

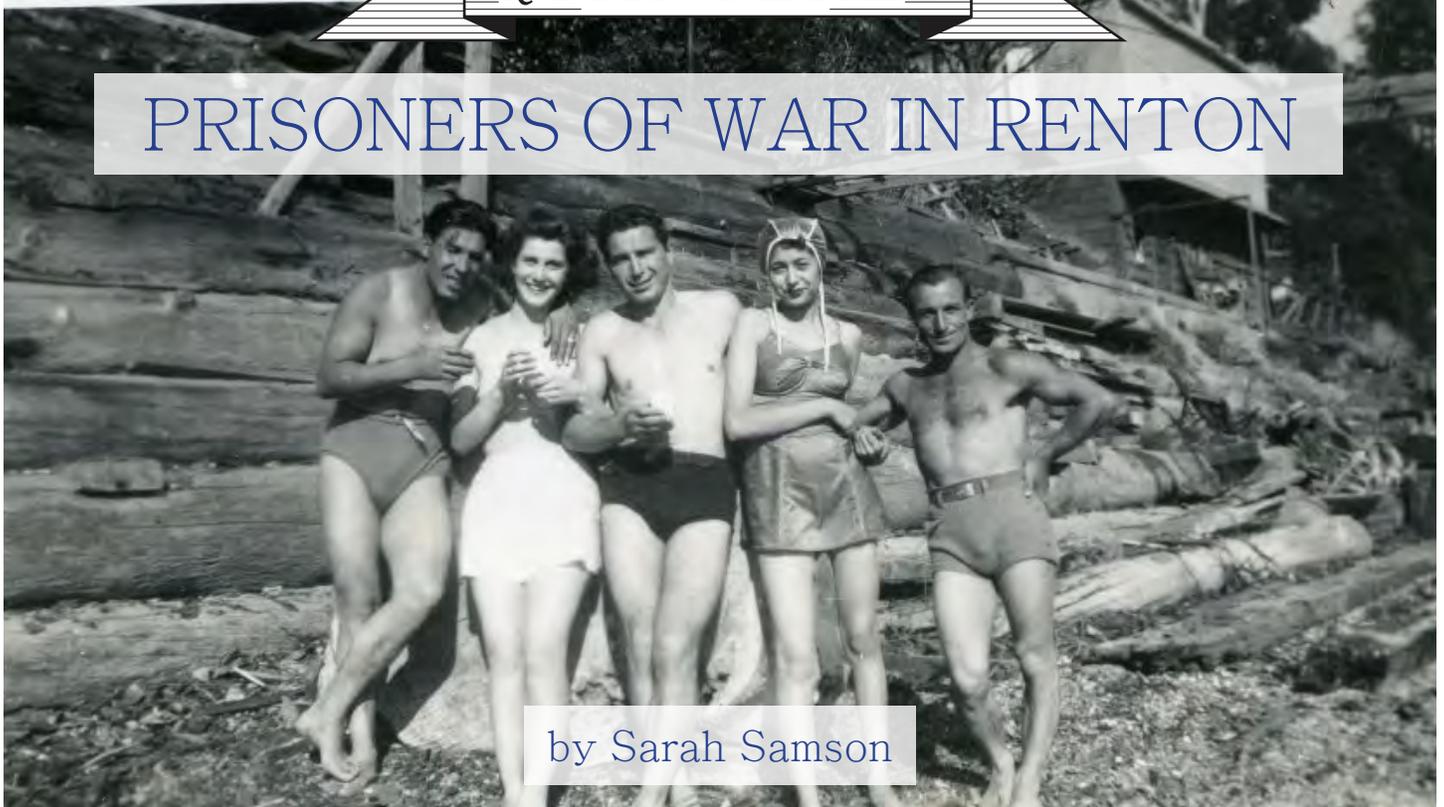
RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Fall
September 2021

QUARTERLY

Volume 52
Number 4

PRISONERS OF WAR IN RENTON



by Sarah Samson

Author's note: I would like to thank Arne Aliment, Rose Custer, Angelina Franceschina Della Rossa, Linda Della Rossa, and Tom Monahan for their assistance in the research for this article. Newspapers and historic records provide a lot of data, but the stories provided by people who experienced historic events are what make history come alive. This story would not have been possible without their willingness to share firsthand accounts and stories that were passed down in their families.

