



# THE HISTORIC COUNTY

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NEWSLETTER OF THE  
PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bloomingtondale • Clifton • Haledon • Hawthorne • Little Falls • North Haledon  
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## GAETANO FEDERICI

(1880-1964)

### SCULPTOR LAUREATE OF PATERSON

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE ON THE  
50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF HIS PASSING

by E. A. Smyk, Passaic County Historian

In the city of Paterson's long and sometimes tumultuous history, people of outstanding ability, through their creative gifts and exertions, have left behind remarkable, even lofty records of accomplishment.

In the life of sculptor Gaetano Federici, who died in his beloved city fifty years ago, on February 15, 1964, the achievements of this self-effacing, humble artisan could be summarized as one extended chapter in artistic greatness. During a much acclaimed career spanning several decades, Federici, with exquisite sensitivity and confident self-assurance, managed to instill nothing less than the soul of humanity in each of the bronze statuary that grace the Silk City's public spaces. It is almost as if this near indefinable quality has retained a strength and vigor that defies time itself, forever embedded in Federici's larger than life figures.

The forthright sculptor, with pardonable pride and a sure sense of history, offered a far less metaphysical explanation. In a 1931 newspaper interview, he said with emphatic certitude that, "the sculptors and artists whose work will endure will be those who have striven for the creation of true likenesses of people, scenes and events." Federici could never be accused of inconsistency. Almost three decades later, while working with ebbing strength on what he called his last "heroic effort," the statue of Bishop Thomas H. McLaughlin, Federici noted,



**Gaetano Federici: confident, immensely talented and blessed with sculptural greatness, ca. 1924.**

(Kemp Studio photo, Paterson, N.J.)

"to do this kind of work properly, you have to be very, very active, practically an acrobat. At least you have to be to give the work a personal touch. And when I sign my work, it is my own."

The life of an artist, painter and sculptor is not an easy one. Even Mozart and Haydn found their struggles eased through the financial support of powerful, highly placed patrons. Federici found his sponsor in the person of *Paterson Evening News* Publisher Harry B. Haines, a man who enjoyed being a formidable player in Paterson's power and influence game. The Federici-Haines connection can be traced to 1911, when Haines commissioned the sculptor to produce a marble tablet in memory of his father, the recently deceased Edward B. Haines. Over many decades, the relationship deepened into one of genuine affection. Haines was no shrinking violet: a short, volcano of energy that was admired in some quarters, but feared in others for using the pages of his newspaper as an instrument for boldly proclaiming what he thought salutary or detrimental to the city's welfare.

Haines accurately perceived that residing in Federici was a great reservoir of talent, and that such talent could be

tapped in creating an impressive array of public statuary, all for memorializing important personages and beautifying the city. Further, Haines, a businessman of the first rank, shrewdly realized that in steering commissions to Federici, the triumphal results of

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**PASSAIC COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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Lambert Castle, a picturesque 1892 Victorian mansion located on the Garret Mountain Reserve, is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Castle is operated and managed by the Passaic County Historical Society, a not-for-profit 501(c) educational institution.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**March 8  
Saturday**

**PCHS Genealogy Club Meeting.** 10 a.m. at Lambert Castle. Tips and Tricks for Successful Research Using Ancestry.com, by Toni McKeen.

**April 24-27  
Thursday-Sunday**

**The Victorian Tea.** Join us this spring for our annual Victorian Tea at Lambert Castle. Seat times and program to be announced.

**April 12  
Saturday**

**PCHS Genealogy Club Meeting.** 10 a.m. at Lambert Castle. Speaker to be announced.

**May 7  
Wednesday**

**PCHS Annual Meeting.** 7 p.m. at Lambert Castle. Business meeting of the Society, followed by *Blueberries: New Jersey's Wonder Fruit*. The blueberry has its roots in the Pinelands of New Jersey. Discover the history of this fascinating berry and the contributions Elizabeth White of Whitesbog made to its cultivation. Learn why the blueberry is touted as the wonder fruit with a host of healthful benefits and hear about the variety of ways to prepare and savor these berries. Program presented by Judith Krall-Russo, Food Historian. Free admission to the public.

We are presently planning more events and programs for the new year. Please check our web page for updated information: [lambertcastle.org](http://lambertcastle.org)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Maria Carparelli

**AROUND THE CASTLE**

During October and November, part of our highly acclaimed Silk Strike Exhibit was installed at the North Jersey Credit Union in Totowa. Visitors to the Credit Union enjoyed learning about the 1913 Paterson Silk Strike and its impact on the area.

