



Italian Historical Society of America

Newsletter

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BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

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

The Royal Palace of Naples was one of four palace residences of the Bourbon family from 1735 to 1861, under the rule of the Royal House of Bourbon Two Sicilies. The family [traces its roots](#) back to Louis XIV, King of France (1643-1715), who – after the death of his father – was crowned several months before he turned five years old.

Construction on the palace in Naples, designed by [Domenico Fontana](#), began in the early 1600s. Fontana was a well-known architect and engineer, having designed numerous structures in Rome, commissioned by Pope Sixtus V. In the mid-1580s, he devised a platform [to move the Egyptian obelisk](#) on the grounds of Vatican City, [825 feet to the piazza](#) of (the building-in-progress) St. Peter's Basilica. Fontana is also credited as [the first in finding the ruins of Pompeii](#) through his plans for digging a tunnel to redirect the River Sarno in 1594.

The Kingdom of Two Sicilies began as the Kingdom of Sicily and included the land south and east of Rome – almost half of the peninsula – along with the island of Sicily. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the region was ruled by the Byzantine Empire, the Muslims, and then the Normans who unified the region into the Kingdom of Sicily, with [Roger II](#) as king.

After the Normans, The Kingdom of Sicily was [under the reign](#) of the Swabians (Germany), the French, the Spaniards, and the Austrians. In the late thirteenth century, the territory was split into the Kingdom of Sicily (House of Aragon) and the Kingdom of Naples (Angevin Dynasty, a branch of the House of Aragon). In 1735 (1734 by some accounts), Charles of Bourbon became [King of Sicily and King of Naples](#) ruling until 1788.

During his reign, the [Royal Palace of Naples](#) – at over 100 years old and through three monarchies – was renovated, and three other palaces were built to accommodate the king and his court. The first, the [Royal Palace of Portici](#) was built (from 1737 to 1742) on the slope of Mount Vesuvius (about eight miles southeast of the Naples palace) as a summer residence. In excavating, relics from Herculaneum were found and later exhibited in the Portici palace.

The plans for the [Royal Palace of Capodimonte](#) began around the same time as the plans for the Portici palace, and were initially drafted by the same architects; but it took slightly over 100 years and five monarchies to completion. The palace was designed to be a residence for the king and his court, and a museum. Located on the top of a hill (capo di monte) about five miles north of the Naples palace and with views of the Tyrrhenian Sea and Mount Vesuvius, with slightly more than 300 acres, the grounds included a hunting park.

Among the treasures in the museum is a collection of artwork Charles inherited from his mother, the Queen of Spain and of the [Farnese family](#), a dynasty of influence in Renaissance Italy, that also included a pope, a cardinal, and dukes. Additional artwork and collectibles were acquired from churches, monasteries, private collections, and other sources. In the early 1740s, the [Royal Factory of Capodimonte](#) was established to produce high quality porcelain.

Spanning eleven acres, the property of the [Royal Palace of Caserta](#), located around 20 miles north of the Naples palace, integrates a telescopic effect in its focal-point landscape design. When it was built in the eighteenth century, it was the largest palace in Europe. It was inscribed on the [UNESCO World Heritage List](#) in 1997. For more about the palace, read my article in the [September 2019 issue of *Tutto Italiano*](#), posted on the website of the Italian Historical Society of America.

In 1816, the Kingdom of Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples became The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, unified under King Ferdinand I. The House of Bourbon ruled until 1861, when Italy became a united country. Today, the Royal Palace of Portici is an agricultural center and a botanical garden. The Royal Palace of Naples, the Royal Palace of Capodimonte, and the Royal Palace of Caserta are museums. Most of the properties are located in the [UNESCO Historic Centre of Naples](#).

[Royal House of Bourbon Two Sicilies: Palaces & Residences](#)

[The glory and demise of the Kingdom of the two Sicilies.](#)

[Architect Domenico Fontana Describes Moving the Obelisk](#)

[The Royal Palace Museum of Napoli](#) (YouTube Video)

[The Reggia of Portici: a jewel on the slopes of Vesuvius](#)

[The Reggia of Portici, Naples](#) (Painting by Carl Ludwig Hackert)

[The Farnese Blue Diamond: Three Centuries of History](#)

[The Royal Palace of Capodimonte](#)

[Museo di Capodimonte](#) (In Italian)

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

[Under the Light of the Italian Moon by Jennifer Anton](#)

A family history of resilience, courage, and love set in Italy during the rise of fascism and World War II.

