

# GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI

## "The George Washington of Italy"

Garibaldi was born in Nice in 1807, son of a small time sea captain. Short were his schooldays and most of them spent on the waterfront. At twelve he was already before the mast on his way to Odessa, Constantinople, and points east. (At 13 he had already saved two children from drowning.) He was 18 when he sailed up the Tiber to Rome. The world's ancient capital made an indelible impression on him.

One day in 1833 at Taganrog on the Black Sea, Garibaldi met another Ligurian who spoke to him of Mazzini and first inflamed his mind with the ideal of a lifetime: the freeing of Italy from foreign and domestic tyrants. He joined the secret "Giovane Italia" Society and enrolled in the Piedmontese navy to start a revolt, which failed. Sentenced to death, he fled to Marseilles. Enrolled in the flotilla of the Bey of Tunis, he reappeared in Marseilles to help the sick of the 1835 cholera epidemic. In December 1835 he embarked for Rio.

At the head of a band of Italian and South American liberals, Garibaldi spent 13 years of almost continuous fighting in South America, first as a sea captain in aid of the Republic of Rio Grande do Sul against the Brazilian Emperor, then in defense of Uruguay against Rosas, tyrant of Argentina. Shot once through the neck, captured and tortured at Gualaguay, Garibaldi roamed the great forests and plains between the Parana and the sea, leading his men into endless skirmish and battle. The phrase "Repubblica Italiana" already appeared on his flag in these years.

In 1839, minutes after meeting her, he asked 18-year-old Anita Riberas to follow him. She did, and fought at his side. Captured, she broke away and fled through the wilderness to rejoin him. They married. Their first born (Menotti) was often carried, slung in a kerchief from Garibaldi's neck, as the couple swam the rivers of the wild country they crossed. Later, in Rome, she was with him on the battlements. During the ensuing escape, she died in his arms in the forest of Comacchio. No girl known to history ever lived such a decade of love and battle with the man who was her fate.

Then in 1848 the trumpets of freedom sounded through Europe, Garibaldi with his "Italian Legion" sailed for Italy. The Old World now rang with his legend. He was no longer the obscure sailor who had fled with a price on his head 14 years before. On hearing that Carlo Alberto (the king who had sentenced him) was at war with the Austrians, Garibaldi forgave and joined him. With his volunteers, Garibaldi won at Luino, Varese, and Morazzone. But the Austrians carried the war.

The Roman Republic lasted from November 1848 to July 1849, when the French army finally overwhelmed the besieged. Not one who then died there dared hope that a few thousand volunteers could withstand the armies of Napoleon III, Franz Joseph, and the Neapolitan Bourbons, all vying for the honor of crushing freedom. Yet the blood of Italians from so many states of the Peninsula, dripping intermingled into the rubble of the Janiculum walls, was to raise the idea of a United Italy from a dream to a necessity.

The triumvirate (Mazzini, Armellini and Saffi) governed Rome well and justly. Garibaldi arrived with his volunteers and, though denied supreme army command, exercised it through the power of fascination. Twice he sortied to drive away the Bourbon armies to the south, and was wounded. On April 30, 1849, he defeated the French on the northern ramparts. When they re-appeared, reinforced, a month later, he led his men recklessly from dawn to nightfall to break the siege. But it closed in. The Republic was doomed.

The Vascello, Casa dei Quattro Venti, Porta San Pancrazio, are names that live in legend. While cannons pounded the houses of poor and rich alike, the Romans rushed to the walls as in the days of Horatius at the Bridge. Garibaldi's officers fell by the score. They were the flower of many noted northern families: Masina, Dandolo, Manara . . . Mameli, who had written the hymn which was to become today's Italian national anthem, was 22. It was after nightfall when he begged Garibaldi to let him join the charge which was to be his, and the battle's last.

A thousand-odd men followed Garibaldi in his escape. With three European armies closing in, he led them, mostly at night, across the Apennines to San Marino. There they dis-

banded. Garibaldi himself embarked on the Adriatic, but the Austrian gunboats forced him ashore. He carried his warrior-wife, who was with child and ill, through the forest combed by Austrian soldiers. In a shack she died. Through the night, Garibaldi fled south with one last wounded companion. Those who helped them on their way, if caught, were shot.

