



Italian Historical Society of America

Newsletter

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BY JANICE THERESE MANCUSO

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

In August, Italy's Minister of Tourism, Daniela Santanchè, [issued a statement](#) regarding the actions of visitors to Italy: "These tourists are also vandals, because they have no respect for our cultural heritage, which belongs not just to Italy, but to the whole world." It's not just Italy that has been experiencing a rash of bad behavior from tourists, but because Italy is one of the top vacation destinations in the world, it's getting a higher proportion of tourism damage.

While multiple instances of tourists disrespecting or defacing historical sites have occurred, two absurd "excuses" stand out: when the parents of a Swiss teenager (17) were told she had [carved an initial into the Colosseum wall](#), they replied "She's just a little girl, she wasn't doing anything wrong;" and in his apology letter to Rome's mayor for [carving his and his girlfriend's names into the Colosseum wall](#), a fitness instructor who lives in England claimed "he wasn't aware of the monument's age."

Setting aside the fact that some people are compelled to leave their mark, or trespass to fulfill a goal – [or fill a water bottle](#) – Italy offers visitors its incredible beauty, both natural and made by hand.

[Vandalism, Tantrums and Narcissism: Entitled Tourists are Out of Control](#) (2023)

[Keep Out of the Trevi Fountain and 32 Other Acts you Should Avoid in Italy](#) (2023)

[Don't Make These 9 Tourist Mistakes in Italy](#) (2021)

[9 Tips for Beginners Visiting Italy for the First Time](#) (2021)

[27 Essential Italy Travel Tips: Everything You Need To Know](#) (2023)

[25 Best Places to Visit in Italy](#) (2023)

[25 Top-Rated Tourist Attractions in Italy](#) (2023)

[The Best Under-The-Radar Villages in Italy You Should Visit to Avoid Tourists, According to an Italian Local](#) (2021)

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.

On the IAP in the months ahead ...

Murder mystery on the Riviera: new English translation by Kazabo Publishing.

A tribute to Bensonhurst, New York by Joseph C. Polacco.

The life of an Italian brigand and folk hero by Dan Possumato.

NOTE

Con Amore is no longer available in print on amazon. The publisher, Infinity Publishing, has undergone several mergers since 2018, and in September sent notice that it was “sunsetting our services,” and the ISBN has been cancelled. A limited number of print copies are available through book resellers, and the eBook, with full-color photographs, can be purchased on [Smashwords](#) and other eBook sellers. I will be making some modifications to the print version and plan to republish in 2024.

Italian American Heritage Project

While many of the festivities for Italian American Heritage Month have already taken place, there's still time to visit Thirty-One Days of Italians to learn about the [remarkable people of Italian heritage](#) who have contributed so much to American society.

From [Pew Research Center](#) “Based on our review of state statutes, human resources websites and other sources, only 16 states and the territory of American Samoa still observe the second Monday in October as an official public holiday exclusively called Columbus Day.”

In researching Columbus Day this year, it appears the violence and protests against Columbus aren't as loud; but the underlying current of replacing Columbus Day has not abated. Numerous petitions have been submitted to state and city government committees throughout the nation. Several weeks ago, I submitted letters to the Massachusetts Senate and the Albany, New York City Council requesting they learn the truth about Columbus before making any decisions to replace the day.

One email making the rounds in Albany contained two messages from the same person who provided a lengthy list of reasons why Columbus Day should be replaced. I wrote his “emails cover many issues in a well-thought plan to eradicate the importance of Christopher Columbus in American history.” Many of his comments were derogatory towards Italian Americans, and if I had the time, I would have addressed every issue he brought up. (On a personal note, I recently moved and although it was a very short distance, it has been most disruptive.)

One issue that stood out was the petitioner basing the foundation of his claims against Columbus on the writings of Bartolome de las Casas, “a first-hand observer of Columbus.” He states “de las Casas was a “Spanish/Catholic priest who was present at the time of Columbus's activities, and he documented what was happening.”

Bartolome de las Casas was not “a first-hand observer of Columbus.” He did not witness any of Columbus's actions.

A timeline of the facts:

1500: Columbus is removed as governor and sent back to Spain

1502: de las Casas arrives for the first time on Hispaniola with an [Encomienda](#)

1502: Columbus's fourth voyage; he is banned from landing on Hispaniola

1506: Columbus died

1507: de las Casas returned to Europe for religious studies

1512: de las Casas, now a priest, returned to Hispaniola

1527: de las Casas begins writing *The History of the Indies*

Another issue the petitioner brought up was his claim of “Italian-Americans who no longer want to be associated with Columbus.” Unfortunately, that's true – most likely because they've been “taught” (the Italian) Columbus was a genocidal mastermind and accountable for slave labor. With almost 40 years of this type of “education,” why would those of Italian heritage want to be associated with Columbus?

Both letters ended with this paragraph:

“Replacing Columbus Day removes significant historical value from Italian American heritage. The day should be commemorated to learn the true facts about his voyages

and accomplishments. Additionally, both Indigenous People and Native Americans already have designated days that were established several decades ago. In December 1994, the United Nations declared International Day of the World's Indigenous People to be observed on August 9th every year. Native American Heritage Month was proclaimed by President Bush in 1990. November 28, 2008 was the first official Native American Heritage Day. The day changes each year, and is celebrated on the day after Thanksgiving. Wouldn't coordinating local celebrations with these recognized dates be an appropriate action?"

