



Willow House Times



Issue 28

Cuyahoga Heights Historical Committee

January 2015



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Cuyahoga Heights Historical Archives

Kennedy House

4651 E 71st Street

Home of

Historical Committee

&

Boy Scouts



Village Soldiers -WW I



Domenico Antonio Casavecchia

Our Village Soldiers

Last year we had village wedding pictures on the front page. This year we're going to tell you about some of the village soldiers and the front page will show a soldier's picture. We can not find anyone that lived in our area that fought in the American Revolution, War of 1812, American Civil War or the Spanish-American War. This does not mean no one did, we just can not find any records. We have found five men who lived in the village that fought during WW I. They are Iacopo Angiocchi, Stanley Czechowski-Chase, Domenico Casavecchia, Frank Hanousek and Luigi Trevisani. This month's soldier is Domenico Casavecchia.

World War I came about because of new alliances forming and military tension in Europe. The final blow was the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austro-Hungarian and his wife Sophie, June 1914 in Sarajevo, Bosnia. May 23, 1915 the Kingdom of Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary. Our first village soldier did not join the US forces but fought with his brother Battista Dante Casavecchia in an elite Italian Army battalion called the Alpini. Domenico was 17 when he joined and if his brother Battista joined at the same time he would have been 15 or 16. The Alpini units were formed in 1872 and today is the oldest active mountain infantry battalion in the world. They were formed to protect the Kingdom of Italy's northern borders with France and Austria. Their nickname is *Le Penne Nere* or "the Black Feathers", because they wore felt hats with a black feather on it. The leader had a white feather. Their motto is *Di Qui Non Si Passa!* "Nobody passes here!" The army recruited men from the northern areas for the unit, because they knew how to travel in the mountains. These men were very special because they had to know how to ski, climb the high mountains, be expert marksmen and teamsters for the mules that carried their bigger guns and supplies. The Alpini battalions were never in any battles but their war was called "War in Snow and Ice." They were sent to passes, summits and ridges to guard and defend on their own. The front line ran over the highest mountains and glaciers in the Alps. During the winters they sometimes had to deal with 40 feet of snow. Thousands of soldiers died in avalanches. Huge underground bases were made in the mountain sides and glaciers. The men built walkways up, through and along the steepest cliffs. Out of the 40,000 Alpini soldiers 12,000 died during World War I. One of the lucky ones that survived the war was Domenico Antonio Casavecchia. He is the son of Giuseppe and Francesca Rosa Fontana Casavecchia. Domenico was born May 14, 1900 in Dalli Sotto, Sillano, Lucca, Tuscany, Kingdom of Italy. His nickname was "Bambinone" meaning "Big Baby", which he was. All his life he was called Bambinone or Bimbo by his friends and family. Besides being in the Alpini during WW I, he worked in coal mines before coming to America. August 15, 1920 he emigrated from the port of Trieste, Italy on the steam ship America. He arrived September 8, 1920 at the port of New York and was



WW I Memorial to Alpini
Soldiers in Italy;
Alpini sharpshooters;
Painting of Alpini soldiers



Picture information is on the back page.

processed through Ellis Island. Ship records show he was single; 20 years old; could read and write Italian; last residence was Sillano, Italy; nearest relative was Giuseppe Casavecchia living in Sillano, Italy; he was coming to Cleveland, OH; to join his cousin Francesco Fontana at 71st ST, Cleveland, OH; he was in good health; had fair skin and brown eyes. Domenico went back to Italy in 1929 to marry Eufemia Adorni-Fontana on November 17. He came back November 29, 1929 and Eufemia came a few months later. She could not come as planned because of major earthquakes around the Dalli Sotto, Sillano area. Domenico did not hear from her for some time and had no idea if she was safe. They lived with Giovanni and Gemma Adorni after she arrived from Italy. Then they moved to a boarding house on Canal road in Valley View. The boarding house was torn down to make way for the Cloverleaf Speedway race track. Allega Cement Company is there now. A number of years ago we found an article that said there were 7 brickyards in the Garfield-Valley View-Canal road area. A couple of the older men in the village said one was on Warner road where the trucking company is and another was in the area under the 480 bridge. The boarding house was probably built to house the men that worked in the brickyard next to it. In the mid to late 30s they bought the house at 5037 E 71st Street where they raised their three daughters Josephine, Frances and Judith. He worked first in one of the Brickyards, then Harris Seybold as a machinist for over 15 years. He had to leave Harris because the dust made his lung problems, from working in the coal mines, worse. He then worked at Southerly Sewage as a Machine oiler, retiring in 1960 due to his asthma and emphysema. He was a member of the Toscana Club when it was in the former Baptist church. His daughter Judy remembers watching the men play Tutta La Morra an ancient Roman hand game still popular in Italy. Domenico was an avid hunter and fisherman. He did major remodeling on their house on 71st. The older homes in the village had outhouses and when he added a bathroom the neighbors came to see the new inside toilet. Their one acre lot allowed Domenico to have a garden and an apple orchard, which he lovingly attended. He was also a beekeeper with 8 hives and even built his own honey extractor and spinner, to remove the honey from the honeycombs. Domenico Antonio Casavecchia died June 5, 1969. He and his wife Eufemia are buried in the Highland Drive Cemetery, Breckville, Ohio.



Cuyahoga Heights Historical Committee

Barb Bartczak

Mark Chase

Laura Hine

Irma Schab

Sandy Waldemarson

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2015 Meetings

10 AM - Noon

April 4th

May 2nd

May Memorial Day

Open House 9 AM - 1PM

August 1st

October 3rd

at

Kennedy House

4561 E. 71st Street

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Willow Times News

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Did You Know?

During World War I, also known as "The Great War" and "The War to End All Wars", came to a close November 11, 1918. A total of 8,528,831 soldiers for both sides died. Italy lost 650,000 and the United States lost 116,516. The total for both sides of killed, wounded, prisoners and missing is 37,466,904.

Italy did not become a Republic until June 12, 1946 when King Umberto II was exiled.

Below are Domenico Casavecchia and Eufemia Adorni-Fontana Casavecchia's index cards showing their Naturalization Petitions

Casavecchia, Domenico		Italy
✓ Domenico Casavecchia		
Age, 28 years	Petition No. 36683	Issued by District
U. S.	at Cleveland, Ohio	
Date of order of admission	May 10, 1929	, 19
Declaration of Intention No. 72362	Issued by Clerk of the	
Common Pleas Court of	Cleveland, Ohio	
on the 8 day of Dec	1926	, 19
Name, age, and place of residence of wife:		
Names, ages, and places of residence of minor children:		
No. 3046265	Old	New Certificate No.

No. 4888920	
Name, CASAVECCHIA Eufemia	
residing at 5037 East 71st., Cuyahoga Hgts., Ohio	
Age, 27 years	Date of order of admission June 7, 1940
Date certificate issued June 7, 1940	by the
US District	Court at Cleveland, Ohio
Petition No. 71892	
Italy	
v. Eufemia Casavecchia	
(Complete and true signature of holder)	

Happy New Year



Committee news

Our meeting dates for 2015 are listed to the left.

We have 223 members on our Facebook page. If you want to become a member go to
www.facebook.com/groups/132447953512779/

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Picture Information for pages 3

- 1 Domenico & Eufemia Casavecchia's wedding in Italy
- 2 Eufemia & Domenico in Cleveland, OH
- 3 Eufemia, Frances, Josephine, Judith & Domenico Casavecchia 1950 Pictures from Judy Casavecchia Marik

Article Source info: Judy Casavecchia Marik, History.com, PBS.com & Wikipedia.org