From hand to midnight hand, Garibaldi was passed back, by patriots, over the Apennines into Tuscany. In the plains behind him the Austrian firing squads were adding to the roster of Risorgimento martyrs men and boys who had helped Garibaldi hold Rome: Father Ugo Bassi, the Redshirts' chaplain; Ciceruacchio, who had led the Roman populace to the ramparts, and his son, who was 13. But Garibaldi could not turn back to share their fate. His life's work was still unfinished.

On the shore of Tuscany, in a lonely dawn, the hounded general finally boarded a fishing smack. To Nice (expelled), to Tunis (expelled), then to Tangiers, Liverpool, and finally (December 1850) New York where his welcome was commensurate to his fame. Antonio Meucci, a Tuscan-born scientist of Staten Island, who was tinkering on a contraption later to become the telephone, asked him into his house. There he lived, restless, helping his host make candles for a living, his ears ever listening to the distant rumbles from Italy, crushed but not spent.

From Staten Island, Garibaldi departed on distant voyages—to China, Australasia, Chile, Peru. In January 1854 he left Staten Island for good to meet Mazzini in London. The two great revolutionary idealists now found that they differed: while Mazzini clung to his republicanism, Garibaldi had veered to the persuasion that without the help of Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont Italy could never break her shackles. Readmitted to Piedmont, Garibaldi met Cavour and the King, pledging his sword in any future war of liberation.

The second Risorgimento war (1859) found Garibaldi leading the *Cacciatori delle Alpi*, a volunteer corps within the (?...)\*nontese army. He beat the Austrian General Urban at Varese and San Fermo, and entered Brescia. The hasty peace of Villafranco, which left Venetia still in Austrian hands, cooled, but did not destroy Garibaldi's faith in Victor Emmanuel and Cavour. He was right. Nine months later Cavour blinked both eyes and proffered a hidden hand when Garibaldi and his "One Thousand" embarked from Pied-

montese waters on the craziest undertaking known to military history.

On the night of May 5, 1860, from the rock of Quarto near Genoa, Garibaldi embarked on two steamers with 1073 men. His destination: Sicily. His intent: to tear from the Bourbon kings of Naples the whole of southern Italy. Few of his men were regular soldiers, most were boys who fled home at the Garibaldi call. At Talamone, he landed to raid a Tuscan arsenal for weapons. The Neapolitan navy scouring the area missed him. He put foot on Sicilian soil at Marsala on May 11. Now, only a kingdom to conquer lay before him.

They must conquer or must die who have no retreat . . . To kindle rebellion in Sicily and acquire fresh volunteers, "The Thousand" could afford nothing less than immediate victory. On May 15, 1860, at Calatafimi, they met the first Bourbon army—5000 strong. With no cannon, no cavalry, Garibaldi attacked at the point of the bayonet. He drove all before him. Though he squandered men on the bloody slopes and appeared himself to be seeking death, the victory, echoing through the island, gave him a new lease on life. Sicilians rose and started to help in earnest. "The Thousand" were on their way.

Though "The Thousand" were still fighting one against ten, Garibaldi's fame of invincibility now made up for the missing nine. Centuries of misrule almost exploded in his face, as the "picciotti" (Sicilian boys) came flocking to his banners. In great silence, on the night of May 26, he marched his men around Palermo to break in where least expected. Three days of street-to-street fighting followed, while the helping population was decimated by the guns of the fort. The liberation of Palermo awoke Europe to the realization that the redshirted "bandits" were making history.

While Europe gaped, and Cavour from Turin maneuvered to stave off foreign intervention, Garibaldi and his swelling army of volunteers defeated the Bourbons again at Milazzo, crossed the Strait, marched up the mountains of Calabria and entered Naples. Led by Francis II himself, the Bourbon army, still strong, rallied on the Volturno. On October 1, in a two-day maneuvered battle, Garibaldi broke its backbone forever. In the meanwhile the Piedmontese were descending through the Papal States, beating Lamoriciere and his Swiss and Belgians at Castelfidardo, to join the North with South.

At Teano, north of Naples, on Oct. 26th, Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont

\*First part of word is missing. Ed

and Garibaldi met. With one phrase "Saluto il primo Re d'Italia!" Garibaldi surrendered his powers over the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily. For the first time since the fall of ancient Rome, Italy was united from the Alps to Sicily's tip. The King offered Garibaldi an estate, a castle, a ship . . . They were refused. Aboard the boat which was to take him to Caprera, the lonely island he had acquired years before off the tip of Sardinia, Garibaldi placed a bag of seed-corn. At the last minute, he had to borrow a few hundred lire for his immediate needs.