In the early 1900s Italians began flocking to America and also to Renton. Many of them settled in a neighborhood on Talbot Hill and began raising new generations of Rentonites. Italians were a crucial ingredient in Renton's melting pot by the time World War II erupted. Orders were drawn up that would have treated Italian Americans the same as the Japanese Americans, resulting in their relocation and incarceration.¹ There were such a large number of Italian Americans, though, that the plan was mostly scrapped. Anti-Italian sentiment still simmered, seemingly more often on the East Coast. Italians who were not American citizens were

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WHEN YOU CAN'T GO HOME

Portraits of Refugees in the Pacific Northwest

by artist Karisa Keasey

When *You Can't Go Home: Portraits of Refugees in the Pacific Northwest* is the life work of Karisa Keasey, local artist, author, and advocate. With the help of World Relief, a globally celebrated refugee resettlement organization, Keasey spent hours with each refugee featured in this exhibit and helps viewers feel as if they have too. She has a passion for enabling some of the most marginalized people in the world to be seen and heard. *When You Can't Go Home* couples inspiring stories with the hard-hitting facts surrounding the current global refugee crisis.

From
AUGUST
11
to
NOVEMBER
5

RHS VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

Thanks to COVID-19, the Renton Historical Society missed our 2020 Annual Meeting, but we're going to make up for it on September 23 with a Zoom Annual Meeting. Join us online to hear what the Museum staff and Board of Trustees are up to and meet new officers of the Historical Society. Artist Karisa Keasey will also talk about her work with refugees in Washington state. Her paintings are currently on exhibit at

the Museum in *When You Can't Go Home: Portraits of Refugees in the Pacific Northwest*. The meeting will also have fun door prizes and offer a chance to catch up with other history-minded Renton people!

Thursday
SEPTEMBER
23
at
7:00PM

HARLEY BRUMBAUGH (1934-2021)

We are sad to acknowledge the death of Harley Brumbaugh, an outstanding Renton musician and educator. Music was at the center of Harley's life—as a big band musician, in the U.S. Army band, teaching students in the Renton School District, and directing choirs and bands, including the Renton Civic Concert Band. His passion for teaching shone through. In a 2009 oral history, Harley described directing his students: "You are caught up in this beautiful

and mystical endeavor of making music, a music that no one person can create on his own. You need each other to create the harmonics." What a legacy to leave the world!



MUSEUM REPORT

by Elizabeth P. Stewart,
Museum Director

For better or for worse, migration is a universal human experience throughout history. Our newsletter article describes the disruptive results of war on WWII soldiers: Italians were drafted—some against their will—and taken prisoner, mostly in battle in North Africa, by American forces, who then had to figure out what to do with them. The Army shipped Italian POWs by the tens of thousands to the U.S., where they experienced a kind of netherworld identity: not citizens, not enemy combatants (once they had renounced fascism), not quite prisoners, but not quite workers. Nevertheless, Italian immigrants welcomed them and the news they brought from their home country, even in spite of criticism. Prisoner of war status was ultimately a temporary condition for these men; by January 1946 most had returned to Italy, taking with them memories of transformative experiences in the U.S.

Similarly, our new exhibit, *When You Can't Go Home*, uses art and interviews to explore the experiences of present-day refugees in Washington state. Local artist Karisa Keasey has created moving watercolor portraits of refugees in South King County and their children, ones that put a human face to a group of people who have lately been the center of controversy in this country. Whether escaping war or religious or political persecution, these refugees have no choice but to run in order to seek a better life—or any life at all—for themselves and their families. “I wished to stay in village, I wished to finish my school... and have good family,” remembered Jeanne D’Arc Musabyimana from Rwanda. “And I got it, but with the war, everything changed.”

