

## Birth Record or Certificato di Nascita

### In the Town Hall

The most accurate document is the birth certificate because presumably it was created at the time of the birth with information supplied by a reliable witness.

Better is the *estratto per riassunto dell'anno di nascita*, or extract of a birth act, as it provides additional information such as the time of birth, sex, the name of the parents are also listed, and some additional information.

Precious genealogical information is represented by notazioni marginali – marginal notes. Any event such as marriage, death or even migration that occurs to a person is noted in the margin of the original birth act.

Here is the information that you will find:

- The name of the Comune and of the Province
- Full name
- Place of birth (only the Comune is listed and not the Frazione or hamlet)
- Date of Birth
- (Time of Birth)
- Sex
- (Parent's names)
- (Marginal Notes)

The brackets identify the information that can be additionally found in the extract of a birth act.

When a child was illegitimate, the officer the Vital Statistics used to register the father unknown and/or whose mother as unknown not entering their names into the register.

As for marriage and death records, also birth records are made in double copy.

One copy remains at the Commune, or *Ufficio di Stato Civile*, and the other copy is sent to the "*Procura della Repubblica*" (Country Court at province level). There is deposited in the chancellery of the competent court of the province, which is NOT open for public consultation. From that point on, the records are separately maintained.

### In the State Archive (Napoleonic Records)

Birth documents held in the State Archives of the main Province are the original birth acts. Usually it is the father who declared the birth of a child in front of the mayor who verified that the child was sane and two witnesses, not related with the family, to state that the child has been born. There is usually a baptism statement in the right margin, which does not

constitute a baptism act, but it was edited directly by the priest, providing the name of the parish where the baptism took place and when.

Here is the information that you will find:

- the child is formally presented to the mayor for identification (date and time of the presentation)
- Comune and Province
- Declaration by the father (full name, age, profession and domicile) of his child's date of birth and his wife's full name
- Name of the child
- Witnesses (full names, age, profession, domicile)
- Baptismal statement (information added on the basis of an a note from the parish priest, which is not a baptismal act), which is a specification of when and where the baptism took place

Also Napoleonic records were made in two copies, one that today is kept in the State Archive and another for the pretura della Repubblica, which is not available for consultation.

Most of these records have been microfilmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS Church), and these reproductions are available to at the church's family history centers (FHC) throughout the United States and Canada.

### **In the Parish Church**

These records, also called baptismal or christening records, are handwritten, the preferred language was Latin, but dialects and old Italian are used as well.

Children were baptized immediately after their birth, as a religious requirement of purification to gain access to Paradise in case of an early death. It was quite common that midwives performed the sacrament when the infant was in danger of dying.

Based on the genealogical information recorded in parish records, we can separate the birth data into three different historical periods:

**First period:** From the second half of the 1500s (when the Council of Trent made the transcription of these records compulsory to every parish) to the first half of the 1800s. Unfortunately the older the act, the less information is included. The data related to the historical period until the late 1700s are usually transcribed in Latin carrying also some paleographic abbreviations. Obviously there are exceptions; in some parishes already in the late 1500s, one parish priest could already use the Italian language in writing the records and maybe his follower would go back to Latin.

The content was organized in the following way:

- In the left upper margin, the number of the baptisms in the year in progressive order
- Date of baptism
- Name of the child baptized

- Full name of the child's father
- First name of the child's mother (very rarely it was indicated her full name)
- Date of birth (sometimes also the time)
- Godmother's name
- Godfather's name

Rarely the names of the grandparents are included, while the names of the godparents were always included.

**Second period:** from the end of the 1700s to the first half of the 1900s. You will find records written in Italian and the content is organized as follows:

- In the left upper margin, the number of the baptisms in the year in progressive order
- Name of the child baptized
- Date of the declaration of birth was presented
- Sex of the child
- Date and time of the child's birth
- Full name of the child's father (in some case it is also indicated his profession)
- Full name of the child's mother (in some case it is also indicated her profession)
- Full name of the parish priest
- All the names imposed to the child (it is an Italian custom to give several names to new born children, usually the first name is a family name belonged to one of the grandparents, than others can be derived, for instance from Saints' names)
- Godmother's full name
- Godfather's full name

**Third period:** From the first half of the 1900s to the present time. Birth acts are written in Italian and present the following information:

- In the left upper margin, the number of the baptisms in the year in progressive order
- Name of the child baptized
- Date of the declaration of birth was presented
- Sex of the child
- The exact date of birth and time of the birth
- The full name of the father, his birth place and profession
- The full name of the paternal grandfather
- The full name of the mother, her birth place and profession
- The full name of the maternal grandfather
- Domicile of the parents
- Full name of the parish priest
- All the names imposed to the child (see above)
- Godmother's full name and domicile
- Godfather's full name and domicile

