

# Friends of Historic Vineland

Volume 2 Issue 3 (Fall)

## *From Venice to Vineland—A History of Glass!*



Jan Olivio making glass!

Glass has played an important economic role in South Jersey. The abundance of huge amounts of pure silica sand and wood for fuel made this area an obvious one for the production of glass items. But the route by which glass arrived in Vineland is less obvious and makes great story telling.

Glass in the form of beads was first made in Egypt 2,500 years before Christ. The next most important step in glass production was the introduction of the blow pipe about 50 years before Christ in the Near East. In view of the fact that the area was under the control of the Romans, that glass and other glass produced in Europe was called “Roman Glass.” Roman glass was quite advanced. But, when the western half of the Roman empire collapsed, the production of glass was limited to the remaining Eastern Half of the Roman Empire (which eventually became Byzantium) and later to production in the Arab states.

It was not until the Renaissance that western Europe again started to produce glass of fine quality, and that occurrence was—you guessed it—in Italy. Specifically Venice began to produce very fine works of glass. The fact that Venice was closely linked by trade with Byzantium and with the Arab states undoubtedly played an important role in this development. In 1291 the production of glass in Venice was moved to the island of Morano, where it has basically remained to this day, to prevent the spread of fires and to protect the secrets of glass making.

A very clear form of glass called Cristallo was developed in Venice and became in great demand in Europe. The glass was placed in the Venetian round ships and taken to Northern Europe. Also when Columbus came to America, he had with him glass beads to trade with the “Indians.” They were made in none other than the city of Venice!!

Eventually the secrets of glass making were stolen from Venice and the production of glass spread to northern Europe including England. In fact, the first industry transplanted to America by Europeans was glass making by the Spanish in 1535 in Mexico. Later, the English also started glass production in their first settlement in America at Jamestown in 1608. The effort failed, then was attempted again in 1621, but again failed even though 6 Italian glass blowers were “imported” to handle the work. The American settlers did not give up easily and attempts at glass making were again made in Boston, New Amersterdam and Philadelphia—but all failed! (Cont. on page 2)



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### • WHAT ARE WE UP TO?

• The historical calendar for the year 2,000 is ready to go to the printer. All those that have donated \$100 will receive 25 issues of the calendar and all those that have paid due for the “Friends” will be sent a calendar. Five thousand copies will be printed.

• We have also started a series of postcards of old Vineland that soon will be on sale at the local stores. More about them at a later date!

<p><b>Address:</b>  Friends of Historic  Vineland  C/O F. De Maio, M.D.  1047 Almond St.  Vineland, NJ 08360</p> <p><b>Officers:</b>  President  Frank De Maio, M.D.</p> <p>Vice President:  Linda Schimmel</p> <p>Secretary Treasurer  Rosanne Hughes</p> <p><b>NewsLetter By:</b>  Mrs. J. Olivio  Dr. F. De Maio  Mrs. R. Hughes  Mrs. T. Kuhnreich</p>
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Then in 1739 a German by the name of Caspar Wistar brought over some German glass makers and started a plant in southern New Jersey near present day Alloway. This became the first successful glass producing plant in the colonies (and America). The plant also made scientific glass and actually supplied Benjamin Franklin with the glass for the experiments that he carried out on electricity.

In 1775 some indentured servants working at Wistarburg by the name of Stanger escaped and went to Glassboro. They started a factory that became the Olive Glass Works. Eventually the factory became a part of the Owens Bottle Company and then the Owen Illinois Company.

The south Jersey area was ideal for glass making with it's rich deposits of pure sand and the abundance of wood for fuel. Eventually, many of the towns in south Jersey such as Winslow Junction, Cape May, Minotola, and Bridgeton had their own glass plants. But of most interest to Vineland was it's neighbor Millville. Millville was started by Mr. Buck in 1795 (the year that Napoleon conquered Venice) which was named for the abundance of mills in the area. Glass making soon became a key element in the industries of Millville to the point that it was mentioned in an essay on Millville by the famous author Carl Sandburg: *"Down in southern New Jersey, they make glass. By day and by night, the fires burn on in Millville and bid the sand let in the light. Millville by night would have delighted Whistler, who loved gloom and mist and wild shadows. Great rafts of wood and big brick hulks, dotted with a myriad of light, glowing and twinkling every shade of red. Big, black flames shooting out smoke and sparks; bottles, bottles, bottles, of every tint and hue, from a brilliant crimson to the dull green that marks the death of sand and the birth of glass."*

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Keeping in mind that Vineland was started in 1861 which was much later than Millville, the history of glass also had to come later. But Vineland too relied heavily upon glass manufacture early in it's development as well as later.

The most famous of the local glass manufacturers was Victor Durand. He actually started work in Millville, but eventually worked in a number of plants all over the country then settled in Vineland. His Flint glass works as well as a number of other plants employed large numbers of Vinelanders. But, he was most famous for his "Durand glass." Of great importance was the fact that the workers of Durand were given free rein to experiment and create their own individual works of art. Durand did not make a profit on this fancy glass, but it did give him personal satisfaction. In a very short period of time his pieces became well known, and today are downright famous.

