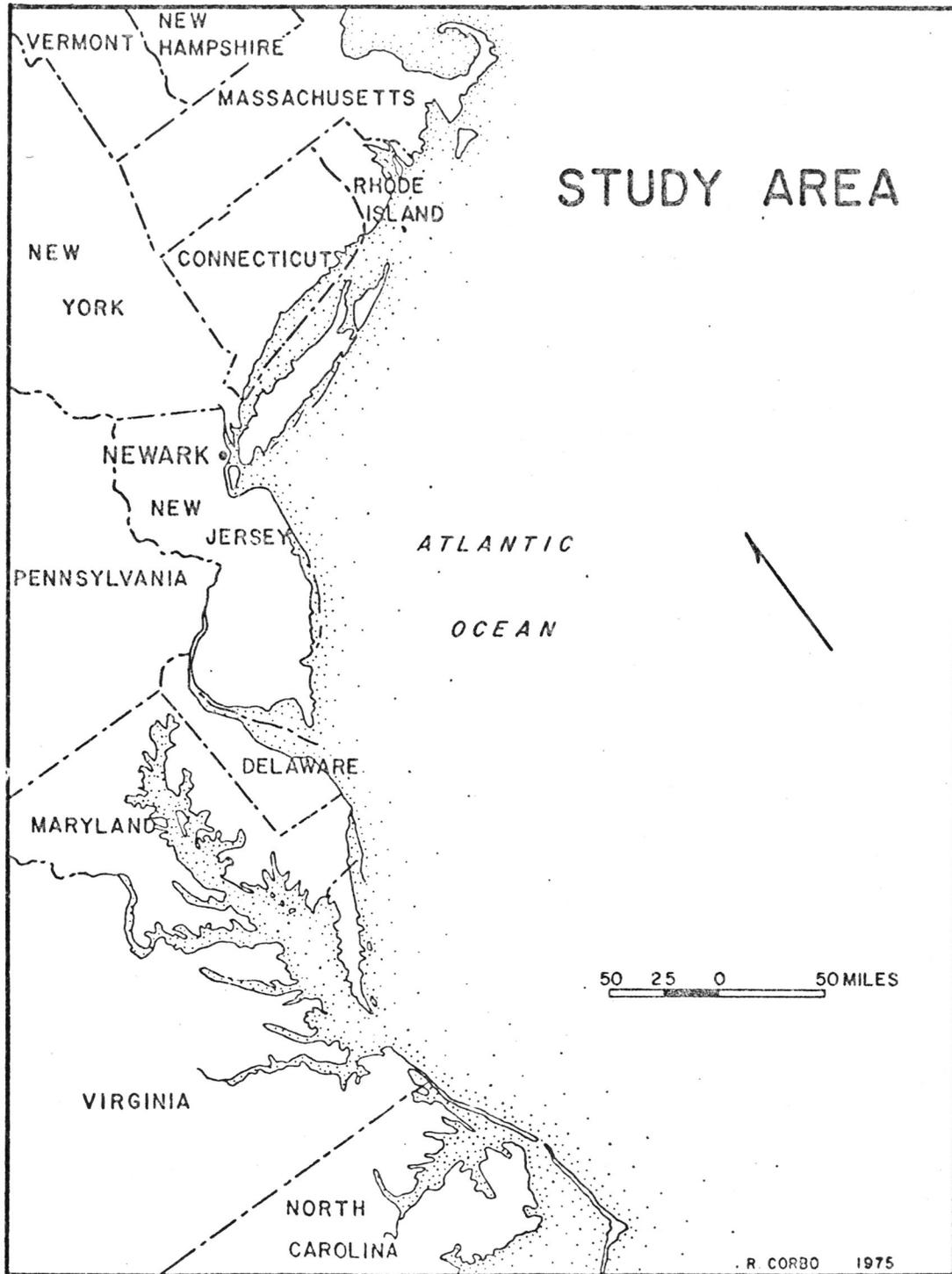


Fig. 1.

is still attracting many immigrants. Its percentage of foreign-born for those years was 37 and 32 respectively. The definition of foreign-born by the United States Bureau of the Census includes natives of foreign or mixed parentage (one foreign-born parent).<sup>10</sup>

The selection of the Italian-born population in Newark as the study group is based on two considerations. The first is the extensive migration of Italians into the city during the twentieth century (Table 1). Secondly, the Italians of Newark have been modifying their nonurban culture to the urban milieu for over a century. Italian migration into the city can be estimated at more than 110 years.<sup>11</sup>

#### Objectives and Needs

The primary objective of this study is to determine whether an Italian cultural area can be delimited in Newark, New Jersey, and to identify the landscape elements that "...give characteristic expression to the area."<sup>12</sup> These features should be representative of "a human society bound together by a common complex of cultural traits, each trait

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<sup>10</sup>U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: 1970, Vol. I, Characteristics of the Population (Appendix B-17).

<sup>11</sup>Frank Prial, "A Saga of Courage," Newark Sunday News Magazine (October 8, 1961), p. 16.

<sup>12</sup>Charles F. Gritzner, Jr., "The Scope of Cultural Geography," Journal of Geography, Vol. 65 (January, 1966), p. 7.

TABLE 1  
 THE ITALIAN POPULATION OF  
 NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, 1910-1970

Year	Italian Population	City Population
1900	8,537	246,070
1910	20,494	347,469
1920	27,465	414,524
1930	30,597	442,337
1940	26,140	429,760
1950	20,140	438,776
1960*	47,105	405,220
1970	27,309	382,374

\*After 1960, the Italian foreign-born population included natives of foreign-born parents.

Source: U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: 1900-1970.

being anything which to the culturally-bound group has either material form and applicable function or an expressed value."<sup>13</sup> Hopefully, this thesis will contribute to that body of literature pertaining to the problem of delimiting and understanding urban areas in general and Italian and other urban settlements in particular.

Bryan Thompson and Carol Agoes have stated: "Many ethnic communities of second and third generation settlers in American cities have gone underground. They have become part of the informal social organization of the city that is invisible to most observers, and frequently are overlooked or avoided."<sup>14</sup> They identify five needs and problems in their discussion of ethnic studies, three of which apply here: (1) lack of awareness of the current ethnic population, (2) lack of relevant data, and (3) lack of sensitivity to problems of scale in spatial analysis.<sup>15</sup>

Argument for an awareness of ethnic settlements, a goal that can only be obtained by intensive research and the creation of a vast amount of data, has already been presented. The idea of spatial analysis in relation to the ethnic settlement might be compared to dendrochronologic examination.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>14</sup>Bryan Thompson and Carol Agoes, "Ethnic Studies: Teaching and Research Needs," Journal of Geography (April, 1973), p. 13.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

As the tree ring reveals conditions of the environment at the time of its development, so also does the ethnic settlement of the United States reveal the economic and political health of the country, and city in which it is found.

In summary, the purpose of the study is twofold. (1) To facilitate an understanding of a distinct cultural group and (2) to identify features characteristic of the Italian cultural area delimited.

## CHAPTER II

### ITALIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

Joseph Velikonja, an authority on Italian immigration, has stated, "The degree of concentration (of Italians) is generally related to the size of the metropolitan area and its distance from New York."<sup>16</sup> Newark's proximity to New York and its inclusion within the Middle Atlantic States means that the city was in the tidal zone with regards to Italian migration. Every aspect of Italian immigration in Newark can be explained in light of Italian immigration in the United States. A general discussion of Italian immigration into the United States is, therefore, presented to elucidate the Italian situation in Newark, New Jersey.

The first United States census to distinguish nationalities was taken in 1850. At that time, 3,645 Italians were in the United States (Table 2). Between 1850-1880, Italian immigration developed in character. During that time, arrivals from South Italy began to outnumber those from North Italy, and returns to Italy became an important component of Italian migration (Table 3).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Joseph Velikonja, "Italian Immigration in the United States in the Sixties," The International Migration Review, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1967), p. 31.

<sup>17</sup>For additional information on Italian return migration, see Robert Foerster, pp. 23-43, 445-473; Francesco Cerase, "Nostalgia or Disenchantment: Considerations on

TABLE 2  
ITALIAN IMMIGRATION INTO  
THE UNITED STATES, 1850-1880

Year	Arrivals	Census Enumeration
1850		3,645
1851-1860	8,940	10,518
1861-1870	12,206	17,157
1871-1880	55,759	44,230

Source: United States Census of Population, 1850-1880.

TABLE 3  
 ITALIAN RETURN MIGRATION (FROM THE UNITED STATES)

Period	Arrivals	Number Returned (Annual Average)
1887-1891	50,499	5,371
1892-1896	56,048	20,075
1897-1901	87,249	26,992
1902-1906	224,649	88,012
1906-1911	206,622	149,979
Year		
1906	286,814	109,258
1907	294,061	176,727
1908	135,247	240,877
1909	190,398	73,806
1910	223,453	104,459
1911	189,950	154,027
1912	162,273	129,649
1913	274,147	122,589
1914	296,414	156,274
1915	57,217	104,265

Source: Foerster, 15, 30.

Continued migration to the United States from Italy was influenced by a variety of conditions. Some of these were: (1) late unification, (2) heavy taxation, (3) absentee landlordism, and (4) lack of natural resources and food supply.<sup>18</sup> The census data for 1890-1900 showed Italian populations of 182,580 and 484,027 respectively. These figures represent considerable increases when compared to previous census, but they are overshadowed by gains made for the decade 1900-1910. For the first ten years of the twentieth century, 2,104,390 Italians arrived in the United States. So many, however, returned to Italy that the enumeration of 1910 recorded a population of only 1,343,125.

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Return Migration," in The Italian Experience in the United States, ed. by Silvano Tomasi and Madeline Engle (Staten Island: Center for Migration Studies, Inc., 1970), pp. 217-239; Giuseppe Monticelli, "Italian Emigration, Basic Characteristics and Trends," in The Italian Experience in the United States, pp. 3-22.

<sup>18</sup>Horrid conditions in Southern Italy resulted from a deep rooted system of feudalism established by the Normans. In the North, the system never penetrated as deeply; the massive opposition of a powerful communal tradition prevented it. The City-States of the North exerted little influence on the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. While the Renaissance lifted Northern Italy and Europe out of the Middle Ages, the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily continued to decline from their days of glory under Frederick II.

After unification (1859-1870) all attempts at agrarian reform failed. The abolition of feudalism, the distribution of Church lands and the Civil Code did little to prevent the flow of southern lands into the hands of the great landlords. The new Italian Kingdom, on top of this, levied heavy taxes and exploited the natural resources of the South for the advance of the North.

