

Chapter 1 : Top 10 Movies About Italians That Don't Involve The Mafia - Listverse

Books that include the Italian-American culture Score A book's total score is based on multiple factors, including the number of people who have voted for it and how highly those voters ranked the book.

Approximately Italian Americans served in the Civil War , both as soldiers and as officers. While some served in the Confederate Army including general William B. Taliaferro , the majority, for both demographic and ideological reasons, served in the Union Army including generals Edward Ferrero and Francis B. Beginning in , Italian immigrants were one of the principal groups, along with the Irish, that built the Transcontinental Railroad west from Omaha, Nebraska. An immigrant, Antonio Meucci , brought with him a concept for the telephone. He is credited by many researchers with being the first to demonstrate the principle of the telephone in a patent caveat he submitted to the U. Patent Office in ; however, considerable controversy existed relative to the priority of invention, with Alexander Graham Bell also being accorded this distinction. In , the U. Congress passed a resolution H. During this period, Italian Americans established a number of institutions of higher learning. Also during this period, there was a growing presence of Italian Americans in higher education. Vincenzo Botta was a distinguished professor of Italian at New York University from to , [32] and Gaetano Lanza was a professor of mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for over 40 years, beginning in Anthony Ghio became the mayor of Texarkana , Texas in Spinola , the first Italian American to serve a full term in Congress, was elected in from New York. Lower East Side , circa Italian immigrants entering the United States via Ellis Island in Italian unification in caused economic conditions to considerably worsen for many in the former Kingdom of the two Sicilies. Major factors that contributed to the large exodus from southern Italy and Sicily after unification, included: Multitudes chose to emigrate rather than face the prospect of a deepening poverty. A large number of these were attracted to the U. Often, the father and older sons would go first, leaving the mother and the rest of the family behind until the male members could afford their passage. From to , an estimated 13 million Italians migrated out of Italy, making Italy the scene of the largest voluntary emigration in recorded world history. Once in America, the immigrants faced great challenges. Often with no knowledge of the English language and with little formal education, many of the immigrants were compelled to accept low-wage manual-labor jobs, and were frequently exploited by the middlemen who acted as intermediaries between them and the prospective employers. Tuberculosis and other communicable diseases were a constant health threat for the immigrant families that were compelled by economic circumstances to live in these dwellings. Other immigrant families lived in single-family abodes, which was more typical in areas outside of the enclaves of the large Northeastern cities, and other parts of the country as well. An estimated 49 per cent of Italians who migrated to the Americas between when return migration statistics began and did not remain in the United States. The Italian male immigrants in the Little Italies were most often employed in manual labor and were heavily involved in public works, such as the construction of roads, railway tracks, sewers, subways, bridges and the first skyscrapers in the northeastern cities. Many established small businesses in the Little Italies to satisfy the day-to-day needs of fellow immigrants. A New York Times article from provides a glimpse into the status of Italian immigration at the turn of the century. Of the half million Italians that are in the United States, about , live in the city, and including those who live in Brooklyn, Jersey City, and the other suburbs the total number in the vicinity is estimated at about , After learning our ways they become good, industrious citizens. They are laborers; toilers in all grades of manual work; they are artisans, they are junkmen, and here, too, dwell the rag pickers There is a monster colony of Italians who might be termed the commercial or shop keeping community of the Latins. Here are all sorts of stores, pensions, groceries, fruit emporiums, tailors, shoemakers, wine merchants, importers, musical instrument makers There are notaries, lawyers, doctors, apothecaries, undertakers There are more bankers among the Italians than among any other foreigners except the Germans in the city. Henry to write a letter in October to the Bishop John J. Clency of Sligo , Ireland ; warning: The Italians are more economic, can live on poor fare and consequently can afford to work for less wages than the ordinary Irishman The Brooklyn Eagle in a article addressed the same reality: But it is the

