

# **GOBBI FAMILY HISTORY**<sup>1</sup>

By Carl A. Sundholm © January 15, 2007

In tracing the particular Gobbi ancestral line of Sylvia Anna Gobbi into the Italian alps Lombardy region of Lake Como, this paper also addresses more general questions of the origins of the family lines marked by the Gobbi surname.

## **GOBBI ORIGINS**

The Italian family name "Gobbi" goes back several centuries in Northern Italy. The oldest known occurrences of the Gobbi name cluster in the following regions of Italy:

- (1) the Northern Branch in the Lake Como region of the Italian Alps (1806);
- (2) the Southern Branch in the Piacenza area southeast of Milan; and
- (3) the Eastern Branch bordered by Trento, Mantova, and Venice.

Famous Italian Gobbis include the famous opera singer Tito Gobbi and Father Stefano Gobbi. Tito Gobbi was an Italian baritone virtuoso who was considered one of the finest opera singers of his day, best known for such operatic roles as the sinister Scarpia in Tosca, Iago in Otello, and the title character in Rigoletto. Father Stefano Gobbi is noted for initiating the Marian Movement of Priests, which spread from Italy throughout the world, and his writings on the subject have been published in several languages. He was born on March 22, 1930, in Dongo, Italy, a village near Lake Como, the lake region north of Milano.

This genealogy focuses on the North Italian Branch of Gobbis by tracing the Gobbi family line running through Elio Gobbi of Santa Rosa, California, through his father Valentino Guglielmo of Piantedo, Italy, through his grandfather Giovanni, his great grandfather Giacomo, and his great great grandfather Giuseppe, reference should be made to the other Gobbi family lines.

Because Elio Gobbi settled in Santa Rosa, the fact that there are a cluster of other Gobbis in that general area of northern California was originally explored for potential relationships. Although the amount of research done showed no immediate traceable relationship, it is likely these Gobbi lines are related since they are

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<sup>1</sup> This history is based upon a thorough search of the following microfilmed genealogical and historical records of the Church of Latter Day Saints: PIANTEDO, SONDRIO, ITALY: 2140012 Piantedo (Item 7) Births 1866-1908; 2140013 Piantedo (Items 1 - 5) Births 1909-1910; Pubblicazioni 1866-1910; Marriages; 1866-1910; Deaths 1866-1910; Cittadinanze 1869-1908; 2097958 Piantedo (Items 10 - 13) Births 1911-1929; Pubblicazioni 1911-1929 ; Marriages 1911-1929; Deaths 1911-1929.

northern Gobbis which all derive from the Lake Como area of Italy. The results of this research are set forth below.

## **GOBBIS OF CALIFORNIA**

The earliest Gobbi in California is Daniel Gobbi of Ukiah, who was born August 18, 1823 in (unknown place) Italy, who immigrated to London in 1843 and then Liverpool where he made eyeglass frames until March 14, 1850 when he immigrated to San Francisco, where he operated a grocery store until 1856 when he moved to Ukiah in Mendocino County, engaging in the livestock business, and marrying Maria Macca in 1872. Other early California Gobbis were Julius J. Gobbi and Peter Gobbi. Julius was born in Dongo, Italy on December 16, 1858, to vinegrower Julius J. Gobbi Sr. and Mary Mache, who immigrated to America in 1869, and settled in Ukiah working as as grape growers and wine makers. After his parents died, Julius relocated to Healdsburg working for Peter & B Gobbi vineyards, and after buying out B. Gobbi's interest, establishing Sotoyome Winery in 1881 in Healdsburg. Julius married Elia Yengling of Petaluma and had one child Henry Gobbi. Julius' partner Peter Gobbi was also born in Dongo, Italy, on Septembver 4, 1853, to Charles Gobbi and Giovannina Mantuva, who were also vinegrowers. Peter immigrated to London in 1870 where he worked as a furniture maker until 1873 when he immigrated to America and moved to Ukiah. Later he moved to Healdsburg where he married Emma Yengling, had children Charles, Raymond (married Ethel Ferguson on April 9, 1912), and Ella, and started to Sotoyome Winery. Since Dongo is on Lake Como close to Piantedo, it is likely these Gobbis are related to Elio's branch of the Gobbi line, although no direct evidence of a specific named common ancestor between the Piantedo and Dongo lines has yet been discovered. Another early California Gobbi is John Anthony Gobbi, born in Stassona, Italy, on June 11, 1876 to Peter Gobbi and Sofia Cetta. He went to London in 1894 where he stayed with his cousin James Gobbi before coming to California in 1904, where he worked in the dairy business with an uncle in Valley Ford, then going into the lumber industry at Jenner and then established a dairy herd at Bodega Bay, where he lived with Angelo and John Mache and later married Ida Pedroli, and had a daughter Ethel Flora.

## **THE GOBBIS OF PIANTEDO**

### **PARENTS' FAMILY: GUGLIELMO GOBBI AND MARIA ROSSOTTI**

Elio Gobbi was born on October 30, 1933 to Guglielmo Gobbi and Maria Rossotti in Piantedo, Sondrio, Italy, where he grew up.