The September 2017 issue of *Tutto Italiano* noted these already-established acknowledgements of celebrations for both Indigenous People and Native Americans. Several issues distributed in 2018 contained information about replacing Columbus Day, and in June 2019, *Tutto Italiano* first published the established dates of both culture's celebrations. Since September 2019 – with the exception of the December issue – the dates of celebrations (mentioned in the above paragraph) – have been included in very issue.

Sometime during the past year, several organizations and other proponents of Columbus have also mentioned these dates. Of all the reasons we have to preserve Columbus Day, these dates are the most compelling. They are factual proof that there is no reason to replace Columbus Day with another culture's celebratory recognition.

Letters by Italian American organizations and individuals "defend" Columbus Day by citing the 1891 mass lynching of Italians, or how Italian immigrants were discriminated against during the mass migration to America after Italy's unification, or how the false information about Columbus has been circulating for years. Those against Columbus have developed numerous excuses to dispel all those claims, but what can they say about the fact that dates to celebrate the culture and heritage of Indigenous People and Native Americans were established over 30 years ago?

On October 9th, President Biden proclaimed the [federal holiday Columbus Day](#); he also proclaimed it [Indigenous Peoples Day](#). His statement about Indigenous Peoples Day was almost twice as long as his Columbus Day proclamation. On October 12th, Jill Biden hosted an [Italian American Heritage Month Reception](#) at the White House. Several days ago, she hosted a [Hispanic Heritage Month Reception](#), also at the White House. Her speech about Italian Americans was longer, but what statement sounded more meaningful and which one received more national attention?

[Thousands Cheer on the 79th Annual Columbus Day Parade in NYC: Photos](#) (nypost.com; October 9, 2023)

[It's Columbus Day, Not the Woke Rebrand](#) (nypost.com; October 9, 2023)

[You Either Celebrate Columbus Day or Hate Civilization. It's That Simple.](#) (spectator.org; October 9, 2023)

[Do Corporations and Networks Not Realize it is Italian American Heritage and Culture Month?](#) (washingtonexaminer.com; October 16, 2023)

The articles above address real issues associated with Columbus Day. The articles below present opinions, not well researched and based on erroneous information.

[Is Commemorating Columbus Day Offensive? Why the Day's Namesake is Disrespectful to Some](#) (usatoday.com; October 9, 2023)

This article uses information first published in 2012, and republished in 2014 and 2015 that includes a list of "some examples of the atrocities Columbus committed, as [compiled by Philadelphia Magazine](#)" The writer of the original (and republished articles) states: "As noted by Spanish historian and Catholic priest Bartolome de las Casas, who witnessed much of the carnage ..." (See timeline above.) [The same article was also published by msn.com.](#)

[Indigenous Peoples Day or Columbus Day? Groups Say It's Time to Leave Columbus](#)

[Behind](http://chicago.suntimes.com) (chicago.suntimes.com; October 9, 2023)

[Columbus Day Could Be on Borrowed Time as More Communities Embrace Indigenous Peoples Day](http://wamc.org) (wamc.org; October 9, 2023)

This article reports on the decision of the Albany City Council to honor “October 9th (2023), as Indigenous Peoples Day in the city,” in addition to Columbus Day. (It appears Columbus Day was not replaced.) One council member’s rationalization: “this resolution goes beyond just Christopher Columbus, this resolution truly goes into acknowledging the actual violence and silencing of indigenous people across the United States.”

[Christopher Columbus Does Not Represent Italian American History](http://itemlive.com) (itemlive.com; October 9, 2023)

[How Christopher Columbus Got His Day](http://saturdayeveningpost.com) (saturdayeveningpost.com; October 9, 2023)

Thank you, John.

Provides a good historical overview.

Another look at discrimination:

[Muscogee Nation Judge Rules in Favor of Citizenship for Slave Descendants](http://npr.org) (npr.org; September 28, 2023)

From the New York Public Library

[Kids Books for Italian American Heritage Month](#)

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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. Although the statements of truth and facts posted on Italian American websites are filled with historical facts, they are not very effective in reaching and educating the intended audience. Columbus Day has lost much of its relevance in American history; but battles for his legacy in American history are being won. Even so, the war against Columbus and our Italian heritage continues. 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

## Celebrating Italian Heritage with Thirty-One Days of Italians

[An Italian Heritage Month Salute to the Top 12 Italian-American Sports Figures in US History](https://palmbeachpost.com/story/news/local/italian-heritage-month-salute-to-the-top-12-italian-american-sports-figures-in-us-history/2023/10/17/italian-heritage-month-salute-to-the-top-12-italian-american-sports-figures-in-us-history/1234567890/) (palmbeachpost.com; October 17, 2023)

[The Heist Performs the Great American Songbook with Its Authentic Italian Roots](#)  
(broadwayworld.com; October 17, 2023)

[The Italian-American Women of Staten Island celebrate at 'Pranza,' a traditional luncheon hosted in South Beach](#) (msn.com; October 8, 2023)

[European Court Finds Italy Violated Human Rights in Landfill Mismanagement](#)  
(msn.com; October 19, 2023)

[Billionaire Buyer Closes Leonardo Da Vinci's Vineyard to the Public](#) (cnn.com; October 17, 2023)

[Venice Won't Be Listed as One of the World's Most Endangered Sites](https://www.npr.org/2023/09/14/1208888888/venice-world-heritage-list) (npr.org; September 14, 2023)

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

[illegible]

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