Italian now that does the work. Then came the Italian carpenter and finally the mason and the bricklayer. In spite of the economic hardship of the immigrants, civil and social life flourished in the Italian American neighborhoods of the large Northeastern cities. Italian theater, band concerts, choral recitals, puppet shows, mutual-aid societies, and social clubs were available to the immigrants. The festa involved an elaborate procession through the streets in honor of a patron saint or the Virgin Mary in which a large statue was carried by a team of men, with musicians marching behind. Followed by food, fireworks and general merriment, the festa became an important occasion that helped give the immigrants a sense of unity and common identity. An American teacher who had studied in Italy, Sarah Wool Moore was so concerned with grifters luring immigrants into rooming houses or employment contracts in which the bosses got kickbacks that she pressed for the founding of the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants often called the Society for Italian Immigrants. The Society published lists of approved living quarters and employers. Later, the organization began establishing schools in work camps to help adult immigrants learn English. The schools focused on teaching phrases that workers needed in their everyday tasks. Among these was Sister Francesca Cabrini, who founded schools, hospitals and orphanages. She was canonized as the first American saint in 1946. Hundreds of parishes were founded by the St. Charles missionaries to serve the needs of the Italian communities. By 1900, Italians had founded Italian Catholic churches and 41 parochial schools, served by priests and nuns, 2 Catholic seminaries and 3 orphanages. They were drawn there by opportunities in agriculture, fishing, mining, railroad construction, lumbering and other activities underway at the time. Oftentimes, the immigrants contracted to work in these areas of the country as a condition for payment of their passage. It was not uncommon, especially in the South, for the immigrants to be subjected to economic exploitation, hostility and sometimes even violence. A number of towns, such as Roseto, Pennsylvania, [49] Tontitown, Arkansas, [50] and Valdese, North Carolina [51] were founded by Italian immigrants during this era. A number of major business ventures were founded by Italian Americans. Amadeo Giannini originated the concept of branch banking to serve the Italian American community in San Francisco. He founded the Bank of Italy, which later became the Bank of America. His bank also provided financing to the film industry developing on the West Coast at the time. An Italian immigrant, Italo Marciony Marcioni, is credited with inventing the earliest version of an ice cream cone in 1903. Another Italian immigrant, Giuseppe Bellanca, brought with him in an advanced aircraft design, which he began producing. An Italian immigrant, Attilio Piccirilli, and his five brothers carved the Lincoln Memorial, which they began in 1918 and completed in 1931. Many Italian operatic singers and conductors were invited to perform for American audiences, most notably, tenor Enrico Caruso. The premiere of the opera *La Fanciulla del West* on December 10, 1903, with conductor Toscanini and tenor Caruso, and with the composer Giacomo Puccini in attendance, was a major international success as well as an historic event for the entire Italian American community. Rudolph Valentino was one of the first great film icons. Dixieland jazz music had a number of important Italian American innovators, the most famous being Nick LaRocca of New Orleans, whose quintet made the first jazz recording in 1917. Ralph DePalma won the Indianapolis 500 in 1935. Italian Americans became increasingly involved in politics, government and the labor movement. Andrew Longino was elected Governor of Mississippi in 1904. The Italian American community wholeheartedly supported the war effort and its young men, both American-born and Italian-born, enlisted in large numbers in the American Army. Another Italian American, 83 Italian born were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest decoration. English was now the language most commonly heard on the streets of the Little Italies. Women found jobs as civil servants, secretaries, dressmakers, and clerks. With better paying jobs they moved to more affluent neighborhoods outside of the Italian enclaves. The Great Depression 1929-39 had a major impact on the Italian American community, and temporarily reversed some of the earlier gains made. Many unemployed men and a few women found jobs on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. In the 1930s and 1940s Italian Americans contributed significantly to American life and culture via, politics, music, film, the arts, sports, the labor movement and business. He was the first Catholic to receive a major party presidential nomination, as Democratic candidate for president in 1960. He lost Protestant strongholds in the South, but energized the Democratic vote in immigrant centers across the entire North. Angelo Rossi was mayor of San Francisco in 1934. In 1929 Ferdinand Pecora led a Senate investigation of the Wall Street Crash of 1929, which exposed major

