



## *From The Desk of the Publisher*

The Online Almanac of the History of the Italians of California launched in April 2021. April is a foundational month for the Italian Republic, as well. In 1945, Italy rose against the invaders, and freeing itself from the yoke of Nazism, gave birth to the national alliance that would

eventually result on June 2nd of 1946 in delivering a democratic republic from the ashes of fascism and a failed monarchy. Thus April is a month of resurgence and rebirth for Italians and as a reflection for the Italfornians.

This resurgence was even more evident this past April 2021 as California and Italy began emerging from the constrictions of COVID-19, and life seemed to take a more familiar turn. Schools reopened (in California), restaurants pulled tables onto the sidewalks, and cheering could be heard anew along the streets.

Four months...had it been a baby, now the Almanac would be able to hold its head straight up and support itself. Well, we think that the Almanac has met this benchmark. A quick visit to its website - <https://www.thealmanac.online> - and a glance at its content will show that the Almanac is a growing and intelligent being.

Currently, it counts about 200 members and growing. Its social media footprint is meaningful, as is its ability to represent unknown facets of the Italiaformian experience and its capacity to produce original content. Surfing the Almanac pages today, a reader can access stories, photos, and videos that have been posted by members who are new to the exploration of their own and their family history, as well as by recognized and less well-known researchers and scholars of Italian-American affairs.

Cruising through the Almanac's screens, the readers may access these materials in the blog area, under the tab Italfornians, and in the forum. There they will find musicians, experts of the Italian diaspora, writers, photographers, and advocates. Under the Tab featured stories, The Almanac publishes stories about aspects of the Italfornian experience that the editors believe have not been given the attention they deserved. Stories of innovators, groundbreaking events, and courageous trailblazers. Stories of Craftsmanship, friendship, and fishing, among others.

The Italfornian, this "episodical" newsletter, as its first issue, hits your mailboxes on the day that saw the birth of the country that has given refuge and shelter to us all and provides a glimpse of what we until now uncovered and of the direction of its voyage. Along with the editors, the contributors, animators, and members of The Almanac, I hope that you will join us in this journey, contributing stories, checking periodically into the website, and the many more issues that we plan to publish. Light in spirit, curious at hearth and confident that the future will be bright.

• **Paolo Pontoniere** / Founder and Publisher, The Online Almanac of the History of the Italians of California



# SWIMMING UPSTREAM: THE IMMIGRANT'S JOURNEY



There are 195 countries in the world. The U.S. population has descendants from 190 countries. No other country is as diverse and no other country accepts as many immigrants each year. Hundreds of millions from all races and nationalities have made the journey to America during the past five centuries.

The metaphor of swimming up stream seems to fit the journey. Many obstacles along the way ... the current, wild animals, fishermen, man made dams, lack of stamina, bad timing. There is no turning back! Unrelenting like the salmon they march toward the spawning grounds. Many will never make it. Those who get there are rewarded by a special legacy ... their progeny.

Americans have stereotypical views of immigrants even though not many share the same profile. Each immigrant has his or her own story to tell. What immigrants share is their struggle to survive and adjust to their chosen destination.

What sets them apart is how they got here and how difficult it was for them to be included and assimilate.

Emma Lazarus wrote the Statue of Liberty inscription in 1883...

*Give me the tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

This romanticized picture is a snapshot, not the whole movie. It captures some but not all the reasons people have and continue to come to America. Millions come to escape persecution. A majority comes seeking economic security. Thousands come to pursue a higher education. Millions of highly educated men and women come lured by high paying jobs. A few come in search of adventure.

Amongst the millions who make the journey we find people who could not read or write, the highly educated few, those with much needed skills as well as those without any, young and old, sick or healthy, able to speak English or not, seeking refuge or without visas.

Immigrants are often viewed with suspicion. They are resented and envied. Most endure prejudice, discrimination, rejection, exploitation, ridicule and worse along the way. Some accept the hardship as a price of admission while others suffer in silence powerless. Many see themselves as sons and daughters of a lesser god.

