

LEGEND OF SAN FELE'S MADONNA.

BEN
8/8/1900

Next Wednesday Will Be One
of Special Celebration in
the Italian Colony.

MIRACLE OF OUR LADY OF PIERNO.

All the Italian Catholics of Buf-
falo Will Be Invited to Join
With Those of Basi-
licata.

On Wednesday, Aug. 15, the people of Buffalo will have an opportunity to see, as it were, a portion of Europe transposed to America.

On that date will occur the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, a holy day of obligation through Catholic Christendom and one of the greatest days on the calendar of the church.

But while Catholics throughout the world will observe the attendance at mass and the other obligations of the day, the Italian Catholics of the Province of Basilicata, in the south of Italy, will celebrate it in a peculiar manner. Likewise the Italian Catholics of Erie and Niagara county who came originally from San Fele and other places in Basilicata Province will also celebrate the feast of the Madonna di Pierno. The other Italians will be invited to join with them in the observances and will doubtless do so.

The legend of the Madonna di Pierno, as related to a NEWS reporter by Father Ludovic Martinelli, rector of the Church of St. Anthony of Padua, is as follows:

LEGEND OF THE VIRGIN.

In the year 1554 a shepherd boy who was tending his flock on Mount Pierno, about four miles from the village of San Fele, saw an image of the Virgin Mary standing near a tree. He reported his discovery to the village folks, who removed the image from the forest and placed it in the village church.

The next morning when the church was opened the people were amazed to find that the image was missing. A search was organized and the image was found at precisely the same place in the forest where it was originally discovered. The village people declared that the transference of the image at the dead of night was a miracle and that it was the plain intention of heaven that the statue of the Virgin should remain on the mountain as a forest shrine. In commemoration of the event a great church and shrine has been built at San Fele and to San Fele every year on August 15 pilgrimages are made by the people of Basilicata and adjoining provinces.

It is this same feast of Our Lady of Pierno which the San Fele families of Erie and Niagara counties will celebrate. An organization of which Vito Christiano, the well-known interpreter, is president, has been formed for the purpose of celebrating the festival in a manner surpassing anything which has ever before been known in this city. Subscriptions are rapidly pouring in and several thousand dollars will be raised.

BAND WILL PLAY.

One of the peculiar customs attending the celebration is this: On the day before Assumption, or "Assunta," as the Italians call it, a band will march throughout the Italian colony. It will not be accompanied by any other marchers, nor will there be anything to show what is the purpose of the marching and music. But the husband on the doorstep will say to his wife, or the wife to the husband: "What is the band playing for?" and the other, perhaps after thought, will reply: "Why, tomorrow is the day of Our Lady of Pierno."

On Assumption Sunday the Italians will attend the solemn high mass belonging to the day, as will all other Catholics. But in the afternoon the band will parade again throughout the Italian colony. In the evening the whole Italian section will be beautifully illuminated. West Morgan and Genesee streets will be brilliantly adorned with Japanese lanterns, transparencies of all sorts and other illuminations. There will be music and social reunions all through the afternoon and evening, and at night there will be an elaborate display of fireworks.

Thus will the Italians of San Fele celebrate the miracle of the Madonna di Pierno. It is expected that at least 20,000 Italians of Erie and Niagara counties will participate.

CELEBRATED MADONNA FEAST

BC
8/16/1903

Great Festival Which Had
Its Origin 300 Years Ago
at Pierno Commemorated
By Buffalo's Italian.

The Feast of the Madonna di Pierno was celebrated yesterday by the Italians of Buffalo in common with the rest of the Catholic world on a scale of magnificence that has seldom been equalled in this city. It was a general holiday in "Little Italy" and the great festival, which had its origin 300 years ago at Pierno, where an image of the Madonna was found near San Fele, was celebrated with much enthusiasm. Most of Buffalo's Italian population hails from San Fele, which accounts for the manner in which the feast was observed.

The feast is most elaborately observed at San Fele, where the four miles intervening between that point and Pierno are by night one mass of glittering illumination and brilliant pyrotechnics. It is celebrated on August 15 by Italians all over the world. This year in Buffalo the preliminaries of the feast began on Friday with music and fireworks, but the main celebration was at the church of St. Anthony de Padua all day yesterday and until 10 o'clock last night.

The celebration opened yesterday morning, starting from the Italian church at Court and Morgan streets about 8 o'clock, and marching through the Italian district, headed by Grand Marshal Vincent Christiano and Signor Pietro Licari's Band of thirty-two pieces playing national and popular airs. Conspicuous in the parade were the officials of the day, including President M. A. Crago of the Society of St. Anthony de Padua; master of fireworks, Donato Gregorio; treasurer, Domenico Vaccaro, and Francesco Rubino, Vito Gregorio, Francesco Vast, Fonzio Pepe, Pasquale Giallilla, and Antonio Gulli, wearing red, white, and green badges, representing the Italian colors.

Five masses were celebrated between 8 o'clock and noon by Father Casassa, rector of the Church of St. Anthony de Padua, assisted by Father Pacifico and the capacity of the sacred edifice was taxed to its uttermost.

In the evening the vicinity of Court and Morgan streets was ablaze with rockets, red fire, and costly fireworks, including a massive castellation which was reserved until the last. Licari's Band occupied a stand over which was a gay canopy of Japanese lanterns. The front of the church was festooned with this brilliant sort of decoration.

It was a grand turnout of the Italian population and from the looks of the throng which fronted the church and lined adjacent cross streets it seemed as if everyone of the 7,000 San Fele Italians in Buffalo was present. The band played as only Licari's Band can, fine selections, starting off with "The Curtain Raiser," followed by "The Royal March," "Comin' Thro' the Rye," "An Autumn Bird," "I Wish the Band Would Play," "Fillippa" and a number of waltzes, winding up with "The Star Spangled Banner," in which the crowd joined lustily.

The committee of arrangements covered itself with glory and they desire to express their gratitude to the Buffalo Catholics of other nationalities who so generously extended their financial aid, and thus contributed to the grandest celebration of this feast thus far held by the Italians of this city.