



Italian Historical Society of America Newsletter

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

Spanning the border between Basilicata and Calabria, [Pollino National Park](#) is the largest nature reserve in Italy. [Spreading across both regions](#), at approximately 475,000 acres, the preserved area stops just short of the Tyrrhenian Sea on the west coast and the Gulf of Taranto – an inlet of the Ionian Sea – on the east.

During the Roman Empire, [herds of sheep and goats would graze the land](#), and trade routes were established, connecting the toe of the boot to Rome. After the fall of Rome, various tribes seized control of the area, and the plague in the mid-1300s greatly decreased the population. By the 1500s, the region experienced substantial agricultural and livestock expansion, but after Italy's unification in 1861, farming activities diminished.

In the late 1950s, the [area was gaining recognition as a park](#) and proposals for commercial development were submitted, but local authorities seeking to protect the territory requested an environmental study. The project brought an alliance between Basilicata and Calabria to identify the terrain as a protected national park. On paper, the national park was officially founded in 1986, and in 1993, the area received its national park classification.

The [mountainous border park](#) was designated a [UNESCO Global Geopark](#) in 2015 being "of great geological interest in the Mediterranean and southern Italy regions ... [and representing] one of the keys for understanding the structural relationship between the peloritano-Calabrian Arch and Southern Apennines ... identified as the '[Fault Sangineto](#)' ... It marks the point of contact between the Apennines and the Peloritano Calabrian Arch." UNESCO Global [Geoparks are identified](#) as "single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development."

Pollino National Park is home to [Heldreich's pine](#), the oldest tree in Europe. In 2018, a group of research ecologists discovered the tree growing on a cliff and determined its age to be 1,230 years old. Also known as [Bosnian pine](#) and [Pino loricato](#), the tree is part of the logo on the official web site of the park. The park also contains an [old-growth beech forest](#) with trees that are over 600 years old. Its one of thirteen beech forests in Italy, all [UNESCO World Heritage Sites](#).

More than [50 municipalities are located within the perimeters of the park](#): ancient settlements that retain their ties to the past. Many of the villages were established by monks and feature historic religious buildings and castles. In the province of Potenza in Basilicata, [Viggianello](#) offers stunning views of its surrounding terrain and numerous churches. [Orsomarso](#), in the province of Cosenza in Calabria, is known for its [clock tower](#), built on top of a narrow rock formation overlooking the town and adjacent hilltops.

In addition to their historic significance, each town maintains many of its cultural traditions showcased through archeology, art, festivals, food, and monuments. Equally, with its sustainable Geopark designation, Pollino National Park preserves the traditions and values of these ancient villages.

[Pollino National Park](#)

[National Parks Association: Pollino National Park](#)

[The Ancient Italian Beech Forests ...](#)

[Beech Forests in Italy](#)

[Municipalities of the Pollino National Park](#)

[Towns of the Pollino National Park](#)

[Basilicata: Pollino National Park](#)

[Calabria: In the Pollino National Park, Among History, Mystical Places and Perched Villages](#)

[Pollino National Park: Things to Do](#)

[ArtePollino](#)

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 Sicilian Journey*](#) by Marcello Boni

Combining Italian, Arabic, French, Greek, and Spanish, the Sicilian language forms a distinct vocabulary, terminology, and sound. Considered a minority language, it's not as popular as the Italian language and is sometimes described as a dialect, rather than an independent language.

In *The Sicilian Journey*, language teacher and native-born Sicilian Marcello Boni offers an easy-to-use guide for learning the basics of the Sicilian language. Through a series of mishaps, a young tourist stranded in Sicily must learn the language so he can return home. Everyday conversations, written in English and Sicilian chronicle his journey, accompanied by colorful illustrations, sketched by the author. A pronunciation guide, tutorials, and translation directories are included. *The Sicilian Journey* is also available as an audio book.

Italian American Heritage Project

Last month, on June 4th, the Massachusetts State Legislature held a hearing on numerous bills including one to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day. Over 30 years ago, in December, the United Nations General Assembly designated August 9th as International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and each year a theme is selected to discuss. The themes address the social and cultural issues Indigenous people face today.

In the past five years, not one theme mentioned replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, yet, this is the mission of groups of people who are or who support this goal. The bill to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day has been submitted to the Massachusetts State Legislature several times since

September 2023. To counteract the bill, two State Representatives, Senator Turco and Senator DeCoste introduced a bill to recognize Indigenous People's Day on the date already established by the United Nations, August 9th.

A video of the hearing has been posted on the Massachusetts State Government website, <https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/5208>, providing a look into the reasons why Columbus Day should be replaced by Indigenous Peoples Day. (Depending on your browser, it may take a few clicks and a few minutes into the hearing to start the video.)

At around the 22:44 mark, the co-sponsor of the bill talks about respecting Indigenous people by replacing Columbus Day. Where is the respect for those of Italian heritage? She states her intention is to “not keep Columbus Day, but allow Italian American Heritage Month ...,” but she “welcomes a conversation” with other legislators. When asked about the August 9th date, she replies, “I don’t know enough about it;” and then comments on “knowing about the accurate history of Christopher Columbus, that we would want to take a hard look at what it means to memorialize Christopher Columbus in 2025.”

Skip to around 35:00 to hear Representative Turco talk about why Columbus Day should be preserved and Indigenous Peoples Day should be celebrated on August 9th. He states actual history. At around the 48:00 mark, Representative Marsi also provides a statement in support of Columbus Day.

