

*Near the turn of the Twentieth Century, Pennsylvania's northeastern coal fields became home to numerous immigrants from the Sicilian sulfur mining regions. Their trip across the Atlantic resulted in modest lifestyle improvements, but the new Americans still were plagued by perilous working conditions, abusive management and a ruthless Mafia organization.*

# Men of Montedoro

By Thomas Hunt  
and Michael A. Tona

About one hundred and thirty miles west of New York City, an underworld organization took root in the early-1900s Italian coal-mining communities of northeastern Pennsylvania.

The shadowy organization known as “the Men of Montedoro” played an important role in the development of the American Mafia, serving as an adhesive force between the New York City and Buffalo Mafia clans, leading organized crime into the lucrative field of labor racketeering and blurring the boundary between underworld rackets and legitimate enterprises.

## Coal mining

Pennsylvanians became aware of large underground anthracite coal deposits in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>1</sup> The hard, lustrous coal initially was deemed a poor energy source, as there were difficulties in keeping anthracite fires burning. So there was little rush to mine the mineral. Effective means of using

anthracite in home heating were developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The geographically isolated Wyoming Valley in northeastern Pennsylvania was particularly rich in hard coal. However, the expenses and dangers of transporting coal to market over the thickly wooded Pocono Mountains or via the treacherous Susquehanna River further frustrated mining efforts in the region. In the middle of the century, canals were constructed to resolve the problems. The North Branch Canal allowed transport of coal southward to Philadelphia and Baltimore. Later, the North Branch Extension provided access to markets in New York and New England. In the 1860s, railroads began serving the region.

As the anthracite mining industry began to grow, it made use of expert immigrant miners from Scotland and Wales. Those first went to work in the Carbondale area and then gradually moved southwest down the valley, toward Scranton, Pittston and Wilkes





*Near the turn of the Twentieth Century, a large number of Sicilian immigrants found work in the anthracite coal mines of northeastern Pennsylvania.*



-Barre.<sup>2</sup> The Wyoming Valley became a popular destination for immigrants looking for work. A variety of European settlers, including Germans, Poles, Italians and Sicilians followed the Scottish and Welsh into the budding communities of Pennsylvania's Luzerne County. An estimated one hundred thousand immigrants settled in the region between 1870 and 1915. Many lived in "mining patch" villages, designed, built and controlled by the companies holding mining leases to the land. Patch residents were compelled to rent company-owned ramshackle homes and to shop in company-owned stores.<sup>3</sup>

Near the turn of the century, Luzerne County benefited from the expertise of immigrant sulfur miners from the interior of Sicily. Families from Montedoro and nearby Serradifalco moved into the region. They concentrated in the quickly growing City of Pittston, along the Susquehanna River.

Montedoro had long been a center of mining activity in Sicily, and much of its male population – including young boys – were employed in the mines. The municipality's name, translated "mountain of gold," is believed to refer to the precious sulfur in the ground there. While some surface (strip) mining was done in the area, most of the

sulfur extraction was accomplished through deep mining operations, such as those used to collect anthracite coal from under the Wyoming Valley.<sup>4</sup>

Oddly, the emigration of families from the Montedoro region did not coincide with the worst of the working conditions in the sulfur mines but with a government crackdown on abusive companies. One historian noted, "It was only in the 1890s, through the efforts of social activists such as Luigi Sturzo (a Catholic priest), that the issues of inhumane working conditions and child exploitation were addressed."<sup>5</sup>

It isn't known for certain whether the efforts to reform mine operations were at all related to the arrival of the Montedoresi in Pittston. It is worth noting that the new immigrants brought with them the abusive and corrupting influence of their Old Country Mafia.

### Montedoresi arrive

Among the earlier arrivals from Montedoro was Salvatore Bufalino, who crossed the Atlantic in late summer of 1901.<sup>6</sup> In April of 1902, he was joined by his cousin Giuseppe LaTorre, who entered the United States through New York harbor aboard the *S.S. California* and went to stay with the





Bufalinos at 39 Main Street in Pittston.<sup>7</sup>

The Pittston area quickly became the adopted home of numerous Bufalinos, Sciandras, Lucchinos and others from Montedoro. Many settled in a small mining-company village called Brandy Patch in southeastern Pittston. Others moved into company-owned homes nearby in Brown Patch.

Giuseppe LaTorre's oldest son arrived in the United States in May of 1903. Born on March 12, 1886, Stefano LaTorre was seventeen years old and likely already a Mafioso when he reached New York aboard the *S.S. Sicilian Prince*.

Stefano LaTorre made his transatlantic journey in the company of fellow Montedoro native Onofrio Morreale. Morreale, too, was headed to Pittston.<sup>8</sup> Giuseppe LaTorre's wife

Maria Marranca and their four remaining children – Carmelo, Giovanna, Angela and Salvatore (the couple would have another child, Calogero, while in Pittston) – crossed the Atlantic six months later.<sup>9</sup>

Two of Salvatore Bufalino's second-cousins, Angelo and Calogero (Charles), reached Pittston's Brown Patch in 1903-1904.<sup>10</sup> Law enforcement authorities later concluded that Charles Bufalino, like Stefano LaTorre, was a transplanted member of the Montedoro Mafia.<sup>11</sup>

In 1906, Stefano LaTorre paid for the transatlantic passage of his brother-in-law, twenty-six-year-old Montedoro Mafia leader Santo Volpe. Volpe arrived in New York on June 30 and proceeded to Pittston.<sup>12</sup> For the next seven decades, the "Men of Montedoro" from the LaTorre, Volpe, Bufalino and Sci-

andra families commanded the local Mafia underworld and held great influence over the politics, labor and industry of the Wyoming Valley.<sup>13</sup>

### Links to Buffalo

Some Montedoresi resisted the migratory pattern and settled in the busy western New York city of Buffalo. These included some relatives of those who populated Pittston. The Bufalino and Sciandra families had strong presences in Buffalo.

After less than a year in Pittston, Angelo Bufalino sent for his wife Cristina Buccoleri Bufalino and their four children – Giuseppa, Calogero, Cristina and Rosario. A December 1903 crossing was aborted due to illness. The family finally reached the United States early in 1906, but young Cristina, possibly still ailing, remained behind in Italy.<sup>14</sup>

Angelo Bufalino died in a mining accident before his wife and children arrived in New York City. The new arrivals stayed for a time on Manhattan's Elizabeth Street before heading west to Buffalo. Calogero, Americanizing his name to Charles, established himself as a theater musician. Rosario and Giuseppa initially were less settled. After their mother's 1910 death, they traveled back to Italy for several years and returned to Buffalo in February of 1914.<sup>15</sup>

Just a few months after their return, Giuseppa Bufalino married Angelo Cordaro, a Buffalo barber who owned a two-family home on Vermont Street. Giuseppa's brothers, Charles and Rosario, also moved into the Vermont Street residence. Rosario, adopting the name of Russell, attended Buffalo public schools and later became employed as an automobile mechanic.<sup>16</sup>

Carmelo Sciandra was the first member of his family to reach the United States. He arrived in New York City aboard the S.S. *Victoria* on August 11, 1897. He remained in the city for a time, staying with his brother-in-law Salvatore Alaimo of Elizabeth Street.<sup>17</sup> Sciandra's wife and children made the crossing in 1900.<sup>18</sup> Another Sciandra brother-in-law Giuseppe Licata of Serradi-



*Within the American Mafia, Castellammarese like Stefano Magaddino (right) generally worked closely with Montedoresi like John Montana (left).*

falco arrived in 1903.<sup>19</sup> Licata traveled back to Sicily in 1905 and returned early the next year with his wife and children. They stayed briefly with Licata's brother Calogero in Pittston,<sup>20</sup> but by 1907, the Sciandra, Licata and Alaimo families had relocated to Buffalo. The Sciandras and Alaimos moved into apartments over a saloon on Court Street.<sup>21</sup>

In the summer of 1907, Carmelo Sciandra's brother Angelo crossed the Atlantic and moved into the Court Street residence in Buffalo.<sup>22</sup> Angelo's wife, Leonarda Laporta Sciandra, and their three children – Andrea, Giovanni and Pasqualina – arrived the following spring.<sup>23</sup>

In Buffalo's Sicilian colony, these Montedoro families came under the influence of Mafiosi from Castellammare del Golfo and the Valledolmo-Vallelunga area. The saloon beneath the Sciandras' and Alaimos' Court Street residence was operated by Castellammarese Mafioso Angelo "Buffalo Bill" Palmeri. Buffalo Mafia boss Giuseppe DiCarlo, a native of Vallelunga with family roots in Valledolmo, owned an importing company nearby.<sup>24</sup> Palmeri was a top lieutenant in the DiCarlo crime family.

There were additional connections between the transplanted Castellammare and Montedoro underworld figures in the U.S.

John C. Montana, a Montedoro native who arrived in Buffalo in 1905,<sup>25</sup> became a key figure in western New York's crime family after DiCarlo was succeeded by Stefano Magaddino of Castellammare. The Montana and Magaddino clans were joined by the marriages of Montana's nephew Charles to Magaddino's daughter Josephine and Montana's niece Frances to Magaddino's son Peter.

A Castellammarese concentration in Endicott, New York, just about sixty-five miles north of Pittston, also helped foster a close relationship between Castellammarese underworld figures and the Men of Montedoro. The Sicilian underworld of Endicott eventually came under the control of key Magaddino lieutenant, Castellammare native Joseph Barbara, who had worked closely with the Montedoresi of Pittston and Buffalo.

### Mafia roundup

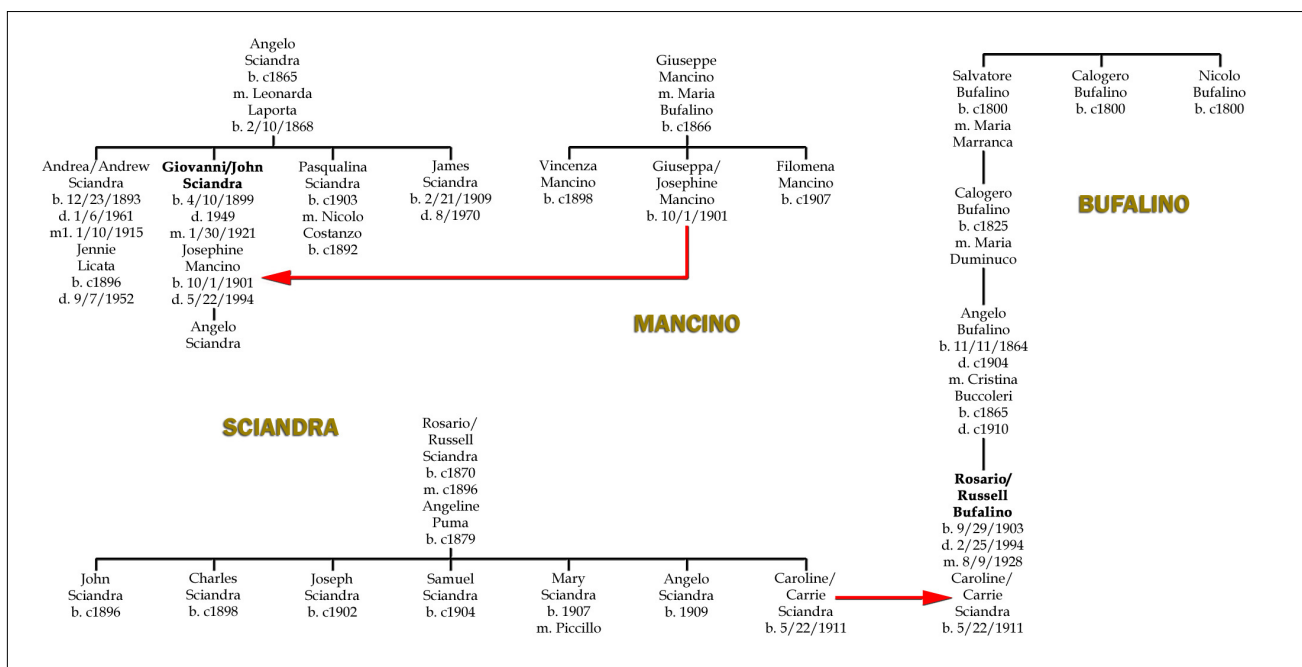
Through the early 1900s, the growing Italian mining communities of the Wyoming Valley battled against Mafia "Black Hand" extortionists, who demanded tribute payments from law-abiding citizens and committed acts of violence against those who refused to comply. An anti-Mafia civic organization formed to the northeast in Carbon-

dale. Led by a local Catholic priest, Father Antonino Cerruti, the St. Joseph Protective Association expanded into Scranton and Pittston. By 1907, the group had scored several victories over the regional underworld. Rumors indicated that the more powerful Mafiosi in the region were entrenched in Pittston.