By 1910, the basic geographical pattern of Italian migration in the United States had been established and would never be greatly modified. Comparisons for 1910 and 1970, by region or by states, reveal only slight changes (Table 4 and Fig. 2). The census of 1910 showed an urban population for Italians of 80%, twice as high a proportion as that for the population of the country as a whole. In New York, Italians numbered 340,770. Philadelphia and Chicago followed with 45,000 each. Boston had an Italian population which numbered 31,000 while Newark had 20,000 and San Francisco 17,000. Other large centers at the time were Pittsburgh, Jersey City, Buffalo, Cleveland, New Orleans, St. Louis, Detroit and Baltimore.<sup>21</sup>

The tendency for Italians to congregate in American cities received much attention at the turn of the century. Americans, concerned over slums and the effects incoming Italians would have in perpetuating miserable conditions and multiplying city problems, attempted to solve the problem by encouraging Italians to shift into rural surroundings. The Italian and United States governments, individual states and private agencies supported the establishment of agricultural colonies in the United States especially in Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama. However, most farming ventures came to nothing and only truck gardening in the

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<sup>21</sup>Foerster, p. 329.

TABLE 4  
STATES WITH THE HIGHEST ITALIAN  
POPULATION, 1910 AND 1970

1910		1970*	
New York	472,201	New York	1,330,057
Pennsylvania	196,122	Pennsylvania	444,841
New Jersey	115,446	New Jersey	515,889
Massachusetts	85,056	California	340,675
Illinois	72,163	Massachusetts	294,318
California	63,615	Illinois	228,984
Connecticut	56,954	Connecticut	227,782
Ohio	41,620	Michigan	117,064
Rhode Island	27,287	Ohio	166,629
Louisiana	20,223	Rhode Island	73,255

\*Figures represent foreign-born Italians and natives of foreign-born parents.

Source: Foerster, 328.

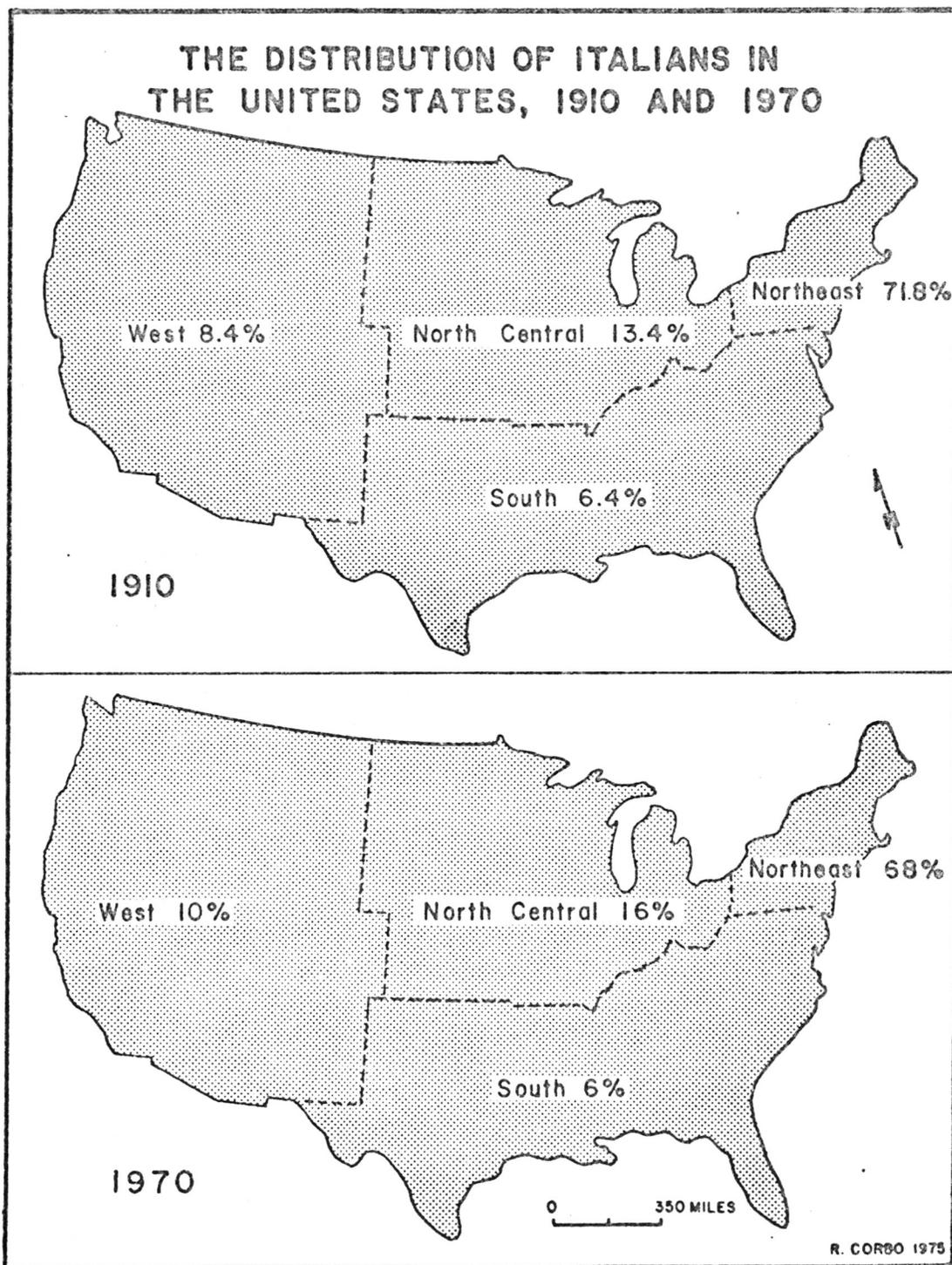


Fig. 2.

vicinity of large urban centers achieved a measure of success. Of those agricultural communities that succeeded, most resulted from efforts by Italian railroad workers who were distributed to the south, mid-west, and west by the padone system.<sup>22</sup> The demand by city Italians for fresh fruits and vegetables surfaces as the main motivating force for the truck farming colonies.

The reason given by most for the failure of Italians to take advantage of agricultural opportunities in the United States was that Italians in cities lacked the strength, ability and knowledge required to take advantage of the opportunities. However, Robert Foerster has shown that most Italians simply did not emigrate with hopes or intentions of farming. They arrived seeking economic opportunities, and gains existed in the commercial and industrial centers of the north and east, not in rural areas.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>The padrone system was a widespread institution among the immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Skilled in English as well as his native tongue, the Padrone acted as a middle man. He would agree with a contractor or railroad representative to furnish laborers and once his fee was established, immigrants were collected, assembled and sent to their destination. See Foerster, pp. 324-327; Luciano Iorizzo, "The Padrone and Immigrant Distribution," in The Italian Experience in the United States; Wayne Moquin, ed., "The Padrone System: A Federal View," in A Documentary History of the Italian Americans (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), pp. 105-110. For the Padrone System at work in Newark, see Charles J. McGuirk, Newark Star Ledger, (November 7, 1935).

<sup>23</sup>Foerster, pp. 370-371.

By 1960, 91.8% of all Italian-Americans resided in urban areas. In the United States as a whole, 70% of the population was urban. Debate still continues as to whether Italian-Americans exhibit a central city preference or not. It seems that original Italian settlements, started in central city areas, remain home for many Italian-Americans and urban renewal projects are the major disrupting events affecting "Little Italies." Examples are Boston, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Chicago.

During the years between 1910 and 1960 Italian emigration declined considerably. Before 1900 a total of 7,000,000 Italians left Italy. Most were from Northern Italy and three-fifths settled in Europe. Between 1900 and 1915 emigration from Italy totaled 9,000,000.<sup>24</sup> Southern Italians dominated this movement and emigration overseas outnumbered that to other European countries. World War I halted the flow of Italian immigrants into the United States. Most who entered in the decade 1910-1920 did so in the first five years, before the war. The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service reported the entrance of 1,109,524 Italians for the decade and the census showed an Italian population of 1,610,109 in 1920 (Table 5).

In the following decade, 1920-1930, Italian arrivals in the United States were severely restricted by legislation.

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<sup>24</sup>Monticelle, p. 4.

TABLE 5  
 ITALIAN IMMIGRATION INTO THE  
 UNITED STATES, 1900-1970

Year	Arrivals	Census Enumeration
1900		484,027
1901-1910	2,104,309	1,343,125
1911-1920	1,109,524	1,610,109
1921-1930	455,314	1,790,245
1931-1940	68,028	1,623,580
1941-1950	57,661	1,427,145
1951-1960	185,491	1,226,141
1961-1970	209,562	1,008,553

Source: United States Immigration and Naturalization Reporter, Vol. 24 (1975).

In 1924, the United States Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act. The new act restricted immigration for the first time in the country's history and did so with the creation of a quota system. The nationality quota system allowed only 5,666 Italians to enter yearly.<sup>25</sup>

Despite legislation, the Italian population increased for the 1921-1930 decade. The Depression and World War II, however, brought a dramatic halt to immigration to the United States. Arrival figures for the 1931-1950 period were not enough to balance return migrations and deaths. Reductions in the Italian population were recorded for both the 1940 and 1950 census.

Additional immigrants entered the United States following enactment of the Refugee Relief Act, 1953. Arrivals for the 1950-1960 decade reached 185,491, but the 1960 census showed, yet, another reduction.

In all, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service reports a total of 5,243,091 Italians admitted in the period between 1820 and 1973. The 1970 census lists a foreign-born Italian population of 1,008,553. In addition, the Bureau of the Census lists 4,240,779 persons born in the

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<sup>25</sup>The yearly allotments were frequently supplemented by special laws, e.g., the Walter-McCarran Act that admitted more than twice as many non-quota immigrants. Italian immigration was strongly affected by restrictive legislation.

The Immigration and Nationality Act was amended in October, 1965. The new law (P. L. 97-236) did away with the quota system and established the new preference system.

United States of Italian parents. Finally, Guiseppe Monticelli estimates that 15,000,000 to 16,000,000 Americans are of Italian descent.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Monticelli, p. 18.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DISTRIBUTION OF ITALIANS IN NEWARK

The census of 1870 reported 29 Italians in Newark. They settled in an area characterized by growing industry and lower class housing. These two variables, low income housing and growing industry, attracted Italian immigrants entering New York. Bewildered by the tumultuous tenement life of New York's "Little Italy", Italian immigrants searched for more suitable homes. Newark offered spacious housing and work.