The hearing moves slowly and covers numerous other issues – as committee members leave and return – and reverts back to Indigenous Peoples Day at 2:14:56, with several canvassing for the change. Right from the beginning, a false claim is made regarding the “testimony” of Bartolomé de Las Casas in regard to his writing about “the emotional and physical abuses of Christopher Columbus including enslavement, murder, and rape of those indigenous people.” Las Casas never met Columbus, first traveled to the newly colonized land in 1502 – the date of Columbus’s last voyage when he was not permitted to land on Hispaniola – and began to write his book, *The History of the Indies*, in the early 1500s, about 15 years after Columbus died (1506). Las Casas witnessed the harsh treatment of the natives under Spanish conquest.

At 2:46:10, Tom Damigella, Vice President of the [Italian American Alliance](#) and Chair of the Save Columbus Committee provided information about the IAA’s work with the [Native American Guardian’s Association](#). The hearing continues alternating between those for Columbus Day and those for Indigenous Peoples Day. It doesn’t seem to matter what historical facts are presented in support of Columbus, those who oppose Columbus rely on misinformation, phrases taken out of context, and their emotions.

One person stated that Columbus was born in Genoa and because Italy was not a country at the time, Columbus is not Italian. Does that same rationale apply to the Native Americans before the country became America? Another talked about the shame her mother felt regarding her indigenous name. How many Italian immigrants in America changed their names because of their shame in being Italian? How many Italian immigrants decided not to speak Italian because of the stigmatizing results?

Nationwide Italian American organizations need to take action and properly educate politicians and the American public about Columbus. Collaborating with communes in Italy, meeting the Pope, and organizing free-to-attend sports events to attract younger Italian Americans doesn’t appear to be helping Italian American culture and history.

In an additional example of distorted information, read the comments about this article: [Mamdani stokes Italian American outrage after resurfaced tweet shows socialist giving the finger to Christopher Columbus statue: ‘Take it down’](#) Some commenting were quick to defend Columbus and provide historical facts, while others repeated the misinformation they have read. One does mention that Italy wasn’t a country when Columbus was born, another states Columbus was Greek, others write

about those who landed before Columbus, and the constant refrain that Columbus didn't land on American soil is included in the mix. (He landed on the islands of what would become the continent of North America.)

Update: In another attempt to abolish Columbus Day, [Governor of Nevada Jay Lombardo vetoed the bill](#) to change the date of Indigenous Peoples Day from August 9th to the second Monday in October. "Local indigenous communities say that decision is the Governor turning his back on them, and that it is a rejection of true justice and history."

Where is the "true justice and history" for Italian Americans?

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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?](#)

[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.](#)

### **Italian American Collective**

Read my article, [John N. LaCorte – Preserving Italian American History and Culture](#) on the Italian American Collective.

From the Italian American Collective: "We are looking for Italian Americans willing to share their experience with us to be interviewed, either in a video or audio format. We are also looking for volunteer interviewers and collaborators who are interested in posting articles, and suggesting news or topics to help this project grow. ... If you wish to collaborate with us on this project, or if you are simply interested in knowing more about the project please email Dr. Daniele Fioretti at [fioretd@miamioh.edu](mailto:fioretd@miamioh.edu)."

## Italian American News

[Century-Old American Cereal Giant Kellogg is Turning Italian, Selling to Ferrero for \\$3.1 Billion](#) (fortune.com; July 10, 2025)

[Written Off](#) (italic.org; July 6, 2025)

[Italian Tribute Painted Over on Newton, Massachusetts Street, Outraging Neighbors](#) (cbsnews.com; June 27, 2025)

[One of America's Best Pizzerias is Turning 100 ...](#) (nypost.com; June 26, 2025)

[Requiem for a Mob-Star](#) (italic.org; June 8, 2025)

[Ten Things We Should All Know](#) (italic.org; June 2, 2025)

[Chicago 2025 Patron Saint Festival Calendar](#) (franoi.com; May 21, 2025)

[Sunday Gravy in the 'Hood](#) (italic.org; May 18, 2025)

[Saying 'I do' in Italy](#) (franoi.com; May 18, 2025)

[Pope Leo's Grandfather was Immigrant from Sicily, Genealogists Reveal](#) (theguardian.com; May 17, 2025)

## Italy in the News

[Not Your Grandfather's Italy](#) (italic.org; June 22, 2025)

[Ancient Roman Masterpieces Emerge from a London Demolition Pit](#) (npr.org; June 20, 2025)

[Pope Leo XIV to Spend Summer Holidays at Castel Gandolfo](#) (yahoo.com; June 17, 2025)

[Museum's CCTV Shows Moment Visitor Broke Artwork by Sitting on It](#) (cnn.com; June 16, 2025)

[Italian Teenager Carlo Acutis to Become First Millennial Saint on September 7](#) (cnn.com; June 13, 2025)

[Florence Finally to be Rid of Notorious 60-Metre Crane After Two Decades](#) (theguardian.com; June 10, 2025)

[Italian Food Awards 2025- USA](#) (italianfood.net; June 6, 2025)

[Wheel of 20th-Century Italian Cheese Smashes Record for Oldest Parmesan](#) (theguardian.com; June 2, 2025)

['An Electrifying Moment': Charles and Camilla Visit Sparks Ravenna Tourism Boom](#) (theguardian.com; June 1, 2025)

['You Feel Useful to Society': Italy's Busybody Pensioners go Professional](#) (theguardian.com; May 24, 2025)

[There are Plenty of One-Euro Homes Hidden all over Sicily. These Brothers want to Find Them for You](#) (cnn.com; May 19, 2025)

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

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