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## ENRICO CARUSO (1873-1921)

**Birth Name:** Enrico Caruso  
**Place of Birth:** Naples, Italy



**Career Highlights:** Enrico Caruso was widely considered the greatest international opera star of his day. He was not American – Caruso was born and died in Naples, Italy – but he spent many years living in New York as a leading star at the Metropolitan Opera, and was the United States’ first recording superstar, issuing almost 300 recordings with the Victor Talking Machine Company (later RCA). While much of his recording focused on operatic works, Caruso recorded many popular songs, including the Neapolitan (southern Italian) song “O Sole Mio,” in the language of his native Naples. (In 1960, Elvis Presley had a No. 1 hit with the song “It’s Now or Never,” sung to same tune as “O Sole Mio.”) In 1918, Caruso recorded the patriotic American World War I song “Over There.”

**Recording:** “O Sole Mio” (traditional Italian song), 1916

**Recording:** “Over There” (patriotic World War I song), 1918

**Questions to consider:**

- What cities are the newspapers below from? What does the size and placement of the articles about Caruso's death suggest about his popularity in the United States?
- What are some of the terms used to describe Caruso in the headlines to these articles?
- Why might American audiences have been interested in listening to recordings of popular Italian songs?
- What does Caruso's recording of a song like "Over There" suggest about his attitude toward the United States? About Americans' attitudes toward him?
- Why might it have been easier for an Italian to find success as an opera star in the United States during this period than in another field?
- How might Caruso's success have helped paved the way for singers of Italian descent who came after him?

**FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM** HOME EDITION  
 FULL DAY ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT BY LEASED WIRE  
 FORT WORTH, TEXAS, TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 1921. PRICE 5 CENTS

**ABSCESS ENDS CARUSO'S LIFE**  
**PARFA CHAUFFEUR SURE HE SAW FUGITIVE CHICAGO BANKER**

**PURGIN IS BROUGHT TO REFUGEE IN MEXICO**  
 MEXICO, Aug. 2.—Purgin was arrested by the police here today and taken to the city jail. He is now a refugee in Mexico.

**3 TO SCAN BUSINESS PERMIT IN HOME AREA**  
 Hereafter all applications for business permits in the home area must be submitted to Fire Chief Ferguson, City Engineer Lewis and Building Inspector. When before being considered by the city council, they will be reviewed by the fire chief, engineer and inspector.

**OPERA STAR DIES AFTER OPERATION IN NAPLES**  
 NAPLES, Aug. 2.—Enrico Caruso is dead. The gallant and spectacular singer died after a long and painful fight which the world famous tenor had waged against disease for several days this morning. When the opera star, with his wife beside him, died here from acute perforation of the stomach.

**CARUSO'S GOLDEN TENOR THRILLED 8,000 PERSONS**  
 The singer's death was not unexpected. He had been suffering from acute perforation of the stomach for several days. He was 40 years old.

**"YUM, YUM!"**  
  
 A man is sitting on a large barrel labeled "\$50,000". He is eating a large slice of watermelon. A speech bubble says "YUM, YUM!".

**TWO WOMEN FEDERAL AGENTS NAB TWO AS "BRAINS" OF GIGANTIC TRUST OF MAIL ROBBERIES**  
 FEDERAL AGENTS nabbed two women today as "brains" of a gigantic trust of mail robberies.

**Citizen Citizen**  
 ESTABLISHED 1870 TODAY'S NEWS TODAY ASSOCIATED PRESS LEASED WIRE  
 TUCSON, ARIZONA, TUESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 2, 1921. TEN PAGES—FIVE CENTS.

**U. S. WINS DISARMAMENT DEBATE**  
**WORLD'S GREATEST TENOR DIES SUDDENLY**

**CASE OF CHICAGO BLACK SOX MAY GO TO JURY LATE TODAY AS BOTH SIDES END CLOSING ARGUMENTS**  
 Defense Winds Up Plea With Continuation of Attack on President of American League

**BRITAIN DROPS PRELIMINARY MEET PROPOSAL**  
 BRITAIN has dropped her proposal for a preliminary meeting of the world disarmament conference.

**OPPOSITION TO ALL RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE KEYNOTE EXPRESSED AT OPENING OF K. C. CONVENTION**  
 Supreme Knight Flaherty Makes Charge Against Professional Purveyors of Prejudice

**Soldier Freed Of Desertion Charge By Army**  
 The United States Army today announced that it had freed a soldier of a charge of desertion.

**DEATH OF CARUSO IN NAPLES STARTLES MUSICAL WORLD AS RECOVERY WAS LOOKED FOR**  
 Wonderful Voice of Great Italian Singer Is Lost Forever to Music Lovers of World

**CONSOLIDATION OF RUBBER COMPANIES IS ANNOUNCED**  
 PHILADELPHIA IS THEORETICALLY WIPED