PCHS recently received a bequest, to be used for conservation purposes. Lillian Jean Wardle, a former docent at Lambert Castle and member of PCHS, passed away in December of 2012, and was thoughtful enough to remember our organization in her will. Representatives from the Wardle Estate plan to visit the Castle in the near future to discuss the use of the bequest. We are most grateful for Ms. Wardle's generosity and look forward to revitalizing parts of our collection in her memory.

PCHS was the recipient of a re-grant from the Passaic County Cultural and Heritage Council. The re-grant, supplemented by funds from the Wardle bequest, will be used to restore two Federici statues: Niobe and Daughter & Hernando de Soto. This newest contribution to the Federici project means that fourteen pieces have now been sponsored for conservation.

**HOLIDAY EVENTS**

As 2013 drew to a close, the Castle hosted many visitors at many events. Our annual Holiday Boutique fundraiser was very well received, with many new vendors and beautiful decorations. Many thanks to the PCHS Staff, Boutique Staff, and PCHS volunteers, who spent many long hours creating and assisting at this important event.

After the Boutique moved out, fabulous food from the Brownstone and a large variety of wines, provided by Stew Leonard's of Clifton, assured the success of our Holiday Wine Tasting party/fundraiser. Thanks to PCHS volunteer Therese Tolomeo, Chair of the event, for organizing and completing all arrangements.

On December 20, The Valley Ringers performed Christmas Carols on their bells. Castle visitors enjoyed the soothing music, the Castle decorations, and light refreshments. PCHS member, Joyce Aitkin, Director of the Valley Ringers, arranged for the concert at the Castle. Trustee Linda Kaplanovich, Hospitality Chair, arranged refreshments with hospitality volunteers. PCHS member and volunteer, Drea De Luca, contributed many hours decorating the Castle for Christmas with her group of volunteers. A special thank you to all who contributed to this very special evening!

**MEMBERSHIP**

Thank you to all of our members who have renewed their dues. We have recorded all renewals in our database, and your membership benefits will continue uninterrupted. However, due to the many holiday events and the bad weather, receipt of your membership card may be delayed.

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## FEDERICI *cont. from page 6*

and onward, Argentina had prided itself as a welcoming haven for European immigrants. The nation's diverse population included approximately 1.4 million people of Italian origin. Argentina did not lack talented sculptors, but one of the most renown, Rogelio Yrurtia, an artist of the Realist school, died in March 1950. Could any of this be connected to the snippet of what Federici disclosed? Perhaps archival sources can be teased to divulge the needed answers.

On April 13, 1958, Gaetano and Orsola, on the cusp of celebrating their golden wedding anniversary, arrived at the Alexander Hamilton Hotel, where 300 conservatively dressed guests waited to laud the aged artist for his magnificent, lifelong accomplishments. The principal speaker, the Most Reverend James Aloysius McNulty, the Bishop of Paterson, articulated what many in the audience devoutly believed, that sculpture was "a reflection of the creative work of God."

Two days after Gaetano Federici's death, on February 17, 1964, Harry B. Haines sent the grief stricken widow a letter that

transcends the formulaic and tells us much about the newspaper publisher's own sense of humanity. Citing what was obviously a "deep sense of personal loss," Haines, the wily tactician of opinion making, and forceful practitioner of the editorial pen, wrote what amounted to a poignant epitaph:

"Throughout the years I held him close to my heart and used my every endeavor to aid him in securing art work commissions. It was my happy privilege to be helpful to him and he was richly deserving of everything that I did for him. He was indeed a sculptor endowed with unusual skill, imagination and ability and the various statues that now grace the city will be a living memorial to him for all time to come. The art world of America, as well as Paterson, has suffered an irreparable loss in his passing. Gaetano was not only a gifted sculptor but a good American and a good citizen, and he leaves behind him a rich heritage to posterity in imperishable bronze."

