



FRIENDS OF HISTORIC VINELAND



SEARCHING FOR PANTS



(By: Frank De Maio, M.D.)

Every part of Italy has its special religious festivals and traditions. When the Italian immigrants came to America, they brought those traditions with them. One of those traditions that really caught my imagination at a young age was the celebration of St. Joseph's day on March 19th and giving out "pants."

"Pants" were not something that you wore. You ate them (now don't let your imagination run away with you!). These pants were cooked, not woven, and were made of dough, chick peas, and honey, and were cooked by deep frying in oil. The recipe for them is found later in this news let-

ter. From what I can determine, the custom was indigenous to the region of Abruzzi (I never saw a Sicilian or Neapolitano make them.) When a person of that region prayed to St. Joseph, and if their prayers were answered, the person might pledge to "repay" the miracle by St. Joseph on the birthday of the saint as a way of thanks for the fact that their prayers were answered. They did this by being host to their neighbors and offering them food on that day which included a particular form of dessert called "pants" (which is the English word, but in Italian is "Calzoni" and "Cavazun" in dialect.)

When we were kids and we knew that St. Joseph's day was coming near, we would all make sure that we had a pretty good idea of who was giving out the treats and where to find them.

Then, on the fateful morning of the exciting day, there was a great anticipation. Your mother was sure to remind you before you left for school to go and get the "pants." You could hardly wait until school was over, to run out of class and go to the nearest home that was giving them out. You would knock on the door, and someone would answer. If you were older, they would invite you in for supper. This included a variety of meats, plenty of macaroni, wine, and bread. No matter how poor the family might be, on that day, no one was turned away. If you were young, they would not invite you to eat, but would just ask if you wanted "pants." You shook your head yes about 10 times, and the kind person would reach inside and bring you two or three of the "pants." They were put in the bag that you were sure to be carrying, and

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CRAFTERS AND ANTIQUE DEALERS WELCOME TO ATTEND THE BIG FOUNDER'S DAY FESTIVAL ON SATURDAY, MAY 19, FROM 11:00 AM TO 6:00 PM.

CHARGE IS MINIMAL.

IF INTERESTED, CALL THE VINELAND DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, 856 794 8653.

LOCATION WILL BE MAIN AND LANDIS ON THE TRAINING SCHOOL GREEN

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away you ran to the next house. Because the "pants" were cooked in oil, your bag was soon coated with that oil and became virtually transparent.

You ran from house to house, because it got dark soon after the end of school, and you had to be home before it got dark. With each house the bag became fuller, and sometimes so full that you just had to eat

a couple to make room for more. After all, how much can an oil soaked paper bag hold?

You headed for home just before it got dark and the first words that greeted you at the door was, "How many pants did you get." The members at home would then put them out on the table to look at them and marvel and then would decide how to portion them out. Everyone tasted some, and saved the rest for dessert. You can be

sure that by the end of the evening, they were GONE!

For a real treat, see the recipes on how to make the delightful little things. But, remember YOU ARE ONLY ALLOWED TO EAT THEM ON ST. JOSEPH'S DAY!

Red Barn Antiques Keeps History Alive



(By: Frank De Maio, M.D.)

So you think that learning the metric system is hard because you have to convert feet and yards to meters and centimeters? Well, take a look at the following surveyor's units of measurement from 1865 (the same year the Civil War ended): ...sells...to the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, all that certain piece of land situated in the Township of Landis, County of Cumberland and state of New Jersey bounded and described as follows to wit: Beginning at the intersection of the centres of Butler Avenue and Main or Horse Bridge Road (as it was then called), thence (1) extend-

ing along the centre of said Butler Avenue South thirty six and fourteen hundredths rods; then (2) South eight degrees West seventy perches....

Or how about this one: "Hence forth degrees East four chains and twenty five links to a corner in said Bridgeton Road."

Now for those of you that want to know (are there really any that want to know??) a perche is equal to a rod and a rod is equal to 5.5 yards or 16.5 feet. A chain is equal to 66 feet and contains 100 links. Now if you want to convert rods to meters, you set up an equation as follows—on second thought, let's forget it!!

What is more interesting is that Mrs. Mary Smith (of the Old Barn Antiques on the North West Boulevard in Newfield) gave me a bunch of old deeds going back to 1865. Many of them were signed by Charles K Landis. By way of this article I am publicly thanking Mrs.

