

# RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Fall  
September 2017

QUARTERLY

Volume 48  
Number 3

No. 2861901

**CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION**

Petition, Volume 57, Number 14204

Description of holder: Age, 26 years; height, 5 feet, 4 inches; color, white; complexion, fair; color of eyes, brown; color of hair, black; visible distinguishing marks, none

Name, age, and place of residence of wife \_\_\_\_\_

(NOTE:—AFTER SEPTEMBER 22, 1922, HUSBAND'S NATURALIZATION DOES NOT MAKE WIFE A CITIZEN.)

Names, ages and places of residence of minor children \_\_\_\_\_

**UNWILLING EXPATRIATES**

United States of America  
Western District of Washington

Be it remembered, that Theresa Ginliani, then residing at number 109 Logan Street, City of Renton, State of Washington, who previous to her naturalization was a subject of Italy, having applied to be admitted a citizen of the United States of America pursuant to law, and at a Court of the Western District of Washington, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seven, on the 24th day of November, the court having found that the petitioner intended to take permanent residence in the United States, and that she had in all respects complied with the Naturalization Laws of the United States, and that she was entitled

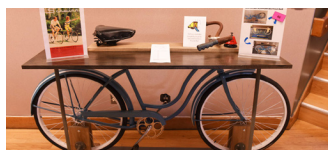
by Sarah Samson

During a routine record search I came across a naturalization record for Theresa Delaurenti Giuliani. I knew Theresa was born in Utah and was very confused as to why she had a federal immigration document to her name. That single record sent me on a fascinating journey of discovery about Theresa and the other married women of Renton who were stripped of their American citizenship by the 1907 Expatriation Act. I would like to thank Louise Delaurenti George, John Giuliani, and Carol Frey for their assistance with this article.

United States citizenship law has been on a long and winding road since we declared independence from Great Britain. Citizenship law for women, in particular, has followed a particularly potholed road. Historically women have often been treated by the law as less than equal to men; U. S. citizenship was no different. As early as the 1855 Naturalization Act, an American woman's citizenship began to hinge upon her husband's citizenship. Women who married citizens could automatically become citizens.<sup>1</sup> This law set a

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Engagement Coord.



# THE RENTON HISTORY MUSEUM invites you to join us for a HISTORY-MAKING PARTY



After last year's fantastic event, the Renton Historical Society's annual fundraiser will again showcase *Renton Makers & Doers* with a very special Silent Auction. Explore locals' talents as you bid on their charming upcycled furniture and decor, specially made for our auction. One-of-a-kind gifts and home furnishings showcase Renton's handmade tradition. Dinner, Dessert Dash, raffle, and a special guest emcee Aunt Dottie!

Reserve your tickets now! The fundraiser is Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at the Renton Senior Activity Center. Tickets are \$45 each. (<http://brownpapertickets.com/event/3057197>)

On  
**OCTOBER**  
17  
doors open at  
**6:30 PM**

## WELCOME NEZY!

Next time you stop by the Museum, please welcome our new Museum Office Aide, Nezy Tewolde. Nezy was born in Los Angeles, CA but was raised in Kent, WA. After volunteering for a year in high school with our friends at the Kent Historical Society, she decided she wanted to pursue a career in History. She has a B.A. in History from Western Washington University, where she led a group called Western's Classics Club on campus. She recently completed a

fellowship with the King County Library System. She's been with us since June, providing support for the volunteer program and generally keeping the office operating smoothly. We're lucky to have Nezy on our team!



## UNDER OUR SKIN

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, we are partnering with King County Library System and City of Renton to help host an evening of conversation about race in Renton. *Under Our Skin: What Do We Mean When We Talk About Race?* is a program created by the *Seattle Times* to encourage candid cross-racial dialogue about what it means to live in a multiracial society. We'll hold a series of small group conversations around topics like colorblindness, safe space, and institutional racism, among others. The

emphasis is on respect and openness. Please join us at Renton Community Center on Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm—watch our Facebook page for more details! More information about *Under Our Skin* available on the *Seattle Times* website.



# MUSEUM REPORT

by Elizabeth P. Stewart,  
Museum Director

Last week a summer vacation visit by a museum colleague reminded me of how far the Renton History Museum has come. He shared early memories of this museum, tracing the progress we have made: gaining control of our collections; hiring professional staff; setting goals; and, most importantly, making sure that what we do here—our programs, exhibits, events, tours, and other services—meet the needs of our community. Our lobby renovation and the re-boot of our Renton River Days programming this year are evidence that we are continually trying to exceed our mission.