There are millions of stories to be told. No two are alike. These stories are bundled together by a deep desire to live in the experiment that we call America. It has been said that memories not written down are memories lost. By writing them down we can pass those stories of our immigrant-ancestors to new generations.

5.5% of Americans have Italian roots. This is about 18 million people. Their journey has been remarkable. A couple millions call California their home. They come from all walks of life. California has been good to Italian-Americans.

The Almanac website has been created to capture our memories and stories for future generations. We encourage everyone to post stories of their immigrant ancestors.

• **Antonio Tasca** / Senior Editor



# The Italian Diaspora



There were two large-scale exodus out of Italy. The first began in 1880 shortly after the unification of Italy and ended in the early 1920's. The second started after WWII and concluded in the 1970s. Both waves were spurred by economic and political problems.

The Emigration Museum in Rome teaches us that between 1850 and 1950 62 million Italians emigrated, some several times. During the same period about 38 million immigrants returned home.

Together the exodus account for the largest voluntary migration in documented history. By 1980 25,000,000 Italians were residing outside their native country. During the first exodus 15,000,000 Italians left their country permanently.

A third wave is in progress as a result of the 21st century financial crisis. More than 3 million young Italians have left Italy in search of better job opportunities. Unlike the previous two waves, this group includes many highly educated and well-trained young professionals. Their destination of choice is other European nations.

## CHOSEN DESTINATIONS

During the first two waves immigrants chose the United States

and Argentina. Australia, Brazil and Canada followed. Chile, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela were next.

Italian immigrant communities can also be found in Kenya, the Maghreb region in North Africa and South Africa. Millions have migrated after WWII to Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

About one-half of Argentines (about 20 million) and 17 million Americans claim Italian ancestry. Australia, Brazil, Canada and Uruguay have large Italian communities.

## LITTLE ITALYS

Where Italians gather in large numbers you will find a Little Italy. These ethnic enclaves usually hold many aspects of Italian culture. There are shops selling Italian goods as well as restaurants, beneficent associations, and cultural centers. They are microcosms of the country Italian immigrants left behind.

In the U.S. there are more than 60 Little Italys and about 50 so-called Italian neighborhoods. You will find them wherever Italians settled in large numbers: New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Missouri, Massachusetts, Baltimore, Connecticut, Delaware, Nebraska, Omaha, Min-

nesota, California, Louisiana, Florida, Rhode Island and West Virginia. New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania have several Little Italys.

In future newsletters we will visit some of them starting in the Heart of Silicon Valley – San Jose.

Besides San Jose, California has Little Italys in San Francisco, and San Diego. San Pedro's has Via Italia and Sacramento the Italian Cultural Center.

Northern California boasts large Italian communities in Cotati, Fresno, Gilroy, Sacramento, Santa Cruz, Sonoma County, Monterey, South San Francisco, Stockton and Oakland's Temescal. In Southern California the following towns have large Italian communities: Altadena, Beaumont, Camarillo, Indio, Fontana, Highland, Long Beach, Palm Desert, Palm Spring and Ventura.

Los Angeles has a large Italian community in downtown's Fashion District. Lincoln Heights used to have a Little Italy that was relocated to Alhambra and Montebello. Los Angeles hosts the Italian American Museum.

So get on board and enjoy the ride through this part of America ... the Little Italys.

• **Antonio Tasca** / Senior Editor



# In Piazza

## MEET SOME FELLOW MEMBERS



### Christopher Forte

Ciao! My name is Christopher Forte. My paternal grandfather's parents immigrated from Palermo in the early 1920s and settled in Brooklyn, New York. My paternal grandmother's parents came from Naples and before that they were Albanians who fled there to escape the Turks. Her parents immigrated to the US much earlier, in fact we have a photo of my great-great-grandmother standing somewhere in New York State in 1890. It was in Brooklyn that these two families, my grandparents, met.