Italian American Heritage Project

One of the most important approaches to preserving Italian American heritage is through education. Within the comfort of family, children can learn about their ancestors and why they journeyed to America. In school, the social circle widens, offering different viewpoints and opinions. In the past twenty years or so – one or two generations – the social circle has expanded considerably: a constant swirl of misinformation based on opinion, not facts.

How do you educate your children to be aware of their ancestry? What is important for them to know to keep them involved in their Italian heritage? Tell them about their grandparents; tell them about you – growing up; tell them about the Italians and the Italian Americans who have greatly contributed to a better quality of life for all Americans.

Italian American museums and cultural centers are throughout America, and offer the opportunity to learn about the history of the transformation from Italian immigrant to Italian American. Read my articles about two museums – one in Albany and one in Los Angeles on *La Gazzetta Italiana*: “[Preserving Italian Heritage in America](#)” (January, 2021) and “[A Tribute to Italian Heritage in Los Angeles](#).”

[List of Italian American Museums](#)

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The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from America. Italian American organizations have recognized the “need to find ways to work together to save Columbus Day and protect our heritage from this onslaught of anti-Italian American bias.”

Resources and sample letters are now available to download (as PDFs) at [Know Columbus](#). However, the statements of truth and facts posted on so many Italian American websites must be publicized and widely distributed, otherwise, they will not work. The Italian American community needs to act quickly on a nationwide program in the battle against 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](#).

### **Experience Venice**

From May 17th to May 23rd, Venice will be live with “more than 70 single events, each from a different location in Venice” on ten topics:” Art & Culture, Artisans, Carnival, Literature & Authors, Lunch with the Author, Kids in Venice, Murano, Performing Arts, Venice and Boats, and Venice Fashion.

A free virtual event, [Live-In-Venice](#) will be streaming all seven days from 11:00 am to 8:00 pm GMT. Click on a topic – for example Art & Culture at <https://live-in-venice.com/category-art-and-culture> – ; read a brief description of the topic, scroll down to view the planned events, and click on each event for more information. Follow on social media or watch online. You can also register to learn about events as they live stream.

*More about Venice next month.*

### **Helping the Environment**

The [Institute of Italian Culture in Oslo](#) is providing a virtual exhibition about TRASH. A movie for “both adults and kids that teaches that recycling serves to give a new purpose and meaning to what can just only appear as trash. The value of recycling and second chances are at the base of the message that this cartoon wants to transfer to the younger generations (and not only).”

[Movie Information](#)

[Code for Virtual Tour](#)

[Virtual Tour](#)

### **Italian American News**

[Slurring and Insulting Italian Americans on Social Media: The Last “Safe” Prejudice](#)  
(La Voce di New York; April 14, 2021)

[160th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Italy and the United States of America](#)  
[1861-2021](#) (Embassy of Italy, Washington)

[A Proclamation on 160th Anniversary Of The Unification Of Italy And The Establishment Of United States-Italy Diplomatic Relations](#) (Joseph R. Biden Jr., The White House; April 13, 2021)

[Italian American groups fight to keep Columbus Day in Philadelphia](#) (BBC News; April 7, 2021)

## News about Italy

[Italy's Uffizi discovers lost frescoes during COVID shutdown](#) (AP; April 23, 2021)

[The inside story of an old master \(Caravaggio\) found in Spain](#) (The Guardian; April 23, 2021)

The Italian Way for Burger King (Source: We the Italians, (EFA News; April 15, 2021);

[Spain Halts Auction of Painting of Jesus After Evidence Indicates It Could Be a Rare Caravaggio](#) (Newsweek; April 8, 2021)

[Italy Has a Gun Culture but No Mass Shootings—Here's Why](#) (Reader's Digest; March 27, 2021)

*Buon anno, buon tutto, buona vita,*  
Janice

Janice Therese Mancuso  
 Publisher, [Tutto Italiano](#)  
 Director, [Italian American Press](#)  
 Founder, [Italian American Heritage Project](#)  
 Founder, [Thirty-One Days of Italians](#)  
 Author of [Con Amore](#)  
[Writer, Author, Researcher](#)

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