We depend on feedback from our community to know how we're doing, and two events recently made us stop and double-check whether we're on the right track. First, many of us put lots of personal time and energy into trying to help pass Proposition 1, known as "Access for All." The funds from Access for All would have doubled the Museum's budget for the next seven years, enabling us to expand our outreach to students, improve our building, and complete the exhibit updates that have taken us more than 10 years so far. Prop 1 failed by about 9000 votes—a disappointment for sure—so we will re-group and figure out how to move forward. Make no mistake about it: Access for All would have been game-changing for small museums in King County, but the voters have spoken.

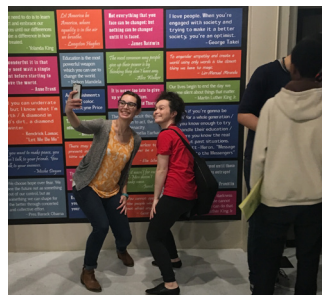
Our second eye-opening experience? This spring we hosted a groundbreaking traveling exhibit, *Sorting Out Race: Examining Racial Stereotypes & Identity in Thrift Store Donations*, that won us many new friends and was extraordinarily well-received. Taking racial issues head on is something new for the Renton History Museum so we prepared ourselves for any kind of reaction, but we were incredibly gratified by the wonderful responses from those who saw the exhibit. Many requested that we do more exhibits and programming like this in the future.

But one distant observer expressed distaste through the U.S. mail, repeatedly returning our membership mailings with dissenting comments. This commenter remains anonymous, so we cannot enter into a conversation with him or her about how our mission is to represent our community in ALL its glorious diversity. Everyone who lives here, works here, learns or plays here, is a part of Renton's history, and we are honored to try to share their stories.

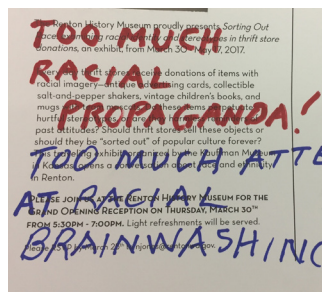
Setbacks like the failure of Prop. 1 may slow our progress, but we will keep working towards updating our building and exhibits. New exhibits remind us to keep listening and the staggeringly positive response to *Sorting Out Race* tell us we're on the right track. Our mission means the world to us, and we will continue to set our sights high.



Elizabeth P. Stewart  
—  
Director



Renton High School teachers enjoying the Selfie Wall while their students toured *Sorting Out Race*. In all, 247 sophomores were able to view the exhibit.



Mail returned to us with dissenting comments.

RENTON HISTORICAL  
QUARTERLY  
Sarah Samson  
Graphic Design & Layout  
Karl Hurst  
City of Renton Print &  
Mail Services

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Elizabeth P. Stewart  
Museum Director  
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Curator of Collections &  
Exhibitions  
Kim Owens  
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Office Aide

RENTON HISTORY MUSEUM  
235 MILL AVENUE S  
RENTON, WA 98057

P (425) 255-2330  
F (425) 255-1570

HOURS:  
Tuesday - Saturday  
10:00am - 4:00pm

ADMISSION:  
\$5 (Adult)  
\$2 (Child)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

September 23  
12:00-2:00 pm

Join us at the Storytelling Tent at the Renton Multicultural Festival to share your story!



### GENERATING GENEALOGY

September 30  
11:00 am-12:00 pm

Learn the basics about starting a genealogy research project from Curator Sarah Samson.



### SMITH COVE: A 1930s SHANTY TOWN

October 21  
11:00 am-12:00 pm

Archaeologist Dr. Alicia Valentino shares the story of a multicultural, low-income community from the 1930s.



### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

October 26  
6:00-7:00 pm

Anthropologist Llyn De Danaan explores our origins and what it means to be human.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Alexis Madison, President

Coming up on October 17<sup>th</sup>, the Renton Historical Society is hosting our annual History-Making Party at the Renton Senior Activity Center. The focus for the last few years has been “Renton Makers and Doers,” drawing on the city’s long history of innovation, industry, and creativity. Building on the popular Flea Market Flip idea, we’re inviting local artists, craftspeople, and designers to donate upcycled furniture to our silent auction, giving them an opportunity to show off their talents. Any upcyclers who enter their piece early enough will have the opportunity to show off their piece in person—the top three pieces, as selected by our judges, will be live auctioned. Every upcycler who donates a piece will get one free ticket to our dinner auction, which includes dinner and an amazing evening.