*Valete ac plaudite.*

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In a 1931 interview: "Gaetano Federici, Paterson's Own Sculptor, Makes Life-like Reproductions His Ideal," *Paterson Evening News*, article, 1931, Gaetano Federici Collection, Passaic County Historical Society; hereafter cited as GFC-PCHS; *Almost three decades later: "Bishop's Statue Final Heroic Project by Sculptor Federici,"* *Paterson Evening News*, April 6, 1955, GFC-PCHS; *The Federici-Haines connection can be traced to 1911:* Flavia Alaya, "Gaetano Federici, 1880-1964," in *Gaetano Federici, The Artist as Historian* (Paterson: Passaic County Historical Society, 1980), 13, hereafter cited as Alaya, *Gaetano Federici; the sculptor penned a hand written note:* Gaetano Federici to Harry B. Haines, undated note headed, "Believe in America," Edward M. Graf Archive; *In March 1950, when controversy raged:* Edward A. Smyk, *The Plaza of Memories, Eastside Park, Paterson, New Jersey* (Paterson: Acquackanonk History Club, 2001), 25-32; *Federici criticized his fellow Italian-American:* "Federici Shocked At Callous Moving of Work of Art," *Paterson Evening News*, March 10, 1950; *In 1953, Haines recalled an incident:* "Barnert's Memory Honored in Surprise Presentations," *Paterson Evening News*, February 3, 1953; also noted in Alaya, *Gaetano Federici*, "Catalogue of Federici's Works," 50; *In 1923, the Paterson Press-Guardian caught the temper of the times:* Edward A. Smyk, "Main Street of Yesteryear," in June Avignone, (ed.), *Downtown Paterson* (Charlestown, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 1999), 41; *One historian who chronicled those bleak years:* Richard A. Noble, "Paterson's Response to the Great Depression," *New Jersey History*, XCIV, Numbers 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1978), 88-90; *In the words of Flavia Alaya:* Alaya, Gaetano Federici, 17; *With much tenderness, Gaetano wrote:* Gaetano to Orsola Federici, undated postcard sent in 1914, Patricia Federici Fiorina Collection; *Beset by intermittent illness:* Alaya, Gaetano Federici, 17; *Federici had to endure the anguish:* "Alois, Accomplice of Janton, Admits Kidnapping Miss Federici," *Paterson Morning Call*, June 11, 1930; *Paterson's honored sculptor was appointed a school commissioner:* Certification of Appointments, November 21, 1942, GFC-PCHS; *In one of the genuine proficiencies of Joseph Campbell:* Joseph Campbell, *The Mythic Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), Preface, xi; *In 1936, Federici was pleased when the College of Paterson offered him the opportunity:* "Gaetano Federici Sculptures to be Shown at College," *Paterson Evening News* article published 1936, GFC-PCHS; *Anthony Federici, the sculptor's son, remembered:* Edie Fitzpatrick, "Carved a niche in history," *Trends*, December 17, 1967; *Federici had been engaged by the Paterson State Normal School:* "Sculpture Course Now Included at Paterson Normal," *Paterson Evening News*, January 5, 1937; *the teacher training school was transitioning:* Kenneth B. White, *Paterson State College: A History, 1855-1966* (Wayne: Student Cooperative Association of Paterson State College, 1967), 57; *Federici's appointment materialized at a fortuitous time:* *Paterson State Teachers College Bulletin*, Teacher Education Courses, Series II, Number 3, (October 1937) (Paterson: New Jersey State Teachers College, 1937), 1,2,6; *He remained on staff until 1939:* *Paterson State Teachers College Bulletin*, Series III, Number 5, (January 1939) (New Jersey State Teachers College, 1939), 1,2,8; *found him an "easy marker":* Alaya, Gaetano Federici, 19; *Perhaps further inspired by college teaching:* "Italian Women Will Hear Gaetano Federici," *Paterson Evening News*, January 13, 1938; *the Passaic County Historical Society invited him to speak:* "Historical Group to Hear Federici," *Paterson Evening News*, November 16, 1938, article in GFC-PCHS; "Historical Society Meeting," (?) *Paterson Evening News*, November 23, 1938 in Edward M. Graf Archive; *without too much recompense:* "Planning Christopher Columbus Monument: Idea Would Set New Mode, if Not Jar Art Sphere," *Paterson Sunday Eagle*, December 7, 1952; *a skilled feature writer from the Paterson Sunday Eagle knocked on the door:* *ibid.*; *Federici said it was Argentina:* "Modern Art? Its 1 Word to Sculptor:

Bah," *New York Sunday News*, August 28, 1960; *Juan Perón, the authoritarian president of Argentina:* Juan Perón, *Wikipedia*, January 11, 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan\\_Perón](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan_Perón); *Rogelio Yrurtia, an artist of the Realist school:* Rogelio Yrurtia, *Wikipedia*, January 11, 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rogelio\\_Yrurtia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rogelio_Yrurtia); On April 13, 1958, *Gaetano and Orsola ... arrived at the Alexander Hamilton Hotel:* "Bishop McNulty Leads Outpouring of Citizens In Tribute To Sculptor Gaetano Federici," *Paterson Evening News*, April 14, 1958, GFC-PCHS; *Harry B. Haines sent the grief stricken widow a letter:* Harry B. Haines to Orsola Federici, letter, February 17, 1964, GFC-PCHS.

