

12. In the early 1900s, America’s system of free enterprise and capitalism provided an opportunity that was unknown elsewhere in the world: The opportunity for a family to become wealthy in a single generation. Immigrants took advantage of the opportunity and started businesses in America. Here are some examples of Italian immigrants who succeeded:

In 1890, nineteen-year-old Domenico DeDomenico emigrated from Italy and settled in California. He started a pasta company called Gragnano Products in 1912. In 1934, the company was renamed the Golden Grain Macaroni Company and later became famous for its Rice-A-Roni products.

In 1889, twelve-year-old Amadeo Obici emigrated from Italy. In 1904, he opened a fruit stand in New York City, offering bags of roasted peanuts for a nickel each. His roasted peanuts were so popular, that in 1906, Amadeo Obici established the Planters Peanut Company.

In 1900, Vincent Taormina emigrated from Sicily and settled in New Orleans. He began a small importing business, bringing the foods of Italy to America. In 1927, his successful business merged with another food company to form the Progresso Italian Food Corporation.

In 1915, seventeen-year-old Hector Boyardi emigrated from Italy and settled in Cleveland, OH, where he became a chef and opened a restaurant. Hector’s spaghetti sauce was so popular that he packaged it in milk bottles for his customers to take home. Later, when Hector combined his bottled spaghetti sauce with pasta and offered the combination as a “cook-at-home” meal, he had the makings of a new company. Hector “Americanized” his name and called his new company Chef Boyardee.

In Anthony’s time, America is still the place where families can become wealthy in a single generation: 80 percent of America’s millionaires are first-generation rich. And starting a business is still the best and most popular way to become wealthy: The self-employed make up less than 20 percent of the workers in America, but they account for more than two-thirds of America’s millionaires; twenty million Americans operate sole-proprietorships; and small companies (companies with less than five hundred employees) employ half of the American workforce, or about sixty million people. In Anthony’s time, small businesses create three out of four new jobs in America annually.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *101 Marvelous Money-Making Ideas for Kids*, by Heather Wood [0812520602, NF, MS+]; *Whiz Teens in Business*, by Danielle Vallee [0966339320, NF, MS+]; *The Millionaire Next Door*, by Thomas Stanley [0671015206, NF, HS+]; *The Young Entrepreneur’s Guide to Starting a Business*, by Steve Mariotti [0812933060, NF, HS+].

13. Passenger Manifest: SS *Sant Anna*, Left Naples 8/4/1910, Arrived New York 8/17/1910.

14. Passenger Manifest: SS *Konig Albert*, Left Naples 4/19/1912, Arrived New York 5/3/1912.

15. Hell’s Kitchen was the New York City district west of 8th Avenue, between 33rd Street and 59th Street. In the late 1890s, tenements sprang up in Hell’s Kitchen to house the immigrant workers who settled in the area. Poverty and close quarters bred ill will between neighbors of different nationalities, and riots and gang violence were not uncommon. In 1912, Antonio Gaetano was living with his father in a tenement located at 506 33rd Street. Antonio described his childhood in Hell’s Kitchen in a 1977 interview: “Back then, you couldn’t go outside, or walk to school, if you didn’t know how to take care of yourself. Your lunch would be taken from you. Your money would be taken, if you had any. Learning the art of self-defense was a must. You had to show everyone how tough you were, or they wouldn’t leave you alone. But after I learned how to fight, they would just say, ‘Ah, there goes Tony,’ and they wouldn’t bother me any more.” Antonio took up boxing, a sport he continued into the 1920s; he boxed under the auspices of the Golden Gloves Association of America.