If you are interested in seeing these items, you won’t want to miss the results! Last year our biggest ticket item was a recycled bicycle converted into a bar. Tickets are available for \$45 each on Brown Paper Tickets at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3057197>. The evening includes dinner, a Dessert Dash, silent and live auctions, and entertainment by Aunt Dottie and her nephew Aaron. Proceeds support the Museum’s mission to connect people to their community through history.

If you would like to support this or any of our activities, the Renton Historical Society is always looking for friends we haven’t met yet. Our Board of Trustees still has a few open seats—we’re in search of a Treasurer-in-training, fundraisers, and people interested in event planning. We’re also in need of volunteers interested in greeting visitors on Saturdays and helping them have the best possible time during their visit. Other volunteer needs include oral history team leader and docents who will guide tours for the public. Contact our Public Engagement Coordinator, Kim Owens, by email at [kowens@rentonwa.gov](mailto:kowens@rentonwa.gov) or at 425.255.2330 if you are interested in being a volunteer.

I am looking forward to the upcoming fundraiser, and I hope you’ll come be a part of the fun!



Alexis Madison  
—  
President



The fantastic Aunt Dottie: super singer and emcee extraordinaire!



Upcycled bicycle bar made by Dennis Conte, the hottest item auctioned at the 2016 fundraiser.



## UNWILLING EXPATRIATES

James & Maria Anna Delaurenti family. Sisters Theresa (seated on her mother's lap), Mary, and Ida (L-R) in the front with their brother Joseph. Woman in back is aunt Louisa Saineghi. (Photo courtesy of Carol Frey)

Continued from page 1

precedent that was then applied to American women in the 1907 Expatriation Act: American women who married non-American husbands instantly lost their citizenship.<sup>2</sup>

The 1907 Expatriation Act passed at a time when Americans were growing leery of the next wave of immigrants: Eastern and Southern Europeans. Italy, in the midst of a horrific depression, saw a quarter of their residents flee between 1890 and 1914.<sup>3</sup> Italians began flooding onto United States soil. Renton went from hosting one Italian resident in 1889 to providing a home for 267 by 1910.<sup>4</sup> American men who married immigrant women were lauded; the public believed that they would teach the women to be good American citizens. American women who married new immigrants, however, were viewed as borderline traitors. Federal hearings held ten years after the passage of the Expatriation Act illustrated this mindset, with one committee member remarking that the marital loss of citizenship was “a good lesson to our American girls to marry American boys.”<sup>5</sup>