### Acknowledgements

Gaetano Federici's hold on sculptural greatness has been repeatedly strengthened, during his lifetime and the half century following his passing, through the diligent researches of numerous scholars, writers and journalists. Without their cumulative efforts, and the presence of mind of various members of the Federici family in preserving documents and photographs, our knowledge of the sculptor would be considerably impoverished.

Absolutely essential for understanding Federici's life is the biography produced by Flavia Maria Alaya, *Gaetano Federici 1880-1964: the Artist as Historian*, published by the Passaic County Historical Society in 1980 to commemorate the centennial of the sculptor's birth. Alaya, the fifth president of the Society, created the indispensable *vade mecum* for all future Federici scholarship.

Ideas have ways of germinating, then taking root, and blossoming; so it was with Professor Vincent N. Parrillo of William Paterson University. In 2013, Parrillo stirred renewed interest in Federici's sculptural accomplishments with the release of a nearly hour long, absorbing documentary, *Gaetano Federici: Sculptor Laureate of Paterson*.

The writer would be remiss in not mentioning the exertions of the late D. Stanton Hammond (1887-1982), Robert P. Brooks (1887-1976), and Edward M. Graf (1896-1982), officers and trustees respectively of the historical society. Each in their own way helped perpetuate knowledge of Federici's career and oeuvre. In 1955, Hammond, then serving as Society's president, accompanied by Graf, the organization's secretary and dogged researcher, called upon Federici in his studio. They spent several hours discussing the sculptor's life. Graf jotted down a series of biographical notes, and with Hammond, he patiently set about compiling a chronology of Federici's works. The material was turned over to Brooks, who used it for the biographical account that appeared, along with the Graf/Hammond chronology, in the June 1955 issue of the Society's *Bulletin*. The publication, (superseded by Flavia Alaya's biography and illustrated catalogue), endures to this day as pioneer effort in Federici studies.

I would like to especially thank Patricia Federici Fiorina, the sculptor's granddaughter, for making available photocopies of postcards that were exchanged between Federici and his wife, with their brief, but heartfelt expressions of love and devotion. She also brought to my attention the superb profile on Federici that appeared in the December 7, 1952 issue of the *Paterson Sunday Eagle* newspaper.

The Federici centennial observance produced its own share of durable legacies. Highly significant is the documentary trove known as the Gaetano Federici Collection, held in perpetuity by the historical society. In the perspicacious words of Flavia Alaya, "It will be an accessible and (we trust) useful resource to future scholars who may see in his career many opportunities for the fuller interpretation of the American urban experience, the American ethnic experience, and the complex sociology that underlies the interaction of the American artist with his community."

