



# Italian Historical Society of America

## Newsletter

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BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

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### **Tutto Italiano** **Benvenuto a *Tutto Italiano***

About 20 miles from the Adriatic Sea on the east coast of Italy, nestled into the foothills of the Apennine Mountains, the medieval city of [Urbino](#) (region of [Le Marche](#)) spreads across several small plateaus. The walled city, the [Historic Centre of Urbino, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) described as “a pinnacle of Renaissance art and architecture,” and for attracting “some of the most outstanding humanist scholars and artists of the Renaissance ...”

The town dates back to early Roman times, and rose to prominence during the late fifteenth century under the rule of [Federico da Montefeltro, Count of Urbino](#) from 1444 to 1482. Born in 1422, Federico was the son of Guidantonio da Montefeltro, the Count of Urbino from 1403 to 1443. Sources note that Federico was born to a woman who was not the Count's wife, but a lady of the Countess; others note that Federico may have been the son of Guidantonio's daughter, Aura, and a noble soldier-at-arms.

The Count's wife died two years later, and Federico was legitimized by the Pope as the Count's heir, along with the approval of the Count's second wife – who was also the Pope's niece. With a planned marriage to Gentile Brancaloni – the [daughter of a noble family](#) – Federico's early life included a good education and the acceptance of his future in-laws. A dispute between his father and the new Pope sent Federico to Venice and later Mantua, where he continued his education under the tutelage of [Vittorino da Feltre](#), a professor of [humanism](#). Federico also learned about weaponry.

At 15, Federico married Gentile, whose dowry included territories near Urbino. Several years later, he was part of a military victory and began his career as a [condottiero](#) – a military leader – a contractor paid by a city to fight its wars. When his half-brother was killed in an uprising, Federico became Duke of Urbino, an area that included Urbino and its neighboring towns, known as the [Montefeltro](#).

Around the same time, he also fought with Francesco Sforza, a most formidable condottiero of the time. Federico excelled at negotiating in war, earning large fees, and he used his fortune to build [Palazzo Ducale](#) in Urbino. His palace became a meeting place for artist, writers, and other influencers of the Renaissance. Giovanni Santi – Raphael's father – lived in Urbino and was a court painter. Federico had an impressive library – hiring scribes to copy books to add to his collection. When he died, the collection was moved to the Vatican.

Gentile died in 1457; three years later Federico married Battista Sforza (Francesco's niece). The classic portrait of the couple shows them in profile facing each other. In all paintings, Federico is shown in left profile – the right side of his face, including part of his nose, was disfigured during a jousting competition. Federico died in 1482; his mausoleum is in the [Church of San Bernardino](#) near the palace. The National Gallery of the Marche, [Galleria Nazionale delle Marche](#), exhibiting a collection of Renaissance art, is housed in the palace.

[Urbino's Historic Center](#)

[Historic Centre of Urbino](#) (UNESCO Video)

[Urbino: Fit for a Duke](#) (Rick Steve's Europe)

[Urbino: a walled medieval town](#)

[About Urbino](#)

[Federico da Montefeltro's Perfect Palace](#)

[The Studio of Federico da Montefeltro](#)

[Portrait: The Duke and Duchess of Urbino](#) (The Uffizi Gallery)

[The legend and the truth about the nose of Federico, Duke of Urbino](#) (PDF)

[Federico da Montefeltro, una vita fuori dall'ordinario](#) (In Italian)

### **From the Italian American Press**

The Italian American Press offers a great selection of books – children's, memoirs, art, history, food, the supernatural, the natural beauty of Italy, and more – for every interest. Help preserve Italian American heritage and history. Support authors of Italian heritage who write about Italian American and Italian culture and let them know you found their books on the Italian American Press.

### **An Unethical Book Review**

If you read my book review in the January issue of *La Gazzetta Italiana*, and read the book review in the March issue of an Italian American newspaper published on the East Coast, you may have noticed the similarities. No coincidence. The book review in March was written using most of the press release I sent to the newspaper, combined with parts of my book review published in January, and some personal commentary added to the mix.

The editor of the newspaper would not speak with me, first sending an email with his apology "for the failure to cite your work," and "We will include a citation in our April 4th edition of the paper." Concerned with the wording I asked how my work would be cited, requested a copy of the attribution, and then offered a suggestion. In reply, the editor accused me of trying to "manipulate the situation" and wrote "in fact the Public Relations Society of America [PRSA] has stated that the use of a press release is not plagiarism. No author's name is associated with the book review and that is the way it will remain."