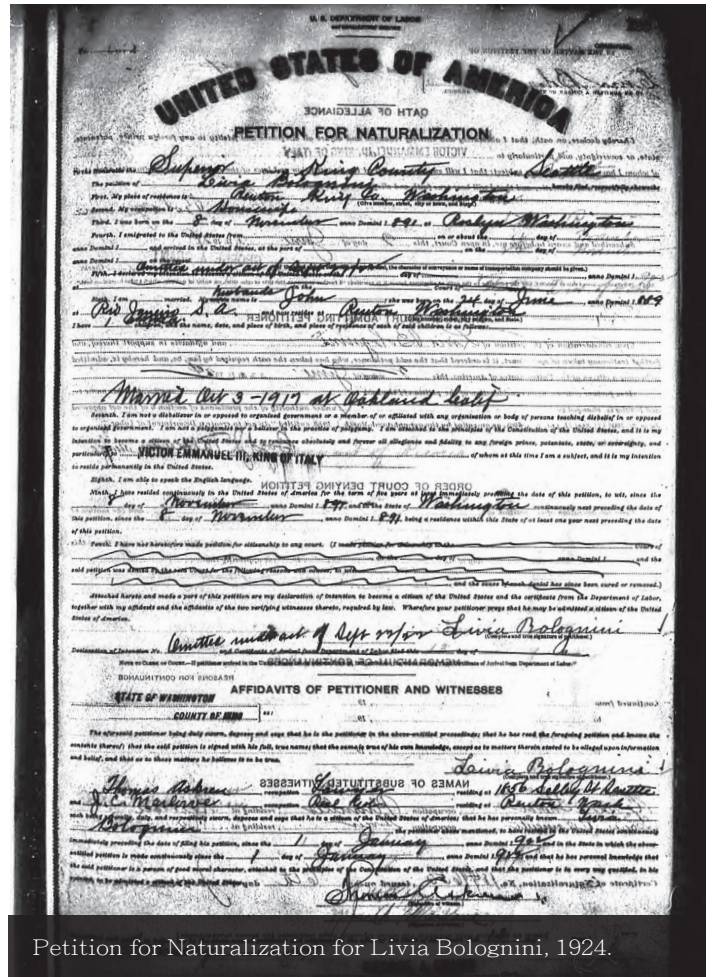
### THE DELAURENTI SISTERS

Italians James Delaurenti and Maria Saineghi immigrated separately in the late 1880s and met and married in Utah in 1896. A coal miner, James followed the coal jobs to Utah, Illinois, and

Cover photo:  
Naturalization Certificate for  
Theresa Giuliani, 1928. (Image  
courtesy of Carol Frey)



Wedding photo of Theresa Delaurenti and John Giuliani, 1919. (Photo courtesy of John Giuliani)



Petition for Naturalization for Livia Bolognini, 1924.



Sisters Mary Delaurenti and Theresa Delaurenti Giuliani with their firstborn children, 1921. (RHM# 2015.011.071)

eventually Newcastle, Washington. The Delaurentis had six children, all born in this country and thus American citizens: Joseph, Ida, Roland, Mary, Theresa, and James. When James Sr. died in Newcastle in 1908, Maria quickly remarried another Italian immigrant, Pio Carroli.<sup>6</sup> They were living just outside of Renton by 1910.

The three girls—Ida, Mary, and Theresa—all married Italian immigrants. Ida married Joseph Baima in 1917, ten years after the Expatriation Act. Luckily for Ida, Joe had been in the U.S. since 1899 and was already a naturalized citizen; because of this, she maintained her citizenship. Two years later, her sister Mary married George Delaurenti (no relation). George was unnaturalized. Both he and Mary are listed as aliens in the 1920 census. Just months later Theresa married John Giuliani and, like Mary, Theresa lost her citizenship.

#### THE GIOVANELLI SISTERS

The Giovanelis were another Italian family of coal miners. Stephen Giovaneli immigrated in 1882. He married Katherine Zucca in 1888. They had four children—Felix, Livia, Steve, and Matilda—all born in Roslyn, Washington. In 1910 nineteen-year old Livia married Lodovic Massetti, a naturalized Italian. After Lodovic drowned in Seattle in 1916, she married again in 1917 to John Bolognini, an unnaturalized immigrant of Italian descent born in Brazil.<sup>7</sup> This time she lost her citizenship. Livia's sister Matilda married Italian immigrant Fiorenzo Delaurenti in 1916 in Seattle. The marriage also cost her citizenship; she was listed as an alien in the 1920 census.



Fiorenzo and Matilda (Giovannelli) Delaurenti with their daughter Louise, ca. 1919. (Photo courtesy of Louise Delaurenti George)

ORIGINAL  
(To be reviewed by clerk)

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**PETITION FOR CITIZENSHIP** 000019639

To the Honorable the U.S. Dist. Court of W. Dist of Wash. at Seattle, Wash.  
The petitioner ETHEL McDONALD

(1) My place of residence is 205 Park Ave. Renton Wash. (2) My occupation is Housewife.  
(3) I was born in Clyphant, Pa. on Nov. 29, 1887. My race is English.  
(4) I was last naturalized as a citizen of the United States.

(5) I am HOW married. The name of my husband is James McDonald.  
We were married on Jan. 1, 1907 at Renton, Wash. I entered the United States at Adrian on March 27, 1879 for permanent residence therein, and now reside at Renton, Wash. with me. I have two children, and the name, date, and place of birth, and place of residence of each of said children are as follows:  
Ethel Bender, Born Feb. 13, 1908 and Harold McDonald, Born Sept. 27, 1909. Both born in Renton, Wash. and both reside with parents.  
Husband is not naturalized.