The truth is that most of us are a war or a change in government or a climate crisis away from being forced to leave home in search of safety or acceptance or justice. Understanding Renton’s history of opening its arms to immigrants from other countries—people who then became our neighbors and community leaders—is a reminder that migration has always been the strength of our country.

Meeting people from other countries face to face and learning about their history and their aspirations begins to erase the preconceptions and prejudices about “those people” that are so easily formed on social media and the internet. To the extent the Renton History Museum can help break down those barriers, we believe it is important to do.



Elizabeth P. Stewart
—
Director



To learn more about Italian POWs around the U.S., see <https://www.prisonersinparadise.com/trailer/>.



Durga, painted by artist Karisa Keasey. Now on display at the museum!

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235 MILL AVENUE S
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HOURS:
Wednesday - Friday
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ADMISSION:
\$5 (Adult)
\$2 (Child)



CULTURE

RHS acknowledges we are on the unceded traditional land of the Duwamish people. A people forced to relocate, but who have persevered.

The Museum views the history of Renton to include since time immemorial to today and is committed to exploring that through its partnerships, exhibits and programs.

SUPPORT
PROVIDED BY:



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Colleen Lenahansen,
Board President

As we all move toward the “new normal,” we continue to navigate the uncertainties of post-COVID life. For the Renton History Museum, that means returning to normal operations, one small step at a time. We are looking forward to reopening on Saturdays so that those who are unable to visit during the work week can once again enjoy the high-quality exhibits put on by our stellar staff.

Another exciting return to normalcy for the Museum is that we will once again be holding our Annual Meeting for members. We are planning to convene via Zoom on September 23rd at 7:00 pm. The highlight will be a curator’s talk with Karisa Keasey, the artist whose work will be on display Aug. 11 – October 5, 2021 at the Museum through the exhibit *When You Can’t Go Home*.

The Annual Meeting is also the time when we formally transition our Board leadership positions. Due to the chaos of 2020, last year we opted to retain the officers voted in at our 2019 Annual Meeting. This year, after serving as your Board President for the last two years, I will be stepping down. I will not be leaving the Board, just taking a step back and making room for a fresh perspective to continue propelling the Museum into the post-pandemic future.

It has been an honor and a privilege to represent you all. Some of my favorite memories from my time as president have been the opportunities to meet and connect with all of you at our annual History-Making Party and exhibit opening celebrations. Though we were not able to gather in person this past year, I still felt the support and sense of community from all of you as you donated to our fundraisers, commented on our Facebook posts, and shared your pandemic stories.

Thank you for making my time as president successful and memorable. I can’t wait to see where the next president will take the Board and the Museum.



Colleen Lenahansen
—
President



Board President Colleen Lenahansen with board members Jessica Kelly and Lynne King at the 2019 History-Making Party fundraiser.

PRISONERS OF WAR IN RENTON



Union men in Seattle protesting the US Army's decision to use Italian POW labor instead of Teamsters, September 1945. (Photo courtesy of MOHAI, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 1986.5.6827.1.)

Continued from page 1

labeled as “enemy aliens” and sometimes incarcerated.²

Since they were mostly treated as Americans rather than outsiders, Italians here were swept up in the patriotic fervor of the war. Many young Renton men of Italian descent enlisted and fought overseas for the U.S. Many of the Italians who stayed home worked for Boeing and Pacific Car, manufacturing B-29s and Sherman tanks. In short, the Italians in Renton were rooting for and supporting the U.S. in WWII as much as any other Rentonite. So why were Italian prisoners of war enjoying picnics with local Italians in Renton in 1944?

