

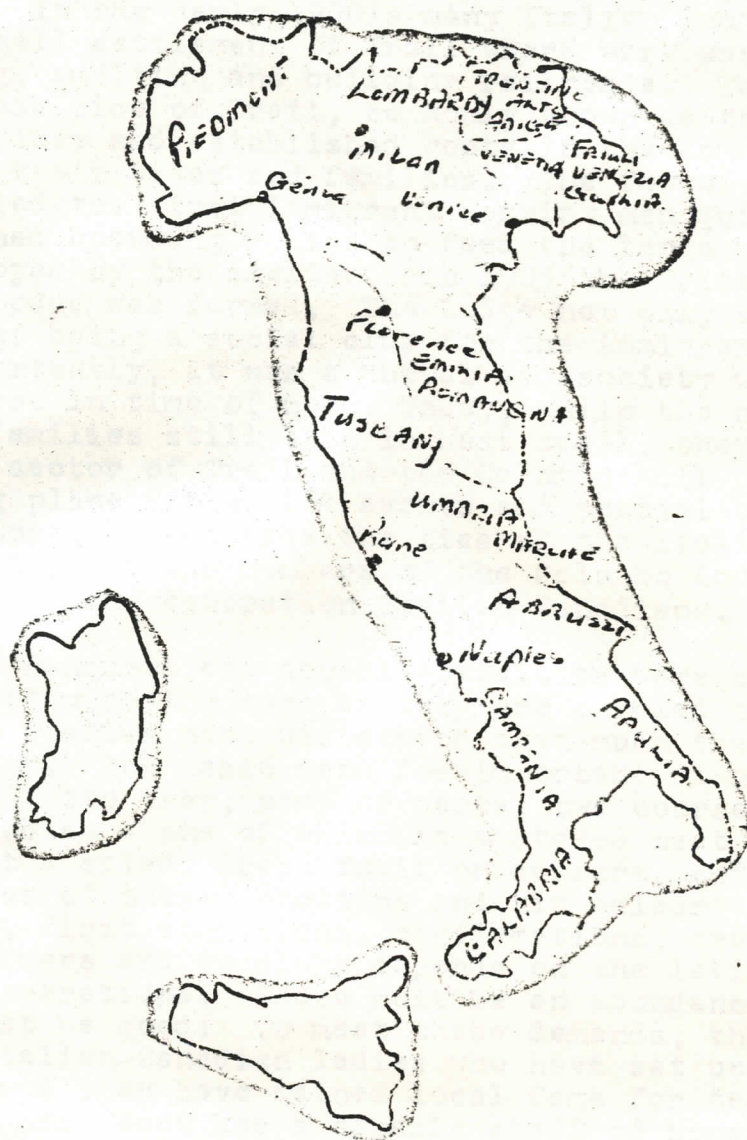
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PARISOTTO, LORNA  
ITALIAN COOKERY IN TRAIL

ITALIAN COOKERY

IN

TRAIL

CHAPTER I - - - - - Lorna Parisotto  
CHAPTER II - - - - - Joan McKenzie  
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## CHAPTER I

In his study of "The Italians of Montreal - Social Adjustment in a Plural Society", anthropologist Jeremy Boissevain observes that Italian food habits are a very important element of the Italian culture. One of the greatest problems the Italian immigrant had in adjusting to life in North America was the diet. The first Italian immigrants to Trail were no exception.

In the early 1900's many Italian immigrants came to the small settlement of Trail where work was available in mining, smelting and building railroads. They settled in the west side of Trail, commonly known as the "Gulch" and when they had established roots in the community they sent for their wives and families. The few wives that accompanied the first immigrant working men quickly established boarding houses to feed the large number of men employed by the smelter. In 1905 the Cristoforo Colombo Lodge was formed. The Lodge not only served the purpose of being a social club for the immigrants but more importantly, it was a mutual aid society which helped its members in time of need. Today, while the nucleus of Italian families still live in West Trail, they are present in every sector of Trail and the Colombo Hall provides a gathering place for social events and special occasions which helps to re-enforce the ties of the Italian community. Most of the members of the Colombo Lodge are now first and second generation Italian-Canadians.