A letter from Wilkes-Barre, published in a Philadelphia newspaper early in 1907, described the war with the Black Hand:

For the last five years the Black Hand Society has virtually had a free hand in the county. It has systematically levied tribute upon hundreds of Italians who paid considerable sums for protection from violence, and has committed numerous outrages upon others who refused to be blackmailed.

The authorities have been almost helpless. Until the advent of the State Constabulary the District Attorney's office had no force to make wholesale arrests, and, besides, fear sealed the mouths of the victims. The fate of informers was well understood, for the society took pains to impress upon its victims that those who have evidence against





any member would suffer violent death.

On numerous occasions, frightened Italians have informed the police that they have received the usual threatening letter signed by the Black Hand, or have been personally threatened; but when told they would be required to appear as witnesses, they wilted, declared they could not identify anyone; that they had not even a suspicion of who the agents of the society were, and were glad to get away from the authorities and go back to their homes. Many have fled from the region to avoid the wrath of the society.

Even in flight there was no safety. A few months ago an Italian who refused tribute fled with his family to Berwick, and there one morning was called to his door by three men and shot dead. There is no clue to his murderers. Another who gave information a year or so ago, against the organization, was shot dead late at night at Pittston. Again there was no clue. A third was shot, beheaded, and his body thrown into a mine-hole, near Browntown... There have been scores of outrages. Houses have been dynamited, men have been waylaid and wounded, women have been terrorized, houses have been fired upon or set on fire, but rarely have there been any arrests.<sup>26</sup>

Early Friday morning, February 15, 1907, Pittston Police Chief Joseph Loftus, several county detectives and thirty-five members of state police Troop B<sup>27</sup> converged on the Pittston suburb of Browntown. Some arrests were made at that location. The law enforcement officers were then divided into squads, which were sent to raid nearby villages.

A total of twenty-two Italian residents were arrested.<sup>28</sup> They were charged with various offenses, including conspiracy, attempted murder, dynamiting, threatening and

shooting at houses. Held on \$1,000 bail each, they were committed to prison.

During the raids, the police gathered almost a full wagonload of shotguns, revolvers, knives and explosives.<sup>29</sup>

Eighteen of the prisoners were arraigned in the corridors of the county prison in Wilkes-Barre later that day. Several witnesses came forward to describe how the population of Pittston had been terrorized into making regular cash payments to the gang. Some testified that the accused were members of a secret criminal society with more than five hundred members and branches in New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Scranton, Wilkes-Barre and a half-dozen other cities.<sup>30</sup>

District Attorney Abram Salsburg told the press that the arrests had broken up the criminal society in the area. He said he ex-

## MAFIA THREATENS COUNTY ATTORNEY

WILKESBARRE, Pa., April 23.—“Black Hand” letters couched in most threatening terms, and postmarked Philadelphia, April 25, were received by District Attorney Abram Salsburg who is conducting the prosecution of the thirteen alleged leaders in this county of the dreaded Sicilian organization, who are on trial at this place, and by county Detective Edward J. Mackin and former Chief of Police Joseph Loftus, of Pittston, who have been assisting in gathering evidence against the defendants.

All three letters threaten these officials with assassination if they persist in their efforts to convict the prisoners and declare that the latter will be saved from imprisonment at all hazards. The author of the missives asserts that stone walls and iron bars cannot intervene much longer between the Black Hand and “those who have been faithful to the cause.”

pected to make examples of the prisoners.<sup>31</sup>

### Black Hand trial

Thirteen of the accused "Black Handers" went to trial on April 22, 1907, in the Wilkes-Barre courtroom of Judge Gaius Leonard Halsey.<sup>32</sup> The defendants included Montedoro Mafiosi Calogero (Charles) Bufalino, Stefano LaTorre and Salvatore (most likely Santo) Volpe.<sup>33</sup> Other defendants were Guachino Cimmone, Charles and Josie Comella, Charles Dominici, Charles Gonzaza, Vincent Lubona, Salvatore and Pietro Lucchino,<sup>34</sup> and Antonio Tagliarino.

The trial caught the attention of the national media and was attended by members of the New York City Police Department and the United States Secret Service,<sup>35</sup> as well as some members of New York and Philadelphia criminal organizations.

An early witness for the prosecution was Charles Rizzo, who testified that twenty of the defendants were involved in dynamiting his Pittston home on December 24, 1905. He specifically named Stefano LaTorre and two other defendants as being among the crowd that placed the dynamite bomb at his house. Rizzo said he had received written demands for \$500. Those were accompanied by a warning that failure to pay would be punished by destruction of his house or by death. Rather than pay the tribute, Rizzo brought the letters to Police Chief Loftus.<sup>36</sup>

Joseph Rizzo, brother of Charles, confirmed the earlier testimony and provided details of some of the Black Hand letters he received. One letter demanded that \$400 be left at the Number 4 mine shaft near Pittston, he said. In an effort to catch the extortionists, he and some friends set up an ambush at the mine shaft. However, the Black Handers never appeared. A subsequent letter increased his tribute amount to

\$500.<sup>37</sup>

Defendant Salvatore Lucchino emerged as a central figure in the extortion conspiracy against the Rizzo brothers. Witnesses stated that Lucchino organized the bombing of the Rizzo home, took part in riddling the home with bullets on another occasion and personally wrote threatening letters.<sup>38</sup>

Witness Joseph George testified about an earlier cooperative effort with the local police that resulted in the arrests of Charles Gonzaza and Salvatore Lucchino for Black Hand extortion.<sup>39</sup>

As the prosecution's case closed on April 27, the press learned that threatening letters had been received by District Attorney Salsburg, Police Chief Loftus and county Detective Edward J. Mackin. The letters promised death if the Black Hand defendants were convicted.<sup>40</sup>

Salsburg refused to discuss the threats, but he did speak of the history of the Sicilian criminal organization in the region:

I am firmly convinced that there is a branch of the Black Hand Society in this county. It is an offshoot of the New York and Philadelphia organizations. I am led to believe this from the fact that [Luciano] Perrino, better known as the "Ox," was quite active at Browntown, a suburb of Pittston, until he met his death at the hands of an assassin. Perrino was undoubtedly implicated in the "Barrel Murder Mystery" in New York. After his release from prison there he came direct to Browntown, which was then the headquarters for the local Black Hand. He was shrewd and cunning and I have no doubt succeeded in getting large sums of money from his countrymen. He was not long in this section until



*Stefano LaTorre*



a number of strange Italians from the large cities joined him. The "Ox" introduced the strangers to the most prosperous Italians as his friends. After remaining at Brown-town some weeks the strangers left, but the "Ox" remained. Then letters began to be received by the wealthy Italians of the place notifying them that if they did not pay over certain sums of money to agents of the society their lives would be in danger.

Many who received the threatening letters went to the "Ox" and asked him what they should do. He always advised a settlement. He would agree to accept 50 percent of the claim and give assurance to the parties that they would not be bothered in the future. In most every case the money was produced. The "Ox" got it. But he was selfish. He wanted the major portion of the money himself. This led to a quarrel with his lieutenants and one night he was shot down in the roadway. His body was not found until the next morning. It was riddled with bullets, showing that his enemies hated him with a vengeance.

Those Italians who refused to pay the "Ox" soon felt the heavy hand of the Black Hand. Three murders took place in a short time and I believe the men killed were all victims of the organization. If murder was not resorted to, robbery was perpetrated.

During the trial last week our detectives noticed in and about the court room Italians said to be implicated in crimes in Philadelphia, New York and other large cities in the past. I am sure they were not here for any good purpose. One of our witnesses was intimidated, but by increasing our detective force we were able to give protection to our witnesses and they went on the witness stand without fear.<sup>41</sup>



*Santo Volpe and his family.*

The defense opened its case on April 29, arguing that the prosecution had created an imaginary criminal conspiracy in order to deprive law-abiding immigrants of their liberty. The defense attorney charged that key prosecution witnesses Charles and Joseph Rizzo ran an illegal gambling establishment and were attempting to remove the potential threat posed by strait-laced residents.

Defense witnesses testified to the good character of the defendants. Defendant Dominici took the witness stand to state that he had not arrived in the United States until the previous July, after the crimes charged against him had been committed.<sup>42</sup>

Defendant Salvatore Lucchino testified on May 2. He denied any involvement in terrorizing the Rizzo brothers. He said the first he knew of the bombing of their home was the morning after it happened.<sup>43</sup>

Summations were delivered by the attorneys on Friday, May 3. Judge Halsey delivered his charge to the jury on Saturday morning. The jury began deliberations before noon. The panel reached a verdict at eight-fifteen that evening. As the court had already adjourned, the verdict was sealed and locked away.<sup>44</sup>

On Monday morning, May 6, the verdict was opened and read in Judge Halsey's courtroom. All the defendants except Volpe and Paternoster were convicted. Volpe was immediately freed. Paternoster was held for prosecution on other charges.<sup>45</sup> On Saturday, the judge imposed surprisingly light penalties. The convicted men were sentenced to a year in prison. Each also was ordered to pay a twenty-five-dollar fine and court costs.<sup>46</sup>

### Quiet growth

Santo Volpe, Stefano LaTorre and Charles Bufalino quietly extended the influence of their Pittston Mafia through the 1910s. Bufalino, known within the underworld as "the old man," used his criminal connections to improve his personal financial status but generally avoided administrative responsibility. The job of guiding the Mafia into various money-making rackets was left to Volpe and LaTorre.

While their progress escaped the notice of law enforcement, it became apparent in their occupations. Until about 1918, Volpe and LaTorre were employed digging in the deep anthracite mines of the Pennsylvania Coal

Company. By 1920, they had sufficient resources and connections to become mining contractors. Charles Bufalino reportedly joined them in that venture. Their small coal company turned in bids to extract ore from Pennsylvania Coal Company locations. For the forty-year-old Volpe, entry in to the new line of work coincided with a move into a nicer residence a few blocks north on Pittston's South Main Street.<sup>47</sup>

It is likely that Volpe and LaTorre, familiar with union workers and union officials, engaged at that stage in a form of labor racketeering to keep their mining expenses down and maximize their business profits. Their small company was able to hand-pick laborers and could agree to employ only those with a weak commitment to union ideals and a willingness to provide monetary kickbacks.

During the 1920s, a number of their distant relatives from Buffalo moved to Pittston and took part in the mining operations or in a rapidly growing garment industry in the region. Large New York clothing manufacturers relocated to the Wyoming Valley in the 1920s, fleeing the expensive unionized labor force of the city. They found a large,



*View of Pittston's Main Street c. 1907.*

willing and mostly non-union labor force among out-of-work miners and the wives and children of miners.<sup>48</sup>

John Sciandra of Buffalo married Josephine Mancino on January 30, 1921. In November of the following year, the couple moved to 104 Railroad Street in Pittston.<sup>49</sup> While Sciandra's older brother Andrea (Andrew) remained in Buffalo,<sup>50</sup> his parents, Angelo and Leonarda, and his younger siblings, Pasqualina and James, also moved to Pittston.<sup>51</sup> A son was born to John and Josephine Sciandra in Pittston in 1924. Keeping with Sicilian tradition, they named the boy Angelo, in honor of his paternal grandfather.

Russell Bufalino of Buffalo married Caroline "Carrie" Sciandra on August 9, 1928. They moved to Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley by the early 1940s.<sup>52</sup>

### Labor strife

Anthracite mining companies and their organized labor had a generally uncomfortable relationship during the two decades following a 1902 strike that choked off coal production for most of the year. Miners walked off the job for a month in 1906 and nearly two months in 1912.

