

MY IMPRESSIONS OF BERNALDA WHILE EXPLORING MY ROOTS:
FOURTH TRIP (2012)

L.F. Dell'Osso

Unlike the first two trips, where, I wrote down daily notes, on this trip (like the 2008 trip) the following is based on Charlene's and my recollections.

Wednesday, September 5 – Sunday, September 9, 2012: Milano

Our friend, Kay drove us to the airport where we flew from Cleveland to New York (Kennedy) and New York to Milano (Malpensa), arriving Thursday morning, September 6th. We made the mistake of taking a cab from Malpensa airport to the hotel; it cost e100. After checking into Hotel Una Tocq, unpacking, and resting, we walked to the Convention Center and back. We had dinner at the hotel during which we heard a bell going off in the bar at regular intervals. As we left the dining area, we were surprised to see that the bell was part of an Italian speed-dating party for singles being held in the hotel bar.

On Friday morning, we went to the Convention Center and took the tour that included La Scala, the Arcade (first in the world), and other sites. We couldn't believe that amongst all the other top-line stores in the Arcade, there was also a McDonalds. After returning, Charlene took the Milan tour while I copied my lecture file into the meeting's computer. I then found the lecture hall, had lunch, and then gave my lecture. Charlene met me at the Convention Center and we went to a cocktail party there. Afterwards, we had dinner a short distance from the hotel—al fresco.

On Saturday, we took the Navigi Canal tour, including lunch. We later had dinner a short distance from the hotel—again, al fresco. We were entertained by a fire-eater and lighted flares that were being sent skyward by several vendors; I bought one.

On Sunday, Angela Dell'Osso and her brother, Roberto (whose family we met in Paola on our last trip) met us at our hotel and we gave them a copy of their branch of our family genealogy. After we toured the Sforza castle, we took the train a popular restaurant they knew and had dinner with them; we returned to the hotel by train and they continued on to their home.

Monday, September 10 – Tuesday, September 11, 2012: Pisa

On Monday morning, we took a cab to the much closer Linate airport where we picked up our rental car. We drove from Milano to Pisa and checked in at the Capitol Hotel. We walked around Pisa, unsuccessfully searching for wi-fi spots in a park near the home of Professora, Dottora Liliana Dell'Osso (sister of Guido, who I met on my first trip to Bernalda), another one of my distant relatives.

On Tuesday, we walked to the Leaning Tower and the Baptistry, which we toured after buying tickets. Later, Liliana picked us up at the hotel and drove us to Lucca, where she attended a book signing. We walked around and stopped for a drink, where we met and conversed with two men from Brazil. When we returned, Liliana and her friends drove us to a restaurant where we had a very fine dinner. Liliana drove us back to the hotel afterwards.

Wednesday, September 12 – Thursday, September 18, 2012: Siena

On Wednesday morning, we drove to Siena and, after parking in a large lot at the stadium, took our bags and found our way to Hotel La Perla, where we checked in. We walked around Siena, a feudal town, and bought some espresso cups and gifts for Charlene's friends at a nice shop in the large Piazza del Campo, where the annual horse racing is held; all were shipped back to our home in Cleveland.

On Thursday, we did some window shopping and later met Alessandra and Francesca for drinks at Piazza del Campo and had dinner with them and their friends.

Friday, September 14 – Saturday, September 15, 2012: Firenze-Pisa-Firenza

On Friday morning, we took our bags back to the car and drove to Firenze and checked into Hotel Garden. We took a walk to the Ponte Vecchio and had a drink before heading back. We made arrangements to meet with Elias Traboulsi and his wife for dinner. We had a fine dinner at a restaurant where they had previously eaten.

On Saturday, we drove to Pisa, parked the car and had lunch at a small restaurant across from Liliana's home. At 4pm, we went to Liliana's and found her apartment to be a restored palazzo, filled with paintings, frescoes, and sculpture. We met other members of the Dell'Osso family and I showed them my genealogical research and gave them a copy of their branch of the family tree. We all then walked to the church for the baptism of her brother Riccardo's daughter. We returned to Liliana's for a wonderful catered reception. Later that evening, we drove back to the Hotel Garden Firenze.