Three periods in time, 1910, 1940, and 1970, have been selected to portray the phases of Italian community changes as reflected in Italian distributional patterns. Choice of these specific dates was made on the basis of data availability. The discussion for 1910 reflects census information for the city of Newark and is based upon divisions by Wards, whereas, the 1940 and 1970 periods rely upon the Census Tract. The use of two different divisional units stems from the decision of the Bureau of the Census to switch from the Ward to the Census Tract for discussion of population social characteristics.<sup>27</sup>

In order to obtain an effective analysis of the spatial

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<sup>27</sup>U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Population, Vol. 2, p. 14.

distribution of Italians within the city, the common statistical measure of dispersion (Standard Deviation) was applied to census data. Use of standard deviation provides an index of the deviation of individual ward (census tract) data, positive and negative, from the mean for the entire city. This made possible a more precise analysis than could have been rendered through the use of percentages and mean. Deviations to the positive side reflect wards or census tracts where the Italian population was concentrated.

Those wards (census tracts) within  $\pm\frac{1}{2}$  (s') standard deviation of the mean were interpreted as having had the average or expected Italian population. Wards between  $\frac{1}{2}$  s' and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s' were defined as moderately above average. Wards or census tracts with a s' greater than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  were categorized as well beyond the mean and could be expected to have a major concentration of Italians. Because of skewness to the positive side the classification system focuses on deviations to the positive side of the mean.

#### Nineteen Ten

By 1910, Italians were well established within the city of Newark. The number of Italians had grown from 29 in 1870 to 20,493 in 1910 (Table 6). Areas of the city inhabited by Italians fit the general economic status of the settlers. Areas which were once dominated by the Irish took on distinctly Italian characteristics. Whether forced or self-

TABLE 6  
ITALIANS IN NEWARK, 1870-1910

1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
29	409	3,897	8,537	20,493

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1870-1910.

imposed, the isolation of the "Little Italies" in Newark shield the immigrant from the processes of acculturation and fostered the maintainance of Italian cultural traditions (Fig. 3).

An Italian population was enumerated for every ward in the city. The range was from a low of 0.6% in ward 12 to 32.9% in ward 15, with a mean of 6.0%. The standard deviation for the city was 8.1%.

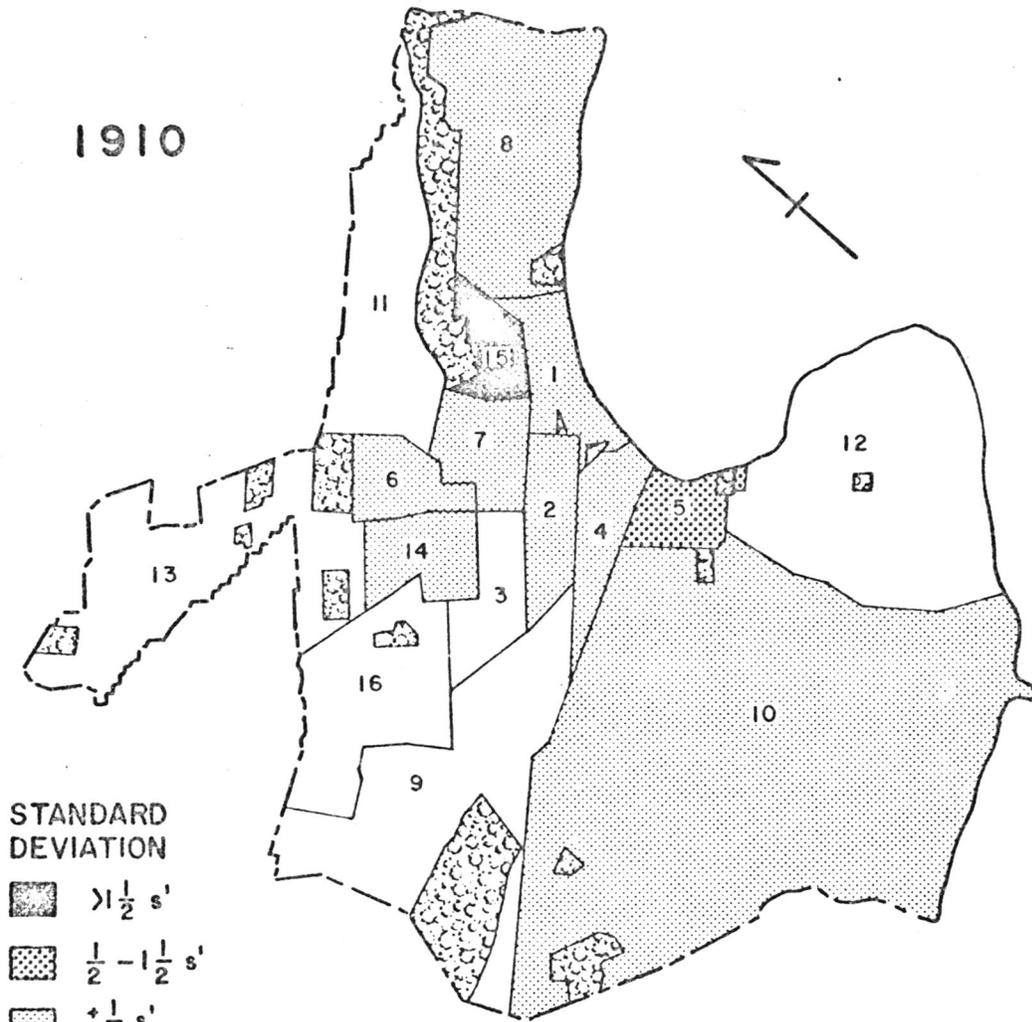
Those wards within  $\frac{1}{2}$  s' included 4, 7, 10, and 14. Wards 4 and 7 were just above the mean and 10 and 14 were well above the mean (Table 1, Appendix I). Combined with those wards within  $-\frac{1}{2}$  s' of the mean, 1, 2, 6, and 8, the major portion of the eastern half of the city was within the average realm (Fig. 3).

Those wards which were moderately below average, 3, 9, 11, 13 and 16, are concentrated in the western half of the city. Only one, ward 12, is not in the western half of the city. The percentage range for wards less than  $-\frac{1}{2}$  s' was between 0 and 2% Italian.

Just two wards registered above  $\frac{1}{2}$  s'. The first, ward 5, with 11.6% Italian fell between  $\frac{1}{2}$  s' and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s'. The second, ward 15, with 32.9% Italian was over  $3\frac{1}{2}$  s' from the mean. Both wards are located in the eastern sector of the city. Ward 5 is within one of the city's industrial complexes, and ward 15 is in proximity to the central business district.

# THE DISTRIBUTION OF ITALIANS IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY\*

1910



STANDARD  
DEVIATION

-   $> 1\frac{1}{2} s'$
-   $\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2} s'$
-   $\pm \frac{1}{2} s'$
-   $< -\frac{1}{2} s'$
-  PARKS

3000 0 3000 6000 FEET

\* BY WARDS

R. CORBO 1975

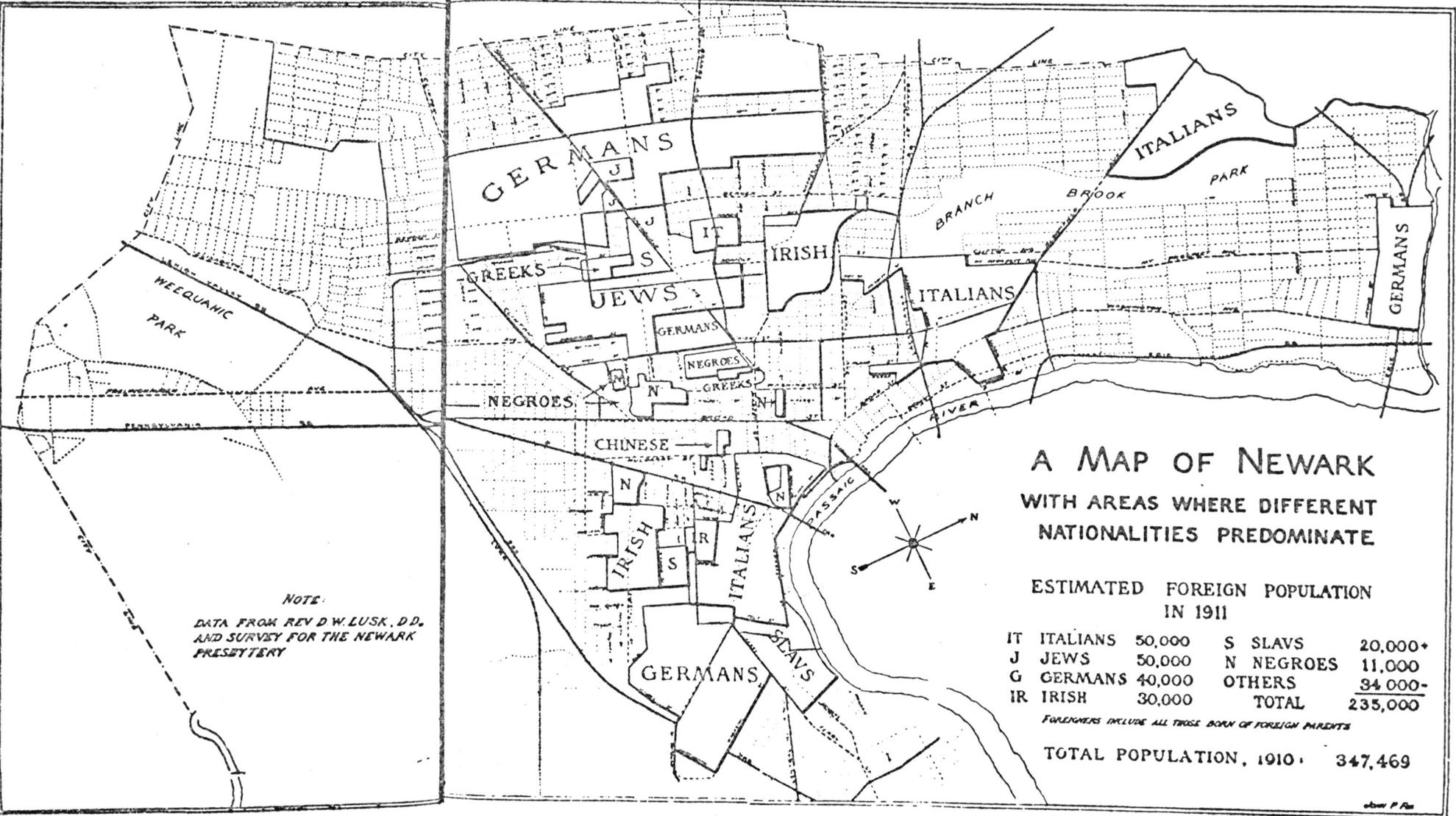
Fig. 3.

Difficulty was encountered in locating the areas of Italian clustering using the ward system. Because of the large area and population included within some wards, a concentration of an Italian population could go unnoticed. Some indication of this problem can be seen when Fig. 4 is examined.

The significance of the Rev. Lusk's map is that it depicts two areas of Italian concentration other than wards 5 and 15. Divisions based upon census tracts, used in the following sections, 1940 and 1970, correct the problem which stemmed from the use of the ward system. Where the ward system offered 16 units of measurements, the census tract offers 97 units. The large number of additional units helps to create a more accurate picture of Italian settlement location.