Banquets and social activities were carried on in the past much the same as they are carried on today. The basic Italian menu was served then much the same as it is today. The basic menu for important dinners consists of an antipasto tray, soup or pasta, two courses of meat and vegetables - one of which is a stewed meat and one a roast meat - salad, fresh fruit or dessert, coffee and wine. The success of these functions and kin celebrations such as births, first communions, confirmations, graduations, bridal showers and weddings depends on the lavishness of the preparations. There must be an abundance of food and it must be good! To meet these demands, there are several Italian-Canadian ladies who have set up catering services and they have gained local fame for their culinary talents. Each cook has a capable staff of women helpers to assist in feeding the sometimes enormous number of guests. Their services are also sought after by many groups and organizations of non-Italian origin.

Many of the necessary ingredients of Italian cuisine were not available in the early days. Shops in major cities in Eastern Canada that already had large, established, Italian communities began to import many Italian foodstuffs and also many Italian products began to be manufactured in Canada. Today, in Western Canada, Vancouver supplies the demand for these products. This



is largely as a result of the large wave of immigrants coming to Canada following the Second World War which swelled the Italian population of Vancouver and Trail considerably. Most Italian - Canadians grow and cultivate many of their favourite vegetables and almost all families have a vegetable garden. Swiss chard, cardoni (a tall, stalky vegetable), radicchio (a red and green broad-leafed salad green), endive, zucchini, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, many types of beans and herbs are some of the vegetables grown. Fruit trees are also found in many Italian gardens. In the spring, many Italians will go out into the countryside to pick dandelion greens and in the fall, the nearby woods are combed for mushrooms. There are also several shops in Trail which cater to Italian tastes.

There are twelve major restaurants and dining rooms listed in the immediate Trail area where one can dine. (This count excludes drive-ins, take-outs and lunch counters.) Nine of these have either an Italian owner or are staffed wholly or in part by Italian staff. Of these, three specialize in Italian cookery served "trattoria" style while the others serve North American style meals.

From the preceding outline, we can conclude that a large number of Italian-Canadians from the beginning of Trail's history to the present time, were and are involved in the preparation and serving of food in Trail. From this we can also conclude that large numbers of both Italian-Canadians and non-Italian Canadians, local and non-local persons, must be dining on Italian style cookery. Thus Italian cuisine in Trail has steadily grown in fame and popularity to become one of the city's most notable attractions.





A PIZZELLE IRON, PASTRY  
CRIMPERS AND MOLDS USED  
IN ITALIAN BAKING.

A PASTRY DUCK  
FASHIONED AROUND A  
HARD-BOILED EGG STILL  
MADE TODAY BY MRS. JOE  
LEROSE FOR HER GRAND-  
CHILDREN AT EASTER.



## CHAPTER II

There is a representation from almost all the provinces in Italy in the Italian-Canadian population of Trail. In this aspect, Trail is unique. However, this fact also presents difficulties in attempting to investigate the eating habits of Italians in Trail. To overcome this, we interviewed families with origins in the provinces of Friuli, Treviso and Tuscany in the north of Italy and the province of Calabria and the Naples area in the south of Italy.

Styles of cooking have altered from the old country ways due primarily to three factors. The first is that certain foods and food ingredients are not available here. The flour is different. There is more meat available and less fish. The coffee is not the same. Certain spices such as anise seed which grows wild in the hills of southern Italy is not found in Canada and the imported extract is not quite the same. The second factor is the less stringent religious restrictions on food consumption. Friday is no longer a meatless day. Religious festivals are not observed here with the exception of Christmas and Easter. The influence of other cultures is the third factor influencing change. One informant said that she cooked less Italian food now as her husband, with increasing age preferred a more bland diet. Another informant said that to the modern Canadian doctor it is very important that a person be thin and who can be thin on good Italian Cooking? Another lady said that her daughter had married an Englishman and she cooks plumb pudding now for Christmas. The economies of the family is, in general, better in Trail than in Italy thus more meat is eaten here consequently less vegetables.

