



Italian Historical Society of America

Newsletter

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BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

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

Italian Americans have an incredible heritage. First, we have the extraordinarily beautiful land of Italy – the home of our ancestors. The entire peninsula, about one and three-quarters larger than the size of Florida – contains more UNESCO World Heritage Sites than any other country in the world.

Next, we have the legacy of a remarkable group of men – Caboto, Columbus, Dante, da Vinci, Galileo, Michelangelo, and Vespucci, among so many others and including some very notable women – who have changed the course of the world. Then we have our ancestors, countless who endured the journey to America; and immeasurable are those who suffered from negative stereotypes and discrimination as they struggled with assimilation.

Before Italy became a united country, the borders of its city-states and regions were in flux, depending on who fought the territorial battles and who won. Residents within the close-knit villages held on to their identity by forming stronger bonds in their community and solidifying their distrust of outsiders.

After unification, life in the southern regions of Italy dramatically declined. Naples and the island of Sicily – once part of a magnificent kingdom – were struggling to maintain viability. Now residents of a united country, the villagers found their new government offered little in support.

Seeking opportunities for themselves and their descendants, millions of Italians left their country; many with hopes of returning to Italy with money to buy land. A voluminous amount made the decision that the United States would be their new home.

[33 Beautiful Photos of Italy](#)

[The 20 Most Beautiful Places in Italy](#)

[10 Most Beautiful Places in Italy](#)

[Italy - Properties Inscribed on the World Heritage List](#)

[Biographies – Italian Historical Society of America](#)

[When Italian Immigrants Were “the Other”](#)

Thirty-One Days of Italians

Celebrate Italian American Heritage Month with Thirty-One Days of Italians. In 2006, a directory of Italians and Italian Americans who are recognized for their significant achievements was compiled and Thirty-One Days of Italians was created. The website features 75 people, and an annual List provides a person of Italian heritage to learn about and celebrate for each day in October, Italian American Heritage Month.

New this year is Vincent Justus Burnelli, who was honored in 1944 for his “Major Contributions to the Scientific Advancement of Aviation.” Burnelli is responsible for much of the modern airplane’s design, and owns numerous patents for his technological innovations. *Thank you, Al, for your nomination.*

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 2022-2023 List includes (in alphabetical order) Father Geno Baroni, Vincent Justus Burnelli, Father Joseph Cataldo, John Ciardi, Pietro di Donato, Frank Frazetta, Ella T. Grasso, John N. LaCorte, Gian Carlo Menotti, Costantino Nivola, Giovanni Pietro Antonio Nobili, Ezio Pinza, Bruno Sammartino, and Luisa Tetrizzini.

See the complete October calendar of names and learn more about them at [Thirty-One Days of Italians 2022-23 List](#).

Thank you, Truby, for posting on [Primo Magazine](#)’s social media sites; and thank you to all those in the Italian American community who help promote Thirty-One Days of Italians.

Italian American Press

Help preserve Italian American heritage and history. 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. 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.

Featured Author

Ralph G. Giordano has been “on a 40-year journey with Mr. Jefferson.” He notes that Thomas Jefferson had “a life-long admiration for all things Italian. Tracing his [Jefferson’s] cultural admiration for Italy is not a new phenomenon, placing him among the forerunner of assimilating Italian culture is.”

Ralph’s interest and research were the foundation for [Italian Culture in America: How a Founding Father introduced Italian Art, Architecture, Food, Wine, and Liberty to the American People](#).

Featured Authors

Joe Tucciarone and Ben Lariccia discovered a lost segment of Italian American history. As Ben notes, “Joe and I agreed that “Coal War” was a story that needed to be told, and that the very ignorance of this history compelled us to publish it.”

They wrote [Coal War in the Mahoning Valley: The Origin of Greater Youngstown’s Italians](#), a detailed history about the Italian immigrants who worked in the coal mines of Ohio in the early 1870s. Learn more about the history and the book from their video, [The Coalburg Italians](#).

Italian American Heritage Project

In these times of diversity, acceptance, and a rebuke of negative perceptions, one of the largest ethnic groups in America still deals with discrimination and harsh stereotypes; and one of the largest offenders is the film industry.

Mike DeLucia, author of several books about Italian heritage including [Being Brothers](#), [posted on the Italian American Press](#), addresses the stereotypes on film in his article,

[“Hollywood’s Mafia Hypocrisy.”](#) Mike provides an overview of the characterizations and how industry leaders “are profiteers of creating and propagating a stereotypical view of Italian Americans as either criminals or unintelligent/uneducated/unrefined individuals ...” In closing, he writes; “The time for change is now and the onus rests squarely upon our shoulders.”

The classic film *Gone with the Wind* is often introduced with a disclaimer, so not to offend any viewers. Should the classic film *The Godfather* – and its sequels – include a notice that character depictions do not represent the vast majority of people with Italian heritage? Should other films and shows that insult people of Italian heritage also include a disclaimer?

Bill Dal Cerro and David Anthony Witter, authors of [Bebop, Swing, and Bella Musica](#) (also on the IAP), address immigration and race relations in music during the end of the nineteenth century. Bill notes, “In terms of immigration, this book reminds readers of just how harsh the experience of mass emigration was for the Italians: public scorn, media defamation (which still continues in 2017!), anti-Italian discrimination (such as the 1924 immigration act), and even violence ...” Bill’s website [Stereotype This](#), provides the myths created by Hollywood and the truth behind the deceptions.