(6) My last foreign residence was Never lived outside of the U.S. I immigrated to the United States of America from England in the United States at Adrian under the name of Adrian on March 27, 1879 on the vessel Adrian.  
(7) I am not a disbeliever in or opposed to established government by any legislation or body of persons teaching disbelief in or opposed to organized government. I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy. I am attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States and will support the same to the best of my ability. It is my intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce absolutely and forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Empire.  
(8) I have resided continuously in the United States of America for the period of 26 years, and in the County of King State of Washington for the period of 10 years, and I have paid continuously in the United States of America for the period of 26 years, and in the County of King State of Washington for the period of 10 years, the duties and taxes imposed by law.  
This State court's record and name of this petition filed under Sec. 4, Act of 9/22/22 as amended.  
(10) I have HOW heretofore made petition for citizenship Number            and such petition was denied by that Court for the following reasons and causes, to wit:             
and the cause of each denial has since been cured or removed.  
I, your petitioner, depose and swear that I am a resident of the United States of America, and that my name is changed to            in accordance with the provisions of the laws of the United States.  
Not having acquired any other nationality by affirmative act.  
I, your petitioner, being duly sworn, depose and say that I have            this petition and know the contents thereof, that the same is true of my own knowledge except as to matters herein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and that as to those matters I believe it to be true, and that this petition is signed by me with my full, true name.  
Ethel McDonald  
Signature of petitioner

AFFIDAVITS OF WITNESSES  
Virginia Cartwright occupation Housewife.  
residing at Renton, Wash.  
Jennie Benton occupation Housewife.  
residing at Renton, Wash.  
Ethel McDonald the petitioner above mentioned, since June 28, 1932  
and that he has personal knowledge that the petitioner is and during all such periods has been a person of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States, and that in his opinion the petitioner is in every way qualified to be admitted a citizen of the United States.  
Virginia Cartwright Signature of witness  
Jennie Benton Signature of witness  
Seattle

Subscribed and sworn to before me by the above-named petitioner and witnesses in the office of the Clerk of said Court at Seattle this 29th day of June, Anno Domini 1933 before me,            Clerk of said Court.

Petition for Citizenship for Ethel McDonald, 1933.

Losing their citizenship didn't immediately endanger the Giovannelli sisters since they married men already in the United States who were intent on staying and becoming citizens. Women who moved back to their husband's home countries had little hope of regaining their citizenship. Some expatriated widows were expelled from the United States with their children after their non-American husbands died.<sup>8</sup>

**"REAL AMERICANS"**

Public outcry in support of these Italian-American women was muted. Additional racist laws barred Asians and others from immigrating, but while Italians were allowed, there were not-so-subtle grumblings about whether they could really be considered "white." Sympathy and organized protest revolved around women who were seen as "real Americans." These women, usually of British descent, were held up as examples to show the cruelty of the law.

Ruth Burrows was born in 1894 in Missouri; she was at least a 4<sup>th</sup> generation American. Her father, Ferry Fay Burrows, brought his family to Renton in 1896 and ran a fishing resort on the Black River north of town. She was an American until August 12, 1918 when she married Austrian immigrant Joseph Venishnick. Despite the federal government's determination, Ruth was described in her obituary as a "daughter of a pioneer family."<sup>9</sup>

Though Ethel Rowe was the daughter of immigrants, she would also have been a sympathetic figure. She was born in 1887 in Pennsylvania to English immigrants Thomas and

Minnie Rowe. The English were never subjected to the same suspicion and derision as other immigrants. At twenty years old, Ethel married Canadian James McDonald in Renton. When the Expatriation Act passed two months later she retroactively lost her American citizenship.

**SUFFRAGETTES AND THE CABLE ACT**

The Expatriation Act made many women think deeply about the meaning of citizenship for the first time. Prior to 1907 a few states had already given women the right to vote. After the act passed scores of American women were no longer able to vote, while non-American women who married American men were able to vote.<sup>10</sup> Immigrant men who naturalized were also immediately able to vote. Suffragists seized on the public's wariness of these non-Americans by pointing out that the country needed "real" American women voting to prevent elections being swayed by recent immigrants who might not have assimilated American values, as they defined them.<sup>11</sup> "In the marriage ceremony not one word is said about change of status of the man toward his state," one member of the State Federation of Women's Clubs pointed out.<sup>12</sup> This argument came to a head in 1920 with the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment finally allowing all American women the right to vote.

For fifteen years American women were made to choose between their citizenship and marriage. Several efforts to repeal or amend the Expatriation Act failed, including one by Rep. Jeannette Rankin from Montana, the first female ever elected

Continued on page 10



Volunteer Amy Gorton and Board Pres. Alexis Madison at the craft station.