With a little imagination we might compare Venice with Vineland. After all, it was the Venetians that were largely responsible for recreation of the great works in glass that had been common in ancient Rome. Then, with their creation of cristallo they captured the market in glass for many years. Vineland also had it's Renaissance in artistic glass in the form of Durand glass and Vineland did capture it's share of the glass market in America.

If you want to stretch the point further, we could consider that early Vineland was heavily populated by Italian immigrants. Many of them did work in glass plants, and so it was that the making of glass by Italians in Venice went full cycle with the making of glass by Italians in Vineland.

The legacy of this "Vineland Renaissance" persists today with such people as Joe Luisi who produces incredible glass sculpture from glass tubing--a Michelangelo in glass sculpture; John Rossi and his sons who produce incredible scientific glass; Mr. and Mrs. Rich Federicci who produce beautiful glass works of art; and even Jan Olivio, one of the editors of this newsletter whose picture appears on the front cover (a local artist who is improving daily in her creations of artistic glass). These Vineland Venetians have truly completed the cycle of glass from Venice to Vineland.

On October 24, 7:00 PM at the Vineland Public Library, I will be presenting this year's slide show about Italy, entitled "From Venice to Vineland—a history of glass." Many of the above facts will be presented along with slides of Venice. Also, there will be a display in the library on the same theme. You might enjoy looking at it and attending the slide show. The show is sponsored by the Sicilian American Club and the Vineland Public Library. Refreshments will be served during intermission.

Frank De Maio, M.D.

## **A SPECIAL NEWS FLASH!!!**

The "Friends" have started a new and interesting program. We would like to welcome newcomers to Vineland with a historic tour of the area. Mr. Bernhardt of the Bernhardt Limousine Service has very graciously offered to help us start this project.

Mr. Antonio Mennone will be our guide. He has had considerable experience as a guide at the Historical Society and, considering the fact that he has lived in Vineland all his life and has extensive knowledge of the area and the people, he is a natural for the job.

The limousine will pick up the individuals at the Chamber of Commerce at the days and time indicated below and make the rounds of the "historic" sites of Vineland. We hope to show the Landis park with it's memorial landmarks, the Soldier's Home, the Landis Junior High School (which was designated a historic site), the Electric Utility Plant, the four Mini Parks in the center of town where Landis first drove the stake into the ground to mark off Landis Ave., then on to City Hall, the Vineland Public Library, Siloam Cemetery containing the graves of many of the famous people of Vineland, Newcomb Medical Center, the Vineland High School, and finally the Cumberland County College.

The tour will end where it began at the Chamber of Commerce where the guests will be given some refreshments, given additional information about the area and also a package of information that they can take home with them. This should include our Historic Calendar, plus brochures from various businesses and institutions.

We would like all the realtors in town, plus businesses, the hospitals, the school system and so forth that are aware of people that are interested in moving into Vineland to be made aware of the fact that this service is available. The schedule for the next 3 months is as follows:

All tours will begin at the Chamber of Commerce at East and Landis Ave. and will start at 10:00 AM and end at 12:00 Noon. They will all be on Wednesdays. The dates are: September 15, October 13, November 10, and December 8.



### ***PIZZA, NAPLES STYLE (PIZZA, STILE NAPOLETANO)***

(Jennie De Maio's recipe for pizza, Naples style.) Jennie was born in Forio, island of Ischia, located in the bay of Naples. She made a lot of this when she first came from Italy. It is a classic. It's fast to make and can be used for a quick meal. Later, when I was growing up, she would send me to the bakery shop (Mattioli's) to buy some dough. Toni Rizzo would always give me some extra dough because we were friends. Then, I would go home and she would tell me how to make the pizza. Use some ingenuity and figure out the amounts of supplies needed!

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

3 cloves of garlic, chopped    3 leaves of basil, chopped    1 teaspoon of salt, or to taste    cooked tomatoes    Oregano  
Olive oil    Bread dough (you can make your own, or purchase the dough from the bakery)

#### **PREPARATION:**

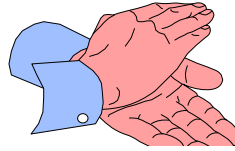
Spread out the dough with a flare, all the while singing one of the old Naples songs, such as "Ti voglio bene." The finished product should be about a quarter inch thick, but could be a bit thicker if you like, and have a round shape. Put the dough in a flat pan.

Put enough tomatoes on the dough to cover it. Add the garlic, basil, and salt (to taste). Pour the oil over the mixture. At this point, you can cook the pizza as is (the basic Neapolitano pizza) or add mozzarella cheese, mushrooms, anchovies, or whatever else the old Italian song inspires you to add.

Put the pizza in a preheated oven at about 450 degrees. Cook for approximately 10 minutes, then remove.

Cut the pizza in pieces, and serve while warm. This will go well with a salad.

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# THANK YOU!!

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Are you interested in being a part of our group??? Are you interested in history??? If you are, please contact Dr. Frank De Maio. We can use you!

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