Only Rome and Venetia now remained to be joined to unite Italy. Garibaldi's heart burned especially for Rome where so many comrades had fallen 13 years before. In 1862 he was again in Sicily recruiting volunteers for a dash ("O Roma, o Morte!") on the Eternal City. In August he crossed the Strait only to be intercepted, at Aspromonte, by the fire of Italian soldiers. Garibaldi paced in front of his men to keep them from answering, until a bullet smashed his ankle. Technically a prisoner, he reaffirmed his allegiance to the Italian Crown, and returned to Caprera to nurse his wound.

Leading a volunteer corps in the 1866 war, Garibaldi marched up the Trentino valley defeating the Austrians at Monte Suello and Bezzecca. He was converging on Trento when the Italian headquarters ordered him to stop and await the impending armistice. This meant that the Trentino was to be abandoned. Yet Garibaldi answered with his famous "Ubbidisco" (I obey). The next year (1867) he made his last attempt on Rome. With his two sons, he crossed the Papal border winning at Monterotondo, only to see his Red-shirts decimated at Mentana by the French with their new repeating rifles.

Now 63, the aging warrior's ear was cocked to the call of republican guns. On learning that France (1870) had proclaimed a Republic, and was holding out against the Germans, he rushed, with his Red-shirts and sons, to Dijon where he won for the French one of the few battles of their losing war. Back in Caprera he rarely left his seagirt fastness. Dreaming of universal brotherhood he wrote, tilled the stony island, and planted the pine woods which stand tall there today.

On the evening of June 2, 1882, the old sailor and farmer sat, propped with pillows, in his armchair overlooking the lonely island and the sea-path of the setting of the sun. Two birds, whom he used to feed, alighted on the sill

and started chirping. Someone was about to scatter them when "no, let them be," he said. The voice which had rung out in 50 battles, none but for freedom fought, had given its last order.

(Note: The foregoing account of our valiant hero's part in man's eternal struggle against tyranny and oppression was forwarded to us by Brother Charles Sanna and is contained in a brochure describing the Garibaldi and Meucci Memorial Museum, at 420 Tompkins Avenue, Rosebank, Staten Island, N.Y. We are indebted to the author, Mr. Lino S. Lipinsky, for the permission which he so kindly gave to reprint this. Mr. Lipinsky is Director of the Museum, which is owned by the Order of the Sons of Italy in America. It is located in the same house where Garibaldi took refuge, as a guest of Antonio Meucci, after the fall of the Roman Republic in 1849.)

Brother Walter R. Harbeson submits the following Masonic information from article in "10,000 Famous Freemasons."

While in Uruguay Garibaldi became a member of Lodge Les Amis de Patrie about 1844. When he came to the United States he affiliated with Tompkins Lodge No. 471, Stapleton, Staten Island, N.Y. In 1860 he became Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Palermo, and in 1867 called a convention to unite all the Italian bodies, which however was not successful. He was an honorary member of the Egyptian Rite of Memphis. In 1863 he was elected Grand Commander of the Supreme Council 33 AASR, in Italy. Garibaldi Lodge No. 542, New York City, was named in his honor. It was warranted on June 11, 1864 while he was Grand Master of Italy.

The monument erected to Garibaldi in Rome had large bronze wreaths superimposed on it, acknowledging him as the Grand Master of Italy. These were removed during the Mussolini period but were restored in 1956.

Among Garibaldi's writings is contained the following significant statement: "Whenever there is a human cause, we are certain to find Freemasonry, for it is the fundamental basis of all true liberal associations. Thank all my brethren and tell them with all my heart, that forever I will pride myself upon my Masonic connection."

What could be more Masonic than the words on the Francis Scott Key American Credo stamp (U.S. #1142): "And this be our Motto, in GOD is our TRUST." This stamp belongs in every collection of Masonry on Stamps."



**Brother Giuseppe Garibaldi in 1866**



The Garibaldi-Meucci Museum in Rosebank, Staten Island, where Garibaldi resided during his time in New York.



Italy #289



USA #1168