#### Nineteen Forty

With the detail precipitated by the use of the census tract, four "Little Italies" were identified on the Newark city landscape, 1940 (Table 7 and Fig. 5). Their resemblance to Lusk's Italian communities concludes that the pattern of Italian settlement in Newark was, in fact, well established by 1910 and that the increases in immigrant population during the 1910-1940 interim lead to the expansion of each colony (Table 8).



NOTE:  
 DATA FROM REV. D. W. LUSK, D.D.,  
 AND SURVEY FOR THE NEWARK  
 PRESBYTERY

### A MAP OF NEWARK WITH AREAS WHERE DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES PREDOMINATE

ESTIMATED FOREIGN POPULATION  
 IN 1911

IT	ITALIANS	50,000	S	SLAVS	20,000+
J	JEWS	50,000	N	NEGROES	11,000
G	GERMANS	40,000		OTHERS	<u>34,000-</u>
IR	IRISH	30,000		TOTAL	<u>235,000</u>

FOREIGNERS INCLUDE ALL THOSE BORN OF FOREIGN PARENTS

TOTAL POPULATION, 1910: 347,469

Fig. 4.

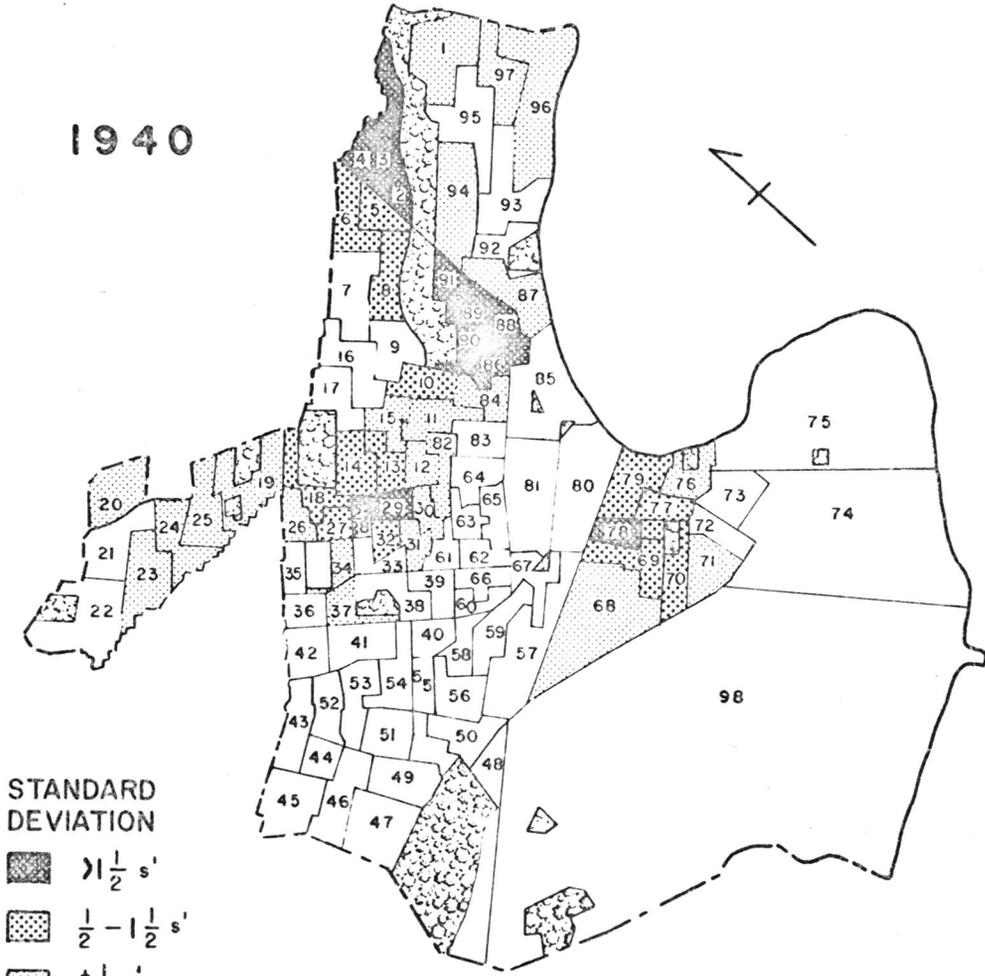
TABLE 7  
 ITALIAN SETTLEMENTS IN NEWARK, 1940

Settlement	Census Tract
Eight Avenue Colony	86
	88
	89
	90
	10
South Orange Avenue Colony	28
	29
	13
	14
	18
	27
Ironbound Colony	32
	78
	69
	70
	77
Silver Lake Colony	79
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	8

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1970.

# THE DISTRIBUTION OF ITALIANS IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY\*

1940



STANDARD  
DEVIATION

- $> \frac{1}{2} s'$
- $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} s'$
- $\pm \frac{1}{2} s'$
- $< -\frac{1}{2} s'$
- PARKS

3000 0 3000 6000 FEET

\* BY CENSUS TRACTS

R. CORBO 1975

Fig. 5.

TABLE 8  
ITALIANS IN NEWARK, 1910-1940

1910	1920	1930	1940
20,439	27,465	30,587	26,140

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1910-1940.

For the 1940 examination, percentages ranged from 0.1% for census tract 66 to 26.3% for census tract 29 (Table 2, Appendix I). The mean and standard deviation were 6.4% and 7.0% respectively. Each of the four Italian colonies consisted of a core area exhibiting an Italian population in excess of 17% (greater than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s'). The core areas were surrounded by areas in transition containing an Italian population between 9.9% and 16.9% ( $\frac{1}{2}$  s' -  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s').

A total of 25 census tracts are included within the four settlements. Eleven of the 25 were greater than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s' and 14 were  $\frac{1}{2}$  s' -  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s'. Of the remaining 72 census tracts, 24 were  $\pm\frac{1}{2}$  s' (14 below average, 10 above) and 48 were less than  $-\frac{1}{2}$  s'. The location of all census tracts can be seen in Fig. 5.

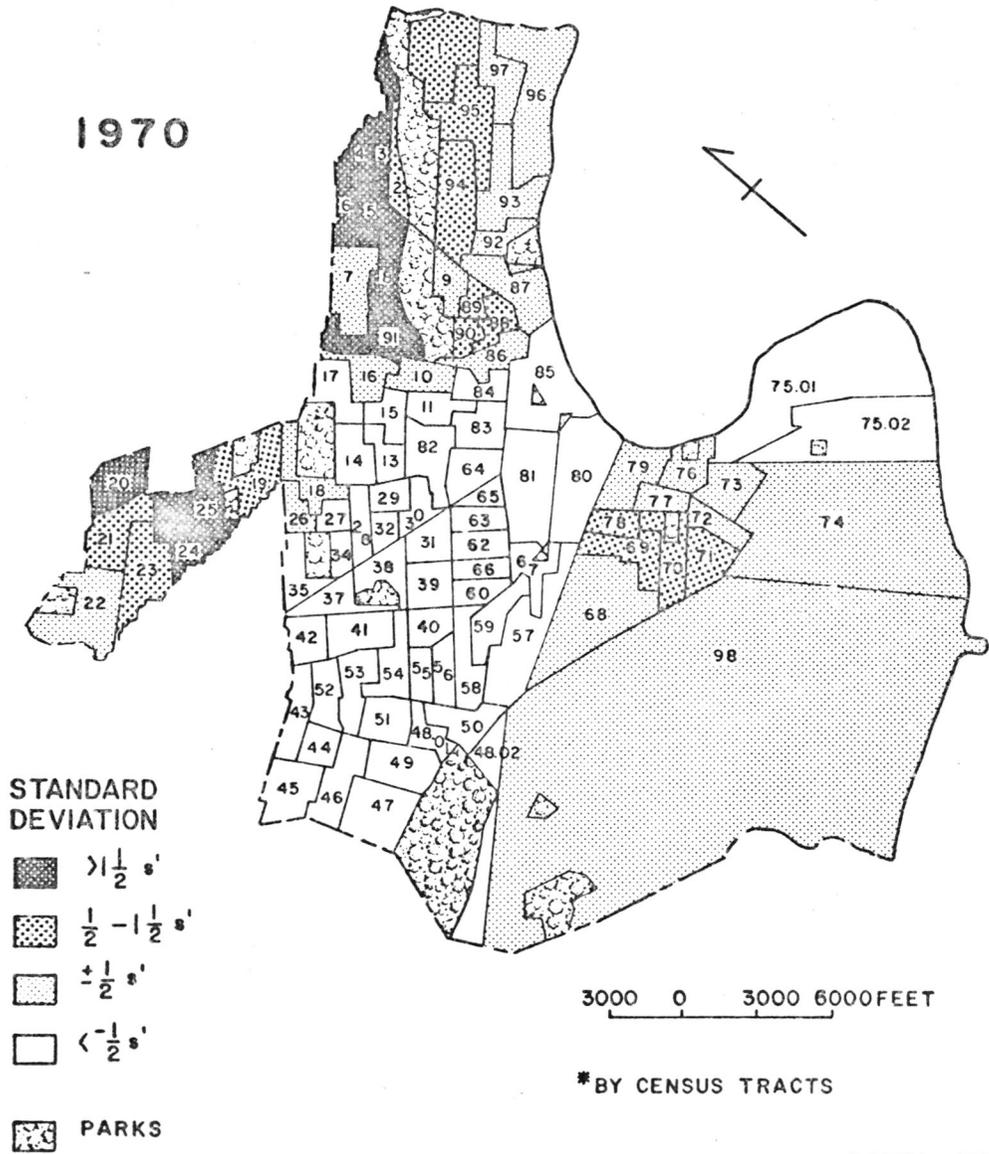
#### Nineteen Seventy

The distribution and cluster location of Italians in Newark had changed considerably by 1970 (Fig. 6). Changes included: (1) the disappearance of the South Orange Avenue Colony; (2) a greater concentration of Italians in the Silver Lake Colony; (3) a major disintegration of the Eight Avenue and Ironbound Colonies; and (4) the turnover of housing in the Vailsburg area to Italians. All changes in the distribution of Italians on the Newark city landscape were attributed to the influx of new ethnic groups.

Census tracts for the 1970 examination range from 0% in

# THE DISTRIBUTION OF ITALIANS IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY\*

1970



R. CORBO 1975

Fig. 6.

19 of the 97 tracts to 44.7% in tract 5 (Table 3, Appendix I). A mean of 7.5% and standard deviation of 10.8% were recorded. Because of a change in the definition of foreign-born, census material for 1970 included natives of foreign-born parents in its statistics.