PRISONERS OF WAR ON AMERICAN SOIL

In World War I prisoners of war were of minimal concern to the American Armed Forces. That changed during World War II. After quickly rolling over the mostly unwillingly conscripted Italian troops in northern Africa, the Allies suddenly had many POWs on their hands. The Army quickly needed to figure out what to do with all these prisoners. Spread out amongst the Allies to lessen the responsibility, the powers-that-be began to realize that most of the POWs were not hardened fascists and were amenable to working for the Allies.³

While they first worked for the American Armed Forces in Europe, in 1943 Italian POWs began trickling into the U.S. and eventually numbered just over 51,000.⁴ All of the POWs were screened and most of the hardcore fascists ended up in higher security military prisons alongside Nazis.⁵ Those who passed the screenings were assigned to Italian Service Units (ISUs), units of the U.S. Army Service Corps that were allowed to work and also to receive some

Cover photo:

Young Renton women and Italian POWs at Three Tree Point in Burien, 1944. L-R: POW, Loraine Rosa (Custer), Vittorio Paolini, Jean Ruffalo (Newell), Luigi Bufanotti. (RHM# 2018.022.003)



Ruthie Malgarini and Italian POW, 1944. The POWs wore American uniforms with large “Italy” patches on their arms. (Photo courtesy of Rose Custer.)



Renton Italian families and Italian POWs picnic, likely at McDonald's Grove, 1944. The group was so large that four photos were taken. We've spliced them together here as best as possible to show the accurate size of the crowd. (RHM# 2018.022.014-017)



privileges, including passes to leave base with an escort. In the Seattle area the ISUs were stationed all over, including at Fort Lawton (present-day Discovery Park in Seattle) and Fort Lewis. The situation became even trickier when Italy surrendered in late 1943 and joined the Allies, rendering the Italian POWs now not quite POWs.

UNEASE

Seattle newspapers were filled with articles and editorials, week after week, of complaints about the Italian POWs. The privileges granted to the Italian POWs starkly contrasted with the experience of enlisted Black soldiers and even more so to the incarcerated Japanese Americans. But that hypocrisy was not what showed up in the papers. Many of the complaints came from veterans' organizations and active troops. They felt the off-base (and even on-base) privileges were too generous for Italian servicemembers who had fought against and perhaps killed Americans. Another frequent complaint was that the POWs were in the U.S. wooing American girls with their foreign accents while American boys were fighting overseas.⁶

In July 1944 seventy-five Italian POWs were taken to a baseball game in Seattle, which the press covered with much amusement since the Italians had no familiarity with baseball; confusion about what they were watching reigned.⁷ Other POWs were allowed to play soccer professionally. The Washington state soccer league had been decimated, losing players to enlistment and the draft. In order to keep the league viable, the league allowed a few teams made entirely of POWs to join.⁸ One team failed to show for a match after

anti-Italian heckling and threats at their previous match made them scared to travel.⁹

FORT LAWTON RIOT

Probably the most publicized incident with Italian POWs happened just up the road in Seattle at Fort Lawton. Late one August night in 1944 a group of Black soldiers attacked the barracks where the Italian POWs were housed. Several of the Italians were grievously injured; when the dust settled the next morning, one POW was found dead by hanging. Pressure immediately mounted from Italy. The Army, worried about the optics of mistreating and killing POWs, quickly charged the African-American soldiers, citing the motive that Black GIs were resentful of the cushy lifestyle given the POWs. A court martial was convened and at the end of it 27 men were convicted and given sentences ranging from six months to 25 years.¹⁰

But is that what really happened? A book published in 2005 by investigative journalist Jack Hamann unearthed previously classified evidence that led to the vacating of all the Black soldiers' convictions.¹¹ White Military Police Officers were at the very least involved and at most were the instigators of and participants in the Fort Lawton riot. The court martial did not pursue evidence of the MPs' involvement nor was it provided to the defense at the time of trial.¹² Sadly, many of the African-American soldiers were not alive to see their convictions overturned.

UNION WARNS OF REVOLUTION

Local labor was also uneasy about the use of Italian POWs.



The Italian POWs are the men in uniform.