The PRSA's policy is controversial, but also states "attribution is recommended, for example, when a direct quote is re-used ...." I'm well aware of what constitutes plagiarism, but I also researched other informed sources, confirming that "[duplicating material from a press release is indeed plagiarism](#)."

### **[Featured Author Maria Lombardo: A Camp Without Walls](#)**

#### **Book Overview**

Salvatore Lombardo was born in a small town in Calabria, a few years before Mussolini's Fascist regime. He was "called into the armed forces of King Victor Emmanuel" when he was 19. Shortly after World War II started, he was sent to Africa and then to Greece, where he was stationed when the Italian Armistice – Italy's surrender to the Allies – was signed. He became a resistance fighter, but was captured by the Nazis and imprisoned in a slave labor camp.

Maria Lombardo has vivid recollections, as a child, of waking up hearing her father's tortured screams. When her family immigrated to America, the dreams didn't stop; and Maria was determined to find out what was causing her father's nightmares.

Her work in the early years of the newly organized National Italian American Foundation, a chance meeting with a holocaust survivor, and her father's

hospitalization for major surgery provided the impetus for researching the history of World War II in Italy and how it affected Italians and Jews in Italy and in America.

In *A Camp Without Walls*, Maria tells the intimate story of a family haunted by the memories of a man who survived cruel treatment by the Nazis, and how the love and understanding of family not only brought the family closer together, but also gave Maria the opportunity to work with others in dealing with the atrocities of war.

#### **Author Interview (Excerpt)**

##### **What inspired you to write your book?**

Growing up listening to a father who had shrilling haunting nightmares that would cause him to shake uncontrollably and screaming in his sleep, I wanted to know what happened to him. My enlightenment came when a Jewish survivor told me the story of this family's rescue by the Italians in Yugoslavia during World War II.

##### **What is the most important attribute of your book?**

The most important attribute of the book is to pay tribute to rescuers and survivors of the Holocaust in Italy and Italian occupied territories.

##### **Why should someone read it?**

People should read this book as an important resource on Italy's role during the Holocaust. One learns through my father's story what makes the Italians so different in wanting to help the Jews during Nazi oppression.

[Read the full interview at the Italian American Press.](#)

#### **Italian American Heritage Project**

The past few months appear to have brought an increased assault against Italian American culture. For a while, numerous pundits on several major news networks kept comparing the actions of some in Washington, D.C. and associates to characters in *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos*. In January, the president of Notre Dame had the murals of Columbus covered. The murals were painted on the walls of the main entrance building by Luigi Gregori, a resident artist of the Vatican, and invited by the founder of Notre Dame to be its resident artist. Gregori stayed for 17 years.

Also in January, at a campaign for presidential candidate, "Elizabeth Warren said she supports a bill making its way through the New Hampshire Legislature that would [honor North America's native residents over Christopher Columbus](#)." (The [bill did not pass](#) in New Hampshire.) She is quoted, "My view on this is why would we not want to honor indigenous people. These were the people who were here."

In February, at a meeting to support her bid for presidential nominee, when asked about replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, Kamala Harris said "... when it comes to indigenous Americans, the indigenous people, there is a lot of work that we still have to do, and I appreciate and applaud your point and your effort, and [count me in on support](#)."

Both sound somewhat evasive, but even so, if Warren or Harris – or any candidate voicing that opinion – is elected president, he or she will be forced into keeping that promise, and if Congress doesn't agree, Columbus Day could be banished by Executive Order.

In 2018, 45 places (24 towns in Kentucky, but also several in New York) replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day. Five years ago, four cities replaced Columbus Day; in 2015, 17; in 2016, another 31; in 2017, another 36. The numbers keep growing. (Totals are from [Indigenous Peoples Day](#) on Wikipedia, the most recent cumulative source found.)

Last October, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian published an article, [Indigenous Peoples' Day: Rethinking American History](#), written by two Native Americans. The article states, "In the forefront of the minds of many Native people

throughout the Western Hemisphere, however, is the fact the colonial takeovers of the Americas, starting with Columbus, led to the deaths of millions of Native people and the forced assimilation of survivors. ... Indigenous Peoples' Day recognizes that Native people are the first inhabitants of the Americas, including the lands that later became the United States of America. And it urges Americans to rethink history."

The authors note how the "movement to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day has gained momentum and spread to states, cities, and towns across the United States," mentioning some of the states and cities, and then writing "Teaching more accurate [sic] and complete narratives and differing perspectives is key to rethinking history. ... This September the museum and Teaching for Change, a Washington-based national education organization, hosted an Indigenous People's Curriculum Day and Teach-In for more than 100 teachers working with students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Sessions ranged from how to join the movement to Abolish Columbus Day ..."