Two major concentrations of Italians existed in Newark, 1970 (Fig. 6). The Silver Lake Community, in the northwestern corner of the city, is the larger. It encompasses seven census tracts (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 91), six of which had an Italian population in excess of 23.7% (greater than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s'). Growth in the Silver Lake settlement resulted from the movement of Italians out of areas encroached upon by Blacks and Spanish speaking people. The second area of concentration was the Vailsburg section of the city. Vailsburg, the "western wing" of the city, was an Irish stronghold before the Italians began to filter in. Little indication that a future Italian movement into the area was shown by the 1940 map. However, migration into central Newark by Blacks resulted in all Italians moving from the South Orange Avenue Colony into Vailsburg. The area consists of six census tracts, three with an Italian population in excess of 23.7% and three with between 12.9% and 23.7% ( $\frac{1}{2}$  s' -  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s').

To better understand the abandonment of housing in the South Orange Avenue Colony, an examination of Table 9 is in order. Amazing gains were made by the Black, Portuguese, and Puerto Rican populations of the city. Their need for

TABLE 9  
ETHNIC GROUPS IN NEWARK

Group	1910	1940	1970*
Blacks	9,475	45,760	207,458
Spanish Speaking	Not Available	N.A.	45,771
Portuguese	N.A.	2,402	32,354
Italians	20,495	26,140	27,309

\*1970 census material includes natives of foreign-born parents, Newark's foreign-born Italian population for 1970 was 8,049.

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1910-1970.

housing placed them in close proximity to the Italians of Newark. Just as hostility flared between Italians and Irish at the turn of the century, so Italians resented the intrusion by the newest minorities. The immediate Italian reaction was to move.

Comparisons made on the South Orange Avenue Colony, 1960-1970, revealed the quickness with which Italians handed over some of the oldest housing in the city to the Blacks (Table 10). In the Eight Avenue Colony, the exchange of housing appears to be slower and to have been from Italians to Blacks and Spanish speaking. The Ironbound area contained the majority of the 32,354 Portuguese in the city. The census did not include Portugal in its census tract breakdown by country of origin (Fig. 7).

Examination of census data, 1910-1970, shows that the pattern of Italian settlement was well established by 1910. At that time four Italian communities existed in Newark. These communities continued to add members and expand until 1960. Then, with few Italian arrivals, the influx of additional Blacks and a sizable wave of Spanish speaking began the exchange of housing responsible for the relocation and concentration of Italians in Vailsburg and Silver Lake (Table 11).

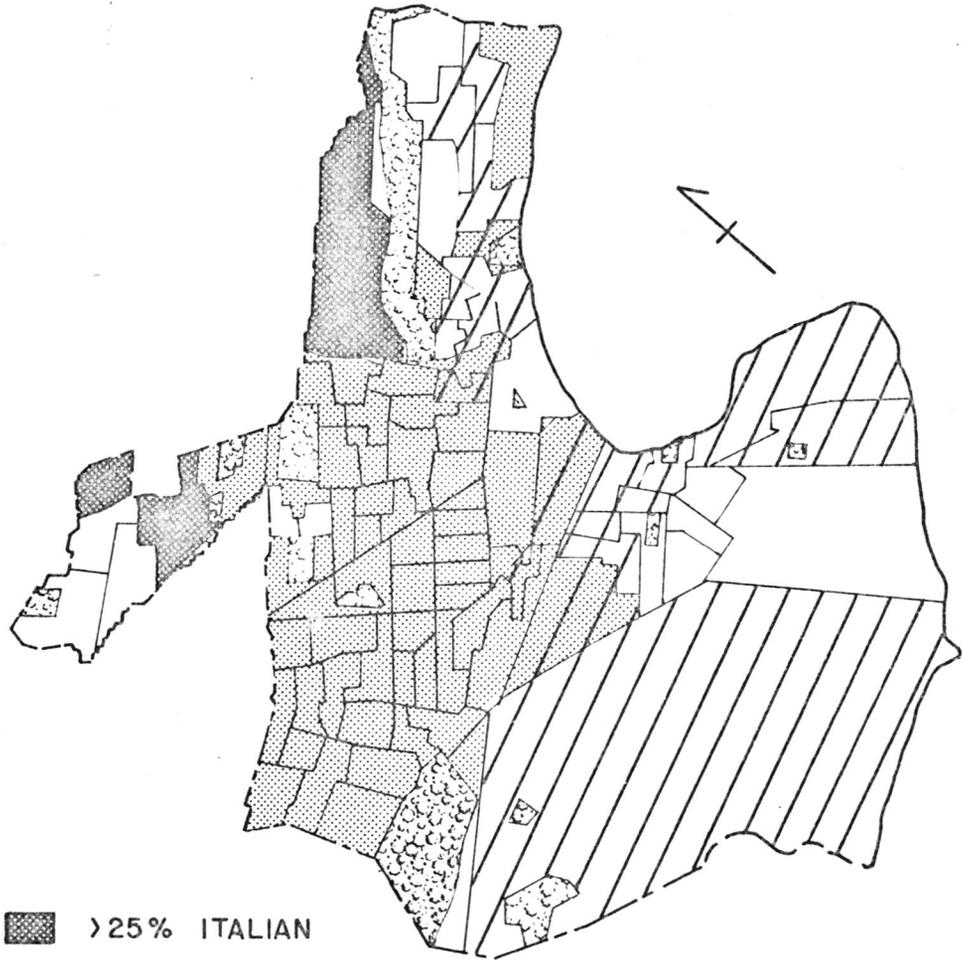
TABLE 10  
POPULATION SHIFTS FOR SELECT CENSUS TRACTS

Census Tract	1960 Percent Italian	Percent Italian	1970 Percent Black	Percent S.S.*
South Orange Avenue Colony				
28	41.1	0.2	88.3	9.8
29	22.8	0.4	86.3	11.0
27	14.3	0.8	95.9	0.9
13	17.7	0.6	83.8	9.8
14	21.6	0	89.7	7.4
18	24.5	2.7	82.0	9.3
Eight Avenue Colony				
88	23.2	14.5	23.5	37.7
89	48.0	22.9	15.6	37.8
90	41.3	14.8	16.6	35.5
10	22.9	5.7	60.2	20.8
9	20.9	5.6	59.2	11.5
Ironbound Colony				
69	31.3	22.1	11.5	27.8
70	29.0	19.0	0.1	21.8
77	24.0	10.3	0.5	28.7
78	29.3	19.3	3.5	40.9
79	15.9	6.4	3.2	40.6
68	18.3	8.8	38.0	29.1
71	17.3	13.8	0.1	13.3

\*Spanish speaking

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1960 and 1970.

# THE DISTRIBUTION OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY



- █ >25% ITALIAN
- ▒ >25% BLACK
- ▨ >25% SPANISH SPEAKING
- PARKS

3000 0 3000 6000 FEET

R. CORBO 1975

Fig. 7.

TABLE 11  
ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS ENTERING NEWARK, 1960-1970

Year	Immigrants	Year	Immigrants
1960	228	1967	297
1961	253	1968	259
1962	320	1969	235
1963	199	1970	225
1964	130	1971	199
1965	106	1972	146
1966	250	1973	227

Source: U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports, 1960-1973.

## CHAPTER IV

### ITALIAN CULTURE IN NEWARK

In order to investigate and identify cultural elements characteristic of Italian areas in Newark, twelve census tracts were selected for field interviews and observations. Nine of the twelve census tracts exhibited an Italian population of 23.7% (greater than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  s'), and for the purpose of this study, represent the Italian cultural area of Newark (Table 12). Statistically, these nine tracts constitute areas with an Italian population well above the average. The three additional census tracts, 41, 51, and 62, are areas without an Italian population (Tables 2 and 3, Appendix I). These tracts were included to serve as a control area; the absence of certain cultural traits in this area, and their presence in the nine "Italian" tracts, would indicate that the Italian population is causally related to these traits (Fig. 8).

Three hundred and eleven interviews were conducted within the Italian cultural area and 60 within the additional three census tracts. Interviews were of the door to door nature (Interview Objectives, Appendix II). In the cultural area, every twenty-fifth dwelling unit was selected for an interview and outside the cultural area, every fiftieth unit. Most units were multi-dwelling. In each case, the owner was

TABLE 12  
THE ITALIAN CULTURAL AREA OF NEWARK

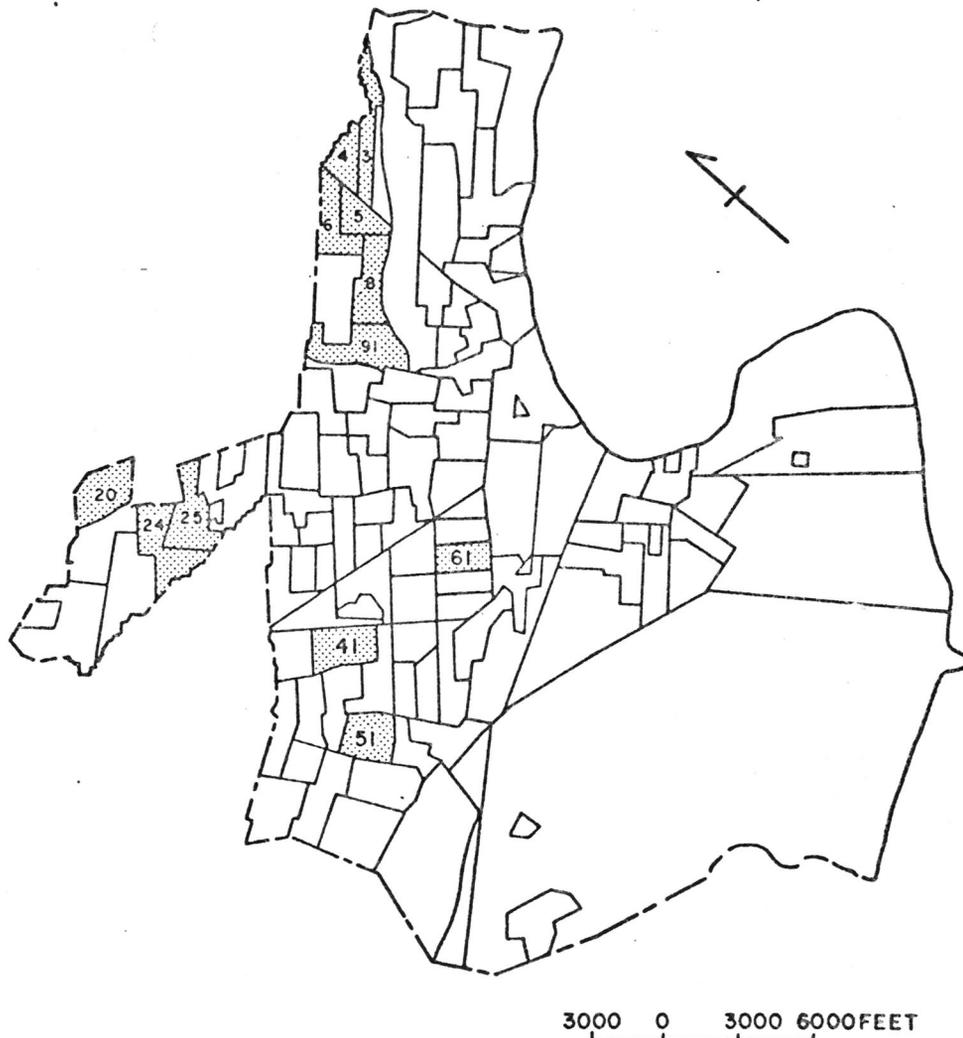
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Census Tracts	Percent Italian
5	45
4	41
6	41
91	36
3	35
20	30
8	26
24	26
25	25

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CENSUS TRACTS INVESTIGATED  
FOR ITALIAN CULTURAL TRAITS



R. CORBO 1975

Fig. 8.

interviewed unless there was a case of absentee ownership.<sup>28</sup> Apartment houses were bypassed. With permission from the Italian Tribune, an ethnic newspaper, the interviewer introduced himself as a writer for that newspaper.

