



Italian Historical Society of America

Newsletter

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BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

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Tutto Italiano **Benvenuto a Tutto Italiano**

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When the Roman Empire was at its peak in the early second century, it encompassed almost two million square miles: surrounding the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea and extending hundreds and thousands of miles inland. Around 400 years earlier in 312 BC, under the direction of Appius Claudius Caecus, construction of [Via Appia](#) began. Built by the military, its main purpose was to facilitate movement of troops and supplies.

Starting at the [Roman Forum](#), the road led south to [Terracina](#) – a Roman colony on the coast of the [Gulf of Gaeta](#) – and then headed east to [Capua](#) (about 20 miles north of Naples), a distance of about 125 miles. Around 240 BC, the road was extended southeast to [Taranto](#), and then across the heel of the boot to [Brindisi](#); the entire distance of the road totaling over 360 miles.

Via Appia was the first road constructed during the Roman Empire, and is often referred to as the "[queen of roads](#)." Its construction was exemplary, and many of the [engineering techniques](#) implemented are utilized today. With Rome the central point of a strategic, political, and social environment, it had to be easily accessible. In 20 BC, under the rule of the first Roman emperor Augustus, the [Milliarium Aureum](#) was installed in the Roman Forum as the point of convergence for all the roads that led from the "[gates of Rome \[to\] several major cities in the Empire](#)." Although established as the first milestone from Rome, traveling to Rome was just as significant.

In 1175 Alain de Lille, "[Monk, poet, preacher, theologian, and eclectic philosopher ...](#)" wrote "*mille viae ducunt homines per saecula Romam*" – "a thousand roads lead men forever to Rome." Known today as "[All roads lead to Rome](#)."

Many of those roads have been paved over and the paths – some originating from the Etruscans – are now part of the transportation system in Italy and in other countries. In Rome, an [original section of Via Appia](#) is preserved in Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica, Appia Antica Regional Park. Located a few miles south of the Colosseum, the park contains about seven miles of the passageway, along with numerous relics that lined the ancient road.

Northeast of the park, [Via Appia Nuova](#) was built for contemporary times, and as Via Appia Antica continues through the park, the modern road follows a parallel path, both meeting in the town of Frattacchie (about twelve miles southeast of Rome), where only Via Appia Nuova continues southeast. It was in Frattacchie in 2017 that McDonalds became the [first restaurant-museum](#) with the discovery of a part of Via Appia during excavations.

Last month, a group of Italian archaeologists who have been digging to find the starting point of Via Appia, [reported that underground water has disrupted their work](#). The road, referred to in ancient times as “regina viarum,” is on the [UNESO Tentative List](#). (Italy currently has 31 sites on the List.) From the application: “The project reveals a surprisingly modern conception ... Outstanding feats of engineering ... also provides evidence as to the revolution in road construction brought about by the Romans.”

A recent article “[The Secret to Making Concrete That Lasts 1,000 Years](#),” reports “Not only is Roman concrete exponentially more durable than modern concrete, but it can also repair itself. Creating a modern equivalent that lasts longer than existing materials could reduce climate emissions and become a key component of resilient infrastructure, like seawalls. ... This is an incredibly sophisticated and complex material. The people who made it were so brilliant, and so precise in what they did, that it has taken us 15 years of work to decipher much of this. And we are humbled by how much more we have to learn.” (See related article in News About Italy below.)

[Building Roman Roads](#)

[40 Maps that Explain the Roman Empire](#)

[All Roads Lead to Rome \(Omnes viae Romam ducunt\)](#)

[Ancient Roman Roads – a Monument to History and Road Construction](#)

[The Beautiful Network of Ancient Roman Roads](#)

[Can't Miss Landmarks Along The Appian Way](#)

[Time Travel on Rome's Ancient Appian Way](#)

[Wandering along the Appian Way – Images from Milestone I to VI](#)

[The Via Appia Antica | A Virtual Tour](#) (YouTube; very informative, but sometimes difficult to hear.)

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

[The Heart of the Family](#) by Phylis Cancilla Martinelli, PhD.

In the late nineteenth century, mining was a major industry in America. Italy – less industrialized and in the ending stages of unification – experienced a mass migration of its citizens seeking a better life. The majority were from Southern Italy, but a small percentage were from the North; and the women “came to start or maintain families [to provide] a settled environment for the men who did the labor.”