financial abuses, and spurred Congress to rein in the banking industry. The Metropolitan Opera continued to flourish under the leadership of Giulio Gatti-Casazza , whose tenure continued until Rosa Ponselle and Dusolina Giannini , daughters of Italian immigrants, performed regularly at the Metropolitan Opera and became internationally known. Ruggiero Ricci , a child prodigy born of Italian immigrant parents, gave his first public performance in at the age of 10, and had a long international career as a concert violinist. Popular singers of the period included Russ Columbo , who established a new singing style that influenced Frank Sinatra and other singers that followed. Other Italian American musicians and performers, such as Jimmy Durante , who later achieved fame in movies and television, were active in vaudeville. The film industry of this era included Frank Capra , who received three Academy Awards for directing. Italian American cartoonists were responsible for some of the most popular animated characters: The voice of Snow White was provided by Adriana Caselotti , a year-old soprano. Open Tournaments in Pete DePaolo won the Indianapolis in Tony Canzoneri won the lightweight boxing championship in Joe DiMaggio , who was destined to become one of the most famous players in baseball history, began playing for the New York Yankees in Hank Luisetti was a three time All-American basketball player at Stanford University from to Louis Zamperini , the American distance runner , competed in the Olympics , and later became the subject of the bestselling book Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand , published in , and a movie of the same title. Italian Americans continued their significant involvement in the labor movement during this period. Italian American businessmen specialized in growing and selling fresh fruits and vegetables, which were cultivated on small tracts of land in the suburban parts of many cities. In California, the DiGiorgio Corporation was founded, which grew to become a national supplier of fresh produce in the United States.

Chapter 2 : Italian Americans - Wikipedia

The Italian-American Novel: A Document of the Interaction of Two Cultures. Green, Rose Basile A chronological analysis of the fictional writings of Americans of Italian ancestry, this book constitutes a record of the interaction of two cultures, immigrant and established, within the composition of American civilization.

Immigration debates flood news sources today, but the realities experienced by those who flee their homes in search of new opportunities – even political asylum – oftentimes end up shoved to the margins. Though mostly fiction, the following literary works offer up a valuable, varied glimpse into what life is like in America for immigrants and their families. Many of them emphasize familiar themes regarding balances between old and new, allegiances to family and the unique hardships faced once settled. Do not think this list comprehensive. Plenty of other excellent books exist out there to educate an open-minded populace about the issue from the perspective of those it impacts most. This is merely a sampling of some of the most notable examples. The progressive Drude Krog Jansen writes of a strong, self-reliant female protagonist who immigrates from Norway to Minneapolis following the family bankruptcy. It brings readers to the squalid fringes of society and shows them the dire consequences of marginalizing peoples of different backgrounds and opinions. *A Girl of the Streets* by Stephen Crane: Along with addressing the issues faced by Irish immigrants to America, Stephen Crane also used *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* as a commentary on industrialization and an experimentation in naturalistic writing. *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair: Upton Sinclair really meant for *The Jungle* to be seen as a socialistic treatise on the marginalized state of immigrants. *Spring Fragrance* by Sui Sin Far: Edith Maude Eaton, under her nom de plume of Sui Sin Far, split this short story collection into two parts – one catering to adults, the other children. Both sections revolve around the theme of how Chinese immigrants coped with their lives on a new continent and related to and differentiated from Europeans in the same situation. Born in Russia, the eponymous character comes of age amongst severe poverty and hardship before sailing to New York and growing progressively more embroiled in its culture. *My Antonia* by Willa Cather: Protagonist Jim Burden befriends a pair of immigrant maids, recounting their lives growing up together in Nebraska. In a rather different twist to the familiar theme, the experience of European women comes relayed through the lens of an American man. *Bread Givers* by Anzia Yezierska: Peer into the lives comprising a Jewish-American immigrant family, whose poverty and insistence on tradition most notably when it comes to arranged marriage ignite a fair amount of consternation. *Giants in the Earth* by Ole Edvart Rolvaag: *Call It Sleep* by Henry Roth: *Christ in Concrete* by Pietro Di Donato: In this fiery social justice novel, the story of an Italian-American breaking his back on an exceptionally hazardous construction sites sheds light on both the immigrant and working-class experiences. *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov: Many readers get so caught up in the thoroughly twisted pedophilic relationship at the center of the novel, they forget *Lolita* can also be approached as a work of immigrant literature. Slimy Humbert Humbert, after all, begins losing some of his European airs after settling in America. *The Assistant* by Bernard Malamud: A young Italian-American man takes a job at a Jewish-American grocery store, with the similarities and differences in their cultural and immigrant experiences explored along the way. *No-No Boy* by John Okada: *Brown Girl, Brownstones* by Paule Marshall: *Eat a Bowl of Tea* by Louis Chu: *The Fortunate Pilgrim* by Mario Puzo: Written as a creative nonfiction memoir infused with traditional tales, *The Woman Warrior* spans over one thousand chapters, chronicling how Chinese-Americans dealt with immigration following the Chinese Revolution. Step inside a Latin-American ghetto in Chicago and receive a valuable education in the serious problems faced by its inhabitants – most especially young women – and how they handle them. *Maus* by Art Spiegelman: Literary types rightfully consider *Maus* one of the greatest works of Holocaust literature, but it also contains some interesting insights regarding immigration and intergenerational communication as well. *Jasmine* by Bharati Mukherjee: After immigrating to the United States, a series of tragedies and hardships forces a young Hindu woman to change her identity several times in the interest of her own safety. Two generations of Chinese-American women struggle against maintaining footholds in tradition and new cultural protocols. In the end, though, everything relates back to the importance of family