Eight secondary interviews were scheduled with community leaders. Three Italian priests and five social workers comprised this group. Added to primary interviews, a total of 379 interviews were conducted. Interviews, coupled with information from city-wide observations, library research and official records, presented a strong foundation from which to write.

#### Region of Origin

Of the 311 interviewees contacted in the cultural area, 221 persons (71%) claimed Italian heritage (Not one person interviewed outside the cultural area claimed Italian heritage).<sup>29</sup> One hundred and eighty-nine Italian-Americans knew what region of Italy they or their ancestors came from (Fig. 9).

Only 9.8% traced their ancestry to Northern or Central

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<sup>28</sup>Italians of foreign birth exhibited a preference for second floor apartments. In Italy, second floor apartments are the aristocratic floor (piano nobile). At that elevation, there is no fear of being overlooked and no evils are encountered.

<sup>29</sup>Persons not claiming Italian heritage had a knowledge of Italian cultural traits. Their knowledge and, in instances, practice of particular traits, resulted from life in a neighborhood dominated by Italian-Americans.

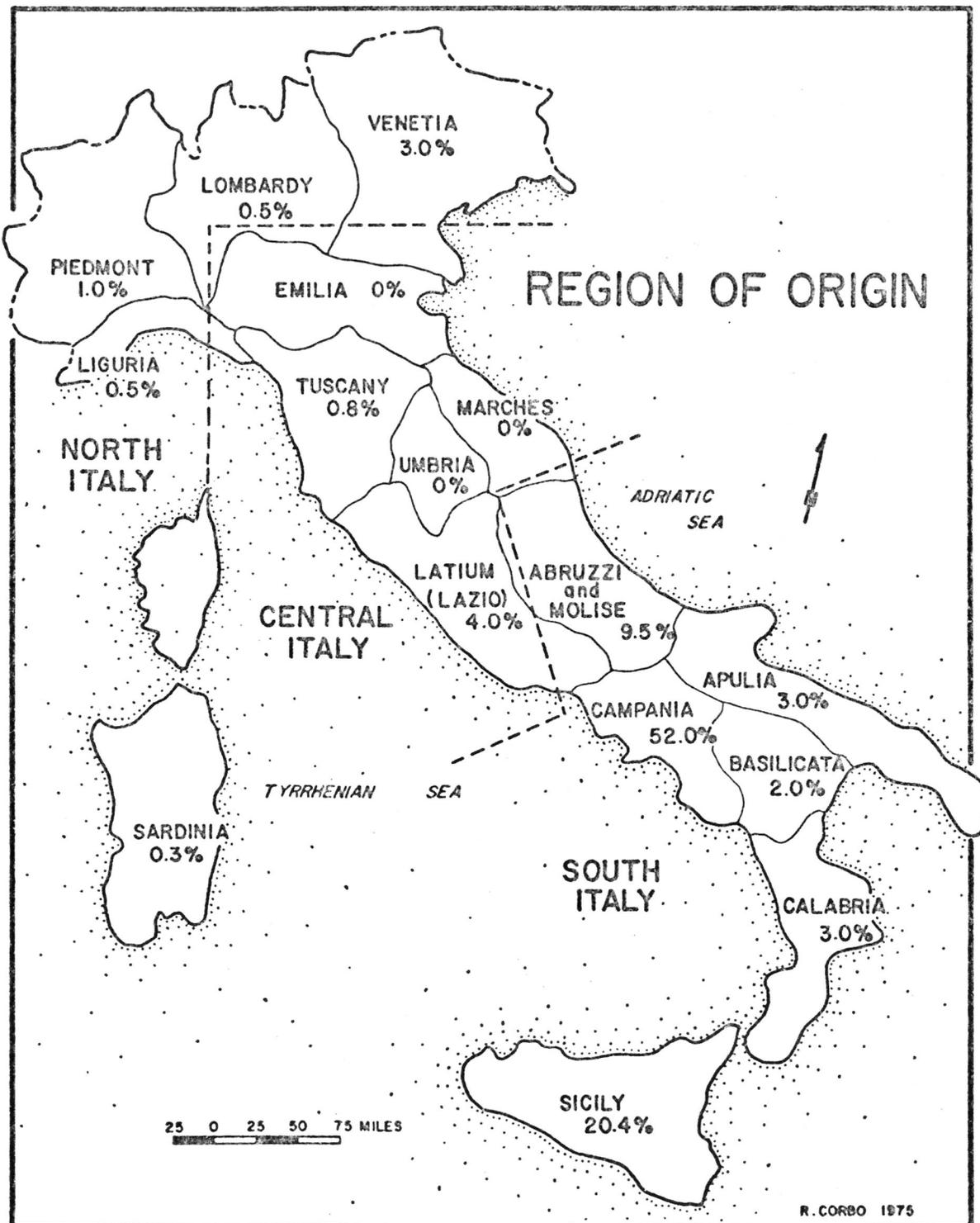


Fig. 9.

Italy, while 90.2% traced it to the six districts of the South and Sicily. As indicated in Chapter II, the bulk of Italian immigration was from the South. However, the high percentage figures for Campania and to a lesser degree Sicily are curious. Hubert Nelli explains the phenomena:

Whether from the North... or from the South and Sicily, newcomers tended at first to settle along the same streets... They lodged according to town or province of origin, doubtless seeking familiar faces, names and dialects...<sup>30</sup>

Knowing the regional origin of the Italian population becomes significant when related to the history of Italy. Ideas and customs typical of Central Europe were found in North Italy. As for South Italy, repeated invasions by foreign powers left their mark upon language, customs and beliefs. In Newark, therefore, Italian culture reflects the regions of the South and in particular, the region of Campania.

#### Cultural Traits Identified

The hypothesis that an Italian cultural landscape could be recognized within Newark was well supported by the investigation. The area inhabited by the Italian population displays cultural elements that are unique. Census tracts 41, 51, and 62, are devoid of the cultural traits attributed to the Italian population.

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<sup>30</sup>Hubert S. Nelli, "Italians in Urban America," in The Italian Experience in the United States, ed. by Tomasi (New York: Center for Migration Studies, Inc., 1970), p. 70.

A discussion of the total trait complex is not included in this paper. Only a small specific group of Italian practices are examined in detail. The following list identifies those cultural traits investigated.

- (1) Religious Feasts
- (2) Vegetable Gardens
- (3) Fig Trees
- (4) Boccie Courts
- (5) Wine Presses and Grape Vines

The above traits have been neglected by other social scientists interested in Italian communities. Literature dealing with Italian urban life has often concentrated on mutual benefit societies, social clubs, the Church and immigrant banks, to name a few.<sup>31</sup> All of these institutions were found in Newark and their exclusion from this paper does not subtract from their important role in Italian assimilation. The cultural traits listed, however, are more subtle, less visible elements of the community.

#### Religious Festivals

In Newark, 93% of the Italian-Americans interviewed were Roman Catholics. Aspects of the ritual and creed observed distinguish the "Italian Church" (Southern Italian) from that of other (Northern Italian, Irish or Polish) Roman Catholic

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<sup>31</sup>See, Foerster; Gans; Glazer and Moynihan; and Tomasi and Engel, pp. 77-102.

Churches. The veneration of saints with a heavy emphasis on statues and the attributing of specific powers and qualities to individual saints illustrates two differences. The Italian population south of Rome preserved many characteristics of pagan civilization.

The word pagan, derived from *paganus*, meaning a peasant or country dweller, points to Christianity's early foothold in urban places. The conversion of the peasant came gradually and their folk superstitions and beliefs, characteristic of paganism, persisted.<sup>32</sup> The Religious Festival and Procession, carried to America in a fairly pure form, was characterized in Italy by customs that reflected the pageantry of Roman practices. During the annual celebration of a town's patron saint, it was customary to take the statue of the saint from the church and carry it, in procession, through the streets.

In Newark, the feast of St. Gerard honors the patron or guardian saint of the immigrants from Caposele, Italy. In the past, the feast of St. Gerard was one of many. The feast of St. Rocco, Our Lady of the Snows, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and Our Lady of the Assumption were other feasts celebrated in Newark.<sup>33</sup> They were discontinued as the Italian

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<sup>32</sup>Phyllis William, Southern Italian Folkways in Europe and America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 46.

<sup>33</sup>St. Rocco is the patron saint of Maddoloni, Italy, and protector from illness. Our Lady of the Snows is the guardian saint of Calabritto, Italy, and Our Lady of the Assumption, the guardian saint of Teore, Italy. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is the healer of the sick.

population of the city decreased.

The feast of St. Gerard, celebrated on October 16, has endured. Thousands attend the feast, including people from areas of Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York. Following church services at St. Lucy's (guardian saint of eyesight) the statue of St. Gerard is carried through the streets. Devotees offer gifts, usually money, for favors. The procession moves through the neighborhood ending back at the church. The festival then begins. Wood framed stalls along the street offer traditional foods such as salted beans, nuts, tomato pies, torrone (almond candy), peppers, sausage, cheese and bread. Other stalls contain sacramentals and amulets.<sup>34</sup> The feast continues for three days.

In both Italy and the United States, the feast celebration has functioned as one of the chief forms of recreation. It responded to the need for color in the lives of the Southern Italian peasants. Costumes, flower displays and floats characterize processions in Italy and the United States. Festivals are more numerous in Italy, "Sicily, for example, has thirty-seven, not counting the fifty-two Sundays and five days of Carnivals--a total of ninety-four days."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Many of the amulets sold are for protection from mystic forces. The best known is the Evil Eye (Mal'occhio), a power inborn in certain men and women, who by a glance can cause physical injury, sickness or death.

