



# Italian Historical Society of America Newsletter

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## Tutto Italiano Benvenuto a *Tutto Italiano*

"He was one of the [most learned Italian laymen](#) of his day, intimately familiar with Aristotelian logic and natural philosophy, theology, and classical literature. He is, of course, most famous for having written the *Divine Comedy* ..." ~ [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

This year – in honor of the seven-hundredth anniversary of his death – Dante Alighieri is being celebrated throughout the world. Born in Florence, Dante is widely acknowledged as the "Father of the Italian language," for his use of the Tuscan dialect instead of Latin when he wrote his legendary tale, *Commedia*. Following Dante, [Giovanni Boccaccio](#) and [Francesco Petrarch](#), two influential writers in the fourteenth century that referenced Dante's work, were also instrumental in using [Italian vernacular](#).

In the early 1450s, the advent of the printing press made it easier and faster to publish written documents, and by the end of the fifteenth century, the [Aldine Press](#) was publishing books in Venice. Founder Aldus Manutius first focused on printing books in their original Greek or Latin. He later created the forerunner to the italic typeface and he is credited with printing the first portable book – smaller versions that could be carried.

[Pietro Bembo](#), a scholar, poet, and cardinal – along with other attributes – was interested in Italian literature and the Italian language, particularly the Tuscan dialect. Shortly before the turn of the sixteenth century, [Bembo and Manutius collaborated](#) on producing the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, positioning the Tuscan dialect as the Italian language.

Dante was born during the time of the [Guelphs and the Ghibellines](#), opposing parties with the Guelphs backing the pope and the Ghibellines loyal to the Holy Roman Emperor. Dante's family had an alliance with the Guelphs, and Dante was part of the political scene in Florence, but when the Guelphs divided, the faction that took control of Florence forced Dante to leave in 1302.

After his exile, Dante traveled throughout the peninsula and around 1317 or 1318, he settled in Ravenna. (region of Emilia-Romagna), about 60 miles northeast of Florence, 35 miles east of Bologna, and less than five miles from the Adriatic Sea. It is not known precisely when Dante began writing *Commedia*; some note in 1308. He completed it in 1320, the year before he died.

In Ravenna and throughout Italy, hundreds of celebrations have been planned, starting last year when [March 25th was proclaimed National Dante Day](#). In January of this year, the Uffizi Gallery opened "A Riveder le Stele" ("To See the Stars Again"), a virtual exhibit of 88 drawings completed in the late 1580s, "[for free, any hour of the day, for everyone](#)." The drawings have been viewed by the public only twice before, in 1865 and 1993. [Exhibit in English](#). [Exhibit in Italian](#).

Earlier this year, the [Consulate General of Italy in Boston announced](#) the formation of "a rich program including over 60 initiatives planned throughout the year across the

United States.” The program includes “a series of virtual conferences led by distinguished experts from some of the most important Italian and American academic institutions.”

In addition to celebrations sponsored by the Italian Embassy, numerous virtual events offer the opportunity to read and discuss Dante’s trilogy. [The Dante Society of America](#) is featuring “[Canto per Canto: Conversations with Dante in Our Time](#),” with the aim “to produce podcast conversations about all 100 cantos of the *Divine Comedy*, to be completed within the seventh centenary of Dante’s death in 2021.” At [100 Days of Dante](#), participants are invited to “Join the world’s largest Dante reading group,” with videos providing “100 short, accessible introductions to the cantos of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.” On [Digital Dante](#), viewers can click on any of the 100 cantos for an in-depth review.

On October 1st, the Camerata Strumentale Città di Prato and the Florence Philharmonic Orchestra (la Filharmonie) will announce the winner of [Dante 700: La Dolce Sinfonia Di Paradiso](#). More than 100 compositions were submitted in an international competition for a score “inspired by the Divina Commedia.” In March, “A Collaborative Initiative of the Dante Alighieri Societies of Australia” began a series of events for the [Dante700 Australia National Seminar Series](#).

In Canada, [Artist Timothy Schmalz Honors Dante](#). “The University of Toronto, in the center of the city, is creating a Dante Park with all 100 of Tim’s sculpted cantos.” A collection of the [exquisite sculptures by Tim](#) will be shown in Florence this month. Tim worked with [Daniel Fitzpatrick](#) of New Orleans, who translated “all 14,000 lines of Dante’s work to “supplement [the] 100 bronze sculptures ...” [Dante 700 Year Anniversary Sculpture| Timothy Schmalz](#) (YouTube video)

[The World of Dante](#)

[Dante Alighieri Biography](#)

[Dante Alighieri 1265-1321](#) [Poets]

[Princeton Dante Project](#)

[The Timelessness of Dante](#) [Italics Magazine]

[Daily Readings at Tomb Honor Dante 700 years After His Death](#)

[Pope Francis Celebrates Dante: Prophet of Hope and Poet of Mercy](#)

[Why 2021 is the Year of Dante](#)

[Dante Alighieri: Italy Celebrates 700-year Anniversary of His Death](#)

[700 Years After Dante’s Death, His Handwritten Notes Are Discovered](#)

[Paoletti Guitars Pay Homage to Dante](#)

## **The Regions of Italy**

[Photographs of Lombardia](#)

[Welcome to Venice](#) [PDF]

Book by Guido Moltedo, founder and editor of the [Venice-based magazine ytali](#), dedicated to the many places in the world called Venice.