Most of my informants do not use recipe books. They learned to cook from their mothers or sometimes fathers and know when a pastry "feels" right or a sauce "looks" right.

A typical first or second generation Italian Canadian whose family emigrated from Northern Italy to Trail would probably eat in a manner similar to the following menu for a week.

### SUNDAY:

Breakfast: Toast broken in a bowl and  
soaked with coffee mixed  
with milk.  
OR: Eggnog with wine.  
OR: Raw egg cracked and  
knocked back.

Lunch: Cheese  
Salami  
French Bread  
Wine



Supper: Broth with Pastina.  
Spaghetti and meatballs.  
Chicken roasted in wine.  
Green salad with oil and  
vinegar dressing.  
Cheese  
Coffee

Pastina - Small round pasta  
made from flour,  
water and eggs.

Spaghetti is served with a  
tomatoe base sauce  
in which the veal  
and pork meat balls  
have been cooked.

The green salad is eaten last  
as vinegar and wine do not  
taste well together.

#### MONDAY:

Breakfast: Coffee  
Roll and butter

Lunch: Cheese, salami and bread  
OR: Omelet  
OR: Soup

Supper: Broth  
Veal and string beans stewed  
in tomato sauce.  
Wine  
Green salad  
Raw fruit  
Cheese  
Coffee

#### TUESDAY:

Breakfast: The same as Monday.

Lunch: The same.

Supper: Broth  
Beef roast served with  
potatoes roasted  
Spinach boiled. The potatoes  
and spinach are arranged in a  
circle around the roast.  
Wine  
Green salad  
Fruit  
Cheese  
Coffee

WEDNESDAY:

Breakfast: The same

Lunch: The same

Supper: Broth  
Buccala  
Cornmeal Polenta  
Wine  
Green Salad  
Fruit, cheese, coffee

Buccala - fish stewed in  
tomato sauce.

Polenta - Corn meal boiled  
in water to soft  
cake and served  
with tomato sauce.

THURSDAY:

Breakfast: Coffee and rolls

Lunch: Soup, Omelet or cheese,  
Salami and bread.

Supper: Broth  
Spaghetti and meat balls  
Wine  
Green salad  
Fruit, cheese, coffee

FRIDAY:

Breakfast: Coffee and rolls.

Lunch: Soup, omelet or cheese,  
salami and bread.

Supper: Broth  
Spareribs and potatoes  
baked in the oven.  
Wine  
Green salad  
Fruit, cheese, coffee

SATURDAY:

Breakfast: The usual coffee and rolls

Lunch: Omelet or soup.

Supper: Broth  
Chicken and mushrooms  
stewed in a light tomato sauce  
Wine  
Green salad  
Fruit, cheese, coffee



## SUNDAY COMPANY SUPPER:

Antipasto - ham, cheese, salami,  
olives, presheuti,  
celery, pickles

Spaghetti or ravioli

Chicken and mushroom stew

Meatballs

Wine

Green salad

Pie and coffee

### Ravioli:

Egg, flour and water pastry  
is rolled and filled with:

ground Pork and veal

swiss chard

cheese

bread crumbs

mushrooms

celery

parsley

eggs

soup stalk

The ravioli are then boiled  
in salted water and served  
with spaghetti sauce for  
special occasions.

Rosotto is also a company dish. It is rice boiled in  
broth and tomato sauce.

Gnochi is another favourite. It is a dish made of potatoes  
and flour boiled in water then eaten with tomato, gravy and  
cheese.

Vegetable soup, especially bean soup is an every day  
favourite.

For a more festive meal more vegetables are used. Cauli-  
flower dipped in batter and fried, artichokes, eggplant  
and zucchini are served after pasta or soup.

Always there is antipasto and a pasta for special fare.