<sup>35</sup>Williams, p. 109.

Whereas each village has a patron saint in Italy, the Italian communities in Newark chose the saints that were representative of the largest homeland groups. The Italian feast appears to have a greater survival value than other religious and cultural practices.

### Vegetable Gardens and Fig Trees

The Southern Italian farmer usually rented his land from a large landowner. This system of sharecropping was known as the mezzadria system. Through the arrangement, the landowner provided a given number of acres of land, a home, farm buildings and livestock. The landlord also provided flour, a certain number of grape vines for wine, olive trees for cooking oil and fruit for the farmer's table. At harvest time, a division was made, half to the owner and half to the tenant.

On migrating to the United States, one of the chief objectives of the Italian was to own a home. Phyllis Williams has stated that the average Italian:

He lives under the most cramped and sordid conditions to save the money necessary for the down payment. After years of patient toil on his part and of economizing on his wife's, granted that the climate and other aspects of his new environment have not brought about too many health problems, he may be able to pay \$500 or \$1,000 on a small home... he has a home. He has become a padrone (landlord), a status far beyond his hopes in Italy... If the house is a two-family, he leases the first floor. The garden space, however, he generally retains and crams full of vegetables and vines.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 53-54.

In Newark, 14% of the Italian-Americans interviewed maintained a garden, 19% had grape vines (many unattended), and 7% fig trees. When questioned if a father or grandfather ever cultivated backyard crops, 62% responded affirmatively. The following list compares crops mentioned during interviews and those characteristic of Southern Italy.

Gardening relieves financial pressures and produces culturally preferred foods. All foods listed (Table 13), however, are available at open air markets which have developed in Newark and other cities with sizable Italian populations (Fig. 10). The availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and the higher economic status of Italians in Newark, 1975, were the reasons given for the discontinuation of gardening. Foerster has said, "The Italian love of trade, bringing an eagerness to have fresh fruits and vegetables and to display them, has undoubtedly somewhat simulated the fruit and vegetable consumption of the American people."<sup>37</sup>

Other culturally preferred foods are found in the neighborhood grocery stores of Newark, many of which reveal the absence of refrigeration in Southern Italy. The appearance of dried mushrooms, peppers and eggplants hanging with cheeses may be found unappealing to some Americans. Beans, chick peas and seeds of sorts are also dried or soaked in salt water. Methods of preserving foods (salt, pepper,

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<sup>37</sup>Foerster, p. 338.

TABLE 13

## A LIST OF CROPS MENTIONED DURING INTERVIEWS

Italy	Newark
Lettuce	Lettuce
Scarole	Scarole
Chicory	
Cabbage	Cabbage
Tomatoes	Tomatoes
Eggplant	Eggplant
Onions	Onions
Artichokes	
Asparagus	
Squash	Squash
Beans (all kinds)	Beans
Potatoes	
Broccoli	Broccoli
Celery	Celery
Peas	
Thyme	
Basil	Basil
Mint	Mint
Parsley	Parsley
Garlic	Garlic
Figs	Figs
Pears	
Melons	
Oranges	
Lemons	
Persimmons	
Bananas	
Strawberries	Strawberries
Peaches	Peaches
Mushrooms	
Grapes	Grapes
Plums	
Beets	Beets
Olives	
Wheat	
Peppers	Peppers
	Radish
	Pumpkins
	Cherries



Fig. 10. Open air markets have developed in Newark.

vinegar and drying) for winter use in Italy continue to characterize Italian foods in the United States.

Fish (eel, squid, anchovies and sardines) identified with coastal regions of Italy remain favorite dishes for Italian-Americans. Salted or dried fish, baccala (cod) and stoccafisso (hake), require prolonged soaking and boiling before being served with tomatoes and oil. The yell of the fish vendor, slowly driving through the streets, can still be heard in Newark.

Sausage, a more common meat in Southern Italy, continues to be used extensively despite the availability of beef and veal. It still contains enough herbs and peppers to be preserved for long periods. Proscutto (smoked ham) is thickly covered in black pepper. Like sausage and proscutto, the inner organs of animals persist as dishes consumed by Italian-Americans. No doubt, Italians made total use of farm animals in Italy. Liver, lungs and brains are a few entrails displayed in the butchereries of Newark.

Pasta eaten in Italy was made from rye, wheat, sometimes chestnut flour, salt and water or eggs. The kinds of pasta the people of the United States refer to as spaghetti are actually maccheroni (tubular pasta). Spaghetti is just one kind of maccheroni. Sauces for pasta vary, but tomatoes and cheese are the most common ingredients.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Williams, p. 51.

Finally, the fig trees found in the yards of 7% of those interviewed best exemplifies the maintenance of Italian culinary habits (Fig. 11). Referred to as the most treasured plant, fig trees are not indigenous to the city. Because winter temperatures are too low, the tree must be bound and canvassed from November to April. Seedlings are bent and buried in the ground for protection. Only intensive care allows the plant to survive, and the fruit to be harvested.

Italian culinary habits have been modified by the rising economic status of Italians in Newark.<sup>39</sup> All generations interviewed, however, expressed a continued preference for Italian foods.

#### Boccie Courts

Boccie, pronounced "bott-chee", is an Italian bowling game. The game is similar to bowls and may be the game from which all other of its type emerged. The American Bowling Congress has stated:

It is absolutely impossible to secure, even though careful research, accurate data of the ancient game bowling of "bowls"... According to some authorities, its place of origin in Europe can quite definitely be placed in what is today Northern Italy. The Helvetii, living in the Alpine region during Caesar's time (50 B.C.) were

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<sup>39</sup>The appearance of numerous bakeries and butcheries in Italian communities in New York, Boston and to a lesser degree Newark, points to this rising economic status. In Southern Italy, the per capita consumption of sugar was one of the lowest in Europe; the average intake in the United States is one of the highest in the world. Meats, along with sugar, were rare among the poor of the South.



Fig. 11. Fig trees are canvassed in Winter.

said to have played a game similar to the present-day Italian bowling game called "Bocci."<sup>40</sup>

In Newark, 5% of the Italian-Americans interviewed had bocce courts in their backyards. Eighty-four percent had played the game at one time. The playing area or alley is 60 feet long and 10 feet wide. A wooden enclosure surrounds the court with ends and sides 18 and 12 inches high respectively. The playing surface is sand or soil (Fig. 12). Some backyard courts were reduced in area to accommodate housing lot size. The occurrence of backyard courts was much more widespread years ago. As the foreign-born population decreased, so did the number of backyard courts.<sup>41</sup>

Bocce ball is often accompanied by the game Patron e Sotto (boss and underboss). During the summer months, men gathering in a neighbor's backyard to play bocce bring wine along. There, many times in the shade of a grape arbor, the game of Patron e Sotto is played simultaneously with bocce ball. The boss (patron) is selected by "throwing

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<sup>40</sup>American Bowling Congress, History of Bowling (Milwaukee: American Bowling Congress, 1962), p. 4.

<sup>41</sup>Rules governing the game are the same in the United States and Italy. The reduction in backyard alley size seems to be the only adaptation to local conditions. Equipment consists of eight balls having a diameter of four and a half inches, plus a smaller jack ball about two inches in diameter. The game can be played with teams of two or four players and ends after the accumulation of eleven or twenty-one points. Points are scored by bringing the ball to rest closer to the jack ball than any of the opponents' balls.



Fig. 12. Bocce courts exist in Branch Brook Park (above) as well as backyards (below).

fingers" (Morra) and is given custody of the wine.<sup>42</sup> The underboss (soto) is the loser of the final round of morra. The boss and underboss are then placed on opposing bocchie teams.

The objective of the game is for the patron to distribute drinks to his teammates. The patron may drink freely, but he cannot offer another person some wine without the permission of the underboss. The underboss, of course, wants his teammates to drink. A time limit in which the wine must be consumed is established and much politicking surfaces.

Bocchie courts added a final touch to backyards that already reflected Italian country life. Migration had transferred most activities from the open air to the indoors, but intensive use of the backyard created a new center of activity for life in urban America.

#### Grape Arbors and Wine Presses

Grape vines, producing grapes for wine and eating in Italy, never yielded the quantity of grapes needed for home wine production in the United States. The vines existing in the yards of 19% of the interviewed population bear only enough fruit for the table and some jam. In Newark, the

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<sup>42</sup>The game of morra is played with men facing one another. Bringing forward their hand from behind their backs, each displays one to five fingers. At the same time, he calls the number which he thinks will be closest to the number of fingers both he and his opponent have showing.

backyard grape arbor provides shade offering a pleasant place to perform household tasks and to entertain in the summer (Fig. 13).

The quantity of grapes needed for the production of one barrel of wine (32 gallons) is approximately nine boxes. Each box weighs forty pounds and costs over \$10. During the 1930-1940 decade, the cost of one box of grapes was \$1.50. Boxes of grapes are sold at the railroad freight station in Newark. They arrive from California.

In Newark, 4% of the Italian-American population interviewed produced wine in their homes. Nine percent reported a fixed or portable wine press in their cellar, and 43% stated their father or grandfather made wine at home years ago (Fig. 14). The knowledge of wine making diffused to the United States with the earliest of Italian immigrants.

South Italy receives between 20 and 40 inches of rain yearly and this lack of water has been reflected in the general customs of the people. A preference for wine is one. The water problem was magnified by outbreaks of malaria. Many times throughout history, wine was thought to be the only safe drink in Southern Italy.

The pollution of water in Southern Italy, reflects the deforestation of the area centuries ago. Scant rainfall was not held by forests or sod and became torrent for short periods. The deposition of soil from hills in valleys choked drainage and formed swamps. The swamps provided breeding



Fig. 13. Backyard grape arbors provide shade.



Fig. 14. Cellar wine presses were reported by 9% of those interviewed.

areas for malaria carrying mosquitoes. The problem was so acute at times that the washing of newborn babies in wine became an adaptation to the condition.

Ninety percent of those persons producing wine are foreign-born, indicating that the practice is not prevalent among first and second generations. The consumption of wine with meals is, however, characteristic of succeeding generations.

Federal law requires that a permit be acquired by persons producing 200 or less gallons of wine. Years ago many families purchased two permits. Large families easily consumed 400 gallons a year. Children were allowed wine at an early age.<sup>43</sup> No one interviewed produced in excess of 200 gallons. As a rule, one-third of the quantity manufactured is white wine, and two-thirds red. To the Italian, wine is thought a blessing if drunk in moderation. One old Italian proverb sums it up, "La viviri misuratu fa l'omu assinnatu," unmeasured drinking makes a man an ass.