In addition to the stereotypes, Italian American heritage has been tainted by the misrepresentation of Christopher Columbus.

Although dissension towards Columbus had been brewing for more than half a century, it was through the distribution of Howard Zinn’s book, *A People’s History of the United States*, published in 1980, that misinformation began to filter through schools and colleges. Zinn wrote the book to promote his own beliefs about American history, but Zinn was not the first to blame Columbus for genocide.

In 1955, Samuel Eliot Morison used some of the material from his 1942 tome *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus* to rewrite “the entire story of the Discoverer’s life and voyages, in the hope of reaching a wider public.” At about one-third the volume of Morison’s first book, *Christopher Columbus, Mariner* does provide a condensed recap, but it also includes Morison’s unsubstantiated judgment: “The cruel policy initiated by Columbus and pursued by his successors resulted in complete genocide.” Zinn used the term to promote his own ideology.

In 2016, the Zinn Education Project initiated [Abolish Columbus Day](#), supporting schools and educational institutions in replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

How do you make Italian Americans history relevant in the twenty-first century? Widespread education is the key, providing the accounts of men and women who have considerably contributed to America and providing the factual history of Columbus. Numerous websites have become more available, offering a plethora of information, but the lack of respect for Italian American culture and heritage is still significant. The online educational resources are not reaching the proper audiences.

Movies glorifying the Italian mobster lifestyle continue to be made, and the battle over Columbus Day persists. Led by indigenous groups of several nationalities, petitions to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous People’s Day are branching further into educational systems and political arenas.

Commercials on the History Channel, PBS, and others, not about food, but about the people of Italian heritage who changed America should be aired. Educational facilities and community government leaders should be notified that Indigenous People already have a designated day, August 9th was established by the United Nations in 1994; and Native Americans have the Friday after Thanksgiving and the month of November to celebrate their heritage.

Within the past six months or so, these dates are being mentioned in various articles that address the continuous efforts to eliminate Columbus Day; and it’s a compelling

rebuttal. (The dates have been published in *Tutto Italiano* every month since September 2019.)

Last year in his Columbus Day proclamation, President Biden also made a [Proclamation on Indigenous Peoples' Day](#) essentially dismissing the day as a celebration of Italian heritage and culture and providing more support for its demise. President Biden's actions prompted a [letter from COPOMIAO](#) – “over fifty of the largest and most influential Italian American membership organizations,” requesting a meeting “to discuss our concerns and make a genuine effort to find a mutually agreeable pathway forward that honors our community and preserves our history.”

In advance of Columbus Day this year, another [letter was sent to President Biden](#), dated September 9th. As the Italian American community waits for a response, a bill was reintroduced to the New York State Legislature that “[Changes the designation of the public holiday of Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day](#).” The [Columbus Heritage Coalition](#) provides the links to contact the New York State House or Senate to oppose this misguided action. The good news: it was reported on September 28th that both the [Democratic and Republican gubernatorial candidates oppose the bill](#). Even so, Italian Americans need to be active in keeping their Italian heritage and culture alive.

Especially when the battle is still being fought.

[Florida Indigenous Groups say Tampa's Columbus Statue Will Come Down “one way or another”](#)

All About Columbus

[Lesson Plans: The Columbus Letter](#)

[Christopher Columbus: When Did the Hero Become a Villain?](#)

[Uncovering the REAL Columbus](#)

[Countering the Critics](#)

[The Columbus Debate: Asleep or Awake? It's Not Woke.](#)

[The True Legacy of Christopher Columbus](#)

[The Columbus Project](#)

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.](#)

Note: Depending on the source, Peoples', People's, or Peoples will be used.

Special Event

An Evening with [Eugenio Bennato](#) - Taranta Power

A free concert by folk musician and songwriter Eugenio Bennato.

[Register](#) (eventbrite)

Thursday, October 6, 2022, 7:00 PM PDT

Warner Grand Theatre South Pacific Avenue, Los Angeles, CA

“This event is presented by the Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles, in collaboration with the Consulate General of Italy, Councilman Joe Buscaino (LA 15th Council District), LILAA - Little Italy of Los Angeles Association and the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Los Angeles.”

Italian American News

[John Cena Sets a New Guinness World Record by Granting 650 Make-A-Wish](#)

[Cabrini Statue, Relic to be Installed at Holy Name](#) (franoi.com; September 2, 2022)

News about Italy

[New Images Reveal Moment of DART Asteroid Impact Captured by Italian Satellite](https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/27/space/dart-asteroid-impact/index.html)
(cnn.com; September 27, 2022)

[Giorgia Meloni: Italy's Far Right Wins Election and Vows to Govern for All](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61811111) (bbc.com,
September 26, 2022

[In 'Saving Venice,' PBS Show Follows Efforts to Save 'Floating City'](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2022/09/24/saving-venice-pbs-show-follows-efforts-to-save-floating-city/)
(washingtonpost.com; September 24, 2022)

8 Italian Villages You May Have Never Heard Of (cnn.com/travel; September 16, 2022)

[Matilde Vicenzi Celebrates the Moon Festival with a Special Box](#) (italianfood.net; September 14, 2022)

[Venetians Fear 'Museum Relic' Status as Population Drops Below 50,000](#)
(theguardian.com; August 10, 2022)

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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Notice About Links: On the date of publication, the links in this newsletter were current. In older newsletters, some links may be inactive if the URL has changed or is no longer available.

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