## FEDERICI *cont. from page 5*

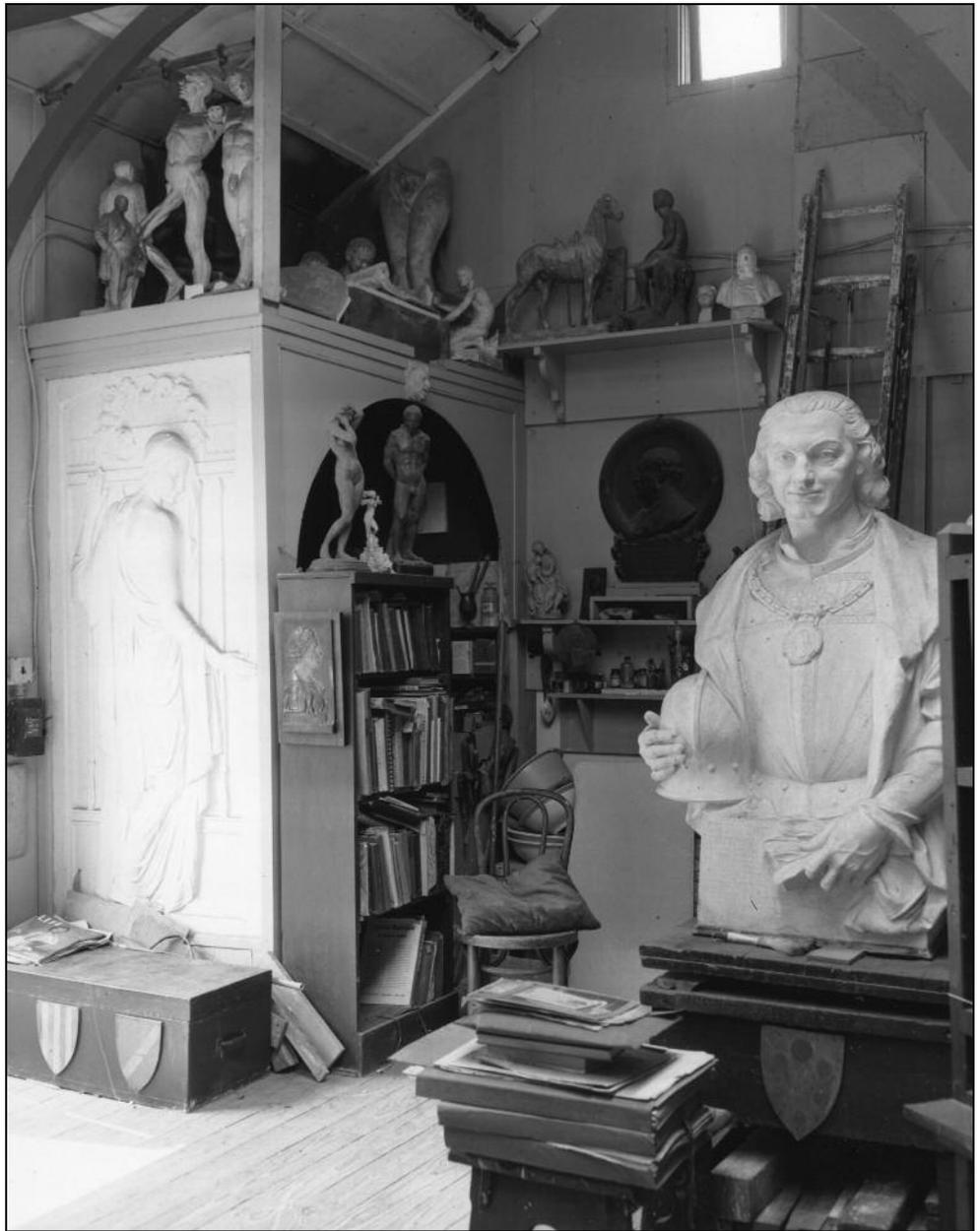
of his language: "My work is a beloved one to me. I have my heart in it and to be the real artist one must feel as well as see and talk about art."

Paterson was good to Federici, affording him the opportunity to immortalize the city's personalities in virtually imperishable bronze, but as one journalist said, he achieved it "without too much recompense." Despite opinions to the contrary, in practicing his art, Federici was unable to acquire what is called worry-free financial independence. Money was necessary to live, rather than worship on the altar of mammon. It never obsessed him. Nor did the often potent combination of money and fame.

In December 1952, a skilled feature writer from the *Paterson Sunday Eagle* knocked on the door of the sculptor's studio, and was admitted for what became a wide-ranging, candid and prescient interview. Describing Federici as "a quiet man, mild and of medium stature with horn rimmed glasses and close cropped classical beard," the interviewer was soon convinced that "the true greatness of Federici has not yet been recognized by the world at large nor fully by Paterson."

During the ensuing dialogue, Federici revealed details about his life and work which became part of the documentary record. Apparently nothing could separate him from Paterson, even a potentially lucrative offer from a foreign nation. The reporter noted, "his major interest has centered about his love for Paterson. His emotions and friendships are deep rooted. Only a few of his intimates know that not too long ago he turned down an offer from South American representatives to become their national sculptor. This offer would have given him greater fame than he now enjoys and would have afforded both Federici and his wife adequate financial remuneration for life. He refused the offer because its acceptance would have necessitated his residence in South America permanently." The sculptor seemed uncharacteristically reticent to identify the nation which made the proposal, and the reporter did not press the matter.