The wine press and other cultural traits discussed are representative of Italian culture. Their presences in Newark resulted from the migration of Italians into the city. The Italian neighborhoods of Newark can be identified by the

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<sup>43</sup>Williams reported Sicilians believed that milk forms a fertile medium for the development of worms in children. Calabrian peasants held that if one gave a young infant much milk it would take on the characteristics of the animal producing the liquid (p. 55).

cultural elements fixed on the landscape. Recognition of the elements, and a knowledge of their cultural history facilitates an understanding of the Italian-American cultural group.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An Italian cultural landscape has been recognized in Newark, New Jersey. Other minority cultural landscapes, no doubt, are in existence in Newark. Based upon research dealing with the Italian population in Newark, it is logical to assume that other cities across the country contain ethnic communities characterized by the native culture of the immigrants who make up the communities.

The idea of the melting pot continues to be influential and hinders social scientists interested in the cultural pluralisms existent in cities of the United States. Ethnic communities are all too often viewed as remnants or manifestations of the foreign-born generation which will soon pass away. In Newark, the Italian-American population is exerting influences on the local American society. The study of urban culture in the United States, therefore, besides possessing romantic appeal, can uncover important additions to North American culture as a whole and reveal much about the former culture of the immigrants who came to settle in this country.

The hypothesis that an Italian-American cultural area, exhibiting an Italian-American cultural landscape, could be found in Newark was supported by this investigation, in spite of the restrictions to which it was subjected. A hesitancy

by interviewees to engage in prolonged conversation was a restriction that impeded the collection of extensive detail pertaining to those cultural traits investigated. Nevertheless, a cultural distinctiveness was associated with all generations of Italian-Americans in Newark, as shown by religious, culinary and recreational practices.

John Jakle and James Wheeler believe that "where high acculturation rates exist, the ethnic population tends toward greater dispersal in residential pattern; conversely, where the acculturation rate is low, increasing residential concentration is the rule."<sup>44</sup> The history of Italian settlement in Newark has been one of residential concentration and of a low rate of acculturation.

The distribution of Italians in Newark was well established by 1910. The census for that year enumerated an Italian population for each ward of the city, but four areas contained concentrations which accounted for more than 90% of the 20,494 Italian. In the next 20 years an additional 10,000 Italians arrived in the city. They continued to settle in areas already occupied by their countrymen and the existing settlements grew and became more complex.

Major changes in the location of the Italian population of Newark did not occur until the decade 1960-1970. During that ten year period, Newark experienced (1) an influx of

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<sup>44</sup>Jakle and Wheeler, p. 459.

minority groups, (2) urban renewal, and (3) inner-city riots. The 1970 census for Newark showed 20,000 fewer Italians than the preceding census. Changes in the distributional pattern of Italians included: (1) the disappearance of the South Orange Avenue area; (2) a greater concentration of Italians in the Silver Lake area; (3) a major disintegration of the Eight Avenue and Ironbound areas; and (4) the turnover of housing in the Vailsburg area to Italians.

Field research, initiated to discover cultural traits characteristic of areas dominated by Italians, was concentrated in the Silver Lake and Vailsburg communities. Interviews and observations uncovered five traits: (1) Religious feasts; (2) Vegetable gardens; (3) Fig trees; (4) Boccie courts; and (5) Wine presses and grape arbors. Each trait manifested itself in the foreign-born Italian population and weakened with succeeding generations.

First and second generation Italians, for the most part, no longer cultivated backyard crops, made wine, or built boccie courts. They did, however, continue to have preferences directly related to the cultural traits discussed above. They elected to maintain Italian culinary habits, consume wine, and perpetuate religious and recreational activities.

Combining the traits presented, with those researched by others, mutual aid societies, the Church, social clubs,

et al., the cultural trait complex used to identify and understand Italian urban ethnic communities continues to grow. Unraveling the cultural history of each trait will aid in understanding distinct differences found in areas dominated by Italian-Americans in the United States.

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APPENDIX I

TABLE 1  
STANDARD DEVIATIONS BY WARDS, 1910

Ward	Percent Italian	Standard Deviation
1	3.3	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
2	3.4	"
3	1.1	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
4	6.3	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
5	11.7	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
6	2.4	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
7	7.8	"
8	3.2	"
9	1.3	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
10	9.5	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
11	1.0	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
12	0.6	"
13	1.2	"
14	9.6	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
15	32.9	$> 1\frac{1}{2}$
16	0.8	$< -\frac{1}{2}$

TABLE 2  
STANDARD DEVIATION BY CENSUS TRACTS, 1940

Census Tract	Percent Italian	Standard Deviation
1	2.8	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
2	20.5	$> 1\frac{1}{2}$
3	19.6	"
4	19.9	"
5	15.5	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
6	15.6	"
7	1.6	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
8	14.1	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
9	4.1	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
10	10.8	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
11	8.0	"
12	9.3	"
13	11.3	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
14	11.1	"
15	5.6	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
16	1.8	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
17	2.3	"
18	10.7	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
19	4.4	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
20	5.2	"
21	1.9	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
22	2.8	"
23	3.3	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
24	5.2	"
25	3.1	"
26	7.6	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
27	15.7	"
28	19.7	$> 1\frac{1}{2}$
29	26.3	"
30	9.8	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
31	4.9	"
32	15.6	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
33	2.7	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
34	3.9	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
35	2.6	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
36	1.5	"
37	3.6	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
38	1.4	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
39	0.5	"
40	1.0	"
41	0.4	"
42	0.8	"

TABLE 2-Continued

Census Tract	Percent Italian	Standard Deviation
43	0.8	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
44	1.2	"
45	0.2	"
46	0.6	"
47	0.2	"
48	2.0	"
49	0.3	"
50	1.0	"
51	0.6	"
52	1.0	"
53	0.5	"
54	1.0	"
55	1.0	"
56	0.5	"
57	1.6	"
58	0.7	"
59	0.5	"
60	0.3	"
61	0.2	"
62	0.1	"
63	0.2	"
64	3.0	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
65	0.9	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
66	0.1	"
67	0.6	"
68	7.9	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
69	16.4	$\frac{1}{2} - 1 \frac{1}{2}$
70	11.9	"
71	5.6	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
72	2.1	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
73	1.3	"
74	0.8	"
75	0.9	"
76	4.5	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
77	11.5	$\frac{1}{2} - 1 \frac{1}{2}$
78	18.4	$> 1 \frac{1}{2}$
79	11.8	$\frac{1}{2} - 1 \frac{1}{2}$
80	2.0	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
81	1.8	"
82	5.4	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
83	11.4	$\frac{1}{2} - 1 \frac{1}{2}$
84	9.1	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
85	1.8	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
86	19.1	$> 1 \frac{1}{2}$

TABLE 2--Continued

Census Tract	Percent Italian	Standard Deviation
87	8.0	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
88	23.9	$1\frac{1}{2}$
89	23.4	"
90	25.6	"
91	22.1	"
92	2.4	$-\frac{1}{2}$
93	2.4	"
94	8.0	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
95	1.9	$-\frac{1}{2}$
96	7.4	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
97	7.2	"

TABLE 3  
STANDARD DEVIATIONS BY CENSUS TRACTS, 1970

Census Tract	Percent Italian	Standard Deviation
1	22.7	$\frac{1}{2}-1\frac{1}{2}$
2	20.9	"
3	34.5	$>1\frac{1}{2}$
4	41.4	"
5	44.7	"
6	40.9	"
7	10.3	$-\frac{1}{2}-+\frac{1}{2}$
8	25.7	$>1\frac{1}{2}$
9	5.6	$-\frac{1}{2}-+\frac{1}{2}$
10	5.7	"
11	0.7	$<-\frac{1}{2}$
12		
13	0.6	$<-\frac{1}{2}$
14	0	"
15	0	"
16	2.2	$-\frac{1}{2}-+\frac{1}{2}$
17	0.4	$<-\frac{1}{2}$
18	2.7	$-\frac{1}{2}-+\frac{1}{2}$
19	13.8	$\frac{1}{2}-1\frac{1}{2}$
20	29.7	$>1\frac{1}{2}$
21	18.7	"
22	10.9	$-\frac{1}{2}-+\frac{1}{2}$
23	20.3	$\frac{1}{2}-1\frac{1}{2}$
24	25.5	$>1\frac{1}{2}$
25	25.1	"
26	3.1	$-\frac{1}{2}-+\frac{1}{2}$
27	0.8	$<-\frac{1}{2}$
28	0.2	"
29	0.4	"
30	0	"
31	0.6	"
32	0.8	"
33		
34	0.6	$-\frac{1}{2}-+\frac{1}{2}$
35	0.4	"
36		
37	0	$<-\frac{1}{2}$
38	0.7	"
39	0.4	"
40	0.1	"
41	0	"

TABLE 3-Continued

Census Tract	Percent Italian	Standard Deviation
42	0.2	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
43	0	"
44	0	"
45	0.6	"
46	0.1	"
47	0.3	"
48.01	0.2	"
48.02	1.1	"
49	0.3	"
50	0.6	"
51	0.3	"
52	0	"
53	0	"
54	0	"
55	0	"
56	0	"
57	0.4	"
58	0	"
59	0	"
60	0	"
61		
62	0.1	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
63	0.8	"
64	0	"
65	0	"
66	0	"
67	0.5	"
68	8.8	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
69	22.1	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
70	19.0	"
71	13.8	"
72	9.4	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
73	4.8	"
74	7.2	"
75.01	1.4	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
75.02	3.4	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
76	4.2	"
77	10.3	"
78	19.3	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
79	6.4	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
80	1.5	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
81	0.3	"
82	1.5	"

TABLE 3-Continued

Census Tract	Percent Italian	Standard Deviation
83	1.5	$< -\frac{1}{2}$
84	1.4	"
85	3.1	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
86	2.3	"
87	11.0	"
88	14.5	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
89	22.9	"
90	14.8	"
91	35.6	$> 1\frac{1}{2}$
92	3.3	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
93	6.8	"
94	17.3	$\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$
95	14.5	"
96	4.4	$-\frac{1}{2} - +\frac{1}{2}$
97	12.9	"
98	10.3	"
98.99	0	$< -\frac{1}{2}$

APPENDIX II

## INTERVIEW OBJECTIVES

1. Are you or any member of your family of Italian descent?

Foreign-born  
First generation  
Second generation

2. What village and province is your family from?

3. What church do you usually attend?

4. Has there ever been any of the following features present where you live?

Backyard grape arbors	Cellar wine press
Vegetable garden	Fig trees
Boccie court	

5. Are any still present?

6. If a vegetable garden was ever maintained, what foods were grown?

7. Is there a neighborhood grocery, butcher or bakery that you frequent for select Italian foods?

Comments:

APPENDIX III

# NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