connections. A niece recounts the life and times of the reckless Guzman, whose involvement with an older, spiritualist woman incites a fair amount of scorn within their Puerto Rican neighborhood. This haunting Pulitzer winner looks back on Cesar and Nestor Castillo as they push towards success as mambo musicians, enjoy the high life and inevitably fall apart. *The Shawl* by Cynthia Ozick: Two interconnected stories recount the life of Holocaust victim Rosa as she experiences torture in a concentration camp and eventually retires to a Florida hotel room, where she passes the time writing letters. *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid: Lucy leaves the West Indies hoping to slough off the yoke of British influence, taking up a job as an au pair in the United States. But that comes with its own set of ethnic, filial, professional and sexual anxieties. The author relates her wonderful bildungsroman backwards, relaying the haunting story of four sisters who fled the Dominican Republic and eventually forged lives for themselves in America. *Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina Garcia: Robert Olen Butler earned a Pulitzer Prize for his short story collection recounting the stories of several Vietnamese immigrants who now call Louisiana home. *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticat: Starting at age 12 and moving up to adulthood, Haitian immigrant Sophie Caco faces plenty of hurdles regarding her race, gender and language after moving to New York. *An American Brat* by Bapsi Sidhwa: Perfect for young adults, this novel involves a young Pakistani girl who moves in with her Massachusetts-based uncle as a means of getting away from the ultra-conservative religious climate in her native land. *Native Speaker* by Chang-Rae Lee: Protagonist Henry Park, a Korean immigrant, wants to find his place in America, but he finds the language and cultural barriers incredibly difficult to maneuver. *The Tortilla Curtain* by T. Boyle unapologetically juxtaposes the privilege afforded to white suburbanites in Los Angeles and the tragic reality for many illegal Mexican immigrants. *Mona in the Promised Land* by Gish Jen: A Chinese-American girl makes the controversial decision to convert to Judaism in an incredible novel about the heavy social constructs behind ethnicity and religion. *The Funeral Party* Lyudmila Ulitskaya: Many colorful characters converge in a suffocating New York apartment to mourn the loss of the one thing they have most in common – a dying Russian artist named Alik. Iranian immigrant Massoud Behrani purchases a house at auction, not realizing it belongs to a lonely drug addict who was wrongfully evicted. *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri: Through nine thematically connected short stories, this Pulitzer Prize winner juxtaposes life in India, life in America and the experiences of Indian immigrants to America. Michael Chabon earned a Pulitzer for his amazing tale of two cousins – one a Jewish-Czech refugee and the other nestled in his native Brooklyn – who play an integral role in establishing the Golden Age of comics. *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides: Not only does *Middlesex* openly discuss the trials and tribulations of Greek immigrants, it also sympathetically depicts the 5-alpha-reductase deficiency – another conduit towards marginalization in America. *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini: Two boys experience a tested friendship against a turbulent Afghani backdrop, including the collapse of the monarchy, the Soviet invasion and establishment of the Taliban. During the course of these historical events, many individuals – including protagonist Amir – attempt to seek refuge in the United States. Taking place in both New York City because no other major metropolitan areas exist in the United States and Prague, a Russian-Jewish immigrant gets himself caught up in scandal and intrigue for want of money. With warmth, intelligence and plenty of humor, Gene Luen Yang offers up a graphic novel centering around themes of identity and strength suitable for the whole family. *What is the What* by Dave Eggers: Protagonist Sepha Stephanos escaped a crumbling Ethiopia, only to find himself floundering in Washington, D. Along with other refugees from the African continent, he reminisces and wonders where life in America took a less-than-ideal turn – and whether or not he can restore any semblance of positivity. A family curse plays heavily into their collective experiences as well. *Blue Boy* by Rakesh Satyal: A young Indian-American boy fancies himself the 10th reincarnation of Krishna, preparing himself for the role with a series of whimsical costumes, dances and music. Then he turns blue. *Saffron Dreams* by Shaila Abdulla: Not only does the main character lose her husband in the tragic September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, she must subsequently contend with raising a handicapped child solo and Americans behaving in a hostile manner because of her Pakistani heritage.