Anthony and Antonio probably didn’t walk the entire distance to school. They probably walked to a nearby station and took the train. In March 1900, ground was broken in Manhattan for an electric-powered subway. Twelve thousand men built the subway for the Inter-Borough Rapid Transit Company (IRT) using the “cut-and-cover” method: A trench was cut to accommodate a 55-foot-wide and 15-foot-high tunnel, the rails were laid and stations built, the finished work was enclosed in steel beams, and a shallow layer of fill was placed over the trench. When the subway opened in 1904, people paid a nickel each to ride the fastest city transportation system in the world: “City Hall to Harlem in 15 minutes!” was the slogan.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *Evolution of New York City Subways*, by Gene Sansone [0801868866, NF, MS+]; *New York City Subway*, by Tom Range [0738510866, NF, MS+].

16. Gennaro Lombardi emigrated from Naples, Italy, in 1895, when he was twenty years old. In 1897, Lombardi opened a grocery store at 53 Spring Street, where he made pizzas for hungry Italian immigrant workers. Lombardi’s store was officially established as the first pizzeria in America when it obtained a New York City mercantile license in 1905. In Anthony’s time, Lombardi’s pizzeria still turns out some of the best pizza in America, using a coal-fired, 900°F brick oven.

Antonio Ferrara emigrated from Italy in the late 1800s. In 1892, he opened Caffé A. Ferrara, at 195 Grand Street in New York City. Ferrara’s quickly became famous for the wide variety and outstanding freshness of its coffee, cookies, and cakes. Sfogliatella Napoletana is a delicate, layered, clamshell-shaped pastry, usually filled with semolina farina, ricotta cheese, candied fruits, and nuts. During World War II, American servicemen with Italian ancestry requested that Ferrara’s cookies be sent to them in Europe. It was the beginning of Ferrara’s mail-order business. In Anthony’s time, Ferrara’s still sells the most exquisite Italian pastries in the United States.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** Lombardi’s Pizzeria [New York, NY, 212-941-7994, www.lombardispizza.com]; Ferrara’s Café [New York, NY, 212-226-6150, www.ferrara cafe.com].

17. Anthony is describing Pizza Margherita, prepared in the classic Neapolitan style. In 1889, Queen Margherita of Italy asked Raffaele Esposito, the owner of a restaurant near the palace in Naples, to cook a pizza dinner for the royal family. Raffaele prepared three pizzas: Pizza alla Mastunicola, a pungent cheese and lard pizza; Pizza alla Marinara, a seafood pizza with anchovies; and Pizza alla Mozzarella, a cheese pizza. On a patriotic impulse, Raffaele placed bright green leaves of basil on top of the cheese pizza to match the colors of the Italian flag—red, white, and green. Raffaele named the new pizza, Pizza Margherita, in honor of the Queen.

Like most Americans, Anthony has eaten a lot of bad pizza, but the situation in America is improving. In 1984, Antonio Pace, the owner of one of the oldest Pizza restaurants in Naples, Italy, founded the Association for True Neapolitan Pizza. The Association published specifications for True Neapolitan Pizza and began a formal program of training pizza chefs and certifying pizza restaurants in the United States and around the world. To eat a pizza that is similar to the pizza Anthony ate in 1913, look for a pizza restaurant that displays the sign: “Vera Pizza Napoletana [Certified True Neapolitan Pizza].” The specifications for True Neapolitan Pizza include: Pizza dough must consist of only flour, natural yeast, and water; the dough must be kneaded by hand or with an approved mixer; the dough must be formed by hand without the help of a rolling pin or any other mechanical device; the pizza must be round, no more than 14 inches in diameter, no thicker than 0.1 inches in the middle and with a crust of about 0.8 inches; toppings for the pizza must be sparing, but should include imported Italian tomatoes, olive oil, and buffalo mozzarella cheese; the pizza must be cooked in a bell shaped, wood-fired, stone oven; the oven temperature must be between 800°F and 900°F.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *Pizza*, by Rosario Buonassisi [1552093212, NF, MS+]; *Pizza: A Slice of Heaven*, by Ed Livine [0789312050, NF, MS+]; *Pizza Napoletana*, by Pamela Johns, [1580080855, NF, MS+]; *Lou Monte Sings Songs for Pizza Lovers* [Collectables, 1999]; *That’s Amore* [Dean Martin, 1954].