As they had from virtually the beginning, the Army employed POWs as a much-needed source of labor.¹³ With a majority of able-bodied men fighting with the armed forces, the U.S. faced a worker shortage that had already led to unprecedented numbers of women entering the wartime workforce. Tensions came to a head when the Army transferred 250 jobs from Teamsters to Italian POWs at the Auburn Army depot.¹⁴ The Army could pay the POWs less money than the unionized Teamsters and the decision was likely simply a matter of dollars to them. The uproar caused by the decision, however, caused the War Department to quickly backtrack. They issued an order banning the use of POW labor at the Auburn depot and claimed they only used POWs when they could not find American workers.¹⁵

ITALIAN POWs IN RENTON

It was in this climate, in a town fully engaged in the war effort, that local Italian families brought Italian POWs to Renton. “The Italian prisoners that we hosted all came from a camp on Marginal Way in Seattle,” remembered Loraine Rosa Custer.¹⁶ The daughter of Italian immigrants Leopoldo and Maria Rosa, Loraine was a fifteen-year-old Renton High School sophomore when her family started entertaining POWs. The family lived on Talbot Hill, an area where Italians had congregated just outside of Renton when they first immigrated. The Italian community hosted many gatherings, including bocce games and picnics.

Most of Renton’s Italians hailed from northern Italy.¹⁷ The Rosas, along with their neighbors, the Franceschinas, were from Friulia Venezia Giulia, the most northeastern province. “My folks entertained the [POWs] that were from around the town they came from,” remembers Angelina Franceschina Della Rossa.¹⁸ Sixteen-year-old Angie was a year ahead of Loraine at RHS and her older brother Attilio was serving in the U.S. Navy. Angie and Loraine, along with Jean Ruffalo (Newell), Louisa Barei (Schlotfeldt), and a few other young women were introduced to Italian POWs that their parents brought home.

Initially, the POWs were let off base with an American Army escort, but those rules were relaxed and local Italians could effectively “check-out” prisoners.¹⁹ “The Italian prisoners we knew were almost all from the higher ranks, officers and non-commissioned officers. The men who were chosen were given a lot of trust and privileges, including jobs, classes, and the ability to take day trips to visit local Italian families and see films. I think it was our families who first reached out to the Army, asking if some of our relatives could be allowed to come and visit. This eventually turned into local families hosting Italian prisoners who they did not know or have a connection

to. One particular soldier came to visit us on several occasions because he knew members of my mother’s family from the town of Fanna back in Italy,” Loraine said.²⁰

Italy had been embroiled in the war for almost five years by this point. Trips to Italy were obviously out of the question, but the deteriorating infrastructure also meant that letters from home were no longer being received. Renton’s Italian families were hungry for news from their families and hometowns, which at first is what led them to spend more time with the POWs.

Family dinners progressed to larger gatherings. “We went on picnics at McDonald’s Grove. Mrs. Cugini, they all made a big dinner, polenta, all the stews, for the picnics up there. There was dancing; there was a dance hall up there,” Angie said.²¹ “Some of our friends would play accordion and we would have sing-alongs with the Italian folk songs that were popular in our parents’ old hometowns. There were a few of us girls who learned to dance with the Italian soldiers,” Loraine remembered.²² According to photographic evidence, one such event attracted close to 150 party-goers!

Some of the POWs had opportunities to take English classes, but not all could speak it conversationally.²³ “My folks came from Friuli, northern Italy, and they spoke dialect. And that’s what I learned. [The POWs] spoke mostly Italian but some spoke a few words of English. And a southern Italian, I couldn’t understand them if they spoke their dialect and they couldn’t understand me if I spoke in my dialect,” remembered Angie.²⁴

The Aliment family was from the Piemonte province in the northeast of Italy. Dominic and Elizabeth Aliment married in Italy in 1905 and came to the U.S. a month later. Their eleven children were all Americans. Their fourth son, Selleck or ‘Slick’, was in his early thirties during WWII and drove a fuel truck for Shell Oil. For his deliveries he frequently visited the Boeing plant in Auburn where a number of POWs were kept. “My dad used to smuggle in hams and turkeys behind the seat of the truck, and he would swap with Italians—they made pastrami, salami, bologna, polenta, gnocchi—and they would trade. My dad spoke real good Italian. He would go down there and would talk with them,” Slick’s son Arne remembered his dad saying.²⁵

UNEASE IN RENTON?

