

---

# GIUSEPPE (JOSEPH) BARATTIERI

---

## First Italian Officer, Winnipeg Police

*Written by John Burchill, President  
January 20, 2024. Winnipeg Police Museum*



Giuseppe (Joseph) Barattieri, Count di San Pietro, was born in 1881 in Piacenza, Italy. He was a direct descendant of Italian nobility in Piacenza. The descendants of the Barattieri clan, dating back to 1192 still live in northern Italy.

Joseph married Hilda Harris in 1909 in London, England, before traveling to Winnipeg where he was appointed as the Italian Consular Agent in Winnipeg. In addition, he was hired as a detective interpreter for the Winnipeg Police on February 25, 1910. As he was fluent in Italian, as well as English, Joseph could assist with the growing immigrant communities and their contact with the law.

Between 1900 and 1904 almost 120,000 Italians immigrated to Canada, primarily from the United States. The greatest number was in 1913, a year before the World War I interrupted immigration. The majority were young males, many of whom worked in mines, building and maintaining railroads, at lumber-camps and construction projects.

The 1911 Census recorded roughly 1100 Italians living in Manitoba, with the vast majority living in the Winnipeg area. By 1916 the Italian population was approaching 1900 people.

The notable influx of Italian immigrants, reflected a broader trend of Italian migration to North America. These immigrants, predominantly from impoverished regions of Southern Italy, were motivated by the search for better economic opportunities and a desire to escape the hardships of their homeland. Although they were not considered the “ideal” type for settling the West (i.e. farmers), Winnipeg was in the midst of an economic boom. This presented opportunities, particularly in construction, railway work and hydro development, which were central to Winnipeg’s rapid growth.

Nevertheless, the Italian community in Winnipeg encountered language barriers, cultural differences, and discrimination, a common issue faced by many immigrant groups during this period. Despite these obstacles, the Italian immigrants demonstrated remarkable resilience and a strong work ethic. They played a crucial role in the construction of Winnipeg’s infrastructure, contributing significantly to the city’s development.

Joseph’s work as a detective was unremarkable. However, when Italy entered World War I in 1915 on the side of the Allies, one of his roles as Consular Agent, was to encourage Italian citizens in Canada to register in the Italian army back home.

**More Italians Called.**  
WINNIPEG, March 15.—Italy has called out the second and third categories of the military class of 1874-75, according to Joseph Barattieri, Italian consul in Winnipeg, today. All Italians in Winnipeg included in these categories will have to report to the Italian consul before April 30.

Regina Morning Leader, March 15, 1917

Joseph resigned from the Winnipeg Police of his own accord on September 14, 1918. He remained in Winnipeg as a consular official, Steamship Agent and Insurance Booker, until the late 1940's when he followed his daughter and her young family to San Diego.

Joseph had one son, Antonio, who died at the age of 7-months in 1912 and a daughter, Opal, born in 1916. His wife, Hilda, died in 1934. In 1940 Joseph was re-married to Marthe Default.

On November 4, 1951, Joseph died in San Diego. His body was returned to Winnipeg where he was buried at the Elmwood Cemetery next to his first wife and son. He was survived by his second wife and daughter.



1912 Winnipeg Police Detective Branch, St. Johns Park.

\*\*\*\*

**NOTE:** In 2024 the Winnipeg Police celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the metro amalgamation. Anyone wishing to recognize a police member who made a substantial contribution to policing in Winnipeg or its surrounding municipalities during the past 150 years is asked to send me their name and (if known) a brief description of their accomplishments.