Almost eight years later, on the eve of his eightieth birthday, the sculptor permitted a New York press representative to photograph him. The interview provided the opportunity to utter his "lively scorn for modern art and its creators." In the brief account that made its way into print, Federici said it was Argentina that wanted him to become their national sculptor.



**Portion of Gaetano Federici's studio at 33 North 8th Street, Paterson, as it appeared in April 1964, not long after the sculptor's passing. Paterson News Publisher Harry B. Haines asked the sculptor's widow, Orsola, for permission to "photograph the scene of his years of magnificent sculpturing." It was readily granted. (Paterson News photo)**

The Argentine offer, apparently made in the late 1940s, wears the cloak of mystery. Certainly, Federici was no longer young, and didn't want to move from Paterson, but in the context of his freedom loving beliefs, he would have found it exceptionally distasteful to live in a country then governed by an oppressive military junta. Juan Perón, the authoritarian president of Argentina, ruled from 1946 to 1955. Perón, adored by large masses of workers for his benefactions, stood for many contradictory things, but he was absolutely clear on one of them: keeping the arts under rigid state control.

It would indeed be interesting to uncover definite facts on the nature of the Argentine-Federici offer. From the nineteenth century

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## MEET THE LAMBERT CASTLE COLLECTIONS INTERNS: BECKY

My name is Becky, and I am from Maplewood, NJ. I participated as a collections intern this past fall at Lambert Castle, as part of the credit-based internship program run through Rutgers University. As I am a history major at Rutgers, I chose to work here because I would be able to draw on my interest in the subject by learning more about the local history of Passaic County, while also gaining exposure to the more practical side of the field. Over the course of my time here, I worked on several projects, dealing primarily with the cataloging and storage of newly acquired donations from local residents, but I

also lent help with numerous other smaller tasks, including the preparation of several events held at the museum. Overall, I felt that my time at the castle was a very valuable experience, which diversified and strengthened my history degree. Because I was able to gain knowledge in the care of objects of historical value, as well as the execution of administrative duties, I was able to realize applications of history other than merely scholarly research. I am grateful for the opportunity to intern at the museum and hope to continue to work in the heritage field in the future.

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### FEDERICI *cont. from page 4*

the sculptor's artistic abilities could be ballyhooed in the pages of his newspaper, thus embellishing Haines' perception of himself as an altruistic, commanding civic leader. Quite simply, Federici, with his intricate methods and overarching visions, made good copy for Haines' readership.

The Haines-Federici connection proved long lived and interrelated, much like the quiet meshing of gears in a top grade, multi-jeweled timepiece. It is not surprising that Haines and Federici enjoyed a deep, unspoken bond of loyalty. After Haines received one of his numerous awards and citations, the sculptor penned a handwritten note, surmounted by the tinted sketch of a woman adorned with a laurel wreath. Federici told Haines, "more power to you." In March 1950, when controversy raged over Mayor Michael U. DeVita's removal of a marble chair that Haines had obtained for the Plaza of Memories, a memorial developed by the newspaper publisher for the city's then elegant Eastside Park, Federici criticized his fellow Italian-American on the front page of the *News*, telling the public "it breaks an artist's heart to see art destroyed because of callousness and disrespect."

Haines' influence on Federici was evident even in the artistic arena. In 1953, Haines recalled an incident where Federici, almost three decades earlier, had called on the publisher with a mildly exasperating problem. The sculptor seemed at wit's end. In 1925, Federici was hard at work, sculpting the statue of Mayor Nathan Barnert. It was a highly significant commission. In today's dollars, the completed statue would cost the sponsoring committee about \$167,000. The finished bronze, elevated on a granite pedestal, was slated for placement in City Hall Plaza. As Federici was soon to discover, Barnert, while posing in Federici's studio, had the habit of making an odd, perplexing gesture. Haines quickly arrived at an immediate, almost peremptory solution. Evidently relieved, Federici

continued on schedule, and the "gratitude statue" unveiling was held on a brisk, sun washed day in late October of that year. The event attracted comprehensive press coverage. Barnert, respected for his generous benefactions, was present to receive the plaudits of a huge crowd of Patersonians that milled about the awe evoking, almost lifelike statue.