Another example of a company meal menu is:

Antipasto

Bean soup

Ravioli or spaghetti

or gnochi

or lasagne

Roast fowl

Stew and beans

Wine

Green salad

Pie and coffee

Except for Christmas and Easter, religious festivals are not observed in this area.

On Christmas Eve spaghetti is eaten with fish sauce. Chestnuts are roasted and eaten with wine.

The Christmas dinner is usually eaten around six o'clock.

A typical menu would be:

Antipasto - olives, salami, cheese, celery,  
tuna, little peppers, artichokes.

Broth

Veal cutlets breaded

Mashed potatoes

Spinach or raddicco or swiss chard

Turkey - roasted with bread stuffing

Wine

Green salad - endive or raddicco with  
oil and vinegar dressing.

Italian panettone

Coffee, ice cream, strawberries, cookies

Panettone - fruit bread

From Epiphany to Lent is a special time called Carnivali. The Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is the usual time of special celebration in Trail. There is a traditional saying that is still uttered on this day which makes it necessary to go to bed on a full stomach to avoid being hungry all through Lent. A large evening meal is eaten on this day and two special sweets are prepared. They are crostoli and fuitelli.

Crostoli - Egg and flour  
and baking powder dough  
rolled paper thin and  
cut with pie edger in  
various shapes. They  
puff up when deep fried.

Fritoli - Egg and flour dough  
dipped in oil and deep  
fried. Dough has raisins,  
nutmeats or chopped fruit  
added.

Fish is eaten once a week during lent.

Buccola is served on Good Friday.



At the Easter Sunday meal capretto is served. Capretto is a small goat and people from Trail will travel far to find a small goat for their Easter meal. It is said that if one does not eat capretto the Easter is not celebrated. Lamb, however is sometimes used as a substitute for goat. Focaccia which is Easter Bread is also served this day and a sweet torte filled with cheese, ham and spinach.

Baptisms are special times in Italian family life. Biscoti, a twisted roll is served with the special company meal and a variety of liquers are served at the end of the meal.

Confirmation is celebrated by a company dinner type of meal.

Funerals are not festive. Usually a big meal is not prepared. For out of town guests and relatives a buffet lunch is set out at the home of a relative but not at the home of the deceased. There will be hams, cheeses, salads and rolls and coffee. Each family contributes some food but only relatives and out of town guests are expected to partake of the luncheon.

An Italian wedding is very festive. Typically a great number of guests are invited to the wedding supper which is in late afternoon. A typical meal would be:

- Apertif
- Antipasto tray
- Broth
- Veal Cutlets
- Potato puffs
- Beans
- Chicken
- Wine
- Salad
- Wedding cake with almond icing
- Ice cream
- Coffee

Passing of confetti is part of the ritual that goes with the meal.

A classic Tuscan "pranzo" used on all special occasions consists of the following:

- Antipasto tray of cheeses, hams, olives, pickles
- Tordelli
- Frito Misto
- Boiled fowl or meat tray flanked with fresh vegetables
- Veal stew
- Cooked vegetable
- Potatoes
- Roast Chicken

Wine  
Salad  
Fresh fruit

Tordelli - Tuscan term for  
ravioli

Frito Misto - deep fried  
variations of rabbit,  
cauliflower, artichoke,  
cordoni stalks garnished  
with lemon wedges.

The main Tuscan dessert is torte which is a pie  
like dish with chocolate, almond or vegetable greens filling.

A course or courses may be omitted from the basic  
pattern depending on the importance of the occasion.

For Christmas tordelli is the important dish and  
pasta reale is served for dessert. It is a sponge cake  
with liqueur flavoured custard filling.

At Easter leg of lamb and torte are served.

The ordinary Tuscan meal consists of soup (ministra)  
from beef or chicken stock, boiled meat with fresh veg-  
etables followed by a stew with cooked vegetables then a  
course of roast, steak, chops, chicken or cutlet with salad.  
This menu is also typical of the one used by the earliest  
boarding houses and with the omission of the boiled meat  
course is typical of the menu served at present day dinners  
and banquets.