The *Renton Chronicle* in 1944 and 1945 reported none of the hostility toward Italian POWs that the Seattle papers did. In fact, there were only three innocuous mentions of Italian POWs during those two years.²⁶ Renton even had men serving in northern Africa where they would have faced Italian soldiers.²⁷



Renton Italians and Italian POWs, ca. 1944. Back row (L-R): Angelina Franceschina (Della Rossa), POW, possibly Mary Marchetti, POW, Louisa Barei (Schlotfeldt), POW, Loriane Rosa (Custer), POW. Front row: POW, POW, Jean Ruffalo (Newell), Ruthie Malgarini (Felkins). (Photo courtesy of Rose Custer.)

Perhaps anti-Italian sentiment bubbled beneath the surface, but it wasn't made public enough to hit the papers.

Renton's familiarity with Italians, coupled with their participation in the war effort, also may have eased any potential nerves. "The American soldiers knew that the Italians were happy to be out of the war and were not supporters of Mussolini and the Fascists. They were not likely to escape since there was nowhere for them to go. By the later days of the war Italy was in ruins and though they missed their families, the prisoners were happy that they were safe in the U.S. and being treated so well. They were not in any hurry to go back to Italy," remembered Loraine.²⁸ Italian POWs interviewed in Seattle confirmed this sentiment and at least one wanted to stay in America to open a restaurant.²⁹

HEADED HOME

Germany surrendered to the Allies in May 1945, bringing an end to the European portion of the war. Plans to ship the Italian POWs back home were drawn up and by fall they were returning in numbers. One Renton sailor, First Class Radar Man Leonard Peterson, even escorted a ship of 3,900 POWs to Naples.³⁰ When one of the POWs who visited Renton, Giuseppe "Joe" Marcoaldi, walked in the door of his mother's house, she fainted on the spot.³¹ The devastation of the war had disrupted most communication and she had assumed Giuseppe was dead. Most of the Italian POWs in the U.S. returned by midway through 1946.³²

The Italian POWs who visited Renton went home to Italy, but that didn't cease all contact with their new American friends. "After the war I continued to be friends

Continued on page 10



Giuseppe "Joe" Marcoaldi and Lorraine Rosa (Custer), 1944. (Photo courtesy of Rose Custer.)

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

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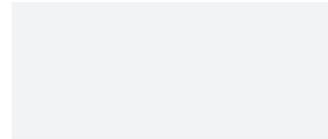
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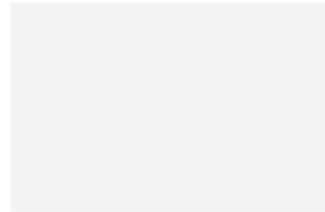
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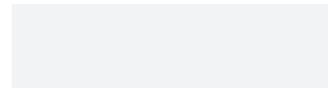
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MARGARET SEBELIST (1918-2021)

A Renton High graduate of the Class of 1936, Margaret Geldseth Sebelist went on to become a mainstay of the Renton History Museum volunteer corps. The multi-talented Margaret served on the Volunteer Committee, cooked for teas and luncheons here, pitched in during Renton River Days, and sewed all the padded hangers that protect our clothing collection. She will

be much missed by all who knew her.



HENRY FORD SCHOOL DOORS GET NEW LIFE

In January 2000, the Henry Ford School at 435 Main Ave S. was demolished, the victim of old age and a declining school-age population in downtown Renton. A community fixture since 1922, the state-of-the-art school was named for the auto manufacturer. When the school district approached him for a grant to complete construction, he responded with a small photo and no money.