A 1920 strike eventually was halted by the order of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, but not before several violent outbursts.

Early in the strike, Stefano LaTorre in-law Detective Sam Lucchino was killed. Police captured two men – Peter Erico and Antonio Puntario – believed to have been called in from New Jersey to eliminate Lucchino. A Lucchino political rival, Charley Consagra, was believed to have promised the gunmen \$35,000 for the killing.<sup>53</sup> Erico and Puntario were convicted of murder and sentenced to die in the electric chair. That sentence was carried out September 25, 1922, at the Western Penitentiary branch in Rockview, Pennsylvania.<sup>54</sup>

During the strike, a number of Italian homes in the Pittston area were bombed. Stefano LaTorre's family was targeted in at least two of the attacks. Dynamite exploded at LaTorre's home, 175 Railroad Street, in early September of 1920. One week later, an

apartment building on South Main Street was bombed. LaTorre's son occupied a suite of rooms in that building.<sup>55</sup>

The violence continued in the months following the strike, as insurgent labor leader Rinaldo Cappellini took control over the United Mine Workers (UMW) of America union in the region. Cappellini, an ally of Volpe and LaTorre, rose to power with assistance from James A. Joyce of Pittston. Soon afterward Cappellini and Joyce parted ways, with Joyce adopting a more conciliatory position toward mine management. The two men publicly charged each other with accepting bribes from the coal companies. (It is conceivable that both were.) Cappellini was forced to acknowledge receipt of a \$10,000 payment from Pennsylvania Coal, but he claimed it was a settlement for a mining accident fifteen years earlier that caused him to lose an arm.

On January 16, 1921, Joyce's home and store were destroyed in an early morning bombing. The blast tore away the front of the building and collapsed a large section of the foundation. Several nearby houses also suffered damage. Joyce escaped harm.<sup>56</sup>

Pennsylvania governors stepped in to resolve labor disputes in 1922 and 1923. At the conclusion of a labor-management pact in the summer of 1925, however, a major walk-out shut down nearly all of the anthracite production in the United States.

Mine operators were not in the mood to make concessions. Mining company competition, overproduction and the development of oil as a cheap alternative fuel had been driving down the costs of coal and the industry profits. Larger companies were pulling back from the many headaches involved with extracting coal from the ground and were simply leasing their mines to others. Some companies were restricting their output, idling many colliery workers, in the hope that artificial scarcity would raise market prices.

Workers had a number of demands, including the incorporation of a check-off system, through which union dues could be automatically deducted from paychecks; a one





*Though preferable to the Old Country mining communities, life in northeastern Pennsylvania mining patches was difficult. Young boys were part of the labor force. Miners lives were constantly threatened by mine collapse, flooding, explosion and accident. Families lived in ramshackle homes rented from mine companies that could evict them at any time.*



dollar per day pay increase; a ten percent increase in the in output rates; equalization of production throughout the coal region; and the end of third-party contract mining.

Agreements were reached only after the strike had reached 164 days and cost the industry an estimated one billion dollars.<sup>57</sup> Many of the underlying issues remained unresolved.

### Civil war in the UMW

Frank “Ciccio” Agati<sup>58</sup> held a number of important roles in northeastern Pennsylvania during the mid-1920s. Officially, he was a district organizer for the UMW union.<sup>59</sup> Less formally, he served as bodyguard and muscle for Rinaldo Cappellini, president of the union’s populous District 1.<sup>60</sup> Secretly – and illegally – Agati also served as a silent partner in the Volpe and LaTorre coal company, ensuring that the mining company would have no trouble with its labor.<sup>61</sup>

By the end of 1927, an anti-Cappellini faction had emerged in the UMW. That faction, led by international union board member Alex Campbell, was able in January 1928 to take control of Local 1703, which worked Number 6 Colliery of the Pennsylvania Coal Company. Number 6, located in Pittston, was one of the operations shut down as coal companies worked to reduce the anthracite supply. The entrenched Cappellini administration sought to eliminate Campbell and his key men while reincorporating the members of his faction into the union. The conflict between the two sides resulted in a number of house bombings and murders.

On January 19, newly elected Local 1703 treasurer Thomas Lillis was shot to death

from ambush as he returned home from a union meeting. Lillis, a leader in the Campbell reform movement, was hit by five bullets.<sup>62</sup>

On February 16, 1928, police puzzled over the murder of Joseph Cicero of West Wyoming, Pennsylvania. Cicero was found with his throat cut. Ernest Cassico and Samuel Savoca, the victim’s sons-in-law, were placed under arrest, as detectives wondered if a Cicero insurance policy prompted the killing.

On the same day, three Campbell men – Local 1703 President Samuel Bonita, Steve Mendola and Adam Moleski – visited union headquarters in Wilkes-Barre to meet with UMW district board member August Lippi. Bonita wanted Lippi’s assistance in arranging negotiations to reopen Number 6 Colliery. Frank Agati interrupted the meeting. He and Bonita exchanged angry words and then gunshots.

Agati fell mortally wounded. Bonita, Mendola and Moleski fled. The next day, police apprehended Bonita as he entered a Pittston attorney’s office. The authorities felt sure that the Cicero and Agati killings were unrelated.<sup>63</sup> That theory was quickly discarded.

On the eighteenth, “Big Sam” Grecio, a reform leader in the UMW and a brother-in-law of the recently murdered Joseph Cicero, was ambushed by gunmen and mortally wounded. Grecio and his wife were returning from a visit with Cicero’s family, when two men stepped from the shadows. One grabbed Grecio and held him, while the other shot him.

Near death in a hospital bed, Grecio summoned Alex Campbell. “It’s over, I guess,” Grecio told the leader of the reform faction.

*‘For the last five years the Black Hand Society has virtually had a free hand in the county. It has systematically levied tribute upon hundreds of Italians who paid considerable sums for protection from violence, and has committed numerous outrages upon others who refused to be blackmailed.’*

“They are going to get to you too, my friend. So be careful.”<sup>64</sup>

Grecio’s warning became a fulfilled prophecy just ten days later. On the evening of February 28, the fifty-five-year-old Campbell and union local secretary Pete Reilly (also known as Pete Saudargas), twenty-two, drove home together from a union conference with county law enforcement on the slaying of Frank Agati. As the vehicle carrying the two men reached Campbell’s home, another car pulled alongside. Gunmen opened fire with shotguns and revolvers.<sup>65</sup> Detectives concluded that the double-murder was committed by professional gunmen imported to the region.<sup>66</sup> Rumors led them to Vincenzo “Little Jimmy” Damini, who had fled to New Orleans.<sup>67</sup>

Following the Campbell and Reilly murders, Pittston Mayor William Gillespie wrote a letter appealing for help to United Mine Workers of America President John L. Lewis:

The hostile factions in the local organization have created a reign of terror by their lawlessness, dynamitings, murder and murder attempts, which are of frequent occurrence. Two prominent leaders of mine workers were murdered in cold blood in the heart of this city last evening. Our city is in a state of terror and turmoil...

The cause of this bloody feud or vendetta is known to every intelligent person in the anthracite coal region. This disgraceful and tragic situation is attributed directly to the bitter hostilities that exist between mine officials, mine contractors, union labor leaders and insurgent labor leaders connected with the Pennsylvania Coal Company.

The public believes that yourself, district Union President Cappellini and the head of the Pennsylvania Coal Company can end these hostilities and bring this campaign of crime to a close, if you meet together

at once and make an honest effort to settle this deadly dispute.<sup>68</sup>

In a crowded Wilkes-Barre courtroom on April 11, Sam Bonita admitted to killing Frank Agati. Bonita argued, however, that he did so in self-defense. He said Agati fired a first shot. Steve Mendola and Adam Molewski, charged as accessories to the killing, confirmed Bonita’s account. A firearms expert called by the defense revealed that a bullet different in caliber from the one fired by Bonita had been found in a union headquarters wall. That bullet, the defense attorney argued, was the one fired by Agati.<sup>69</sup>

It took Bonita’s jury forty-three hours – and a refusal by the trial judge to accept a verdict of involuntary manslaughter – to find him guilty of voluntary manslaughter. The jury recommended a merciful sentence. The media also was sympathetic with Bonita and his reform cause:

The insurgents have bitterly fought the system of contract mining in the mines of the Pennsylvania Coal Company at Pittston, contending that thirty favored contractors have grown rich on the labor of mine workers, that contract mining was in violation of their working contract and that such a system was tainted with graft.<sup>70</sup>

Faced with growing opposition, the beleaguered Rinaldo Cappellini resigned from the presidency of UMW District 1, effective June 20, 1928. John Boyland, elected to replace him, pledged to end the contract mining system that he saw as a “curse” on the industry.<sup>71</sup> Despite the rhetoric, the system remained in place until the final days of the Wyoming Valley’s deep mining industry.

In 1929, the coal company run by Santo Volpe, Stefano LaTorre and Charles Bufalino was dissolved. While the timing of the partnership dissolution made it appear to be a response to Boyland’s election, it may also have been triggered by large financial losses



suffered by Stefano LaTorre in the stock market crash and a serious disagreement among the Men of Montedoro regarding the murders of Campbell and Reilly :

Ill feelings developed between Steve LaTorre and Santo Volpe and Charles Bufalino, when Steve LaTorre refused to contribute his share of money to pay for the knocking-off of Campbell and [Reilly]. [An informant] said the collection was taken up by someone in the "organization," and when Steve LaTorre refused to pay his share, Volpe and Bufalino had to come up with more money. [The informant] stated this was the beginning of the conflict between Steve LaTorre and the other two individuals.<sup>72</sup>

Despite having to pay a larger share for his hired murders, it appeared that Volpe extracted the greatest benefit from the business partnership. By early 1930, he had moved from Pittston's Main Street into his own twenty-thousand-dollar home at 215 Wyoming Avenue in West Pittston.<sup>73</sup>

### **Murders continue**

At about eight o'clock in the evening of January 4, 1931, Calogero Calamera took a walk along Pittston's Railroad Street. Two men overtook him. One drew a handgun and fired six times. Calamera collapsed mortally wounded.<sup>74</sup>

Another native of Montedoro, Sicily, Calamera was a longtime resident of Pittston, having first arrived there after a transatlantic crossing in the summer of 1903.<sup>75</sup> Calamera worked as a miner and became influential in the local UMW. He periodically traveled back to Sicily, where his wife Maria Campanella and their children continued to live. His last trip to the Old Country concluded just days before his murder. His returned through New York City on December 30, 1930.<sup>76</sup>

Calamera lived long enough to tell police that local Mafioso Tony Morreale had shot

him, probably on orders from Santo Volpe and Charles Bufalino. It is not known if Calamera was ever a member of the Men of Montedoro Mafia, but his close acquaintance with the members was evident from his dying declaration.

Calamera did not identify the second man involved. Police suspected that Joseph Barbara had aided Morreale. They arrested Morreale on a murder charge and Barbara on suspicion. An alibi offered by Calamera included Barbara but also made it clear that Barbara was no stranger to criminal activity. Calamera claimed that at the time of the murder in Pittston, he was at Old Forge tending to an alcohol distillery owned by Barbara. Without evidence linking Barbara to the killing, police were forced to release him.<sup>77</sup>

On March 2, another murder occurred. Samuel Licata, a member of the UMW faction led by the late Alex Campbell and a friend of the late Calogero Calamera, was shot to death as he returned home from an evening at a Pittston billiard parlor. Police found his lifeless body lying in front of Sam Lucchino's home. Licata had been shot five times in the chest and abdomen and once in the back.

There was suspicion that Licata was killed for informing police of "Little Jimmy" Damini's role in the murder of Alex Campbell.<sup>78</sup>

### **Outside Pennsylvania**

While the Men of Montedoro were settling affairs with the uncooperative Campbell faction of the UMW in Pittston, the Mafia of New York and other major cities was engaged in an internal struggle known as the Castellammarese War.