The publisher's mind reeled back to that auspicious happening, "Nathan Barnert posed in person in the studio of Federici for this statue and during the course of the modelling Sculptor Federici visited my office in a very perturbed state of mind. His complaint was that in spite of all he could do, Mr. Barnert refused to abandon the grasping of the left lapel of his coat." Federici asked, "what am I to do?" Haines advised, "you are to do nothing to change his natural pose. That is the way we know him and that is the way posterity is to know him, but I will give you the reason why he assumes this pose. Mr. Barnert was twice Mayor of Paterson, and to him public office was a sacred trust. He contributed his salary as Mayor to worthy charities, never taking a dollar for himself and his badge of office as Mayor of the City of Paterson was his most precious possession. It was his habit when in conversation to gradually pull back his coat so that whomever he was talking to might glimpse the badge of office of which he was so proud and to which he had paid the honor of unselfish civic service ...."



**Harry B. Haines (1882-1972), publisher of the Paterson Evening News, as he appeared in 1930. For 53 consecutive years, Haines was Federici's patron and fervent supporter.**

(Ivan Busatt photo, Hackensack, N.J.)

The 1920s were a time of superb accomplishment for Federici, when commissions for large impressive statuary kept his studio humming with activity. In 1923, the *Paterson Press Guardian* caught the temper of the times when it exulted that Paterson was

*cont. on page 4*

## FEDERICI *cont. from page 1*

a place “where genuine wholesome hospitality is formed within its gates – a real hometown for the people.” Like many cities in the northeast, Paterson defined itself in the buoyant prosperity of the Jazz Age. All of that would change, for the city, and Gaetano Federici, with the onset of the Great Depression. One historian who chronicled those bleak years concluded that “the Depression left Paterson’s economy prostrate. [The] value of manufactured products dropped 65 percent from 1929 to 1933, while the number of wage earners decreased by 12,000.” With tax delinquencies rising, and lacking the necessary cash, the city authorities resorted to using tax anticipation notes to pay off debts. Unemployed men were selling apples



**The sculptor applying the finishing touches to the final model of the Nathan Barnert Gratitude Statue, July 1925.** (Kemp Studio photo, Paterson, N.J.)

**Oval: Nathan Barnert (1838-1927), philanthropist and twice mayor of Paterson, strikes his characteristic pose at a cornerstone laying ceremony in the late 1920s. Affectionately known as Paterson’s “Grand Old Man,” the altruistic Barnert donated a million dollars to various Paterson charities.**

(Heinrichs Studio photo, Paterson Museum)

in front of City Hall Plaza, with Federici’s bronze effigy of Nathan Barnert looking on in mute stoicism. It was a grim time.

In the words of Flavia Alaya, the sculptor’s assiduous biographer, from 1931 onward, “Paterson’s public memorials in bronze were reduced to plaques or medallions, and commissions for these came with a frequency barely sufficient for survival.” During these financially lean years, Federici, a fiercely proud man, did what he could to provide a decent living for his wife and children. They

sustained him. The love that burned between Gaetano and his wife Orsola never dimmed.

A fragment of that abiding affection survives in Federici’s own voice, captured in humble and touching words. In

1914, Federici was in Havana, Cuba, to assist his teacher, Guisepe Moretti, with scul-

tural embellishments for the city’s *Centro Gallego*, an impressive *Beaux-Arts* style building. Orsola was staying with her sister in Norristown, Pennsylvania while awaiting the birth of her second child.

She received a card from her husband. With much tenderness, Gaetano wrote, “I always think of you while I work and have carved your beautiful face in stone – almost unconsciously.” For Federici, the idea of family – or as an Italian would say in the expressive, robust sweet-

ness of “*La Famiglia*” – was paramount in his life and work, in his joys and sorrows, in what can only be construed as his all-embracing love. The sculptor was not untouched by personal heartache. Beset by intermittent illness in the early 1930’s, Federici had to endure the anguish of a bizarre kidnapping plot involving his fifteen year-old daughter, Teresa Marie. Two relatives, an uncle and cousin, had conspired to hold the teenager ransom for the hefty sum of \$4,000, equivalent to \$55,000 in today’s money.