Many students had fond memories of their time at

the Ford School. At the time of demolition, the Renton Historical Society responded by meeting with the City of Renton and property-owners Service Laundry, who kindly permitted them to rescue the main school doors, as well as some blackboards used to make custom slates. At the direction of museum director Steve Anderson, volunteers—among them master carpenter Norm Abrahamson—carefully removed the

beautiful Art Deco doors and their surrounding windows and woodwork in sections. These pieces were reassembled in the Museum's north gallery as part of the *Century to Century* exhibit.

This spring we had the opportunity to make these doors a feature of our north gallery renovation. With the help of the City of Renton Facilities Division and funding from 4Culture, Artech Fine Art Services moved the doors for us

and carefully secured them at the front of the gallery, where they will serve as a feature in future exhibits. Volunteer Dennis Conte also helped polish them up.



Continued from page 8

with Giuseppe ‘Joe’ Marcoaldi, exchanging Christmas cards and letters. My husband and I even went to visit him and his wife in Rome after the war. We remained friends until he passed away a few years ago,” Loraine said in 2018.³³ Giuseppe took that friendship seriously. He scouted out a hotel prior to Loraine’s daughter visiting in 2003 to make sure it was “up to snuff” for her, and even took her out to dinner during her visit.³⁴

EPILOGUE

In the end, the Italian POWs’ time visiting Renton was a blip in the fast-paced timeline of WWII: easy to overlook in the face of so many life-altering events. But the visits, photographed fairly extensively, were clearly important to the Renton Italian community. Hungry for just a little taste of their homeland, the Renton Italians sought out POWs who could give them news of their province, their town, or even their family. For the POWs the visits meant time spent around Italian speakers who provided them with a literal taste of home through the meals they received.

ENDNOTES

- 1 David A. Taylor, “During World War II, the U.S. Saw Italian-Americans as a Threat to Homeland Security,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, 2 Feb 2017, accessed 4 Aug 2021, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/italian-americans-were-considered-enemy-aliens-world-war-ii-180962021/>.
- 2 Taylor, “During World War II, the U.S. Saw Italian-Americans as a Threat to Homeland Security.”
- 3 Bob Moore, “*Enforced Diaspora: The Fate of Italian Prisoners of War during the Second World War*,” *War in History* 22, 13 Apr 2015, accessed 21 Jul 2021, <https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/90913/2/Enforced%20disapora.pdf>
- 4 Moore, “*Enforced Diaspora*.”
- 5 Jack Hamann, *On American Soil: How Justice Became a Casualty of World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005) p.27.
- 6 Hamann, *On American Soil*, p.55-56.
- 7 Hazel Millikin, “Italian Soldiers See First Ball Game, and Can’t Explain It,” *Seattle Daily Times*, 26 Jul 1944, p.9.