New York-based Mafia boss of bosses Giuseppe Masseria and allies in Chicago, Cleveland and Detroit, were warring against a network of Castellammarese Mafiosi and their allies. Masseria had been accused of abusing his authority. Rather than merely arbitrate disputes between Mafia crime families in the United States, Masseria had

## UMW District 1 President Rinaldo Cappellini

Rinaldo Cappellini, born about 1900, first earned notice as a “radical” labor leader when he organized a strike of fourteen-thousand coal miners in the Scranton area in 1920. After listening to some of his speeches, many became convinced that Cappellini had Communist leanings.

His fiery rhetoric earned him a surprising 1923 victory in the presidential election for District 1 of the United Mine Workers. (District 1, the Scranton area, included almost half of the workers in the UMW.)

Once elected, Cappellini oddly seemed uninterested in supporting his own radical platform. Others took up the radical banner and drew away the insurgent element that had backed Cappellini.

The district president resigned from his post on July 20, 1928. It is believed he was under pressure from the union’s international President John L. Lewis. Following his resignation, Cappellini traveled to Europe and then spent some time in Brooklyn.

Cappellini later proved to be fiery in more than rhetoric. He served nine months in prison in 1931 on an arson conviction. He was returned to prison in 1934 as a parole violator after a disturbance at the home of his ex-wife.

Cappellini died July 6, 1966, at his Harveys Lake, Pennsylvania, home, about fifteen miles northwest of Wilkes-Barre.

Sources: “Coal: Mr. Cappellini,” *TIME*, July 9, 1923; “Cappellini quits post,” *New York Times*, July 21, 1928; “Priest’s plan for strike settlement to be considered,” *Clearfield PA Progress*, Jan. 17, 1934, p. 1; “Rinaldo Cappellini...,” *Gettysburg PA Times*, July 7, 1966.



meddled in the internal affairs of crime families and had ordered the murders of unfriendly Mafia bosses.

In April 1931, Masseria was assassinated by some of his own lieutenants, who subsequently made peace with Castellammarese leader Salvatore Maranzano. Charlie Luciano and Vito Genovese took over Masseria's crime family in New York. Maranzano moved into the position of boss of bosses until his own abuses of power led to his assassination less than half a year later.

At a convention of the Mafia underworld in autumn of 1931, it was decided to replace the single arbitrator system with a panel of six Mafia bosses known as the Commission.

The new cooperative system in the American Mafia faced its first serious challenge in the summer of 1932. Pittsburgh Mafia boss John Bazzano had orchestrated the murders of three of western Pennsylvania's more important Neapolitan gang leaders.<sup>79</sup> Vito Genovese, the most influential Neapolitan Mafioso in the country, summoned Bazzano to answer for the crime before an underworld assembly in Brooklyn.

Bazzano's dead body, perforated by numerous ice-pick wounds, was found inside a large burlap sack on August 8, 1932. Learning of the presence of out-of-town Mafiosi, police raided a number of hotels in Brooklyn and Manhattan. They arrested fourteen men, charging them with participating in the murder of Bazzano.

Santo Volpe of Pittston and his Mafia lieutenant, Angelo Polizzi of Dunmore, Pennsylvania, were two of the accused. The group also included Brooklyn Mafiosi Albert Anastasia, John Oddo, Cassandro Bonasera, Ciro Gallo and Joseph Traina; Calogero Spallino, Michael Bua, Frank Adrano and Michael Russo of Pittsburgh; Paul Palmeri of Niagara Falls; Salvatore DiCarlo of Buffalo; and Peter Lombardo of Trenton, New Jersey.

The suspects were held for several days, while the police and prosecutors scrambled to assemble a case. Evidence was lacking, and the fourteen had to be released.<sup>80</sup>

### Bootlegging

Through much of the Prohibition Era, the rum-running enterprises of the northeastern Pennsylvania Mafia earned much less notice than its bloody efforts to control mining labor. However, a number of incidents reveal that illegal alcohol was flowing into and through the region in vast quantities.

In mid-January of 1931, Pennsylvania State Police stopped a truck on the highway between Wilkes-Barre and Pittston. Inside the vehicle, they found two hundred, five-gallon cans filled with alcohol. The truck drivers were Mannie Kline of New York City and Morris Okon of Brooklyn. The truck was traced to the Aywon Truck Company of Brooklyn. Kline and Okon were arrested. Their truck and its cargo were confiscated by the police.<sup>81</sup>

In the final year of Prohibition, the Men of Montedoro dealt harshly with a racketeer who dared to hijack a shipment of whiskey belonging to Santo Volpe. The hijacker turned out to be small-time bootlegger Sam Wichner, a resident of Lee Park, Pennsylvania, just southwest of Wilkes-Barre.

On St. Valentine's Day of 1933, Wichner was summoned to a meeting at the Endicott, New York, home of Joseph Barbara, who was perhaps viewed as an objective third-party in the matter. There he conferred with Barbara, Santo Volpe and Angelo Polizzi about a bootlegging venture. Wichner was asked to return the follow-

ing night without telling anyone where he was going.

Early in the evening of February 16, Wichner's body was found packed into the trunk of a car parked on Meridian Avenue in



*Salvatore Maranzano (artist's sketch—no portrait of Maranzano is known to exist.)*



Scranton. A rope noose had been fastened around his throat, and the loose end of the rope had been tied around his raised knees. Wichner had strangled himself while trying to work free of his bonds.

Learning of Wichner's recent meetings from his wife, police arrested Barbara and Polizzi. Investigators discovered that witnesses had seen three men leaving the automobile at Meridian Avenue and driving off in a black Buick sedan. However, the witnesses could not identify Barbara or Polizzi as having been at the scene, and the prisoners had to be discharged.<sup>82</sup>

In January of 1941, years after Prohibition had ended, Stefano LaTorre managed to get arrested for liquor law violations. State liquor control officials conducted a raid at an illegal Harding, Pennsylvania, distillery on January 10. The distillery was found to be operated by LaTorre, and he was charged on the sixteenth with unlawful possession, manufacture and transportation of alcohol. The state charge was dropped on November 3. However, the following year LaTorre was convicted of failing to pay federal taxes on his distillery operation. He received a suspended three-month sentence and a \$100 fine.<sup>83</sup>

### LaTorre is out

Stefano LaTorre began pursuing interests apart from the Men of Montedoro Mafia in the late 1930s. A number of factors led to his separation from the criminal society. These included differences of opinion over how to deal with uncooperative union factions and the debt Volpe and Bufalino felt he owed the organization after the Campbell and Riley "hits."

The relationship suffered further when John Sciandra attempted to persuade one of LaTorre's sons to help with "cracking heads" of picketing union workers at the Schooley Shaft. LaTorre stepped in and forbade his

son to take part.<sup>84</sup>

LaTorre became one of the owners of the small Saporito Coal Company in 1938. Company founder Carl Saporito reportedly partnered with LaTorre in order to provide a measure of protection for his firm against Volpe, Bufalino and Sciandra. Saporito Coal leased the mining operations of the Schooley Shaft in Exeter, Pennsylvania, from the Pennsylvania Coal Company.<sup>85</sup> A few years later, LaTorre opened a billiard parlor and smoke shop on Pittston's Main Street.<sup>86</sup>

About 1940, Santo Volpe, who owned the far more substantial Volpe Coal Company, also withdrew somewhat from the regional Mafia. At sixty years of age, the underworld boss who had become known as the "King of the Night" turned over control of his crime family to John Sciandra. Volpe

stepped from the shadowy underworld of Pittston to become a significant figure in the national coal industry and state politics.

Governor Arthur H. James, a former "breaker boy" in the anthracite collieries of Luzerne County and a proponent of a *laissez-faire* approach to business,<sup>87</sup> appointed Volpe to a nine-man Anthracite Emergency Committee. Volpe was one of three mine operator representatives on the committee, which was charged with rehabilitating the industry.<sup>88</sup>

During World War II, Volpe served as an alternate on a mine operators' negotiations board as it met in New York City with representatives of the UMW to end a crisis situation.

To put an end to a massive wartime strike of coal workers, which choked steel production and hampered railroad transportation, President Franklin Roosevelt employed emergency wartime powers. On May 1, 1943, he ordered the federal seizure of all coal fields in the eastern United States and commanded miners to return to their essential work. The President threatened to induct



Gov. Arthur James

into the army any miners missing work without just cause. The UMW continued sporadic strikes as it sought a sorely needed wage increase. Operators and miners representatives were called upon to resolve their differences, though federal wartime regulations prohibited wage increases. When the principle operator representatives were called to meet with President Franklin Roosevelt in Washington in May 1943, Santo Volpe and F.W. Leamy Sr., of the Hudson Coal Company of New York, took seats at the bargaining table.

The strikes were brought to a close in June 1943, with a change in workplace regulations. Historically, miners' time at work was calculated when they reached the coal, deep in underground shafts and tunnels. The negotiations allowed for portal to portal pay, allowing miners to be compensated for time spent travelling into and out of the mines.<sup>89</sup>

Volpe and LaTorre both left their coal businesses in 1943. Volpe did so voluntarily; LaTorre did not. Volpe sold his namesake firm to Jermyn-Green Coal Company (he remained owner of Gateway Coal Company until his death). LaTorre was forced from the Saporito Coal Company by the financial maneuvering of John Sciandra, who had made it a personal mission to recover all funds LaTorre was believed to owe Volpe and Bufalino. Sciandra became the controlling force in the company (as Carl Saporito had feared years earlier), and rechristened it the Knox Coal Company.

Sciandra then turned his attention to LaTorre's billiard parlor and smoke shop. He summoned LaTorre to a 1944 underworld tribunal at the Sterling Hotel in Wilkes-Barre. The meeting included Sciandra, Santo Volpe, Angelo Polizzi, Joseph Barbara of Endicott, New York, and Angelo Parrino of Stamford, Connecticut. Parrino, a member of the Luciano-Genovese crime family of New York, fre-

quently called and visited Stefano LaTorre and likely served as his underworld protector.

During the meeting, Sciandra challenged LaTorre to reveal who authorized him to open his business on Pittston's Main Street. If the business had been approved by Parrino, Sciandra argued, then Parrino should be sharing in its profits. LaTorre was incensed by Sciandra's interrogation. He stormed out of the meeting, telling all of the assembled Mafiosi to "go to hell."

After the meeting, LaTorre had no further contact with the Pittston underworld. Parrino, perhaps realizing that he had been used by Sciandra, maintained his relationship with LaTorre. Visits and telephone calls from Parrino continued for decades.<sup>90</sup>

### Bufalino's rise

Vito Genovese had spent World War II in Italy, hiding from a murder charge in the U.S. At the conclusion of the war, Genovese assisted the U.S. Army's occupying force as a translator while also engaging in black market activities. In August of 1944, Genovese's criminal background came to light and he was placed under arrest. In Army custody, he was transported back to the United States aboard the *S.S. James Lykes* in May 1945. He reached New York on June 1.<sup>91</sup>

Prosecution of Genovese on the murder charge was deemed impossible, as a key witness in the case had died of a sleeping pill overdose while in prison. Genovese was freed on June 10.<sup>92</sup>

On June 24, 1946, Mafia leaders from around the eastern U.S. gathered at the Hotel Diplomat in Manhattan to welcome Genovese home. The event called attention to Santo Volpe's position as senior member of the underworld fraternity, as well as to the always close relationship between Genovese and the northeastern Pennsylv-



*President Franklin Roosevelt*

nia underworld:

Twenty-eight East Coast mob lords were seated at a rectangular table and rose as Genovese entered. Santo Volpe, the Pittston, Pennsylvania, mob boss, walked across the room to meet Genovese. They exchanged handshakes. Volpe then led Genovese to a leather upholstered chair at the head of the table. Mafia protocol required that Volpe, the oldest mobster present, be the first to welcome Don Vitone.<sup>93</sup>

While Volpe continued to be held in high esteem by his underworld colleagues, the daily command of the Men of Montedoro Mafia had passed to younger men. With John Sciandra's death around 1949, Russell Bufalino, who reportedly attended the Hotel Diplomat celebration three years earlier, became the most important figure in the Pittston-based Mafia. Volpe served in the role of mentor, while Bufalino called the shots.<sup>94</sup>

Bufalino lived farther from Pittston than the previous leaders of the Men of Montedoro. After living for brief periods in Endicott, New York, and Pittston, he and his wife settled into a private home in an upscale neighborhood in Kingston, Pennsylvania.<sup>95</sup> While U.S. authorities considered him a "ruthless and powerful" Mafia leader, Bufalino acted the role of a successful executive in the garment industry. He held financial interests in the Penn Drape & Curtain Company of Pittston, the Alaimo Dress Company and other clothing factories in the region.<sup>96</sup>

### **Corruption unabated**

Corruption in northeastern Pennsylvania mining operations continued through the 1950s.