Smith for her kindness. The deeds are a real treasure.

When Landis purchased the "Vineland Tract" from Mr. Wood, he had no ready cash. His mother had given him 500 dollars to start the endeavor. He had to get the land from Mr. Wood manly on the basis of enthusiasm. The terms from Mr. Wood were generous--seven dollars an acre, no interest payments for 3 ½ years, and no money down.

As Charles K. sold the land, he would pay off Mr. Wood. I quote from the autobiography of Charles K. Landis concerning his sale of the first parcel of land to a man from New York: "I drove him down to Millville and had the deed signed by Mr. Wood and his wife, who were both there. I paid Mr. Wood his portion, and kept the balance. Under my arrangement with him I was to pay him a certain amount per acre for every deed he signed, until I had paid him enough to take a deed myself. I

shall never forget his look of astonishment as he received this money.”

In the deeds I saw signed by Mr. Landis, he would turn the deed over to Mr. Wood as payment. There was a statement on the deed that Mr. Landis had personally appeared. The signed statement is as follows: “For a valuable consideration, I do hereby transfer, assign and set over the within Mortgage, to Richard D. Wood, his heirs and assigns— Witness my hand and seal this twenty seventh day of November of A.D. eighteen hundred and sixty five. Witness present W. A. House.” This was followed by

the signature of Landis.

As one follows the deeds throughout the years, one notes that they were handwritten up until about 1900 whereupon a typewriter was used. Some of the penmanship was stunning and some seemed to be written by doctors. Also, I noted that Matilda Landis took over much of the business in the later years, and was the chief executor after he died. When she died, the business was taken over by Charles K. Landis Jr. and his wife Mary. They had moved the main office to Sea Isle City by that time

A number of people have com-

mented that they have deeds signed by Mr. Landis, the founder of Vineland, after the year 1900. That is unlikely since Charles K died in 1900. It is far more likely that the son, Charles K Junior actually signed them!!

Well, anyway, thank you again Mrs. Smith from the Old Barn!!!

***Recipe for Pants!* CALZONI ("CAVAZUN" in dialect)**
(Recipe donated by Carmella Romeo, from her mother Angelina Bellone)

FILLING INGREDIENTS:

1 lb. of dried chic peas
The skin of one orange, ground up, plus the juice from the same orange
2 teaspoons of cinnamon or to taste
1 cup of sugar
1/2 cup of honey

DOUGH INGREDIENTS:

1 1/2 lb. of flour
2 eggs
1/2 cup of white wine
Warm water

PREPARATION OF THE DOUGH:

Put the flour on a mixing board and make a hole in the center of the flour. Add the ingredients to the center of the flour, and gradually mix in with the flour. Continue to work the dough until it is firm and elastic. Add flour or water as needed.

PREPARING THE FILLING:

Rinse the dried chic peas in water, then soak in clean water overnight. The next day, cook the peas in water until tender. Then, grind up the peas and pass through a sieve while still warm. Let cool, then add sugar, honey, cinnamon, orange rind, and orange juice to the chic peas. Mix well and let stand for 4-5 hours.

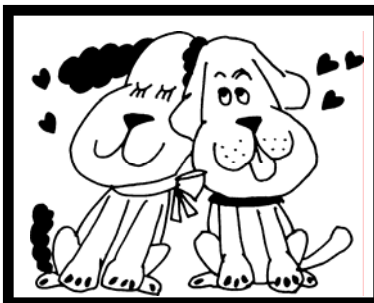
PREPARATION OF THE PANTS:

Roll out the dough until thin. Cut the dough into round circles about 5 inches across. Put filling on one half of the circle, then fold over the dough so that the edges of the dough meet. Seal the edges of the dough with a scalloped tool so that the edges are pleated.

Heat the oil to temperature suitable for frying. Put in the prepared pants, and cook until golden brown. Remove, and let dry on a towel (paper). While still warm, sprinkle sugar on them.

Make 500 of these, and then give almost all of them out to all the kids in the neighborhood, but save a couple for yourself!

We want to do out dog-gone best to thank all the people that contributed money towards our activities during the last year. The list is as follows:



We think you are great!!

- | | | |
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- STUDENT.....\$5

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The Friends have no connections with the Vineland Historical Society or any other society!

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Mail to: Friends of Historic Vineland
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 Vineland, NJ 08360