He joined the Fifth Alpini Battalion Tirano of the Italian Army. In the photograph, he is on the right.



Elio became interested in immigrating to the United States after corresponding with his father's sister, his Aunt Josephine, in Santa Rosa, California. When Josephine's husband John Costa and his partner John Galeazzi offered Elio a job as a stoneworker in their business at North Bay Monument Company, he immigrated to America.

Elio's branch of the Gobbi family came from the Italian Alps town of Piantedo near Lake Como, which is well known for producing skilled stoneworkers who have contributed to the construction of some of the most beautiful architecture in Italy, including the world famous Duomo cathedral of Milan.

Elio's aunt Josephine was born Guiseppina Maria Gobbi on February 23, 1897 as the first child of Giovanni Gobbi and Carolina Rossotti. On November 19, 1919, she married Giovanni ("John") Atillio Costa (who was born on July 25, 1897 to Francisco Costa and Angela Allietti) in Piantedo, where their daughter Bianca Irma was born on August 24, 1920. John Costa, Josephine, and little Irma, immigrated to the United States, arriving in Chicago on January 9, 1921 on the way to Santa Rosa, California, where Costa's sister (name unknown) had earlier immigrated.<sup>2</sup> John Costa was naturalized on December 21, 1927 in Santa Rosa, California.<sup>3</sup> John Costa and his friend John Galeazzi purchased North Bay Monument Company in the 1920s from a Mr. Kinslow. California death records list a John Atillio Costa, who was born on July 25, 1897 with the social security number of 555-03-1059, as passing away in Sonoma Co. on April 19, 1980.

### **FATHER'S FATHER'S FAMILY: VALENTINO GUGLIELMO GOBBI & MARIA ROSSOTTI**



As far back as has been traced, the entire Gobbi side of the family is from the town of Piantedo, near the northeast shore of Lake Como in the Italian Alps.

<sup>2</sup> John Costa's sister lived next-door to a family friend in Santa Rosa, Enrico Deghi. Research in the U.S. 1920 Census for Santa Rosa or telephone books should reveal the names of Costa's sister and the other individuals in the neighboring households.

<sup>3</sup> The only other Santa Rosa immigration record of a Costa pre-dating that of John Costa is of a Giacomo Costa from Italy, who was naturalized on August 6, 1908, although it is not known whether this is a relative.



**Valentino Guglielmo Gobbi** was born on February 27, 1903, in Piantedo, Italy to Giovanni Virgilio Gobbi and Carolina Maria Rossotti. He made a living as a dairyman, making cheese, and farming.



Around 1930 or so he married Maria Rossotti, who was born on February 21, 1910 to Luigi Rossotti and Dominica Acquistapace. After World War II, Valenting Guglielmo Gobbi worked for Edison Power, making rock building materials. Guglielmo and Maria stayed in Piantedo and had five children:

- (1) Valentina Gobbi born in 1931,
- (2) Elio Gobbi born October 30, 1933,
- (3) Ilde Gobbi (born 1936),
- (4) Silvia Gobbi (born 1939),
- (5) Fausto Gobbi (born 1942).

For as long as anyone can remember, the family has had a stone cottage called the Stuetta in the Isolato region of the Alps, as shown a late 1940s family photograph of Maria and Guglielmo, with his brother Guido Gobbi, and three of the children: Silvia, Ilde and Fausto.



**Maria Catarina Rossotti** was born on February 21, 1910 in Piantedo, Italy to **Luigi Rossotti, Jr.** (born July 6, 1866 to **Luigi Rossotti, Sr.** and **Catarina Scalini**) and **Domenica Acquistapace** (born to **Giovanni Acquistapace** and **Catarina Colli**). Luigi and Domenica were married on February 13, 1909. This was Luigi Rossotti's second marriage. Their children were:

1. Luigi Agostino Rossotti (b. 8/20/1911)
2. Attilio Rossotti (1897-1990, married Caterina Rossotti)
3. Maria Catarina Rossotti (who married Valentino Guglielmo Gobbi)

Luigi Rossotti, Jr.'s first marriage was to Cristina Gobbi on April 28, 1888, and they had the following children:

1. Aurelia Rossotti Moretti (who immigrated to Santa Rosa)
2. Natalina Rossotti SanPietro (who also immigrated to Santa Rosa)
3. Giovanni Guiseppe Rossotti (b. 1890, who also immigrated to Santa Rosa).

The oral family history according to Elio on this issue is as follows: Luigi Rossotti, Jr. may have come to California to work in Hopland or Ukiah as a logger to get money to bring back to Italy.

Luigi's son Giovanni Guiseppe Rossetti Americanized his name to "Joe" Rossotti when he moved to Santa Rosa, where his wife Ann owned a hotel named "La Rose" in Railroad Square. They lost the hotel in 1949 due because they were caught bootlegging. Joe may be buried at the Neptune Society cemetery. Joe's mother, Cristina Gobbi was killed in 1908 at the Stuetta in Isola by a rock fall (Cristina Gobbi's death record confirms this). Joe's Father Luigi then re-married to Domenica Acquistapace. Joe's sister Natalina Rossotti married Louis SanPietro in Santa Rosa. Louis' sister was Doris (SanPietro) Scacchi of Santa Rosa. It appears that Aurelia Rossotti married a man with the last name of Moretti. Elio indicated that he thought that Luigi Rossotti, Jr. came to Northern California, possibly in Hopland and Ukiah, to work as a logger so he could bring back money to the family in Italy.