(Note: The most recent attempt to replace Columbus Day was [defeated in Montana](#), where "One Native American lawmaker said ... Columbus Day celebrates a man who killed and tortured Native American people and compared it to having a holiday that would celebrate Nazi Germany." Another said, "Christopher Columbus ... is "a colonizer who came into the Americas-ish [?] and brutally mutilated Native populations..." The bill was defeated due to lack of funding.)

[Teaching for Change collaborates with the Zinn Education Project](#) "to bring people's history to the classroom." Howard Zinn is the author of *A Peoples History of the United States*, and his ideology that has been taught in schools for 30 years is largely responsible for the attacks on Columbus.

Between the continued popularity, admiration, and mention of characters from *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos* and the negative teachings of Christopher Columbus and the organized campaign to abolish Columbus Day, the culture of Italian Americans is losing ground.

Some suggestions:

>Just as viewing the entire Mueller Report is necessary, so is viewing all the letters and journals of Columbus (even though they may not be his actual words), and also understanding the history of Europe during the fifteenth century.

>Just as almost every online news article about Columbus (especially on CBS) has a video with an extremist claiming Columbus is responsible for all the woes of indigenous and native peoples, videos of the positives of Columbus's voyage should also be included.

>Just as organizations and museums are finding it necessary to add disclaimers about how Native Americans and other ethnic groups have been inaccurately depicted, disclaimers should be added to the beginnings and endings of *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos* (and possibly other films and television series of the same genre) stating that the characters in these videos are not a true depiction of Italian Americans.

[Notre Dame's brochure about the Columbus Murals](#) (From the brochure: "Such depictions conflict with the vision of the dignity of the human person championed by the Catholic Church.")

[What's Wrong with this Diorama?](#) (Article about the American Museum of Natural History)

>All newspaper and other media editors and reporters and all educational institutions – schools, colleges, and universities – should receive weekly press releases providing factual information about Columbus. (Call it Reeducating About Columbus)

[Mob Week](#) (John Mancini, Italic Institute of America, March 10, 2019)

## **Support the IAHP**

Visit the [IAHP website](#) to read my articles, learn about the lesson plans, see the resources I've used, and support my work. Donate for a cause – preserving Italian heritage and Italian American history and culture through education. All donations are tax-deductible.

[Two museums have been added to the IAHP website](#): Magazzino Italian Art and the Waldensian Heritage Museum.

## **On The Radio**

West Coast Italian Radio (WCIR), based near Seattle, is hosted by Tony La Stella and Marzia Clyons and every Monday broadcasts an hour of “everything Italian” throughout the United States.

In my interview on March 4th, we talked about some of the topics in the March issue of *Tutto Italiano*, the new lesson plans I'm developing about Italian immigration, and we briefly discussed the Columbus controversy. [Listen to the show and my interview](#).

## **Italian American News**

From merriam-webster.com: Lynch – to put to death (as by hanging) by mob action without legal approval or permission

In 1891, 11 Italian immigrants who made their homes in New Orleans were lynched by an angry mob after they were exonerated of murder by a jury. With workers needed on cotton and sugar plantations, New Orleans was a popular city for Italian immigrants; but the residents of the city were not friendly – they resented the Italian immigrants.

Leading up to the trial, many newspapers contributed to the hatred by publishing articles with negative stories about Italians. After the trial, newspaper articles incited the residents of New Orleans to seek revenge; and after the Italians were killed, newspapers commended the mass lynching. [Read one editorial here](#) (Scroll down to read the first part).

On April 12th “due to the efforts of the NYS Order Sons & Daughters of Italy in America – Grand Lodge of New York and the New York State Commission for Social Justice, and after 128 years, New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell has agreed to issue an official Proclamation of Apology.”

[Press Release: City of New Orleans to Officially Apologize for Lynching of Italian Americans—128 Years Later](#)

[The Grisly Story of America's Largest Lynching](#)

[The Tragic Story of the 1891 New Orleans' Mass Lynching Of Italian Immigrants](#)

[New Orleans to apologize for lynching of 11 Italians in 1891, among worst in American history](#) (The Washington Post, April 1, 2019)

## **News about Italy**

[Ten years after the quake, Italy's ravaged heart is still struggling to recover](#) (The Guardian, April 7, 2019)

[Red Regatta, Venice: An Independent Public Art Project](#) (Melissa McGill)

[Orticola Flower Show, Milan](#)