The Northerners like cornmeal, rice and spicy  
coloured sauces with tomato base. The Southerners like  
pasta, tortes and more vegetables. The Southerners call  
the Northerners polenta eaters and the Northerners call  
the Southerners spaghetti eaters.

The people who came from Southern Italy eat a  
little differently especially on festive occasions.

On Christmas Eve no meat is served.

The meal would probably be:

Spaghetti with anchovy sauce  
Capitone or  
Buccola  
Broad endive stuffed with bread,  
raisins, walnuts, spices and anchovies  
and cooked in the anchovy sauce  
Zerpoli  
Wine  
Green salad  
Pondesponia



Capitone - celery and cod cooked in tomato, oil and garlic sauce.

Zerpoli - bits of cod, anchovy and celery, dipped and fried in oil then sugared.

Pondesponia - white cake layered with liquiers and custard.

On All Souls Day, the last day of November, chestnuts are roasted and eaten with wine.

Christmas Day:

Antipasto  
Soupalentia  
Turkey  
Sweet potatoes  
Vegetables such as brussel sprouts and spinach  
Wine  
Salad  
Pone de Sienna

Soupalentia - chicken broth with tiny beef balls in it. This is poured over cubed toast and tiny pieces of provolini cheese mixed with beaten egg.

Pone di Sienna - layered cake with cream filling sprinkled with liqueur and espresso.

Grostini with defigatelli may also be served. This is toasted bread topped with livers that have been chopped and prepared with marsella wine. The bread and livers are dipped in egg and fried.

The traditional pastry scoliu may also be served or mince meat in a pastry. Cristoli is also popular at Christmas. It is a mixture of wine, oil, flour and sugar fried in oil.

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## New Years:

Macaroni or spaghetti  
Wild meat or duck  
or stuffed fried veal cutlet  
Carrots  
Mushrooms  
Stuffed artichokes  
Wine  
Salad  
Sweets  
Cheese and fruit  
Coffee

For the pre-lenten carnivale a macaroni dish with riccotto, eggs, cheese and milk baked in the oven is eaten. It is cut in squares for serving. Fish is eaten on Fridays throughout carnivale.

During Lent a special dish is often made of dried corn, soaked wheat, chachs beans, any other dried beans and lentils all boiled together. Oil, salt and spices are added. This is eaten also on Christmas Eve.

On Easter Sunday pastiera is served for lunch. This is made by spreading pizza dough in a deep pan and placing ricotto, eggs, parsley, salt and pepper, cold meats, salami, sausage, ham and bacon and tender soft cheese in layers on top of the dough four or five inches thick. This delicacy is then baked.

The Calabresi may instead serve fritatta which is an omelet with bacon, sausage, ricotta and cheese in it.

A typical Easter dinner menu for a family from the Naples area would be:

Brodo parodico  
Lamb and tomato stew or turkey  
Vegetables including artichokes  
Panna rapero  
Potato flour souffle  
Wine  
Green salad  
Liquieur dessert  
Fruit, cheese, coffee.

Brodo parodico - chicken broth  
with bread crumbs, whipped  
egg and cheese mixture  
added.

Panna rapero - buns with meat  
stuffing eaten with vegetables.

A Calabresi family would eat:

Antipasto  
Leg of lamb



Macaroni

Vegetables - broccoli, brussel sprouts,  
cauliflower

Hard boiled eggs

Wine

Salad

Sponge cake and ice cream

Fresh fruit and cheeses

For other special meals such as baptisms, confirmations and weddings macaroni dishes such as lasagne are served. Antipasto is not always part of the menu but vegetables such as eggplant and cauliflower are served in a variety of ways. Tomatoes are used extensively in cooking, raw and in sauces. Peppers, Zucchini, bean soup and Italian stew are popular foods and fruit, cheese, green salad and wine are served with every meal.