# PROGRAMMING REPORT

by Kim Owens, Public Engagement Coordinator



Kim Owens  
—  
Public Engagement  
Coordinator

While it may have been the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of Renton River Days, it was the Renton History Museum’s first year of providing a special set of programs and activities at the Museum during the festival. The Museum took advantage of its beautiful grounds by setting up three stations outside to interact with the public. “The Historian is In” booth was by far the most popular station.

In it Director Liz Stewart, Curator Sarah Samson, and volunteers Nancy Fairman, Colleen Lenahan, and Elizabeth Edgerton took turns fielding questions from the public and handing out “Passport to History” activity books. Three craft stations offered opportunities to construct a bentwood box, create a moveable paper puppet, or color a postcard of a historic Renton photo from the Museum’s collection.

The highlight of the event was Renton History Live! which took place on Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Renton History Live! was a series of performances bringing to life two Renton residents from history. The Museum commissioned two scripts: one for Florence Guitteau and one for Charles Custer. These monologues were crafted by our talented volunteer, Sabella Curtis, drawing on the Museum’s collection of letters and journals. Sabella spent over 50 hours researching, writing, and revising the scripts.

To cast the parts we turned to known theater groups and programs. By reaching out to Bellevue University, Theater Puget Sound, Fort Nisqually, and



Actors Spencer Peerson and Abby Lewis as Charles Custer & Florence Guitteau.



Renton Civic Theater, we recruited actors Abby Lewis and Spencer Peerson to bring the characters to life. With only two weeks of rehearsal the actors memorized pages of text and blocking. Museum volunteers Cathy Lim and Bridget Shew spent 90 hours to create the costumes and props for the performances. Dennis Conte also donated his time and talents by building props for the sets. Renton History Live! was truly a team effort.

Museum attendance was at a River Days high on the day of the performances. A total of 194 people took in the exhibits and the shows on Saturday alone. The response to the performances was overwhelmingly positive. It elicited responses such as “teary-eyed” and “wonderful!” Because of its success, the Museum plans to continue to develop Renton History Live for next year’s Renton River Days events.

The Museum’s River Days effort would not be possible without the commitment of our talented corps of volunteers. Volunteers, Board members, and staff filled 50 shifts during the River Days weekend, not to mention the hours and hours of work preparing activities, rehearsing actors, and getting passports ready. The results: Renton River Days provided a golden opportunity to introduce hundreds of people to Renton’s history at the Museum!



# MEMORIAL DONATIONS

May 16, 2017 - August 10, 2017

Norma Jean Cugini  
Larry & Jeannie Crook  
Louis & Pamela Barei  
Kenneth L. Huckins  
Laurie Lent  
Bill & Hilda McGarrigle  
Marilyn Hemman  
Bruce Pickering  
Larry & Jeannie Crook  
Marge Pellegrino  
Louis & Pamela Barei

Laverne Schmolke  
Proctor Sturgeon  
Richard & Louise Major  
Owen Proctor  
Richard & Louise Major  
Ivan Puhich  
Richard & Louise Major  
Lorine Roth O'Brian  
Larry & Jeannie Crook  
Homer Venishnick  
William & Patti Bucher

# MEMORIAL DONATIONS OF \$100 OR MORE

John Bertagni  
Eleanor G. Bertagni  
Mike Lowry  
Denis & Patty Law  
Velma Dragin McKean  
Shirley J. Moretti  
King Parker  
Eleanor G. Bertagni  
Denis & Patty Law  
Ann Porcello  
Eleanor G. Bertagni

# CORRECTION

(from June 2017 quarterly):

## MEMORIAL DONATION

Ed Bentley  
Hazelle DuBois  
Fraternal Order of Eagles,  
Ladies Aux. Renton #1722  
Venishnick Family

Due to an error in formatting in the June 2017 Newsletter, it appeared that Hazelle DuBois had passed away. We apologize to Ms. DuBois for the inconvenience.

# NEW MEMBERS

Monica & Dave Brethauer  
Carol Frey

# BENEFACTOR MEMBERS

Sally Rochelle

# GENERAL DONATIONS

Norm & Carol Abrahamson  
Karl Hurst  
Hazel Newing  
Barbara Nilson  
David Pickett  
Sally Rochelle

# GENERAL DONATIONS OF \$100 OR MORE

Char & Jim Baker  
Glenn Garrett  
Dorothy M. Finley  
Kurt Hanson  
Arline McCready  
Janice R. Tanner

# GENERAL DONATIONS OF \$1000 OR MORE

Monica & Dave Brethauer  
Jack Morrison

# IN-KIND DONATIONS

The Edgerton family  
Bridget Shew



# MATCHING DONATIONS



# GIVING DAY: SEPTEMBER 21

Join your friends and neighbors in supporting the Renton Historical Society with a gift through the Renton Community Foundation (RCF)! The foundation has been our partner for over a decade in ensuring that Rentonites can connect to their history. On Sept. 21 RCF launches a special Giving Day—the "Under One Roof" campaign—on their web site, with opportunities to

have your dollars matched and chances to win free dinners at local restaurants. Learn more on our Facebook page or at <http://rentonfoundation.org/>.