John S. Fine, son of a coal miner and longtime leader in Luzerne County Republican politics, won election as Pennsylvania's governor in 1950. Fine owed his very narrow victory over Democratic reformer Richardson



*Rosario "Russell" Bufalino*

Dilworth to the work of the entrenched Republican political machine. Though supported by Santo Volpe and his allies, Fine did not carry his home base in the coalmining communities of Pittston, Scranton and Wilkes-Barre.<sup>97</sup>

Still, Governor Fine remained sympathetic with the interests of coal companies, particularly the Newport Excavating Company of Nanticoke, a strip-mining firm run by Lawrence Biscontini. Santo Volpe happened to be the vice president of the same company.<sup>98</sup> Early in his term as governor, Fine reportedly worked with Biscontini and Santo Volpe to devise a system under which Newport Excavating would avoid paying corporate taxes by artificially inflating its payroll. The payroll padding continued through Fine's term as the state's chief executive and for another four years afterward.<sup>99</sup>

The Knox Coal Company, founded by the late John Sciandra, also engaged in some un-



derhanded business practices in the period. In 1950, August Lippi, then president of District 1 of the UMW and chairman of the board of the First National Bank of Exeter, unlawfully became a partner in Knox Coal.<sup>100</sup> In 1956, Lippi began receiving large cash payments to ensure labor peace.<sup>101</sup> Dominick J. Alaimo, another official of the UMW, also received under-the-table cash payments. His small bribes from Knox Coal began arriving in 1954. They continued on a biweekly basis into 1959.<sup>102</sup>

As Governor Fine left office in 1955, Newport Excavating Company launched a \$62,000 renovation project at Fine's dairy farm in Loyalville, Pennsylvania. The company, under direction of Biscontini, constructed a picnic grove and a fish pond, and made improvements to a guest house and a bath house on the property.<sup>103</sup>

Fine became a part-owner of Newport Excavating, as he entered into private legal practice in Wilkes-Barre. Newport Excavating also hired him as its general counsel at a salary of \$25,000 per year.<sup>104</sup>

### Apalachin

Russell Bufalino generally escaped the attention of law enforcement until a 1957 Mafia convention called by Stefano Magaddino at the Apalachin country estate of Joseph Barbara.

There was a great deal of confusion and violence within the U.S. Mafia in 1957. Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, protector of Mafia gambling and narcotics trafficking investments in Havana, faced a growing threat from revolutionaries under Fidel Castro. The established Mafia interests in Cuba continued to back Batista, while others secretly channeled weapons to Castro.<sup>105</sup> Luciano successor Frank Costello survived an assassination attempt in May and wisely decided to retire, turning his New York crime family over to Vito Genovese.<sup>106</sup> Ambitious Mafia boss Albert Anastasia (an investor in the northeastern Pennsylvania garment industry) and his underboss Frank Scalise both were murdered, as Carlo Gambino seized control of their organization.<sup>107</sup> Another New

York boss, Joseph Bonanno, traveled to Sicily in September to work with Old World Mafiosi on the assembly of an international narcotics smuggling network.<sup>108</sup>

Vito Genovese eagerly sought a national Mafia meeting in order to firmly establish himself and his ally Gambino as crime family bosses and to work out the various conflicts that had arisen during the year. Stefano Magaddino was approached to plan the conference. He decided that it should take place at the Barbara estate, which had hosted an underworld assembly one year earlier.<sup>109</sup>

Holding the gathering in Apalachin turned out to be a mistake. New York State Police Sergeant Edgar Crosswell, based in Vestal, was aware of the 1956 meeting as well as of Joseph Barbara's organized crime connections. When he learned that Barbara was expecting company in November 1957, he kept close watch on the Barbara home. On the morning of Nov. 14, Crosswell noted the presence of a large number of pricey, new automobiles at Barbara's estate, many with out-of-state license plates. He called in state police and agents of the federal Treasury Department to set up a roadblock.

In the early afternoon, Mafiosi at Barbara's home learned that law enforcement agents were gathering nearby, and they instinctively fled. Some sprinted into the woods and farms around the estate. Others jumped into automobiles and attempted to reach the highway. The police captured most of the



*Joseph Barbara's estate at Apalachin.*

men departing on foot and stopped all cars leaving the estate.

The first car stopped at the roadblock was of only marginal interest to law enforcement. It held longtime Barbara friend Emanuele Zicari of Endicott and racketeer/UMW union leader Dominick Alaimo of Pittston. The next car was the jackpot. In that 1957 Chrysler Imperial, police found Russell Bufalino and New York-New Jersey Mafia big shots Vito Genovese, Gerardo Catena, Joseph Ida and Dominick Oliveto. The police eventually collected about sixty Mafiosi from all over the country. None provided a reasonable explanation for being at Barbara's estate that day.<sup>110</sup>

While there was no justification for holding the Mafiosi, the state police took down their names and checked on their backgrounds before releasing them. No arrests were made, but the events at Apalachin proved enormously damaging to the underworld. Law enforcement officers, state and federal legislators and the general public became instantly aware that organized criminals in various regions of the country coordinated their activities at a national level. Much of the ensuing attention was focused on the underworld of the Apalachin, New York, area and the nearby territory of the northeast Pennsylvania Mafia organization.

### Apalachin aftermath

Early in 1958, the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* newspaper published a story about the influential northeastern Pennsylvania underworld organization known as the Men of Montedoro. The story was reprinted or reported in newspapers across the country. It stated that the group was all-powerful in northeast Pennsylvania and upstate New York and held great influence over other regions of the U.S.

The Men of Montedoro chapter of

the Mafia was organized in the early 1900s by the LaTorre, Sciandra, Volpe and Bufalino families, the first families from Montedoro to settle in Brandy Patch... These early arrivals became influential and rich... through becoming 'mine contractors' and working specified sections of company-owned coal mines with their own men at pay rates they themselves fixed.<sup>111</sup>



Vito Genovese

According to the newspaper story, the Men of Montedoro were responsible for many of the underworld rackets in the U.S. and even met secretly aboard a private yacht off the New Jersey shore in September 1957 to plan the execution of Albert Anastasia.<sup>112</sup>

A host of local, state and federal investigations of organized crime were launched as a result of the Apalachin conference and the sensational publicity that accompanied it. Those investigations continued for years.

Santo Volpe, Pittston's "King of the Night," would not live long enough to see the matter resolved. After a lengthy illness, he died at his West Pittston home on December 2, 1958.<sup>113</sup>

In May 1959, federal narcotics agents in nine states rounded up twenty-seven of the Apalachin attendees on conspiracy charges. Northeast Pennsylvania crime boss Russell Bufalino was one of the twenty-seven accused of obstructing justice by concealing the purpose of the Apalachin meeting from grand juries and other investigating bodies. Thirty-six other Mafiosi were named as co-conspirators.<sup>114</sup>

Just days after the arrests, fifty-three-year-old Joseph Barbara suffered a serious heart attack. He was rushed to Wilson Memorial Hospital in Johnson City, New York. He was never released. The host of the Apalachin convention died at the hospital on

June 17, 1959.<sup>115</sup>

Twenty-two of the indicted Mafiosi were brought to trial in October 1959. Four of the original twenty-seven could not be located by police, and Joseph Bonanno was granted a severance from the group trial because of a heart condition.<sup>116</sup> As the trial opened, Ohio Mafioso John DeMarco suffered a heart attack and also was removed from the case.<sup>117</sup> After the prosecution had presented its case, Judge Irving Kaufman ruled that no substantial evidence had been introduced against Boston Mafioso Frank Cucchiara. Cucchiara was released.<sup>118</sup> The remaining twenty defendants were convicted on December 18. The next month, Judge Kaufman sentenced them all to five-year prison terms.<sup>119</sup>

On November 28, 1960, a U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the conspiracy convictions. The court found that prosecutors established both a conspiracy among the defendants and the criminal reputations of the defendants but failed to prove that the Apalachin gathering was held for any illegal purpose.<sup>120</sup>

As a result of Apalachin publicity, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service conducted a check on the citizenship of conference attendees. Russell Bufalino insisted that he had been born in Pittston, and he was able to produce a birth certificate as proof. Investigators later dismissed the docu-

ment as a forgery and obtained a copy of Bufalino's 1903 birth record from Montedoro, Sicily.<sup>121</sup> A Montedoro birth was confirmed by his school records in Buffalo, New York.

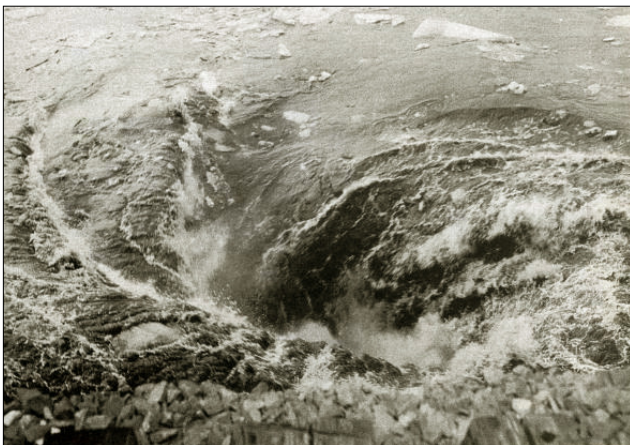
The INS built a deportation case against Bufalino on two false statements of American citizenship made by Bufalino as he reentered the U.S. in 1956 after trips to Havana and Bimini.<sup>122</sup>

### Knox Mine disaster

On January 22, 1959, residents of Pittston were alarmed by a thunderous roar. Those near the banks of the Susquehanna saw the icy river transform into a giant whirlpool.

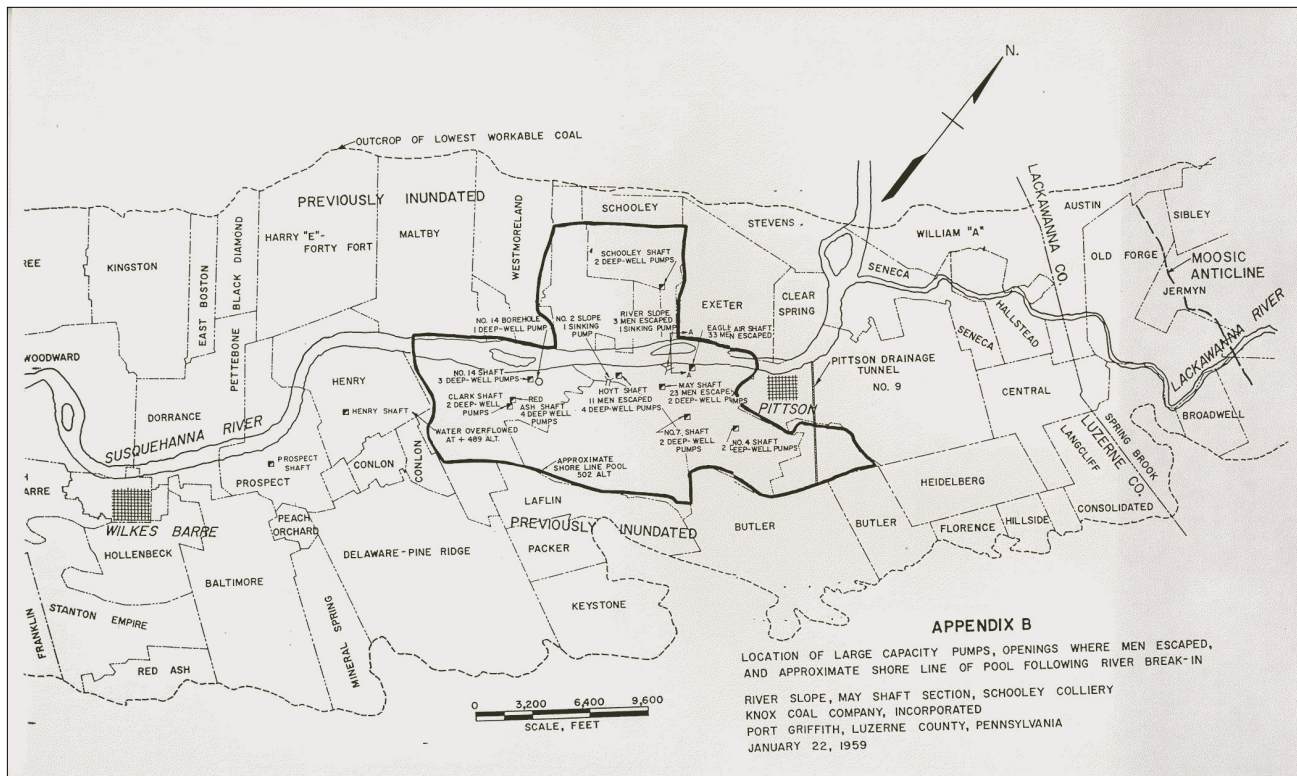
Knox Coal Company mines dug beneath the river had collapsed, allowing more than 10 billion gallons of water to flood a four-hundred-foot-deep shaft. Seventy-four miners were trapped inside. Sixty-two of them were rescued. The remaining dozen died. In a futile effort to plug a twenty-foot hole at the river bottom, mine operators dumped railroad cars, mine cars, hay bales, lumber, soil and rock into the Susquehanna whirlpool. None of the measures were successful.