Filled with historical facts and well documented, this slim volume presents a collection of every day real-life experiences of the women who made the journey from Northern Italy to America. It's a fascinating look into the mining communities of the American West from the Italian immigrant women's point of view. A brief history of Italy and America provides the background and a wider perspective, showing how social and cultural conditions affected the women's' lives, and how their stories are relevant to social and cultural history today.

Italian American Heritage Project

Keep your Italian heritage alive. An excellent source for learning about Italian American culture and heritage is a museum specifically established to focus on the Italian American experience. Many have virtual exhibits and tours available on their websites. [List of Italian American Museums](#).

Talk with your children (no matter what age), grandchildren, other family members, friends, and educators. Tell them about the significant contributions people of Italian heritage have made to America ... and the world. [List of more than 70 contributors on Thirty-One Days of Italians](#).

Learn about Columbus. It's difficult to correct over 30 years of misinformation, and the rapid spread through digital sources is disheartening. In 2018, the Italian American Heritage Project was established to provide educational resources about Italian American history, heritage, and culture. The website also addresses the Columbus Controversy by providing facts about Columbus, how the controversy started, and why it continues. Read [What is the Truth About Columbus?](#) To understand how Columbus became an important part of American history, read [Christopher Columbus: When Did the Hero Become a Villain?](#) (Some links are no longer active.)

[Lesson plans developed from the letters Columbus wrote after his first voyage.](#)

The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from America. The statements of truth and facts posted on Italian American websites are not working. Columbus Day has lost much of its relevance in American history. 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.](#)

Exhibits

[Vittore Carpaccio: Master Storyteller of Renaissance Venice](#)

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; West Building, Main Floor

Ends February 12, 2023

[Fondazione Del Carnevale Di Acireale](#)

"The Carnival of Acireale, considered 'the most beautiful in Sicily', is one of the most authentic and engaging events of the island's folklore. Throughout the period of the celebrations allegorical floats, masked groups, bands and flowered floats parade along an articulated path through the streets of the center. Exhibitions and concerts are located within the circuit, entirely immersed in the splendor of Sicilian Baroque." Via Ruggero Settimo, 5; 95024, Acireale (CT)

La Gazzetta Italiana

Read my articles

[The Historic and Contemporary Lake Garda](#)

[The Lure of Lecco](#)

Italian American News

[64 Years of Italian Grammy Winners! How Many Do You Know?](#)

(americadomani.com; February 5, 2023)

[Art Titan Frank Frazetta's Legacy Keeps Growing With New Projects And A Massive Retrospective](#) (forbes.com; January 27, 2023)

Learn more about Frank Frazetta at [Thirty-One Days of Italians](#) (Scroll down.)

[Schenectady's Italian Restaurants Navigating Generational Changes](#)

(timesunion.com; January 13, 2023)

[Italian Neighborhood Guide: Cleveland, Ohio](#) (americadomani.com; January 13, 2023)

[RIP Ronzoni's Pastina, the Star-Shaped Pasta of So Many Italian American Childhoods](#) (bonappetit.com; January 7, 2023)

[Petition change.org: SAVE PASTINA! Tell Ronzoni not to discontinue Pastina pasta stars!](#)

News about Italy

['Declaration of war': Outrage in Italy over New York Times Tomato Carbonara](#)

(thelocal.it; February 3, 2023)

[Meet The Man Who Thinks Marco Polo's Discovery Of Pasta Is Hilarious](#)

(americadomani.com; February 2, 2023)

[Herculaneum Fresco Among Looted Relics Returned to Italy from US](#)

(theguardian.com; January 23, 2023)

[Gina Lollobrigida Funeral: Iconic Actress To Be Laid To Rest In Birthplace Of Subiaco After Ceremony In Rome](#) (deadline.com; January 19, 2023)

[Cinemadamare Offers Young Filmmakers a Springboard](#) (franoi.com; January 16, 2023)

[Italy's Most-Wanted Mafia Boss Matteo Messina Denaro Arrested in Sicily](#) (bbc.com; January 16, 2023)

[New Train Route Offers Dreamy Views of Italian Coast](#) (americadomani.com; January 11, 2023)

[See the Lavish Pompeii Home Owned by Two Men Freed From Slavery](#)

(smithsonianmag.com; January 10, 2023)

[Mystery of Why Roman Buildings Have Survived So Long Has Been Unraveled, Scientists Say](#) (cnn.com; January 9, 2023)

[Ranking Barbara Walters' Top Five Italian Interviews of All Time](#) (americadomani.com; December 31, 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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