History is a complex tapestry of events, woven with many interlocking, and some frayed threads. For the resilient Federici, his talents again found a natural outlet in educating youth. In February 1932, no doubt aided from behind the scenes by Harry B. Haines, Paterson’s honored sculptor was appointed a school commissioner by Mayor John V. Hinchliffe. He was reappointed two more times. During his time on the board, his sculptural creations reflect school-oriented themes. Federici’s acknowledged *métier* was the plastic arts, but he wedded to it a profound desire for historical truthfulness, or as Flavia Alaya succinctly characterized the phenomena, “the artist as historian.” Federici did not disappoint; he would shortly

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## FEDERICI *cont. from page 4*

prove his mettle as a born educator. College teaching would soon beckon, and here, in the classroom, he could tell his students to not hurry, to form in their mind an adequate picture of sculptural pursuits. In one of the genuine profundities of Joseph Campbell, the scholar who thought imagery, especially dream imagery, is the basis of mythology, we find a correlative that aptly applies to Federici. The sculptor would no doubt concur with Campbell's observation that "pictures invite the eye not to rush along, but to rest a while and dwell with them in enjoyment of their revelation."

In 1936, Federici was pleased when the College of Paterson offered him the opportunity of exhibiting a selection of his works in the institution's College Hall, at Fourteenth Avenue and East Twenty-Sixth Street. Federici assembled for viewing a number of his bronze and marble creations, declaring that "sculpture is a barometer of culture in a community such as ours," adding that he appreciated "the fact that this fine institution is a distinguished leader in spreading culture and learning among our people."

Federici certainly had all the stigmata that would make him a fine teacher. Gifted with a quick intelligence and supreme talent, he was an enthusiastic extrovert, but also comfortable with pouring through reference works, patiently seeking to find the correct historical garb for his many renditions in bronze, marble and stone. Anthony Federici, the sculptor's son, remembered when his father would become positively garrulous right in the family's kitchen. The conversations were long and spirited. His father's love of art was contagious. "Any chance he had to talk about it," young Federici said, "he'd break his neck to get there." Federici's life was certainly buoyant with enthusiasm, but intruding was the stark reality that he needed to make a living in a city buffeted by unemployment and economic distress. Teaching, then, was a way to supplement whatever earnings he could derive from ever dwindling sculptural commissions.

On January 5, 1937, the *Paterson Evening News* reported that Federici had been engaged by the Paterson State Normal School to offer a course in sculpture, and it would be "open to teachers of this area and to other qualified adults." The sculptor, appointed as Instructor in Art, came at a time when the teacher training school was transitioning to the degree granting, Paterson State Teachers College, the predecessor to what is now William Paterson University. Apparently, Federici had previously given a "lecture demonstration" at the school, and the students had given it a "hearty response." The fifty-eight year old sculptor had made a positive impression, and was asked to give a course for which few, if any, had better qualifications.

Federici's appointment materialized at a fortuitous time, right in tandem with the college's rapid increase in enrollment for extension courses. Federici joined the part-time teacher education division, one of eighteen instructors. We can only imagine him,



**PS. No. 24 at 19th Avenue and East 22nd Street, as it appeared on June 14, 1929. Depicted are graduates and students attending the New Jersey State Normal School at Paterson. Federici taught in this building. He joined the faculty of Paterson State Teachers College in 1937, offering a course known as "Art 401 –Sculpturing."** (Heinrichs Studio photo, Paterson, NJ)

the nattily dressed artist with the Van Dyke beard, arriving at Paterson State, then housed in Public School Number 24 at 19th Avenue and East 22nd Street. The course, designated "Art 401 – Sculpturing," met on Wednesday afternoons at 4:15. Participants could earn two semester hours of credit. According to the course description, "students will study the practical side as well as the artistic phase of sculpture. Clay modeling and soap carving are the mediums to be used in applying sculpturing for decorative purposes, such as book ends, grotesque masks and other subjects." The sculptor did not expect his students to purchase a textbook, but readily available tools and art materials cost an additional \$4.05. Federici's teaching career was not a long one. He remained on staff until 1939, but his students are reputed to have enjoyed his classes and found him an "easy marker."

Perhaps further inspired by college teaching, in 1938, he was asked to be guest speaker at a mid-January meeting of the New Jersey branch of the Italian Professional Women's Club of America, and his zest for stimulating art and sculpture-oriented dialogues was even more in evidence when the Passaic County Historical Society invited him to speak at Lambert Castle, the Society's headquarters, on the *Inside Story of Sculpture*. Accompanied by his wife, Federici arrived at the Castle on a chilly November night, and in what was then called the ballroom, he traced for the history aficionados the trajectory of his career, with generous reference to his various creations. He concluded the talk with a brief statement of endearing humility. It reveals the essence of the man in the telltale simplicity

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