Sunday, September 16 – Friday, September 21, 2012: Bernalda

On Sunday morning, we began the long (~7.5 hours) drive from Firenze to Bernalda. At about 2pm, we arrived in Bernalda and checked into the Hotel Giardino Giamperduto. After unpacking and resting, we walked to the Corso Umberto Primo and looked for our good friend, Maestro Antonio Salfi. He was out so we stopped by the church to say hello to Don Mariano and let him know we had returned to Bernalda to continue my research. We had dinner in a restaurant on the Corso and then went back to his home where we found Antonio and his wife Lea. We talked over old times and planned the coming week's research.

Genealogical Research

From Monday through Friday (9am to 2pm) we did research using the birth, marriage, and death record books for the 1800's in both the school library, where most of the books were kept, and in the Commune. In the library, we worked in the same room and at the same table we had used in 2008. In the Commune, Antonio introduced us to the mayor, Leonardo Chiruzzi. After we explained to him what I had been doing for the past 20 years, he told his staff to allow me unlimited access to the records and provided a room with a large table for us to work. We worked there and looked into records of Guido's branch of the family. After each day's research, we returned to the hotel where I caught up on my emails and updated some of the genealogical research.

Friends and Family

On Monday, after a hard day's work, we simply had dinner and retired to the hotel.

On Tuesday, Angelo Dell'Osso and his family, residents of Bernalda, came to the hotel at 3pm to meet Charlene and me and give us the information he had on his branch

of the Dell'Osso family. Dottori Antonio and Giuseppe Dell'Osso drove from Matera to Bernalda and met us at the hotel later. Again, we exchanged genealogical information about their branch of the Dell'Osso family before they took us to dinner at Giuseppe's favorite restaurant in Taranto. We had a great dinner *al fresco* overlooking the bay, starting with *pesce crudo* (raw fish) appetizers. After dinner we took a walking tour of some of Taranto near the bay and saw some of the Fascist buildings there.

On Wednesday, we met with Antonio and his friends at *il Circolino* on the *Corso*. We had met all of them on our prior trips and it was good to see them again and talk about Bernalda, Bernaldesi who had gone to America, and my genealogical research.

On Thursday, after a slight mix-up in arrangements, Antonio arrived at the hotel and drove us to Matera for dinner at Antonio's and Giuseppe's home. There, we met Giuseppe's wife Lucia, who had made a wonderful dinner, which we enjoyed while talking about the connection between their branch of the Dell'Osso family and other branches.

On Friday, we again met with Antonio and his friends at *il Circolino* on the *Corso* and after some pleasant conversation, had dinner with Antonio at a restaurant one street off the *Corso*. We said our sad goodbyes to our good friend Antonio and walked back to the hotel.

Saturday, September 22 – Sunday, September 23, 2012: Napoli

On Saturday morning, we drove to Napoli and checked into the Holiday Inn. We took the rental car back to the airport and looked for the Air France counter; there was none since there were no Air France flights that day. After returning to the hotel by their van, we took a taxi to the nearby train station and then walked down one of the major streets leading to the city's center. We passed many shops and even more Moroccan street vendors. We had dinner *al fresco* by the Bay of Napoli and could see Sorrento across the bay. We walked back to the castle we had passed on our way to the restaurant and took a cab back to the hotel. The cab driver had his son in the front seat and was teaching him the trade.

On Sunday, we took the hotel's van back to the city center and walked around the other main street, again passing many shops and vendors. We had lunch *al fresco* on a side street and took a taxi back to the hotel.

Monday, September 24, 2012: Cleveland

We took the hotel's van to the airport and flew from Napoli to Paris, Paris to New York, and New York to Cleveland. Our friend, Kay picked us up at the airport and drove us home.