### CHAPTER III

Just as important as the meal itself is the cheeses, cured meats and wines which accompany it.

**Cheeses:** The classic Italian cheese is the Parmesan (Parmigiano) and is available in local shops along with other hard cheeses such as Romano, Fruilano, Provolone and tender cheeses such as mozzarella and BelPaese. Toronto provides the source for tender cheeses known as Paron and one named simply Toronto cheese. Another tender cheese known as Grand Forks cheese is made in Grand Forks by an Italian family and is very popular with the Italians in Trail.

**Meats:** Many Italian-Canadian families make their own sausages and salami's and proscuitto hams. Proscuitto is a cured and seasoned leg of pork and when sliced thin along with salami is used along with the cheeses in the antipasto tray. It is also delicious when eaten with cantalope or melon.

**Wines:** Almost all of the first Italian immigrants made their own wine and of twenty post-war immigrants interviewed all made their own wine. However the situation changes markedly in first generation Canadians. Very few made their own wine or their fathers made it for them. This may be explained by the following reasons:

1. He considers it unnecessary and too expensive.
2. Wine is available in liquor stores today.
3. He has grown up in an North American culture where hard liquor is more popular than wine.

Wine was not served with meals in the first boarding houses of West Trail as grapes were not available. However, the many saloons of that era provided beer which the working man carried in jugs full to his table. This provided a temporary alternative to the wine which was so much a part of his meal. When California grapes began to arrive in Trail there was a large and eager market for them in the Italian community. The most popular California grape sold is the Zinfandel. Some Alicante and Muscatel (a white grape) is also sold. The wine produced from these "soft" grapes closely resembles the wines of the Mediterranean countries.



## CHAPTER IV

On November 11, 1972, I attended the 30th Anniversary Banquet of the San Martino Club. All members of the club were born in San Martino, a little town in North Italy, or are direct descendants.

Scrolls were presented to charter members of the Club, and a banner, designed by a local artist, was on display. This banner was a portrayal of life in San Martino, with the church in the center (which the town grew up around) displaying a very high bell tower, a butter-churn depicting economy and a horse which St. Martin, who the town was named for, rode. As the story goes, St. Martin was supposed to have given his cape on November 11th to a beggar, hence the celebration on that day.

In our study of Italian cookery, three distinct areas have influence. They are generation, religion, and marriage.

Approximately 150 - 200 members and their families attended the banquet, the ages ranging approximately from a year to eighty years. All the first generation members immigrated from Italy, and many of the second generation were also born in San Martino. Third generation children enjoyed the banquet and dance and the annual affair provides a means for many of them to be introduced into the culture and helps maintain the tradition.

Primarily the religious representation was Roman Catholic, and a special mass to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the club was held at the Catholic Church. The Protestant faiths were represented in the second and third generations.

The first generation members were all married to kin folk, and the second generation members are intermarrying into the Canadian, English, etc. cultures. Presumably the third generation members will be even further integrated into the community. Head table guests included club executive, local dignitaries as the occasion demanded, and the parish priest, who is always included. Before the banquet began, I visited the kitchen and spoke to the cooks which included one head cook and her helpers. The huge trays of cut up chicken had been cooked earlier and would be returned to the oven for reheating. Steam was everywhere! Veal stew and soup were boiling on the stove in huge pots. Boxes of cornetti, which are specially shaped white bread, were stacked up on a table.





MRS. TRUANT, IN KITCHEN OF ITALO-CANADESE HALL, STANDING BESIDE LARGE POTS OF POLENTA.



POLENTA BEING STIRRED BY WOMEN OF SPANISH CLUB.





POLENTA, FICATELLI AND  
FRESH CHEESE BEING SERVED  
AT SAN MARTINO BANQUET.

SPOONING OUT  
POLENTA FOR THE CHILDREN  
TOO!



ROAST CHICKEN IS  
DELICIOUS WHEN MRS MITRI  
IS COOK!

The Menu for the evening was as follows:

Antipasto - trays of ham rolls, Trulano cheese sliced, pickles, celery, olives.

