My project on Italian internment in Australia began as a family history that was to explore my paternal grandfather’s life. Antonino Spizzi in Australia. My father’s family was reunited in 1950 after more than twenty-three years of separation beginning with his father’s emigration from Italy in 1927, when my father was three months old. Antonino’s life in Australia was a mystery that our family never discussed when we were growing up. As he grew older he joked about the fact that he’d had during the war years, and never mentioned what the true story was until I discovered forgotten documents and the history of what happened to many thousands of Italians from 1939 to 1946. Some 4,000 Italians, [circa 15% of Italians] were interned in Australia during the war. Antonino had been interned in Sydney in 1940 like many thousands of Italian families, becoming an ‘enemy alien’ as a result of Mussolini’s declaration of war on the British Commonwealth. Victorian Italians were to suffer fewer internments due to Archbishop Mannix’s efforts. The few largest numbers of interned were farm workers from Queensland. As I explored the history of attorney that there were a considerable number of Italian families with stories of internment throughout Australia. Some had stories that were quite tragic, and some that triumphed in spite of the overwhelming odds of failure and disaster. Even the most insignificant internment case, such as my own in this current era of relative affluence and political tranquility in Australian society, was a personal experience of internment. Indeed, they made the best of the situation, but many paid the price of long-term incarceration that often resulted in life-long, deep emotional scars, especially for the older men who had families, mortgages and businesses to support but could not due to their incarceration. Many lost their farms, homes or businesses, whilst other families struggled to survive under extreme conditions. Without their breadwinner, some families became destitute, receiving no support from the Australian government or elsewhere. Some women and children who lost all means of support were interned at the Tatura Internment Camp in Victoria. Many families have never revealed their stories of hardship and survival against a background of strong ethnic prejudice. As each personal story unfolded, unique experiences came alive again after seventy years as untold family memories were recollected, sometimes with heartache, tears and sorrow. Amazingly, these scattered recollections and shared fragments were often corroborated by official government documents from the National Archives of Australia. Interestingly, none of the stories were embellished with wartime heroism since they didn’t need to exaggerate the deep undeniable suffering of internment. Indeed, these men and women who had experiences years of incarceration were very humble and often downplayed past suffering and injustices. One of the most salient features of this research has been that many of the former internees or their descendants have carried the grief, humiliation, emotion, indignation and fear of authority for seventy years since the outbreak of war between Italy and the British Commonwealth. Amongst many famous interned were Prince Alfonso Del Drago [Il Principe], the Alcorso family and 14A and 14D Loveday in South Australia. My project on Italian internment is the personal experiences of Italian migrants entangled in the ramifications of war. These early migrants were forced to accept incarceration because of their Italian origins, regardless of how much work and goodwill they had invested in Australia. Over the coming weeks, we will take a journey into the lives of some amazing Italian protagonists of Australia during World War Two. Some stories may never have been heard of, whilst others may insist that only ‘guilty’ Italians or ‘Fascists’ were interned. This series of articles will be a simple recollection of the events pertaining to the internment of the Italians in Australia during the Second World War, with no judgement, or political agenda. We have not perceived ‘guilt’ or ‘innocence’. As a historian, I have the right to know the truth about our past and share in the history that has come to light. In order to understand who Italian-Australians are as a community, it may also be necessary to judge past events and people who suffered incarceration because of their country of origin. MI SPIZZACa