18. Antonio Gaetano Family Archive (hereafter cited as: AGFA).

19. It is difficult for people in Anthony’s time to imagine the hardships and the terror endured by World War I soldiers in the trenches. Charging across No Man’s Land into withering machine gun fire was futile and deadly, but daily living in the trenches had its own special horrors. In the trenches, soldiers had to contend with unceasing artillery shelling (causing the mentally debilitating condition called “shell shock”), being surrounded by poorly buried dead bodies, poison gas attacks, trench cave-ins, rats, lice, malaria-carrying mosquitoes, poor sanitation, shortages of drinkable water, hunger, poor nutrition and poor hygiene (causing the gum disease called “trench mouth”), puddles of standing water (causing rotted boots and the disease called “trench foot”), and extremes of weather.

The only good thing to come out of trench warfare was the trench coat: The fashionable trench coat worn in Anthony’s time is a descendant of the gabardine military coats worn by British, Canadian, and French soldiers during World War I. Invented in England in 1880 by Thomas Burberry, gabardine is a breathable fabric made from wool yarn that is waterproofed before weaving. In 1901, Burberry was commissioned by England’s War Office to design a new service uniform for British officers; he designed a full-length gabardine military coat. In 1914, Burberry adapted the design of the coat to accommodate the military equipment of World War I, and the trench coat was born. The World War I trench coat had cuff straps on the sleeves, epaulettes to hold gloves and a service cap, and a belt with small brass D-rings to secure grenades, side arms, and swords.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *World War I Trench Warfare: 1914–1916* and *World War I Trench Warfare: 1916–1918*, by Stephen Bull [1841761974 and 1841761982, NF, MS+].

20. Antonio Gaetano attended DeWitt Clinton High School (DWCHS) in Manhattan, NY, at the same time as Thomas Waller (DWCHS Class of 1917) and Richard Rodgers (DWCHS Class of 1919). Thomas “Fats” Waller became a jazz musician and composer and is credited with writing over 450 jazz tunes; one of his most famous is Ain’t Misbehavin’ [1929]. Richard Rodgers became a composer and is famous for

the musical and theater productions he wrote in collaboration with his partner, Oscar Hammerstein.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *State Fair* [1945, NR]; *Oklahoma!* [1955, NR]; *Carousel* [1956, NR]; *The King and I* [1956, NR]; *South Pacific* [1958, NR]; *The Sound of Music* [1965, NR]; *The Definitive Fats Waller* [Jazz Classics, 1996]; *The Very Best of Fats Waller* [RCA, 2000].

21. The Italian Reparti d’Assalto, or Arditi, were the world’s first Special Forces. The Arditi were assigned the dangerous role of breaching enemy defenses and preparing the way for a broader infantry advance. Anthony described in accurate detail the tactics employed by the Arditi in overcoming and taking an enemy trench, but on a successful mission, the Arditi would remain in the secured enemy trench until the Italian infantry arrived. Then, the Arditi would proceed to the second or third line enemy trench, continuing their advance into enemy territory as the Italian infantry followed behind the fast-moving assault troops. The typical Arditi soldier carried twenty-five hand grenades (to be used as Anthony described in his narrative), a carbine rifle, and a dagger. The dagger was the symbol of Arditi aggressiveness and eagerness for hand-to-hand combat; military recruiting posters often depicted the dagger as being carried in the teeth.

The men who joined the Arditi had a reputation for bold action, fearlessness, and daring. They also had a reputation for defiance of authority: The official Arditi slogan was “Me ne frego [I don’t give a damn]!” Living in the trenches was actually limited for the Arditi. They often slept in barracks behind the front lines, and were driven to the front when ordered to attack the enemy. The Arditi also had other benefits to compensate them for their dangerous missions and unusually high casualty rates: They received higher pay, better food, and wine to drink.