# NORMA CUGINI (1928-2017)

Lifelong Rentonite Norma Denzer Cugini passed away on July 10, 2017. A descendant of Renton pioneers Thomas and Robena Rowe, Norma inherited a tradition of public service that she built upon throughout her lifetime. She was an enthusiastic supporter of the arts, volunteering for many Renton and Seattle arts and other charitable organizations, including co-chairing the very first Renton Annual Arts Show. In 2008 she earned the well-deserved distinction of Renton Citizen of the Year.

Her contributions to Renton culture are many and long-lasting, and her sound advice and calm demeanor will be missed by all.

Below: teenaged Norma Cugini (2<sup>nd</sup> from left in black sweater with white buttons) with the cast of Renton High's *Ladies of the Jury*, 1946.



Continued from page 7

at the national level.<sup>13</sup> Finally, in 1922, a law was passed that ended the practice of stripping citizenship from American-born women who married non-citizens. The law was called the Married Women's Independent Citizenship Act, but came to be known as the Cable Act after the bill's sponsor, Rep. John Cable of Ohio.<sup>14</sup>

The Cable Act stopped women from losing their citizenship, but did very little for the women who had already lost theirs. Those women—like Mary, Theresa, Livia, Matilda, Ruth, and Ethel—still had to work through the naturalization process and were not allowed to regain their American citizenship if their husbands were deemed ineligible.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, naturalized citizens did not have the same legal protections as birth citizens. By making these women go through the naturalization process, the government could still later legally revoke their citizenship at any point, a final cruel legacy of the Expatriation and Cable Acts.<sup>16</sup>

### NATURALIZATION IN RENTON

There was nothing for Renton's expatriated women to do except to follow the naturalization process along with their husbands. All the women in this article had husbands who were eligible to naturalize and did so. This dramatically eased the process for the women; had the men been unwilling to naturalize the women would have had to attempt the process independently, subject to immigration quotas covering her husband's country of origin.<sup>17</sup>

Because of a provision in the Cable Act, Renton's expatriated women did not have to file a Declaration of Intent (to naturalize); they could skip that part of the process and go right to filing a Petition to Naturalize.<sup>18</sup> Their forms all had the Declaration of Intent line scratched out and "Filed under Act of Sept. 22, 1922" (the date of the Cable Act) or similar text typed above it. They had to claim on the form the date at which they began residence in the United States: their birth date. One indicated she had "never lived outside the U.S."<sup>19</sup> The expatriated women also had to provide the names of two American witnesses who could vouch for them. Livia Giovanelli Bolognini's form lists a Seattle lawyer and John C. Marlowe, a prominent Renton real estate and insurance agent.<sup>20</sup>