River water eventually filled many of the interconnected coalmines beneath the Pittston area, halting anthracite production. The Knox Mine Disaster brought an end to most deep coal mining in the Wyoming Valley. The Knox Coal Company, founded twen-



*Knox Coal Company's refusal to observe state rules on mining under riverbeds led to the collapse of a mine and a twenty-foot hole in the bed of the Susquehanna River. Even railroad cars were dumped into the river in hope of plugging the hole.*





Map shows the extent of the underground mine flooding resulting from the Knox Mine Disaster.

ty-two years earlier as the Saporito Coal Company, went out of business.

Investigation of the disaster revealed corruption at high levels and negligent business practices. According to one report, Stefano LaTorre spoke frankly with investigators about mining industry corruption and even admitted to his lapsed membership in the Mafia. (A law enforcement informant could not explain why LaTorre had not been murdered by that time.)<sup>123</sup>

State regulations prohibited mining within thirty-five feet of the river bottom. Investigators discovered that the Knox company instructed its workers to ignore the restrictions as they followed the coal vein upward. Miners had carved out a pocket within a few feet of the river bottom when the mine roof gave way under the water weight.<sup>124</sup>

Knox Coal Company payoffs to union leaders quickly came to light. On March 3, a federal grand jury at Scranton indicted Dominick Alaimo for accepting four and a half years' worth of bribes totaling more than thirty thousand dollars. The grand jury

also indicted the Knox Coal Company, company President Robert Dougherty and Vice President Louis Fabrizio for making the illegal payments. Following the indictments, the UMW announced that Alaimo had been removed from his position as committeeman for Scranton Local 8005.<sup>125</sup>

On September 8, a Luzerne County grand jury indicted seven men for involuntary manslaughter in connection with the Knox Mine Disaster. The defendants were current Knox Coal Company President Louis Fabrizio, former President Robert Dougherty, UMW District 1 President August Lippi, Pennsylvania Coal Company Chief Engineer Fritz Renner, Pennsylvania Coal Company District Engineer Ralph Fries, former Knox Coal Company Superintendent Robert Groves and former Assistant Foreman William Receski. The grand jury also indicted Fabrizio, Dougherty and Lippi for conspiracy.<sup>126</sup>

Groves and Receski were acquitted at their manslaughter trial in Wilkes-Barre on April 9, 1960. Trial of the remaining five de-

fendants was scheduled to begin the next month.<sup>127</sup>

Just before that manslaughter trial began, a federal jury at Wilmington, Delaware, found fifty-nine-year-old August Lippi guilty of three counts of bribery. Each count was punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$10,000 fine. The jury apparently did not believe Lippi's defense – that the \$10,117 he received from Knox Coal was repayment for an old loan he once made to John Sciandra. With Lippi due to go to trial for manslaughter, Judge Caleb Wright deferred sentencing.<sup>128</sup> (Lippi successfully appealed his conviction and won a new trial.<sup>129</sup>)

After the prosecution had presented its evidence in the manslaughter case, Judge Carleton Woodring determined that evidence against Fritz Renner and Ralph Fries was lacking. The judge discharged both men.<sup>130</sup> On July 13, August Lippi and Louis Fabrizio were convicted of involuntary manslaughter. Robert Dougherty was found not guilty on that charge. All three defendants were convicted on a conspiracy charge, which accused them of working together to conceal Lippi ownership of Knox Coal Company stock and to deny Knox Coal Company miners their rights under state law and under the UMW contract.<sup>131</sup>

Seven months later, the northeast Pennsylvania region was stunned, as the manslaughter and conspiracy convictions were overturned. Judge Woodring decided that the defendants had not been charged with their offenses within the two-year period specified in statute. The judge noted that more recent violations of state mine laws were not included in the indictments.<sup>132</sup>

In January of 1960, former Governor Fine was indicted twice for income tax evasion. The first indictment charged him with attempting to avoid payment of taxes on the expensive work Newport Excavating Compa-

ny performed at his farm. The second charged him with working with Albert Biscontini of Newport Excavating to avoid corporate taxes. Biscontini also was indicted in the second case. Had Santo Volpe been alive, it is likely he would have been charged as well.<sup>133</sup> Fine escaped punishment. A jury found him not guilty of evading taxes on farm improvements. Federal prosecutors decided to drop the other charges.<sup>134</sup>

Dominick Alaimo was convicted of accepting bribes. He was sentenced March 10, 1961, to two years in prison and a \$7,651 fine.<sup>135</sup>

In 1964, the Knox Mine Disaster case came to a close. Judge Frederick Follmer imposed a fine of \$2,000 on Mrs. Josephine Sciandra. He also sentenced her to three years' probation and ordered her to pay \$39,000 in income taxes. Josephine Sciandra became a part owner of the Knox Coal Company upon the death of her husband John Sciandra. The

judge sentenced Louis Fabrizio to a six-month jail term and a \$2,000 fine.

### **Teflon Don?**

The Immigration and Naturalization Service continued its effort to deport Russell Bufalino through the 1960s and beyond. It was able to obtain a deport order for the crime boss, but he remained in the U.S. when Italy refused to allow him to return.

Late in 1969, the sixty-four-year-old Bufalino was hauled into federal court, along with Salvatore Todaro and John Sacco, associates of the Buffalo crime family, to face trial on criminal conspiracy charges. The three men were accused of plotting in the spring of 1968 to transport sixty stolen color television sets worth a total of twenty-five-thousand dollars from Buffalo to Pittston.

The televisions had been taken from a warehouse. Fifty-nine of them were recovered in a Buffalo home, where FBI agents



*Russell Bufalino*

also discovered stolen furs and silver.<sup>136</sup>

When the case failed to result in a conviction, Bufalino went to the press with a story of law enforcement harassment. He claimed in a summer 1970 interview that he had been badgered by police and federal agents since he was found at Apalachin in 1957.

I don't want to go to Italy to live. I'm sixty-seven years old, and only have a few years left on this earth – I don't want to be President of this country. I only want to be an American, free of somebody always following me, free of police wiretapping my phone – which they have admitted – and free to live my own life. I've never, never been convicted of any crime.<sup>137</sup>

Bufalino, who rarely spoke with the press, was giving another newspaper interview in a rear room of Scranton's Club C&C on mid-April 1973 when he was taken into custody by the FBI. He was one of eighteen underworld figures from the Buffalo, Rochester and Scranton areas to be arrested on a number of racketeering-related charges.<sup>138</sup> Indictments were returned in May that increased the number of defendants to twenty-four.

Bufalino was named in connection with



*Teamster President James R. Hoffa*

three different criminal acts. He and fifteen underlings were charged with conspiring to give control of a cigarette vending machine business to an underworld associate by arranging the beatings of two rivals. Bufalino and two other men were charged with plotting to extort \$100,000 from the owner of a discount store in Geneva, New York. The grand jury also charged that six members of Bufalino's criminal organization robbed a Brackney, Pennsylvania, couple at gunpoint.<sup>139</sup>

Once again, Bufalino was acquitted of the charges against him.

### Hoffa

By 1960, James Riddle "Jimmy" Hoffa, underworld-linked president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, had become a symbol of labor union corruption. Hoffa had risen to a position of importance in the union through the use of largely-imaginary "paper" locals created with the assistance of New York Mafiosi<sup>140</sup> and the illegal wiretapping of rivals.<sup>141</sup> When he secured control over the union, he appointed Mafia-connected individuals to important posts<sup>142</sup> and channeled millions of dollars from Teamster pension funds to Mafia-infiltrated casino operations in Las Vegas.<sup>143</sup>

Hoffa was known to have strong relationships with a number of important Mafiosi, including Anthony "Tony Pro" Provenzano of the Genovese crime family,<sup>144</sup> Anthony "Tony Ducks" Corallo and Johnny "Dio" Dioguardi of the Lucchese crime family,<sup>145</sup> and Russell Bufalino underling Frank "the Irishman" Sheeran.<sup>146</sup>

Early attempts to convict the Teamster boss of wrongdoing were unsuccessful. There was apparently good reason that juries insisted on siding with Hoffa. In 1962, he was convicted of jury tampering.<sup>147</sup> Two years later, he was convicted of misusing the Teamster pension fund.<sup>148</sup> After exhausting his legal appeals, Hoffa began serving a thirteen-year prison sentence in 1967.<sup>149</sup> When Hoffa and Anthony Provenzano found themselves locked into the same prison in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, the old friends reportedly had



a terrible falling out.<sup>150</sup>

U.S. President Richard Nixon commuted the prison sentence of the fifty-eight-year-old Hoffa in 1971 but imposed a condition that Hoffa not hold a leadership position in any labor union before spring 1980.<sup>151</sup> Despite that condition, Hoffa was determined to regain control of the union. In the summer of 1975, he requested a meeting with Mafia representatives in an effort to settle his differences with Anthony Provenzano and clear the way for an immediate return to power. The underworld, however, was comfortable with Hoffa's successor Frank Fitzsimmons and considered Hoffa a threat.

It is generally believed that Hoffa left his Lake Orion, Michigan, home on July 30, 1975, intending to meet Detroit mobster Anthony "Tony Jack" Giacalone at a restaurant.<sup>152</sup> He may also have believed that he was going to meet Russell Bufalino and Anthony Provenzano.<sup>153</sup>

Hoffa never returned home. No trace of him has ever been found.

By the end of the year, investigators believed that Provenzano associates Salvatore and Gabriel Briguglio and Thomas Andretta, all of New Jersey, were involved in Hoffa's disappearance.<sup>154</sup> Persistent rumors indicated that Russell Bufalino ordered Hoffa killed and disposed of. However, he was never charged with involvement in Hoffa's disappearance.<sup>155</sup>

### **Trip to Danbury**

Yet another federal indictment was filed against Bufalino in October 1976. This time, the charge involved the use of extortion to collect a \$25,000 debt owed by bartender Jack Napoli to Bufalino friend Herbert Jacobs. Napoli purchased jewelry from Jacobs on credit and then refused to pay for it.

Jacobs, Bufalino, Michael Sparber of Manhattan and Joseph Lapadura of Brooklyn plotted to force payment of the debt by threatening Napoli.<sup>156</sup>

Unknown to the conspirators, Napoli went to the FBI and agreed to tape record conversations with Bufalino and the others. His recordings captured Bufalino saying,

"I'm going to kill you. I'll do it myself." Napoli entered the federal Witness Protection Program and testified in court.

All four defendants were convicted. At the age of seventy-three, Bufalino's perfect courtroom record was spoiled.<sup>157</sup> On October 21, 1977, Bufalino was sentenced to serve four years in federal prison.<sup>158</sup> He remained free on bail until his legal appeals were processed.