**Click here for more of Chris' profile:** <https://www.thealmanac.online/profile/cforte844/profile>



### Robert Petrone

Attorney: I have been an attorney since 1994, and am licensed to practice in New York, Pennsylvania, the Southern District of New York, the Eastern District of New York, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Authorship: I have published articles in sociology journals, and have written many, many articles on civil rights for the Civil Rights Law Review of Temple University and for online publications like Broad + Liberty, Bigtrial.net, PRIMO Magazine, the Pandola Learning Center and L'Idea Magazine

**Click here for more of Robert's profile:** <https://www.thealmanac.online/profile/robertpetrone/profile>



### Rosemarie Chiovari

I am a dual citizen and fairly proficient in Italian. All 4 of my nonni were born in Sicilia. In 2019 I convinced my non-Italian husband that we should purchase a home in Italy. After years of trips all over Italy, we decided to purchase in Firenze because we have always been in love with Firenze and knew the city quite well. Our plan is to live there at least 5 months of the year. My husband (after passing the B1 language exam) is waiting for his citizenship through marriage.

**Click here for more of Rosemarie's profile:** <https://www.thealmanac.online/profile/rcchiovari/profile>



### Barbara Bardelli Rindge

I am first generation California born. My parents are from the gorgeous shores of Lago Maggiore. My mom's family was originally from Campo San Martino in the Padova province in the Veneto, and my father's family from Angera in the Varese province of Lombardia. My father played professional soccer in Italy Serie B for Gallarate in the 40's and early 50's. After immigrating to San Francisco in 1955, he owned the Iron Pot Restaurant in the Financial District for many years.

**Click here for more of Barbara's profile:** <https://www.thealmanac.online/profile/brindge/profile>



# EXERPTS *from* FEATURED STORIES



## BEING BLACK & ITALIAN AMERICAN

by Paolo Pontoniere & Francine Brevetti

Recent history's episodes of racial intolerance, like the murder of George Floyd, and the subsequent whiplash of mass demonstrations against bigotry and police violence on blacks and other ethnic minorities--with the ensuing push to cancel landmarks glorifying the colonial and slavery past of the United States--have struck a raw nerve. And not only across the US but also within the ethnic communities themselves, forcing them to re-examine their narrative of integration and the pathway they took to becoming "Americans."

This reflection has been particularly true for the Italian and the Italian American communities, which from bystanders in the clash between the resurgent Jim Crow culture across America and minorities vying for recognition and full citizenship, have become unwitting participants in the debate surrounding Columbus' legacy and his role in the colonization of the Americas.

To read more of [BEING BLACK & ITALIAN AMERICAN](#), please click [HERE](#).



## BORROWED RADIANCE

### 19th to 20th Century Italian Artists of Northern California

by Francine Brevetti

It is no secret that Italians brought their art and craftsmanship to California. What's astounding is how many there were and are. Far too many for this mere peek at them.

"Like California's landscape shaped by Italian agriculture, and California's cities shaped by Italianate architecture, California's art has a noticeable Italian accent. From the folk-art towers of Sabato Rodia, to the murals of Gottardo Piazzoni, to the sculptures of Bufano and diSuvero, to the canvases of Rinaldo Cuneo and Jerry Carniglia, Italian Americans have shaped both the look of California, and the way Californians look at their world," observed Lawrence DiStasi, author and Italian American historian.

The work of these artisti and artigiani -- as clustered around the San Francisco Bay Area -- can be seen among the works the Hearst Castle in San Simeon (built between 1919 and 1947) and the effulgence of the Works Progress Administration, (in force 1935 to 1943). Yet many worked independently also for their clients.

To read more of [BORROWED RADIANCE](#), please click [HERE](#).



# Online Almanac How To:



## 5 EASY STEPS

- Become a Member
- Post Your Profile
- Make Your Profile Public
- Create a Blog
- Create a Forum

These are the fundamental steps necessary to getting started with the Almanac. We want to emphasize the importance of making your profile public, since by doing this, the site will allow you to befriend other members and create or comment on posts that will be published on the Almanac. Again, the steps for completing this action are listed on the

cheat sheet, so give it a read! We hope to see our membership grow at the OAHIC in the upcoming months, and if you have a story or simply want to comment on the constant impact Italians are having in and around California, please post! We cannot wait to see what our community has to share.