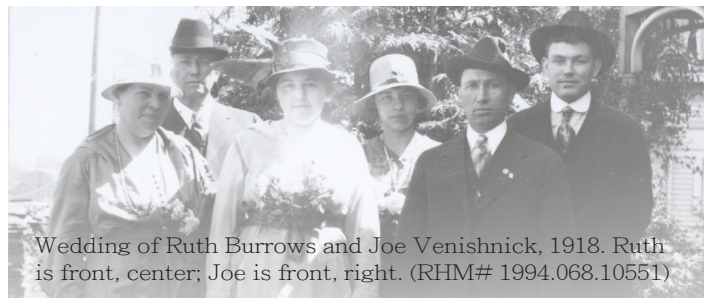
### ENDNOTES

- 1 Candace Lewis Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 15.
- 2 Meg Hacker, "When Saying 'I Do' Meant Giving Up Your U.S. Citizenship," *Prologue* (Spring 2014): 57.
- 3 David L. Nicandri, *Italians in Washington State: Emigration 1853 – 1924* (N.p.: The Washington State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1978), 18.
- 4 1889 Washington Territorial Census, 1910 Federal Census.
- 5 Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, 74.
- 6 Pio Carroli and Maria Delaurenti, Marriage Certificate, 6 Oct 1908 (King County Marriage Records, 1855-Present, Washington State Digital Archives).
- 7 Livia Bolognini, Petition for Naturalization, 1 Jan 1922 (Washington, Petitions for Naturalization, 1860-1991, Ancestry.com).
- 8 Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, 174.
- 9 "Ruth Venishnick," *Record-Chronicle*, 15 Apr 1980, p.2.
- 10 Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, 64.
- 11 Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, 49.
- 12 Sophie L. Wepf Clark, "State Federation of Women's Clubs," *Pullman Herald*, 29 Sep 1916, p.3.
- 13 Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, 74.
- 14 Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, 98.
- 15 Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, 134. Husbands might be ineligible because of their country of origin, political views, labor activism, or other reasons.
- 16 Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, 134.

Immigrants attempting to naturalize usually had to pass a citizenship test. Renton, always a community of immigrants, had a large pool of residents in the process of naturalizing at any given time. Dutch immigrant Pieter Prins founded the Renton Americanization School to help people pass the citizenship test. Known to his students as "Mr. America," Prins had gone through the naturalization process himself, becoming an American citizen in 1912.<sup>21</sup> Prins's school thrived. In 1936 the school held a picnic at Cottonwood Grove; it became an annual event, garnering mention in the *Seattle Times*.<sup>22</sup> It is not clear if all of Renton's expatriated women had to take citizenship tests but Matilda Giovanelli Delaurenti's daughter remembers her mother taking citizenship classes from Prins.<sup>23</sup> Prins is listed as one of the witnesses on her Petition for Naturalization.<sup>24</sup>

### A FOOTNOTE IN HISTORY

It wasn't until 1940 that all of the women affected by the Expatriation and Cable Acts were finally allowed to regain American citizenship completely independent of their husband's status.<sup>25</sup> The full impact of the Expatriation Act is hard to uncover today. We don't know how many American women it affected during the fifteen years it was in effect, and we have little indication how they felt about being suddenly expatriated for love. In 2014 the U. S. Senate, spurred by Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota, passed a resolution formally apologizing for the act and its repercussions.<sup>26</sup> The six women highlighted in this article were the only expatriated Renton residents we could uncover. Doubtless there are more women out there whose stories are waiting to be discovered.



Wedding of Ruth Burrows and Joe Venishnick, 1918. Ruth is front, center; Joe is front, right. (RHM# 1994.068.10551)

- 17 Meg Hacker, "When Saying 'I Do' Meant Giving Up Your U.S. Citizenship," *Prologue* (Spring 2014): 58.
- 18 Marian L. Smith, "Any woman who is now or may hereafter be married...Women and Naturalization, ca. 1802-1940," *Prologue* 30, no.2 (Summer 1998), <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/summer/women-and-naturalization-1.html>, accessed 7 Aug 2017.
- 19 Ethel McDonald, Petition for Naturalization, 29 Jun 1933 (Washington, Petitions for Naturalization, 1860-1991, Ancestry.com).
- 20 Livia Bolognini, Petition for Naturalization, 1 Jan 1922 (Washington, Petitions for Naturalization, 1860-1991, Ancestry.com).
- 21 Anna Ploegman Larsen, "Prins Family History," *Maple Valley Family Recollections* (1984): 22.
- 22 "Picnic Planned by Citizenship Group," *Seattle Times*, 31 May 1936, p.10; "Citizen Classes Sponsor Picnic," *Seattle Times*, 27 Feb 1940, p.3.
- 23 Interview of Louise Delaurenti George by author, 5 Jun 2017.
- 24 Matilda Delaurenti, Petition for Naturalization, 15 Mar 1935 (Washington, Petitions for Naturalization, 1860-1991, Ancestry.com).
- 25 Marian L. Smith, "Any woman who is now or may hereafter be married...Women and Naturalization, ca. 1802-1940, Part 2," *Prologue* 30, no.2 (Summer 1998), <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/summer/women-and-naturalization-2.html>, accessed 7 Aug 2017.
- 26 Richard Simon, "Women who lost U.S. citizenship for marrying foreigners get apology," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 May 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-nn-senate-apology-20140516-story.html>, accessed 7 August 2017.

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What did you do on your summer vacation? Summer home of George, Annie, and Charles Custer at Three Tree Point in Burien, 1974. (RHM# 2000.127.2935)