Bufalino entered prison in August of 1978. Edward Sciandra, cousin to former boss John Sciandra and consigliere of the crime family, apparently ran the criminal organization in Bufalino's absence. Sciandra was born in Montedoro and raised in New York City. He later moved to Bellmore, New York, a distance of about one hundred and sixty miles from the crime family base in Pittston.<sup>159</sup>

With a "good time" credit, Bufalino was eligible for release from the Danbury, Connecticut, Federal Correctional Institution on May 8, 1981. As he left prison, Bufalino was greeted by personnel of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, who warned him that he was on an INS "watch" list and that efforts to have him deported to Italy were continuing.<sup>160</sup>

Bufalino was back in federal court in October of 1981. He was convicted of conspiring in an unsuccessful 1976 attempt to murder federal witness Jack Napoli. The key witness for the prosecution was West Coast Mafia turncoat Aladena "Jimmy the Weasel" Fratianno. Fratianno said Bufalino, intent on killing the informant, instructed him to find Napoli, believed to have been relocated by federal authorities to Walnut Creek, California.<sup>161</sup>

The conviction earned Bufalino a ten-year prison sentence. He entered prison in 1982 and was released after serving six years and eight months of the sentence.<sup>162</sup>

### **LaTorre's end**

Though he had violated the Mafia code by opposing his superiors on several occasions and by speaking with law enforcement about the secret criminal society, Stefano LaTorre

lived an extremely long life in Pittston.

Despite his Depression Era setbacks, LaTorre remained interested in the stock market. Through the 1970s, he made daily trips to his stock broker's office in Wilkes-Barre. The aging LaTorre had other interests as well. Federal investigators learned that he also was making frequent visits to the Wilkes-Barre home of a middle-aged woman.<sup>163</sup> In the evenings, he was occasionally seen playing cards at Charlie LaTorre's Pool Room in Pittston.<sup>164</sup>

On June 13, 1967, a serious automobile accident made it apparent that he could no longer drive himself around. LaTorre's driver's license was revoked. He continued to make his Wilkes-Barre trips by bus.

When contacted by law enforcement officers, LaTorre was friendly. However, he declined to discuss any matters relating to the underworld.<sup>165</sup>

In 1970, when a Wilkes-Barre newspaper ran a series of articles on local Mafia history, LaTorre became upset. He threatened to sue over his portrayal as one of the early leaders of that secret society in the region.<sup>166</sup>

LaTorre died in Pittston in July of 1984. He was ninety-eight years old.

### Last Man of Montedoro

Russell Bufalino died February 25, 1994, at Nesbitt Memorial Hospital in Kingston, Pennsylvania. He was ninety years old.<sup>167</sup> Bufalino left the northeastern Pennsylvania Mafia in the hands of Edward Sciandra.

About ten years younger than Bufalino, Sciandra likely served as acting boss during Bufalino's incarcerations of the 1970s and 1980s. However, in 1988, the Pennsylvania Crime Commission noted that William "Billy" D'Elia of Hughestown, once Bufalino's driver, was a trusted confidant of Bufalino and served as his representative in meetings with other members of the organization.<sup>168</sup>

In 1990, the commission stated that D'Elia was "a significant member" of the crime family and noted that he had frequent contact with members of other Mafia organizations.<sup>169</sup> It appears D'Elia was being

groomed at that time to take over the crime family formerly led by the Men of Montedoro. D'Elia became boss by about 2001.<sup>170</sup>

The last Man of Montedoro to lead the regional Mafia, Edward Sciandra retired to Hallandale, Florida. He died there July 13, 2003, at about ninety years of age.

### Notes

- 1 "History," The City of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, [www.city.pottsville.pa.us/html/history.htm](http://www.city.pottsville.pa.us/html/history.htm) (accessed Feb. 14, 2011). According to legend, the state's anthracite coal deposits were discovered accidentally by hunter Necho Allen, who in 1790 fell asleep by a campfire in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, and awoke to find a blaze fueled by a coal outcropping.
- 2 Carbondale is about 15 miles from Scranton, 25 miles from Pittston and 35 miles from Wilkes-Barre.
- 3 Bradshy, H.C., editor, *History of Luzerne County Pennsylvania*, S.B. Nelson & Co., 1893, Chapter XI; "History of Luzerne County," Luzerne County Living, [www.luzernecounty.org/living/history\\_of\\_luzerne\\_county](http://www.luzernecounty.org/living/history_of_luzerne_county), May 5, 2008 (accessed Feb. 13, 2011). Mining companies were generally heartless landlords. If a miner died or suffered debilitating injury in a mine accident, or if he caused the company any sort of trouble, his family could expect to be quickly evicted from its home.
- 4 "Caltanissetta Sicily," Sicily Bella, [sicilybella.com/about\\_caltanissetta.html](http://sicilybella.com/about_caltanissetta.html), 2010 (accessed Feb. 13, 2011); "Montedoro," Sicilia Indettaglio, [sicilia.indettaglio.it/eng/comuni/cl/Montedoro/Montedoro.html](http://sicilia.indettaglio.it/eng/comuni/cl/Montedoro/Montedoro.html) (accessed Feb. 13, 2011).
- 5 Mormino, Vincenzo, "Sulfur in Sicily," Best of Sicily Magazine, [www.bestofsicily.com/mag/art145.htm](http://www.bestofsicily.com/mag/art145.htm), 2004 (accessed Feb. 12, 2011). Boys as young as seven were assigned the task of carrying sulfur from Sicilian mines, while *piconieri* (pick men) chopped it from the rock.
- 6 Salvatore Bufalino Petition for Naturalization, U.S. Circuit Court in Scranton, filed Dec. 10, 1909; Birth records of Montedoro, Sicily. Salvatore reported that he reached New York City aboard the S.S. Liguria on Sept. 6, 1901. Some details of his arrival appear to be in error. Salvatore, born Nov. 23, 1868 (Birth Certificate no. 84), was the second son of Calogero and Calogera Tulumelo Bufalino. His brother Nicolo, born May 20, 1876 (Birth Certificate no. 42), joined him in Pittston in the summer of 1902. Another brother, Rosario, born Dec. 31, 1872 (Birth Certificate, no. 1), entered the U.S. ten years later.
- 7 Passenger manifest of the S.S. *California*, arrived New York City on April 29, 1902.
- 8 Passenger manifest of the S.S. *Sicilian Prince*, arrived New York City on May 16, 1903; Birth records of Montedoro Sicily, certificate no. 30. Stefano LaTorre was born March 12, 1886, to Giuseppe (sulfur miner) and Maria Marranca LaTorre.
- 9 Passenger manifest of the S.S. *Sicilian Prince*, arrived New York City on Dec. 24, 1903; Giuseppe LaTorre Petition for Naturalization, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, filed Sept. 25, 1913.
- 10 Birth records of Montedoro, Sicily; Passenger manifest of the S.S. *Citta di Napoli*, arrived New York City on July 9, 1903; Passenger manifest of the S.S. *Nord America*, arrived New York City on March 17, 1904. Angelo Bufalino was born Oct. 11, 1864 (Birth Certificate no. 86), and arrived in the U.S. aboard the S.S. *Citta di Napoli*. Calogero Bufalino was born April 5, 1878 (Birth Certificate no. 39), and entered the U.S. aboard the S.S. *Nord America*. They were sons of Calogero and Maria Cristina Duminuco

- Bufalino. Angelo Bufalino was the father of Rosario "Russell" Bufalino.
- 11 "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI report dated Oct. 30, 1967, file PH 92-1717, p. 1-2.
  - 12 Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Republic*, arrived New York City on June 30, 1906; "Steven Joseph LaTorre," report dated Oct. 30, 1967, FBI file PH 92-1717, p. 2; Birth records of Montedoro, Sicily, certificate no. 110. Santo Volpe was born Oct. 20, 1879, to Gaetano (sulfur miner) and Gaetana Milazzo Volpe. The *Republic* manifest states that Volpe's passage was paid by LaTorre. Santo Volpe planned but did not make an earlier transatlantic trip aboard the *S.S. Romanic*, which arrived in Boston on Jan. 28, 1906.
  - 13 Pennsylvania Crime Commission, *Report on Organized Crime*, July 1970, p. 17.
  - 14 Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Citta di Milano*, arrived New York City on Dec. 21, 1903; Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Brasile*, arrived New York City on Jan. 14, 1906. The 1903 manifest indicates that the family's destination was Pittston. In 1906, Cristina Buccoleri Bufalino, 30; daughter Giuseppe (Josephine), 8; and sons Calogero (Charles), 7, and Rosario (Russell), 2, had New York City as their destination. Daughter Cristina did not make the transatlantic trip in 1906.
  - 15 Frank, Stanley, "The rap gangsters fear most," *Saturday Evening Post*, Aug. 9, 1958, p. 63; Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Venezia*, arrived New York City on Feb. 15, 1914; U.S. Census of 1920. Sister Cristina accompanied Rosario and Giuseppa on the 1914 crossing. She was unable to join the family in Buffalo. In ill health, she was deported.
  - 16 Frank, "The rap gangsters fear most;" U.S. Census of 1920.
  - 17 Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Victoria*, arrived New York City on Aug. 11, 1897. Another Sciandra, Rosario, was living on Buffalo's Mechanics Street at the time of the 1900 U.S. Census. He indicated that he arrived in the U.S. in 1897, the same year as Carmelo.
  - 18 Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Manilla*, arrived New York City on April 6, 1900. Antonina Alaimo Sciandra, 40, traveled with daughters Carmela, 14; Giuseppa, 11; and Vincenza, 4; and son Carmelo, 8. They were to meet Carmelo Sciandra Sr. at 243 Elizabeth Street in New York City.
  - 19 Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Neapolitan Prince*, arrived New York City on Nov. 28, 1903.
  - 20 Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Sicilian Prince*, arrived New York City on Feb. 12, 1906.
  - 21 U.S. Census of 1910.
  - 22 Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Italia*, arrived New York City on July 2, 1907.
  - 23 Passenger manifest of the *S.S. Nord America*, arrived New York City on April 24, 1908. Leonarda Laporta Sciandra, 40, traveled with sons Andrea, 15, and Giovanni, 9, and daughter Pasqualina, 5. They were traveling to meet Angelo Sciandra at 211 Court Street in Buffalo.
  - 24 Giuseppe DiCarlo's importing firm, Buffalo Italian Importing Co., was located at 161 Court Street.
  - 25 "Montana, taxi firm head, dies," *Buffalo Courier Express*, March 19, 1964. Montana's maternal grandmother appears to be from the same Buccoleri line as Angelo Bufalino's wife, Cristina Buccoleri. Giovanni "John" Montana was born July 1, 1893, in Montedoro, Sicily, to Calogero (shopkeeper) and Rosa Valenti Montana (Birth Certificate no. 104). He entered the U.S. at age 13 aboard the *S.S. Perugia*, arrived New York City on June 30, 1907.
  - 26 Mayo, Katherine, *Justice to All: The Story of the Pennsylvania State Police*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1917, p. 115.
  - 27 Mayo, p. 116; "Round up Black Hand," *Connellsville PA Daily Courier*, Feb. 15, 1907, p. 2. Pennsylvania's state police force was a recent invention, having been authorized in 1905. Mayo, noting the jurisdictional limits of local police authority, argued that county district attorneys had no means of arresting and charging criminals before the establishment of the state police agency.
  - 28 Early reports stated that twenty-three Italians were arrested. Additional arrests were made later in the day, and three of the original prisoners were discharged. Twenty-two were held for trial, though only thirteen were prosecuted.
  - 29 "Round up Black Hand."
  - 30 "Story of blood and terrorism," *Richmond VA Times Dispatch*, Feb. 16, 1907, p. 3; "Gang has 500 members," *Indiana PA Evening Gazette*, Feb. 16, 1907, p. 3.
  - 31 "Bad Italians flee," *New York Sun*, Feb. 17, 1907, p. 5.
  - 32 Jordan, John W., *Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography*, Volume 7, New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1916, p. 2589. Pennsylvania Governor Daniel Hastings temporarily appointed Gaius Leonard Halsey to fill a judge vacancy at the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas in 1898. Halsey secured both Republican and Democratic nominations for the position and was unanimously elected in the fall of that year. He died of a mysterious disease on Feb. 16, 1911.
  - 33 The Pittston area did have a number of residents named "Salvatore Volpe." However, none of those could be placed in the area before 1908 and none could be connected with Mafiosi Charles Bufalino and Stefano LaTorre in the same way as Santo Volpe.
  - 34 The Lucchinos were in-laws of Stefano LaTorre. LaTorre married Rose Lucchino. A further link between the two families is evident from the naturalization application of Stefano LaTorre's father Giuseppe. That document, filed Sept. 25, 1913, was witnessed by a detective named Salvatore Lucchino.
  - 35 Mayo, p. 116.
  - 36 "Black Hand on trial," *Frederick MD News*, April 23, 1907, p. 3.
  - 37 "More secrets of Black Hand work," *Richmond VA Times Dispatch*, April 24, 1907, p. 3.
  - 38 "The Black Hand trial," *Richmond VA Times Dispatch*, May 3, 1907, p. 3.
  - 39 "Black Hand men as blackmailers," *Richmond VA Times Dispatch*, April 26, 1907, p. 1.
  - 40 "Black Hand," *Marion OH Daily Mirror*, April 29, 1907, p. 2; "Mafia threatens county attorney," *Washington Times*, April 29, 1907, p. 6.
  - 41 "Black Hand."
  - 42 "Defense claims it's conspiracy," *Richmond VA Times Dispatch*, April 30, 1907, p. 5.
  - 43 "The Black Hand trial."
  - 44 "Black Hand verdict," *Richmond VA Times Dispatch*, May 5, 1907, p. 6; "Black Hand trial nears a finish," *Marion OH Daily Mirror*, May 4, 1907, p. 2.
  - 45 "Found guilty," *Connellsville PA Daily Courier*, May 6, 1907, p. 1; "11 Blackhand leaders guilty of conspiracy," *New York Evening World*, May 6, 1907, p. 5; "Black-Hand men are convicted," *Richmond VA Times Dispatch*, May 7, 1907, p. 1; "Secures 11 convictions," *Boston Globe*, May 7, 1907, p. 13; "Black Hand men convicted," *Washington Herald*, May 7, 1907, p. 1.
  - 46 "Black Hand sentence," *Connellsville PA Daily Courier*, May 11, 1907, p. 8; "Black Hand gang jailed and fined," *Washington Times*, May 12, 1907, p. 5; "Light sentence for Black Hand men," *New York Tribune*, May 12, 1907, p. 5; "Eleven Black Hands convicted," *Indiana PA Democrat*, May 15, 1907, p. 7.
  - 47 U.S. Census of 1920.
  - 48 "Workers in Greater Pittston's garment industry," explorePAhistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1105, 2010 (accessed March 6, 2011).
  - 49 John Sciandra Petition for Naturalization, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, filed Jan. 4,