Wine - home made from Zinfandel grapes was brought from home by members and kept under the tables and poured as required. (This is a custom which is accepted, even though there was hard liquor available to buy.)

Soup - made from chicken broth with small pieces of chicken and puntini, which are small round macaroni, and grated cheese sprinkled on top - very tasty.

Vegetables - mashed potatoes  
- green beans (finely cut) with butter on  
- carrots - gravy from the stew poured on top.

Stew - made with veal - fork tender.

Chicken - oven done in pieces.

Dessert - pastry roll filled with custard

Coffee and pop for children.

Speeches followed, then entertainment and dancing.

11:30 P.M. - Visitation to kitchen again showed huge pots of polenta cooking on top of the stove and sausages cooking in the oven.

12:00 P.M. - Polenta made with corn meal, was served wet like porridge and seemed rather tasteless to me.

- Figatelli sausages, made by one of the male members, from liver and pork were very tasty and helped the polenta along.
- Coffee and Buns

All the children joined into every activity and stayed right to the end of the affair.



On Monday evening, November 13, 1972 I attended the evening of Italian baking held at St. Anthony's Catholic Church Hall kitchen, participants of which were the Catholic Women's League. The first generation Italian ladies present were braiding dough to make the scallili, which means "little ladders". These are typically Southern Italian cookies. Others were cooking the cookies in hot oil. The older ladies presence there was probably valuable in a supervisory capacity as well. Second generation ladies were also working, some learning how to make the cookies for the first time, as well as satisfying a feeling of obligation to the church. Others were familiar with the tradition, having been previously involved. The reason for the bake was to prepare cookies for the annual church tea and bake sale, thus all participants were Roman Catholic. The first generation Italian ladies are all married to native Italians or are widows and when asked if they baked these cookies at home, one replied that she and her friends, mostly relatives, get together and bake and have a visiting day all in one. Second generation ladies, some of them not Italian, but married to second generation Italians replied that they had not as yet made them at home or make them only very occasionally. Second generation Italian ladies were more likely to make these cookies at home on special occasions, having learned the art in their upbringing.

#### Recipe for Scallili

6 eggs	ie. 1 tsp salt to a
3 cups flour	dozen eggs
1/2 tsp salt	
1 tsp. crisco	

Method - add salt and beat eggs with a mixmaster till foamy. Add rest of ingredients and knead for a long time, then put through a meat grinder.

The dough is kept under a bowl and brought out as needed. First it is rolled thin like a pencil, then braided on a stick, slipped off and deep fried in oil till brown, about five minutes. When they are cooled, they are dipped in liquid honey. Left over dough was made into the shape of bunnies, squirrels and bow ties and fried. A large heavy metal pot is used, as it holds the heat, and a wire turner with a wooden handle or metal tongs are used to turn the cooking scallili. The cookie is about 3-4" in length and puffed up when cooked. A usual reply to the question of how many scallili did you make, would be that I made 6 eggs! One egg makes 12 scallili. Fried bread dough, or the Canadian equivalent of do-nuts, is very common in Italian cookery, particularly southern, and is almost never absent at mealtimes. If a member of the family dies, no frying is done, as a sign of mourning.





LADIES OF ST. ANTHONY'S C.W.L. ROLLING AND  
BRAIDING PASTRY FOR MAKING SCALLIKI IN KITCHEN  
OF CHURCH HALL.



SCALLIKI BEING DEEP-FRIED BEFORE  
BEING COATED IN HONEY.



In conclusion, we find many of the first generation Italians still cooking similarly to their native cuisine, being married to spouses who like this type of food. Their religion is an important part of their lives and helps to maintain their tradition. The second generation Italians are showing variations in their cooking to suit their possibly non-Italian spouses, or are introducing some Italian dishes into their menus if one partner, usually the male, is Italian. There is much intermarrying into the existing nationalities of the community, and religion plays a less significant role in many families, as there are so many other organizations which perform the function of socializing and teaching.