

# Spotlight ON THE PAST

## Italians add to cultural mosaic

By KEN FAVRHOLDT

**K**amloops is composed of many different ethnic groups that have contributed to the development of Canada as a "cultural mosaic." One of the most populous ethnic groups of Kamloops other than people of English-speaking background has been the Italians. Many Italians emigrated to Canada and British Columbia in the mid-19th century.

As many British Columbians know, Mount Garibaldi was named around 1860 after the Italian patriot and soldier who died in 1882. With the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, many Italians came to Canada as laborers.

It was around 1875 that Martino Gaglietto, one of Kamloops' first Italian residents, opened a store in Kamloops. There were probably a few others, although they did not stay.

Gaglietto was joined in 1884 when a fellow compatriot, G. B. Scuitto, arrived in Kamloops from Yale where he ran a fruit store. Together Scuitto with Gaglietto also ran a bakery, grocery store and restaurant. In 1886 he bought a ranch on Campbell Creek with Martino and a few years later retired from the Kamloops Bakery and General Store.

In 1888 Filippo Scala, an old-country baker who was sponsored by Gaglietto, came to Kamloops. He had a store across from the present Rendezvous pub. In the meantime Gaglietto enlarged his store and also opened a branch in the "New Town," as east Kamloops was called. Gaglietto sold his bakery in 1891, but continued the general store with Scala until they dissolved in 1892. It was Scala who in 1907 bought the lot where the Italian Hall was later built.

By the 1890s there were many other Italians establishing themselves in Kamloops, including Stefano Mondado, a marble cutter, who with G. B. Armanine and Scuitto each had a one-third share of the Campbell Creek Ranch.

Another wave of emigration around the turn of the century brought a Matteo Vigna in 1901 (sponsored by his uncle Scala), Antonio Novaglia in 1901, Domenico Fuoco in 1905, and Ivo Arduini in 1907.

Mrs. Agnes Ricona, a midwife, came to Kamloops in 1898. Erminio Petrini came to Kamloops in 1904 and was a pool room manager, whose place was originally on Lorne Street in the area of the CNR station, then in the 300 block Victoria Street for many years.

Domenico Fuoco was born in 1888 in Italy and came to Canada in 1904, and to Kamloops in 1906. He ran a grocery next to the Red Bridge until 1923, then the Model Bakery until retiring in 1951. When he passed away in 1971 he was the oldest member of the Kamloops Rotary Club and last charter member of the Cristoforo Colombo Lodge. James Fuoco came to B.C. in 1912, then to Kamloops in 1920, and in later years was proprietor of the Big Boot Inn.

Antonio and Mario Commazetto came to Kamloops in 1914, and started the "Home Dairy" on Pleasant Street, later moving to Valleyview. Domenico Micono was the proprietor of the Thompson Valley Dairy on Lorne Street (next to the old Bayswater Motel). Several men also worked as laborers for Johnstone and Company, brick makers and general contractors.

The Kamloops City Directory for 1913 lists more than 100 people of Italian descent living in Kamloops. Many Italian residents lived along Lorne Street and Seymour Street. Many men worked for the CPR; several were involved with the Italian Band.

Charles Spadari was the leader of this band which included Vito Morea, Pietro O. Lenarduzzi, F. Genovese, V. Olivieri, A. Ramo, and J. G. (Joe) Arduini who played the piccolo in the band at the age of eight and later the violin, clarinet and saxophone in the Rocky Mountain Rangers Band.

Like many ethnic groups, there was some discrimination to overcome. Such was the case with Alessandro Demarchi who came to Kamloops in 1903 and was a cleaner for the city but was fired by Mayor Robinson "due to political activity and his Italian origin."

Demarchi had more unfortunate luck when his five-month-old child died at Royal Inland Hospital in 1912 and his Lorne Street home was destroyed by fire in 1913. Later he broke his leg working as a teamster for the Imperial Brewery in 1916.



KAMLOOPS ITALIAN BAND when first organized in 1912.

**'1888 was a banner year for the Kamloops Italian community. Ray Fuoco was named Freeman of the City in April and Phil Gagliardi was elected mayor of Kamloops in November.'**

He regained his job, however, with the city and retired as poundkeeper in 1938 when his son Guglielmo succeeded him as poundkeeper, and subsequently worked on the CPR.

Battista Cavazzi arrived in Kamloops in 1901 and was employed by a boiler maker until his retirement in 1947. Carlo and Andrew Cavazzi came to Kamloops in 1910. Gene Cavazzi was a delivery driver for Whiteway Laundry and elected alderman in 1952 but ousted, then made alderman again between 1958 and 1967.

Fredrico Cavaletto was a grocer who opened his Hub Grocery with his brother Angelo in 1911. It was located next to the former Dominion Hotel on West Victoria Street.

Antonio "Tony" Candido came to Kamloops in 1909. He passed away in 1925, leaving his six sons and one daughter. Antonio became a charter member of the Cristoforo Colombo Society; he worked for the city of Kamloops. His son Marino operated a garage business on Lorne Street. Both Len and Marino Candido became presidents of the Cristoforo Colombo Society.

Ivo Arduini opened his repair and shoe store six weeks after his arrival from Italy to Kamloops in 1907 with brother Jack, a partner, and employees Girolamo (Momi) Tiotta and Carlo Micheli. It was first located on the north side of the 300 block Victoria Street.

Tony Corea came to Kamloops in 1912 and was founder of the Corea and McDonald Shoe Store and honorary member of the Cristoforo Colombo Lodge since 1920.

In 1967, Canada's centennial year, the Italian community sponsored "Italian Week" as a centennial project and served 2,000 people Italian food in Riverside Park.

Tony Romano served as alderman of the town of North Kamloops from 1961 to 1967 and of the amalgamated City of Kamloops from 1967 to 1974. He was made Freeman of the City and served again as alderman from 1977 to 1978.

Gordon Arthur Bregolis was also a North Kamloops alderman from 1965 to 1967 and, like Romano, was City of Kamloops alderman from 1968 to 1976, being made Freeman in 1977.

Today's Italian population still flourishes in Kamloops. The 1986 census shows 1,155 residents in Kamloops whose mother tongue is Italian. There are approximately 4,000 people of Italian descent. Unlike the early days of the Italian colony before the First World War when most lived on Lorne Street, today's Italians reside all around Kamloops.

1908 was a banner year for the Kamloops Italian community. Ray Fuoco was named Freeman of the City in April and Phil Gagliardi was elected mayor of Kamloops in November.

Gagliardi, born in Mission City in 1913, became an ordained minister after graduating from Northwest Bible College in Seattle, Wash., and came to Kamloops in 1945 where he began Calvary Temple.

He became a candidate for the Social Credit Party in 1952 and, when elected, was appointed Minister of Public Works, the Minister of Highways a few years later until he resigned in 1968.

Pictured on Spotlight's cover is the Fuoco store at 580 Victoria St., typical of a family-run store in downtown Kamloops in the early 1920s, and close to the large Italian community then on Lorne Street. The B.C. in B.C. Fuoco Co., incidentally, stands for partners Benny and Carmen, not British Columbia. Note the old-fashioned taxi at the side of the store.

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