- 8 Frank McDonald, “Freedom to Play,” *The Frank McDonald Blog*, 26 Dec 2019, accessed 28 Jul 2021, <https://www.frankmacdonald.net/?p=2622>.
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- 10 Hamann, *On American Soil*, p.286-287.
- 11 Casey McNerthey, “Book provided evidence for exonerating Fort Lawton veterans,” *Seattle P-I*, 28 Jul 2008, accessed 27 Jul 2021, <https://www.seattletpi.com/local/seattle-history/article/Book-provided-evidence-for-exonerating-Fort-2112503.php>.
- 12 Hamann, *On American Soil*.
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- 14 “Beck Protests Italian Labor,” *Seattle Daily Times*, 17 Sep 1945, p.4.
- 15 “Send Italian Prisoners Home – V.F.W Demands,” *Seattle Daily Times*, 21 Sep 1945, p.10.
- 16 Interview with Loraine (Rosa) Custer conducted by Tom Monahan, 4 Jun 2018.
- 17 Elizabeth P. Stewart, “Home Away from Home: Vall’Alta Transplants in the 1900s,” *Renton Historical Society Newsletter*, Mar 2013, p.5.
- 18 Interview with Angelina Franceschina Della Rossa conducted by Sarah Samson, 27 Jul 2021.
- 19 “War Prisoners Not Pampered,” *The Spokesman-Review* (Spokane), 9 Feb 1945, p.1.
- 20 Interview with Loraine (Rosa) Custer conducted by Tom Monahan, 4 Jun 2018.
- 21 Interview with Angelina Franceschina Della Rossa conducted by Sarah Samson, 27 Jul 2021.
- 22 Interview with Loraine (Rosa) Custer conducted by Tom Monahan, 4 Jun 2018.
- 23 “U.S. Uses Italian War Prisoners,” *The Spokesman Review* (Spokane), 7 May 1944.
- 24 Interview with Angelina Franceschina Della Rossa conducted by Sarah Samson, 27 Jul 2021.
- 25 Interview with Arne Aliment conducted by Sarah Samson, 10 Aug 2021.
- 26 “Africa Display at Chronicle,” *Renton Chronicle*, 14 Sep 1944, p.1; “Army Warns ‘PW’ Users,” *Renton Chronicle*, 10 May 1945, p.7; “Local Boy Accompanies P.W. to Naples,” *Renton Chronicle*, 18 Oct 1945, p.8.
- 27 Marion Shook, an Army cook, was stationed in Oran, Algeria. He mailed home items Italian POWs had made for him that his sister Laura Shook displayed at the Renton Chronicle office; “Africa Display at Chronicle,” *Renton Chronicle*, 14 Sep 1944, p.1.
- 28 Interview with Loraine (Rosa) Custer conducted by Tom Monahan, 4 Jun 2018.
- 29 Millikin, “Italian Soldiers See First Ball Game, and Can’t Explain It,” *Seattle Daily Times*, 26 Jul 1944, p.9.
- 30 “Local Boy Accompanies P.W. to Naples,” *Renton Chronicle*, 18 Oct 1945, p.8.
- 31 Email from Rose Custer, 29 Jul 2021.
- 32 Moore, “*Enforced Diaspora*.”
- 33 Interview with Loraine (Rosa) Custer conducted by Tom Monahan, 4 Jun 2018.
- 34 Email from Rose Custer to Sarah Samson, 15 Jul 2021; email from Rose Custer to Sarah Samson, 29 Jul 2021.



Renton Italians with Italian POWs, 1944. Back row (L-R): POW, POW, POW, Maria Franceschina, Umberto Barei, Maria Toffolo Rosa, Jean Ruffalo (Newell), POW, Loraine Rosa (Custer), David Franceschina Sr. Front row: Eduardo Franceschina, Angelina Franceschina (Della Rossa), POW, Louisa Barei (Schlotfeldt), Nancy Barei (Monahan). (RHM# 2018.022.002)

2021 Brain Injury Art Show

Paintings • Photography • Multimedia



Brain Injury
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WASHINGTON

BrainInjuryArtShow.com

The Renton History Museum will host the Annual Art Show of the Brain Injury Alliance of Washington, full of moving stories like this one. In 2014 Seattleite Erlene Alston suffered a hemorrhagic stroke. A year later she reluctantly accepted a friend's invitation to an arts and crafts party, because, she said, "I don't like to create art!" Accepting the invitation dramatically changed her life. Alston became a prolific visual artist, exhibiting over 30 impressionistic landscape paintings in solo and group exhibits. Alston credits art with not only aiding in her stroke recovery, but also with providing an emotional outlet to grieve the loss of her beloved sister. We are excited to host the *Brain Injury Art Show* to bring the art of people like Alston to the Renton community.

Exhibit Opens
NOVEMBER
16

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please select a membership level:

BASIC MEMBERSHIPS

- Individual \$30
- Student/Senior \$20
- Family \$40

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIPS

- Benefactor \$75
- Patron \$150
- Business/Corporate \$175
- Life membership \$750

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation! Your donations help us provide new exhibits and exciting programs.

Donation: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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PAYMENT INFORMATION

Visa or MC #: _____

Exp. date: _____

Signature: _____

Please make checks payable to the Renton Historical Society.



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