[Venice is Watching Tourists’ Every Move](#) [CNN Travel]

“On the island of Tronchetto, next to the two-mile bridge separating Venice from the Italian mainland, the Control Room opened in September 2020.”

[Venice employs armed guards to deal with overcrowding on ferries](#) (cnn.com; August 22, 2021)

[Paolo Veneziano: Art & Devotion in 14th-Century Venice](#)  
July 13 to October 3, 2021; Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA

[The Venice Film Festival Returns](#)

### **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**

[Beppo's America: An Immigrant Tale by Frank P. Riga](#)

In the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century, millions of Italians seeking a better life journeyed to America. Based on personal recollections and historic facts, a young married couple joins her parents in Buffalo to start their new life in America.

### **Featured Authors**

[Italians Swindled to New York by Joe Tucciarone and Ben Lariccia](#)

The 1861 Unification of Italy launched a new European country promising to fulfill the dreams of millions of Italians, but a large sector of poor peasants found themselves cutoff from the changed order and desperate to survive. In 1872, an army of speculators invaded the countryside, hawking steamship tickets and promising fabulous riches in the Americas.

Authors Interview (Excerpts)

*What inspired you to write "Italians Swindled to New York: False Promises at the Dawn of Immigration"?*

Joe: A few months after the publication of *Coal War in the Mahoning Valley* in 2019, Ben asked if we had left any unfinished business as a result of our research.

Ben: The swindling that we had touched upon in this first book really deserved to be fully investigated and brought to light in all its particulars.

*What is the most important attribute of this book?*

Ben: All too often, to emigrate means to put your well-being at the mercy of others who may exploit your desperation. It's true today, and it was then for Italians trying to escape social and economic changes ushered in by Italian Unification.

Joe: We uncovered numerous facts during our research, but the most important one was that the well known mass-migration of Italians to the United States began almost eight years earlier than has been widely believed.

*Why should someone read it?*

Joe: This is an important chapter in the economic and cultural history of the late 19th century.

Ben: The era before 1880 is little studied, yet it's directly tied to how Americans, for decades, came to view Italians.

### **Was it difficult to access sources?**

Ben: Primary resources on the scandalous swindles of the 1870s exist online ... Also the spirited debates in the Italian Parliament on emigration provided important background ...

Joe: The challenge was weeding out irrelevant data and composing the rest into a coherent narrative. The Italian Parliament began discussing the unprecedented surge in emigration (caused by exaggerated claims and false promises of shipping agents) in the spring of 1872.

[Read the entire interview on the Italian American Press.](#)

### **Author Update**

Lou Del Bianco, IAP author of *Out of Rushmore's Shadow*, tells the story of his grandfather, Luigi Del Bianco, the Chief Carver of Mount Rushmore, in a webinar presented by the New York Adventure Club. "The Mount Rushmore Scandal: Chief Carver's (Nearly) Lost Legacy" September 14th at 8:00 pm. Registration fee. [Details here.](#)

### **Italian American Heritage Project**

#### **Lesson Plans: *The Columbus Letter***

On his return to Spain after his first voyage west, Christopher Columbus wrote three letters describing his exploration of the islands. For many years, students have been taught about Columbus through fragments of phrases taken from the letters. These small sections of words have been used against Columbus to portray him as solely responsible for the mistreatment of the natives on the islands.

The lesson plans provide learners with a well-rounded approach in determining what Columbus wrote. Students examine passages from the letters to learn what was reported through the translated editions. In grades 1 to 4, children learn about Columbus's account of the people on the islands and how they lived. In grades 5 to 8, children learn about native culture and some of the reasons why Columbus made the expedition. High school students analyze the three letters for similarities and differences.

Lesson plans for all grade levels include numerous opportunities for involvement with age-appropriate activities and varied topics for class discussions. All include PowerPoint presentations for ease in creating a positive and informative class experience. The lesson plans – as a Word document with teacher instructions and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation – are available for download at [sharemylesson.com](http://sharemylesson.com). (No fees to pay, but registration is required.)

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**

Learn about Italian American history and the people of Italian heritage who helped build America. Thirty-One Days of Italians releases its 2021-22 List with a notable group of people who influenced the growth and culture of America.

