

Garibaldi-Meucci Museum: A Very Special Visit

Alice Bonvicini (February 17, 2011)



The President of the Commission for the 150th anniversary of Italy's unification, Giuliano Amato, spends an afternoon in Staten Island. "Garibaldi and Meucci represent two great Italian ideals: courage and creativity." OUR VIDEO COMING SOON

Giuliano Amato, the President of the Commission for the 150th anniversary of the Italian Unification, began his New York visit on the first warm day of one of the coldest winters in recorded history. The visit took place at the [Garibaldi-Meucci Museum](#) [2] in Staten Island.

Present at the event were Italian Consul General Francesco Maria Talò, Chairman of the Museum Keith Wilson, President of the [Order Sons of Italy](#) [3] Joseph D. Trapani, who manages the museum,



Joseph Sciame, Vice-president for Community Relations at [St. John's University](#) [4] and former president of OSIA, Silvana Mangione, Vice General Secretary fo [CGIE](#) [5] and Angelo Vinciguerra, Vice-president of [Comites New York and Connecticut](#) [6].

Upon arrival, Prof. Amato laid a crown of flowers upon the monument of Antonio Meucci, in the museum's garden. About thirty students of the Scuola d'Italia G. Marconi were also awaiting for him. They sang the Italian national anthem, and were joined by the ex-Prime Minister. Together with listening to Amato's brief excursus about the Italian unification, the students also had the opportunity of visiting the two-floor villa, once the home of the two illustrious Italians.

The beautiful Victorian style house in Staten Island, the borough with the highest concentration of Italian-Americans in the United States, hosted Garibaldi and Meucci between 1850 and 1853. The two survived by making and selling candles. It is also where the latter perfected the invention of the telephone. One of the museum's missions is, in fact, to preserve the heritage of Antonio Meucci, the first true inventor of the telephone. The President of the Commission for the 150th anniversary of Italy's unification speaking of his afternoon in Staten Island remarked how Garibaldi and Meucci represent two great Italian ideals: courage and creativity.

The Order Sons of Italy has managed the museum since 1919, and Keith Wilson explained that in spite of being recognized as a cultural landmark it is not supported by the New York City or State, and that it desperately needs funding. Amato, recognizing the cultural value of the site committed to do as much as possible to contribute to maintaining the museum alive.

Consul General Francesco Maria Talò underscored how Garibaldi and Meucci are emblems of the many values that Italy and America share. Being an advocate of getting out of Manhattan to discover where the Italian American community lives and operates, he highlighted the importance of President Amato's stop in Staten Island. Finally, he spoke about the celebrations for the the 150th anniversary of Italy's unification, which will soon take place in America and especially in New York. During his short yet eventful trip to New York, President Amato also conducted the First Gaetano Salvemini Lecture at the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [7], "Italy: An Old and Unfinished Nation."

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