



Italian Historical Society of America Newsletter

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

October is Italian American Heritage Month, usually noted with little fanfare or acknowledgment outside of Italian American communities. This year because of the coronavirus, parades and many in-person celebrations have been canceled; but throughout the country, cities with a higher percentage of Italian Americans are celebrating Italian heritage.

Each year, federal and various state governments officially proclaim October as Italian American Heritage Month. On October 2nd, a Resolution was introduced "[Recognizing the month of October 2020 as 'Italian-American Heritage Month' in Pennsylvania](#)," beginning with "Whereas Italian Americans have contributed to a great number of aspects of our everyday life in the United States ..."

In Massachusetts, the governor signed a Proclamation recognizing October as Italian American Heritage Month and mentioning five Italian-Americans, including [Dr. Anthony Fauci, who recorded a message of thanks](#) and "discusses his Italian heritage and why he chose to work in public health."

In California, [Italian American festivities in the San Francisco Bay Area](#) will be virtual, with a High Mass streamed from Ss. Peter & Paul Church website followed by a show "featuring dignitaries, music, performances, and representatives of Italian and Italian-American organizations and businesses." The Little Italy of Los Angeles Association (LILAA) has [scheduled a variety of events](#) including "an interactive workshop to teach Italians how to tell their stories and leave their legacies; and an old-fashioned drive-in experience showing" Italian films.

In New Jersey "the traditional [Nutley-Belleville Columbus Day and Italian Heritage Month Parade](#)" was modified, replaced by "a caravan of cars [that] will follow the usual parade route." A flag raising, a presentation of Italy's and America's national anthems, and a wreath laying ceremony are scheduled.

On Columbus Day, October 12th, We the Italians will be live streaming on its social media platforms "[Christopher Columbus, the Man, the Journey, the Myth](#)." [View the trailer here](#). (The video is in Italian: "*click on the settings icon and put captions ON.*")

[Meet Genoa's Most Famous Explorer: Christopher Columbus](#)

[Genoa, Italy](#)

[Genoa, Italy](#) (YouTube)

From the Italian American Press

The Italian American Press offers a great selection of books – culture, history, memoirs, art, family, 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.

New on the Italian American Press

[*Italian Culture in America: How a Founding Father introduced Italian Art, Architecture, Food, Wine, and Liberty to the American People*](#) by Ralph G. Giordano

In 1784, Thomas Jefferson was sent to Paris; the following year he succeeded Benjamin Franklin as Minister to France. Jefferson visited Italy in 1787, and he returned to America in 1789, with a deep appreciation of Italian culture.

During “general discussions on American culture” with an Italian American colleague, a “cultural connection to Thomas Jefferson” and his affinity for Italian culture became apparent. Ralph had “ventured into many areas of academic and cultural fields,” but his “40-year journey with Mr. Jefferson” – first learning about Jefferson in the author’s early career as an architect – provided Ralph with the inspiration to research and write the book.

I asked Ralph, “With the current controversies surrounding so many of the country’s forefathers, is Jefferson’s significance in establishing the culture of America still relevant? He replied:

“ ... the American Revolution was a political separation – the colonies remained ‘culturally dependent’ upon Great Britain. In searching for a Cultural Independence, individuals such as Thomas Jefferson explored – by way of discovering the architecture of Renaissance Italians such as Andrea Palladio – and the personal interaction with Filippo ‘Philip’ Mazzei the wonders of Italian culture. With Mazzei, the basic idea of ‘personal liberty’ was derived from Humanism (a concept developed by the Italian Renaissance and refined during the Enlightenment). This author holds the view – discrediting Jefferson is an attempt to negate the idea of each human born with inherent natural rights. Jefferson argued ‘genius is not by accident of birth’ – therefore his search to reject a culture, such as Great Britain which was dictated by the direct rule of a King or Queen, even religious belief; was to find a culture worthy of the people such as derived from Italy.

With moral controversies of so many of the country’s forefathers, the questions seem to dismiss the vast contributions to the so-called American ideology provided by the likes of Thomas Jefferson. Simple – discredit Jefferson leads to discrediting the ‘natural right’ of people to govern themselves. Thereby, allowing a return to rule by Tyranny and a return to people believing a ruler is ordained by ‘Divine Right’ and not by the will of the people. In that same sense a distinct culture would also be lost.”

Italian Culture in America provides a substantive look into how Jefferson infused Italian culture into a developing American culture, in an easy-to-read format. Each chapter details historical facts and includes illustrations, images, and an Appendix. A comprehensive Bibliography and Index are included.

Italian American Heritage Project

The typical claims against Columbus cite genocide, slave trade, and other atrocities, all without verified substantial documentation. Included in the diatribe is the assertion that Columbus did not land on American soil, so – in retrospect – he should not receive any tributes for landing on and exploring the uncharted islands of an unknown landmass.

This is one allegation that is true. It’s also true that not one person on the unknown continents (of what is now North America and South America) lived on American soil. It was not until 1507 when the first map of the newly explored landmass was named America, after another great Italian explorer, Amerigo Vespucci. (Some claim America was named after other people or concepts.)

[How Did America Get Its Name?](#) (Library of Congress)

[What do Italian Americans Want?](#) (Bill Dal Cerro; August 24, 2020)

The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from America; Italian Americans do not have an organized defense. The statements of truth and facts posted on so many Italian American websites are not working. Italian Americans need a nationwide program to battle the campaign to abolish Columbus Day or it will be lost; even though Indigenous People already have a designated day, and Native Americans have a day and a month to celebrate their culture.

Indigenous Peoples Day – August 9

Native American Month – November

Native American Heritage Day – Friday after Thanksgiving

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.](#)

Thirty-One Days of Italians

In 2007, Thirty-One Days of Italians went online. I created the name and the concept of celebrating each day in October – Italian American Heritage Month – by honoring one person of Italian heritage who has significantly contributed to America.

[2020-21 List of Thirty-One Days of Italians](#)

Read my article [Celebrate Your Italian Heritage with “Thirty-One Days of Italians”](#) at La Gazzetta Italiana.

Italian American News

[On this Columbus Day, Italian Americans should embrace identity politics](#) (app.com [Special to the USA TODAY NETWORK]; October 9, 2020)

[Italian American group ‘surprised’ over plans for Boston’s Christopher Columbus statue](#) (Boston Globe; October 7, 2020)

[Standing by Columbus](#) (Fra Noi; September 15, 2020)

[Contemporary Italian cinema goes virtual](#) (Fra Noi; September 15, 2020)

News about Italy

[Coronavirus: Masks made mandatory outdoors across Italy](#) (BBC; October 8, 2020)

[Murano Glass, an Ancient Art Revived](#) (The NYT Style Magazine; September 30, 2020) (*Thanks, Mary.*)

[The history of Venice Film Festival’s Golden Lion](#) (Reuters; September 12, 2020 [YouTube Video])

[Venice Film Festival 2020: The Best Movies According To The Critics](#) (Deadline; September 12, 2020)

Buon anno, buon tutto, buona vita,
Janice

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