The idea of creating units of fast-moving assault troops was first proposed by Captain Guiseppe Bassi in 1916. In June 1917, Bassi opened the first training camp for Reparti d’Assalto, near Gorizia, Italy. The camp moved to Sdricca di Manzano, in northeastern Italy, and was destroyed in November 1917 during the Battle of Caporetto. At the end of the war, the Italian government quickly demobilized the Reparti d’Assalto because the units became active with the political parties vying for power in postwar Italy. By 1920, all of the Arditi units were disbanded.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *Italian Arditi*, by Angelo Pirocchi [1841766860, NF, MS+]; *The Italian Army of World War I*, by David Nicolle [1841763985, NF, MS+].

22. Anthony is quoting Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892), English poet, from: *Charge of the Light Brigade*. Tennyson’s poem memorializes the suicidal charge made by British forces over open terrain in the Battle of Balaclava (Ukraine) in the Crimean War on October 25, 1854.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *The Charge of the Light Brigade* [1936, NR].

23. The Battle of Caporetto was a disaster for the Italians, who suffered 500,000 casualties, 40,000 killed, and 250,000 taken prisoner. By the end of November 1917, the surviving remnants of the Italian military had been pushed back to the Piave River. The Italians dug in and held the new line, and even made some advances in 1918, but the German offensive had seriously devastated the Italian forces and crippled morale. In Anthony’s time, Italians still say, “It’s a Caporetto,” when describing an event as a “complete disaster.”

The fighting on the Austrian front along the Isonzo River, and the Battle of Caporetto in particular, became the backdrop for American novelist Ernest Hemingway’s classic story, *A Farewell to Arms*. In the novel, an American ambulance driver, Lieutenant Frederick Henry, falls in love with an English nurse, Catherine Barkley, and their passion plays out in a world weary of the pointless war. Hemingway’s description of the Battle of Caporetto, and the retreat in the rain of hungry, weary, and demoralized Italian soldiers, is vivid and memorable. The story also has a foundation in Hemingway’s own experiences during World War I: Hemingway was an ambulance driver for the Red Cross on the Austrian front, and he fell in love with a Red Cross nurse, Agnes Kurowsky, who later declined to marry him.

For his service in the Battle of Caporetto, Antonio Gaetano was awarded Italy’s War Merit Cross in 1918. In 1968, Antonio Gaetano was knighted in the Order of Vittorio Veneto, and awarded the Gold Medal Commemorative of World War I Service. [Source: AGFA.]

24. In 1914, during the first Christmas of World War I, there was a short-lived, unofficial ceasefire, called the “Silent Night” truce. Against orders, soldiers in opposing trenches called out to each other, shared Christmas greetings, and sang *Silent Night* together; some soldiers even ventured out into No Man’s Land to meet their enemies and exchange gifts.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *Silent Night, Holy Night: The Christmas Truce*, by Walter Cronkite [1590381661, NF, MS+]; *Going My Way* [1944, NR]; *Christmas in the Trenches* [John McCutcheon, 1984].

25. Scopa [Broom] is a popular Italian card game that is played with a deck of 40 cards, divided into four suits called Soldi [Coins], Coppe [Cups], Spade [Swords], and Bastoni [Clubs]. The object is to “sweep” the table of cards by playing certain hands. Scopa can be played with a standard American deck of cards by removing the picture cards.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *Card Games Around the World*, by Sid Sackson [0486281000, NF, MS+].