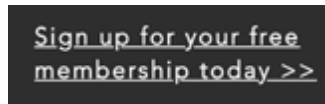
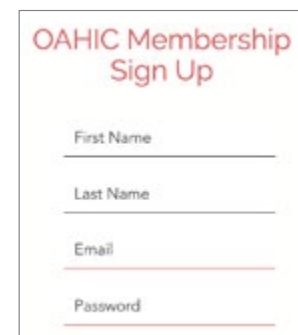
• **Andrew Cardellini** / Associate Editor

## HOW TO NAVIGATE THE ONLINE ALMANAC

### STEP 1: SIGN UP

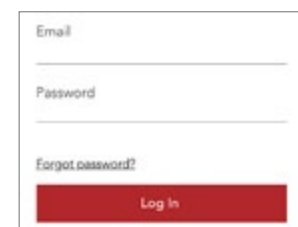
1. Go to <https://www.thealmanac.online/> to access the website.
2. On the HOME page, locate the box that reads, "Sign up for your free membership today!" and click.
3. Enter your information, and you are all set!

**TIP – Write down your password so you do not forget it!**

A black rectangular button with white text that reads "Sign up for your free membership today >>".A white rectangular form titled "OAHIC Membership Sign Up" in red. It contains four input fields: "First Name", "Last Name", "Email", and "Password", each with a red underline.

### STEP 2: LOG IN

1. Once you are signed up, logging in is even easier!
2. Access the website again, locate the "Log In" button in the top right corner of the screen, and click.
3. Choose "Log in with Email" (unless you have connected your Google or Facebook account), and enter the information prompted.
4. Press the red "Log In" box, and you are good to go!

A white rectangular form with two input fields: "Email" and "Password", each with a red underline. Below the fields is a red button with white text that reads "Log In".

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



### STEP 3: PUBLISH YOUR PROFILE

1. Open the OAHIC website link and follow the instructions in Step 2 to log in.
2. Locate the bell icon or the down carrot and click either.
3. When the pop-up message appears asking if you want to make your profile public, select "Confirm" and you're done!



**TIP – If the pop-up message does not appear, next to your name, press "Make Profile Public," (this works too).**

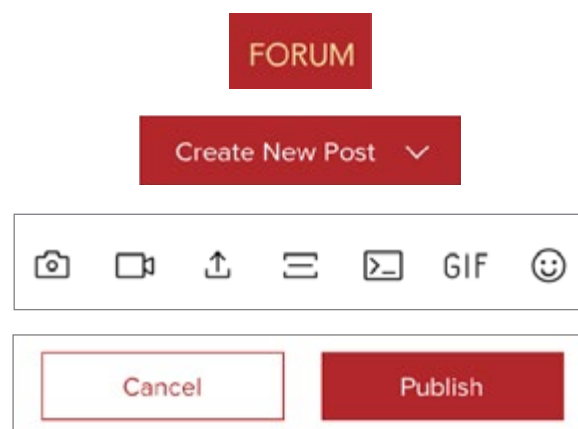
### STEP 4: CREATE A 'PROFILE' POST

1. Log into your account, find the profile icon in the top right corner of the screen, and click.
2. Scroll down to the text box that reads "Share something about yourself..." and type your message into the box.
3. Locate the red "Publish" box and press it when you have completed your post.
4. Navigate to the "Blog" section of the menu tab, refresh the page, and your post will appear for others to see!



### STEP 5: CREATE A 'FORUM' POST

1. Once you log in to your account and make your profile public, you can create posts!
2. Navigate to the "Forum" tab on the menu bar and click.
  - a. It will take you to this page.
3. Find the "Create New Post" banner under the search bar and click.
4. Select whichever option you prefer, and the site will provide a text box for you.



*So Join Us!!!! Membership is totally secure.*

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THE VOICE OF THE ONLINE ALMANAC OF THE HISTORY OF THE ITALIANS OF CALIFORNIA

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