



ROMA 1849

GARIBALDI AND THE CITY

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December 2009

INTRODUCTION

The ill fated Roman Republic of 1849 was one of a series of revolutions taking place in Europe in the mid 19th century. In Italy it occurred simultaneously with the equally ill-fated Venetian attempt to throw off the Austrian yoke. Both of these failed revolutions were not in vain however, because they paved the way for Italian unification which was completed two decades later.

The political vacuum left by the hasty departure of Pope Pius IX from Rome in November of 1848, was filled by the Roman Republic which was declared in February of 1849 under the leadership of Giuseppe Mazzini and two other triumvirs. Since the great European powers could not tolerate the existence of this upstart entity, they responded readily to the pope's call for help in regaining his secular state.

With four European powers threatening the Roman Republic, Giuseppe Garibaldi came to aid in its defense with his Italian Legion of about 400 men. While a great leader in the execution of dynamic warfare, he proved to be less so in the static defense of the city. Indeed the two successes he obtained for the Romans in 1849 were both accomplished on the move: the thwarting of the first French attack on the city on 30 April 1849, and the near elimination of the Neapolitan threat at the battle of Velletri in May of the same year.

Once the French broke the truce they had previously obtained, a day early, thereby capturing Villa Corsini which was the key to the defense of the city, Garibaldi could only carry out a holding action after heroic but vain attempts to recapture that villa had failed. This he did gallantly, but without the room for manoeuvre and surprise, which typified his earlier and later campaigns, his efforts proved to be insufficient to withstand the invasion of the city by the French.

His retreat from the city with about 4,000 volunteers was carried out with his usual panache. With his ability for dynamic warfare, mentioned above, on his way to Venice he was able to outmaneuver four armies. However his hope of raising more volunteers in Tuscany and Umbria so as to succor the struggling Venetian Republic was unfulfilled, so he disbanded his army in San Marino once he had managed to guide it safely to that asylum.

The intent of this exhibit, marking 160 years since the siege of Rome, is to illustrate the physical effects of the siege and defense of the city, as well as the urban changes accomplished

by pope Pius IX after his return in an effort to bolster his renewed secular rule. The recounting of the history of the period is not the purpose of this catalog, and summary discussions of events are intended to serve only as an explanatory background for the maps and prints that make up the display. A great debt is due to G.M. Trevelyan whose excellent book, *Garibaldi's Defense of the Roman Republic*, is the principal source for the historical references. The reader is referred to that book as well as the two other parts of Trevelyan's trilogy, which is one of the best available accounts of the Italian Risorgimento.

INTRODUCTION

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B. Velletri

C. The Attack on Rome

II. GARIBALDI'S RETREAT

III. THE DAMAGED CITY

IV. THE RETURN OF PIUS IX CATALOG OF MAPS & PRINTS