26. AGFA.

27. There were also other U.S. Army units in the area. In December 1917, the U.S. Army sent a detachment of five hundred men to the Austrian Front to learn air warfare tactics from the Italians. The Italians were early pioneers in the use of aircraft in battle—they had more than 145 airplanes at the Austrian front, and they flew more than 200 sorties a day during battle. In July 1918, when the U.S. Army’s 332nd Infantry Regiment arrived, there were still about 100 American pilots training at the Austrian Front, under the command of American pilot Captain Fiorello La Guardia. Before the war, Fiorello La Guardia worked as an interpreter at Ellis Island. After the war, La Guardia became a U.S. Congressman, and then served as the mayor of New York for three terms. La Guardia became known as a political reformer, a bit of a showman, but was mostly acknowledged for bettering the city of New York. New York’s La Guardia Airport is named after him. Although he was an American, La Guardia was awarded the Italian War Merit Cross for his service on the Austrian Front during World War I.

28. As Anthony correctly points out, humans get malaria from the bite of a malaria-infected mosquito. The symptoms of malaria include fever, shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. If not promptly treated, malaria can cause kidney failure, seizures, mental confusion, coma, and death. During World War I, the only treatment for malaria was quinine, a white crystalline alkaloid with a bitter taste, derived from the bark of the South American cinchona tree. Jesuit missionaries brought cinchona bark to Europe, and quinine was isolated as the active ingredient in 1820. Because it reduced fever, pain, and inflammation, people began drinking quinine-laced water as a tonic for many ailments, not only for malaria. In 1870, the Schweppes Company introduced a carbonated soft drink flavored with quinine, and called it Schweppes Tonic Water. British soldiers

in India hated the bitter taste of the new tonic water, and they began mixing it with alcohol, mostly gin (inventing the adult drink, the “gin and tonic”). In Anthony’s time, the amount of quinine in tonic water is too small to have any medicinal effect.

Quinine can cure a bout of malaria, but it is not a vaccine; people can be reinfected with the disease by another mosquito bite. In Anthony’s time, malaria remains a terrible killer: Eradicated in the United States through the use of pesticides—mostly DDT—to kill malaria-carrying mosquitoes, malaria still claims nearly two million lives each year in other parts of the world, mostly in South America and Africa. Although it is the most effective tool to eradicate malaria-carrying mosquitoes, DDT was banned in the United States and around the world in 1972. A book written by Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* [061825305X, NF, HS+], turned public opinion against the use of DDT by claiming that the chemical contaminated the human food supply, caused cancer, and killed birds. The book also helped to spark an environmental movement in the United States.

✓ **Anthony Recommends:** *Malaria, West Nile, and Other Mosquito-Borne Diseases*, by Nancy Day [0766015971, NF, MS+]; *The Hellstrom Chronicle* [1971, G]; *Big Yellow Taxi* [Joni Mitchell, 1970]; *Mercy Mercy Me* [Marvin Gaye, 1971].

29. The Allied Powers mobilized 42,188,810 men during The Great War; the Central Powers mobilized 22,850,000. By the end of the war, there were 8,528,831 killed, 21,189,154 wounded, and 7,750,919 missing or taken prisoner—37,468,904 casualties. Italy mobilized 5,615,000 men, lost 650,000 men, and suffered 2,197,000 casualties. The United States mobilized 4,355,000 men, lost 116,516 men, and suffered 323,018 casualties. People called World War I the “War to End All Wars,” but even in that, it failed. [Source: “Armed Forces Mobilized and Casualties in World War I,” U.S. War Department, 1924, amended 1957.]

30. Passenger Manifest: SS *Dante Alighieri*, Left Naples 11/17/1920, Arrived New York 12/2/1920.

31. Restaurant entrepreneurs Joe Horn and Frank Hardart opened the first Automat in Philadelphia on June 9, 1902. The “Automatic Restaurant” was based on a food-serving machine that Frank Hardart purchased in Europe. Success in Philadelphia was immediate and the two men expanded the menu, opened more restaurants, and introduced American-made serving machines. On July 2, 1912, the first Automat in New York City was opened at 46th Street and Broadway in Times Square—the Automat in which Anthony and Antonio had lunch in 1920. The Automat in New York was popular with businessmen: They raved to their wives about the delicious food they ate at