In the late seventeenth century, Eusebio Francesco Chini – better known as Francis Kino – founded more than 20 missions in Southern Arizona and Northern Sonora, Mexico, in addition to charting maps of the area. For his humanitarian efforts, he is a candidate for sainthood. Around the same time, further east, Enrico de Tonti (under the French name Henri) was supervising fort construction and exploring the Mississippi River with de la Salle. De Tonti's expeditions earned him the title "Father

of Arkansas.”

During the American Revolution, shortly before the states claimed their independence from Britain, Giuseppe Maria Francesco Vigo – Francis Vigo – funded General George Rogers Clark and is largely responsible for America securing control of the Northwest Territory. Almost 100 years later, Charles Angelo Siringo gained fame for his best-selling book *Will Rogers* declared “The Cowboy’s Bible.” Later, Siringo became one of the first undercover Pinkerton detectives.

In more contemporary times, two inventions caused significant changes in the world of sports and beyond. Frank J. Zamboni invented the ice-rink surfacing machine named after him, and Francis Rogallo – and his wife Gertrude – created a flexible fabric wing, named after its founders and giving Rogallo the title “father of modern hang gliding.”

In 2006, a directory of Italians and Italian Americans who are recognized for their extraordinary achievements was compiled and Thirty-One Days of Italians was created. The website features 74 names, and an annual List provides a person of Italian heritage to learn about and celebrate for each day in October, Italian American Heritage Month.

The first day in October honors the Italian immigrant and the last day is set aside to honor someone not on the List. Honorary Members are on the List every year. In alphabetical order, they are Father Pietro Bandini, Constantino Brumidi, Mother Francis Cabrini, Enrico Caruso, Christopher Columbus, Enrico Fermi, Amadeo Pietro Giannini, Guglielmo Marconi, Filippo Mazzei, Antonio Meucci, Maria Montessori, Andrea Palladio, Antonio Pasin, Arturo Toscanini, and Amerigo Vespucci.

Other names are rotated, giving everyone on Thirty-One Days of Italians a chance to have their day. The 2021-22 List includes (in alphabetical order) John Buscema, Eusebio Francesco Chini (Kino), Fred De Luca, Enrico de Tonti, Robert Charles Gallo, Jeno F. Paulucci, Leonard Riggio, Francis Rogallo, R.A. Salvatore, Giorgio Santelli, Francisco Scavullo, Charles Angelo Siringo, Giuseppe Maria Francesco Vigo, and Frank Zamboni.

See the complete calendar of names and learn more about them at [Thirty-One Days of Italians 2021-22 List](#).

### **Italian American News**

Read my articles in [La Gazzetta Italiana](#)

[The Waldensians of Italy](#)

[The President and First Gentleman](#)

This month, *La Gazzetta Italiana* is providing access to all its online articles, many usually available only to subscribers.

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[The American Italian Heritage Museum in Albany Celebrates its 25th Birthday](#)

[The National Italian American Foundation Accepting Submissions for Ninth Annual NIAF Photo Contest](#)

[A Century of Notoriety: The Estate of Al Capone](#) (Witherell’s Auctioneers)

[Judge Rules Philadelphia Can’t Remove A Christopher Columbus Statue](#) (npr.com; August 18, 2021)

[JCCIA Files Suit \[Against Chicago Park District\] to Restore \[Columbus\] Statue to Arrigo Park](#) (Fra Noi; August 17, 2021)

[Tucson Celebrates Father Kino and the 30th Anniversary of “Three Statues for Three](#)

Nations" (tuscon.com; August 8, 2021)

[Meet the Woman In Charge of Conserving Every Single Inch of the Watts Towers, L.A.'s Most Iconic Landmark](#) (L.A. Taco; June 17, 2021)

## News about Italy

[Chamois: Italy's Alpine Village Without Cars](#) (BBC Travel; September 10, 2021)

[Pope Francis Sends 15,000 Ice Creams to Rome Prisoners](#) (can.com; September 8, 2021)

[Lamborghini Countach Is a Striking Tribute to the Original Supercar](#) (msn.com; August 15, 2021)

[Italy Fights Over 500 Infernos Across The Country, As Wildfires Death Toll Rises](#) (RT News; August 12, 2021)

[Highest Temperature Ever Recorded In Europe Likely Hit In Italy](#) (The Hill, August 12, 2021)

[Tensions Rise Over Bid To Rename Italy Park For A Mussolini](#) (Nexstar Media, August 11, 2021)

[How Italy's Torre Lupara Makes 11,000 Pounds of Buffalo Mozzarella a Day \(eater.com; August 7, 2021\)](#)

[Italy's New UNESCO Sites in Padua, Bologna, and Tuscany](#) (Italofile; August 3, 2021)

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

Janice Therese Mancuso  
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 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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