Luigi Rossotti Jr.'s father Luigi Rossotti, Sr. (born 1841) and his mother was Catarina Scalini. Domenica Acquistapace's father was Giovanni Acquistapace and her mother was Catarina Colli.

**FATHER'S FATHER'S FATHER'S FAMILY: GIOVANNI VIRGILIO GOBBI & CAROLINA ROSSOTTI**

**Giovanni Virgilio Gobbi** was born in Piantedo in 1864 (exact date unknown) to Giacomo Gobbi and Maria Colli. On June 12, 1896, he married Carolina Maria Rossotti, born to Giovanni Rossotti and Dominica Pedroncelli. They had 10 children:

- (1) Guiseppina (born February 25, 1897),
- (2) Giovanni (born February 16, 1899, died 1952, Piantedo Cemetery),



- (3) Domenica (born May 30, 1901),
- (4) Valentino Guglielmo (born February 27, 1903, died May 29, 1988, Piantedo Cemetery),
- (5) Albino Antonio (born September 15, 1907, married Emerina Acquistapace, died March 26, 1986, Piantedo Cemetery),



- (6) Guido (born 1909 at Stuetta in Isolato, died 1955),
- (7) Virgilio (born December 9, 1911, married Enrica Digoncelli [1918-2001], died 1996, Piantedo Cemetery), d 1996 Piantedo,



- (8) Angelina (born December 4, 1913),
- (9) Lines ("Lino" born September 19, 1915),<sup>4</sup> and
- (10) Geoneffa (born November 25, 1917).

Elio Gobbi states that his grandfather Giovanni Virgilio Gobbi may have come to Northern California in the late 1800s living in Duncan Mills near Bodega

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<sup>4</sup> Elio states Lino was a monk, that he visited Elio in the 1960s and later died of Cancer.

Bay until about 1893 working in logging camps to bring back money to Italy

According to the Piantedo Gobbi family oral history related by Fausto Gobbi, Giovanni Gobbi died after being kicked in the stomach by a horse.

Giovanni's wife **Carolina Rossotti** was born to Giovanni Rossotti (b 1834) and Domenica Pedroncelli.<sup>5</sup> Giovanni Rossotti was the child of Giovanni Rossotti Sr and Luigia Acquistapace, and Domenica Pedroncelli was born to Guglielmo Pedroncelli and Margherita Deyo.

### **FATHER'S FATHER'S FATHER'S FATHER'S FAMILY: GIACOMO GOBBI & MARIA COLLI**

Giacomo Gobbi was born in 1832 to Guiseppi Gobbi and Anna Maria Rossotti and died in 1903 at 71 years of age. They had the following children:

- (1) Maria (born 1850, died 1921 at 71 years old),
- (2) Guiseppe (born 1855),
- (3) Giovanni Virgilio (born 1864),<sup>6</sup> and
- (4) Antonio (born 1869, died 1885 at 16 years old).<sup>7</sup>

### **FATHER'S FATHER'S FATHER'S FATHER'S FATHER'S FAMILY: GUISEPPE GOBBI & ANNA MARIA ROSSOTTI**

Guiseppe Gobbi was born sometime around 1800 and was married to Anna Maria Rossotti sometime around 1830. They had at least 2 children: (1) Giacomo Antonio (born 1832) and (2) Giuseppe (born 1840, died 1916).

### **CONCLUSION**

While this paper has focused on developing information about the particular

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<sup>5</sup> The handwriting on their marriage certificate appears to state that Giovanni Rossotti resided in "America, California," while Domenica was from Piantedo.

<sup>6</sup> *Unknown Gobbis with similar names are shown in Passenger Ship Immigration Arrivals in New York for November 1890 to December 1891: a 27 year old farmer named Giavanni Gobbi (destination unknown), accompanied by Giovanni Macchi (44 year old farmer), This may or may not be related to the John Anthony Gobbi and John Mache living in Bodega, California listed as being from Stassona, Italy; the February 19, 1889 arrival record of La Champagne shows a 21 year old Giovanni Gobbi and a 25 year old Guiseppe Gobbi (traveling with a 27 year old Pietro Deghi and a 21 year old Giacomo Deghi, all farmers.*

<sup>7</sup> *Possible further children are Catarina and Matteo. January-December 1892 New York ship arrival records show the arrival of a Matteo Gobbi listed as a farmer aged 29*

Gobbi family ancestors of Sylvia Anna Gobbi, this work should be viewed as a starting point for gathering information about all those with the Gobbi family name. We offer this information to those who share the Gobbi family name and hope that others will contact us with additional information and use the data provided here to further the knowledge that we share about this interesting family line.