1925. Sciandra noted that he moved to Pennsylvania on Nov. 11, 1922. According to Montedoro, Sicily, birth certificate no. 53, Giovanni Sciandra was born April 10, 1899, to Angelo (sulfur miner) and Leonarda LaPorta Sciandra.
- 50 A clue to Andrew Sciandra's influence within Buffalo is the fact that he was named an honorary pallbearer for murdered Castellammarese Mafioso Filippo Mazzara in 1927. According to Montedoro, Sicily, birth certificate no. 203, Andrea Sciandra was born Dec. 23, 1893, to Angelo and Leonarda LaPorta Sciandra.
- 51 Pasqualina Sciandra married Nicolo Costanzo of Pittston on Feb. 26, 1919, in Buffalo, New York. The couple moved to East Railroad Street in Pittston. According to Montedoro, Sicily, birth certificate no. 12, Pasqua Sciandra was born Jan. 15, 1903, to Angelo and Leonarda LaPorta Sciandra.
- 52 Marriage license no. 2679, New York Department of Health. Russell Bufalino and Caroline Sciandra were married in Buffalo, New York, on Aug. 9, 1928.
- 53 "Commutation of death sentence opposed by James," *New Castle PA News*, May 19, 1922, p. 18.
- 54 "Governor gives respite to imported 'gunmen,'" *New Castle PA News*, March 8, 1922, p. 17; "Detective's murder to be cleared up," *New Castle PA News*, Sept. 20, 1922, p. 16; "Italian 'gunmen' shocked to death," *New Castle PA News*, Sept. 25, 1922, p. 1. A week before the executions were to take place, Peter Erico provided authorities with a confession that exonerated Antonio Puntario. The confession was viewed as a last minute attempt to thwart the sentence. The state parole board did not take it seriously.
- 55 "Striking miners threaten violence," *New York Times*, Sept. 13, 1920, p. 16.
- 56 "Radicals dynamite union chief's home," *New York Times*, Jan. 17, 1921, p. 1.
- 57 "\$1,000,000,000 lost in coal strike," *New York Times*, Feb. 13, 1926; "Crisis approaches in hard coal field," *New York Times*, April 23, 1927.
- 58 Santo Volpe's daughter Stephanie "Fanny" married an Anthony R. Agati, likely a relative of Frank Agati.
- 59 "Mine union official is held for murder," *New York Times*, Feb. 18, 1928.
- 60 "Mine union leader guilty of killing," *New York Times*, April 15, 1928.
- 61 "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI report dated Oct. 30, 1967, file PH 92-1717, p. 2. The FBI report stated, "Frank Agati..., who was a union official, was a silent partner with Santo Volpe, Sr., and Steve LaTorre in one of their coal contracting businesses... Frank Agati was believed to be a member of the Mafia."
- 62 "Pittston miner shot as result of election feud in local union," *Clearfield PA Progress*, Jan. 19, 1928, p. 1.
- 63 "Mine union official is held for murder;" "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI report dated Oct. 30, 1967, file PH 92-1717, p. 2.
- 64 "Mine feud shooting pits area in dread," *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 1928.
- 65 Later accounts indicate that machine guns were used in this attack.
- 66 "Murder machine' killed two union men at Pittston," *Clearfield PA Progress*, Feb. 29, 1928, p. 1.
- 67 "Pittston leader shot and killed," *Huntingdon PA Daily News*, March 2, 1931, p. 2.
- 68 "Murder machine' killed two union men at Pittston."
- 69 "Miners' leader admits Wilkes-Barre killing," *New York Times*, April 12, 1928.
- 70 "Mine union leader guilty of killing," *New York Times*, April 15, 1928.
- 71 "Seeks to abolish contract mining," *New York Times*, July 29, 1928.
- 72 "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI report dated Oct. 30, 1967, file PH 92-1717, p. 2.
- 73 U.S. Census of 1930.
- 74 Reuter, Arthur L., "Report on the activities and associations of persons identified as present at the residence of Joseph Barbara, Sr., at Apalachin, New York, on November 14, 1957, and the reasons for their presence," State of New York Executive Department, Office of the Commission of Investigation, April 23, 1958.
- 75 Passenger manifest of S.S. *Citta di Milano*, arrived New York City on Sept. 12, 1903. Calogero Calamera was to meet his brother-in-law Angelo Speranza in Pittston.
- 76 Passenger manifest of S.S. *Saturnia*, arrived New York City on Dec. 30, 1930.
- 77 Reuter.
- 78 "Pittston leader shot and killed;" "Pittston man is slain by gunman," *New Castle PA News*, March 2, 1931, p. 17.
- 79 John Bazzano's victims, brothers John, James and Arthur Volpe, were not at all related to Pittston Mafia boss Santo Volpe. The victims' names are not mentioned in the text in order to prevent readers from reaching incorrect conclusions.
- 80 Hunt, Thomas, and Michael A. Tona, "A Test of Resolve," *Informer: The History of American Crime and Law Enforcement*, February 2011, p. 4-43.
- 81 "Thousand gallons of liquor aboard truck is seized," *New Castle PA News*, Jan. 14, 1931, p. 13.
- 82 Reuter; Jordan, Franklin, "The real Mr. Big of the Mafia," *True Police Cases*, June 1958.
- 83 SAC Philadelphia, "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI memorandum dated Aug. 13, 1965, file PH 92-1717, p. 5.
- 84 SAC Philadelphia, "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI memorandum dated Aug. 13, 1965, file PH 92-1717, p. 4; "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI report dated Oct. 30, 1967, file PH 92-1717, p. 2. The FBI reports did not agree on when this strikebreaking effort occurred. The 1965 document put it in 1944 (and indicated that Russell Bufalino joined John Sciandra in asking for the services of LaTorre's son). The 1967 document said it was 1942. The 1944 date is unlikely, as the relationship between LaTorre and his former underworld associates had grown hostile by that time. It is possible that the incident occurred much earlier than the FBI informants indicated, nearer in time to the September 1920 explosion of a bomb behind the home of LaTorre's son. John Sciandra became a Pittston resident in the early 1920s, moving from Buffalo, New York, after his marriage to Montedoro native Josephine Mancino on Dec. 31, 1920 (Marriage License no. 73348).
- 85 SAC Philadelphia, "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI memorandum dated Aug. 13, 1965, file PH 92-1717, p. 3. When the company was formed in 1937, Saporito Coal had just 18 employees and shipped just over 8,200 tons of anthracite to market. Saporito was a native of San Cataldo, Sicily, a short distance east of Montedoro.
- 86 "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI report dated Oct. 30, 1967, file PH 92-1717, p. 2.
- 87 "Governor Arthur H. James," Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, [www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/1879-1951/4284/arthur\\_horace\\_james/469118](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/1879-1951/4284/arthur_horace_james/469118), 2011 (accessed March 8, 2011).
- 88 "James names coal board," *New York Times*, Jan. 25, 1940.
- 89 "Lewis ignores Roosevelt view," *New York Times*, May 8, 1943; Goodwin, Doris Kearns, *No Ordinary Times: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 440-443; Woolley, John T., and Gerhard Peters, "Franklin D. Roosevelt," *The American Presidency Project*, University of California - Santa Barbara, 1999, [www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16416](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16416) (accessed March 8, 2011).
- 90 "Steven Joseph LaTorre," FBI report dated Oct. 30, 1967, file PH 92-1717, p. 2-3.

- 91 "La Cosa Nostra," FBI report dated Oct. 8, 1963, file 92-6054-513, p. 3-4; Passenger manifest of S.S. *James Lykes*, arrived New York City on June 1, 1945.
- 92 "La Cosa Nostra," FBI report dated Oct. 8, 1963, file 92-6054-513, p. 4; "Prisoner called suicide," *New York Times*, Feb. 10, 1945, p. 13.
- 93 Frasca, Dom, *King of Crime*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1959, p. 145. A similar story is related by Cook, Fred J., *Mafia!*, Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1973, p. 169-170.
- 94 Mafia historians traditionally insert Joseph Barbara between John Sciandra and Russell Bufalino as northeast Pennsylvania Mafia boss. However, the authors believe that Barbara was an Endicott-based capodecina in Stefano Magaddino's western New York crime family and never a Mafia boss.
- 95 Russell and Catherine Bufalino lived at 304 East Dorrance Street in Kingston.
- 96 United States Treasury Department Bureau of Narcotics, *Mafia: The Government's Secret File on Organized Crime*, New York: Collins, 2007, p. 704.
- 97 Weart, William G., "G.O.P. call close in Pennsylvania," *New York Times*, Nov. 9, 1950, p. 29; "Governor John Sydney Fine," Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/1951-present/4285/john\\_s\\_fine/471469](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/1951-present/4285/john_s_fine/471469), 2011 (accessed March 9, 2011).
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Cover—Pennsylvania State Archives.

Page 4—Explore PA History website.

Page 8—Montana: *Buffalo Courier Express* Collection courtesy of Buffalo State College Archives.

Page 10—*Washington Times*, April 29, 1907.

Page 11—Stefano LaTorre passport application.

Page 12—Santo Volpe passport application.

Page 15—Top and left photos from Library of Congress. Bottom photo from Pennsylvania State Archives.

Page 21—Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee.

Page 26—Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.

Page 27—U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration Report on Knox Mine Disaster, 1959.

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