Chapter 3 : 50 Greatest Works of Immigration Literature

Many of these authors' books and writings are easily found on the internet, as for example on an archive of Contemporary Italian American authors, as well as in bibliographies online at Stonybrook University's Italian American Studies Department in New York, or at the Italian American Writers Association website.

Plot summary[edit] The novel is set during the Allied occupation of the fictional Italian coastal town of Adano based on the real city of Licata. The main character, Major Victor Joppolo, is the temporary administrator of the town during the occupation and is often referred to by the people of Adano as Mister Major. Joppolo is an idealistic Italian-American who wants to bring justice and compassion to Adano, which has been hardened by the authoritarian Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini. When Major Joppolo arrives at Adano, he immediately asks the people of the town what they need the most. The first spokesman of the town tells Joppolo that they are in great need of food for some people have not eaten in days. Joppolo is touched by the story of a year-old bell that was taken away from the town by the Fascists. Mussolini had ordered that the bell be removed from the town and be melted to make weapons for the war. The people were greatly attached to the bell. To them, the bell was a source of pride and unity. Joppolo immediately sees the importance of the bell and makes persistent attempts to locate the bell. In addition to finding the bell, Joppolo spends time trying to supply the town with food and other necessities. He soon discovers that the town has no fish because the fishermen have not gone out in months. Joppolo tells Tomasino that he will not have to pay any bribes or extra taxes to the Americans for fishing. At first, Tomasino is convinced that Joppolo is lying to him and that it is some sort of cruel trick. Tomasino hates persons of authority because he believes that they are all power-hungry and corrupt. Joppolo is faced with another problem in which he had to countermand the order of General Marvin in order to do what was best for the town. General Marvin is an army general who happens to pass through Adano. All day his armored car has been slowed down by mule carts that are blocking the road. Finally, on the road to Adano, he loses his temper and orders that his men shoot a mule that refuses to move from the center of the road. When General Marvin arrived at Adano, he orders Major Joppolo to keep all mule carts out of the town. Joppolo is disheartened but complies with the order. Immediately, he calls for a meeting with all the officials of the town and tells them of the new order, but also that he is prepared to find a solution. Later in the novel, Joppolo gains the admiration of Lieutenant Livingston, who invites Joppolo to come have a drink with some of his navy buddies. The arrival of the bell to the town coincides with a party that the town is hosting for Joppolo to express their gratitude for all of his great doings. Although the bell has arrived at the town, the engineers say that it will take them until the next morning to install it. Sergeant Borth tells Joppolo that he has been relieved from duty while they are at the party and hands Joppolo the order. The next morning, Joppolo leaves Adano, but does not say goodbye to anyone because he does not think he could. As the jeep is driving away, he tells the driver to stop for a moment. They hear the clear sound of a loud bell. Characters[edit] Major Victor Joppolo: The protagonist of the story, is the interim mayor of the Italian coastal town of Adano. Under Major Joppolo and the officer in charge of the military police in Adano. General of the American 34th Infantry Division in Italy. He orders that all carts stay out of Adano and relieves Major Joppolo of his position when he discovers that the major countermanded his order. The daughter of Tomasino, Major Joppolo develops an affinity for her over the course of the novel, even though it may be because she wants the major to find out whether her sweetheart is still alive. The leader of the fishermen. Tomasino, though skeptical at first, is thrilled when Major Joppolo allows him and his men to go out and fish. A rich man, he owns the sulfur refinery of Adano. His chiasmus seen throughout the book: The crier of the town. Chief of the police in Adano. Former fascist mayor of Adano, he comes back to the town and is ridiculed by all. A United States Navy lieutenant, he is in charge of the port of Adano. The novel achieved huge popularity and was hailed as a classic war novel. Many believed that the novel was realistic because John Hersey had been a war correspondent in Italy during the war. The book is rich in characterization, and it is recognized as a classic study in leadership. Another possible reason it was so well received was that the novel portrays the American army in a positive light and shows how democracy is inherently superior to Fascism. At the conclusion of

World War II , the American people were anxious to believe that they had made the right decision to go to war, and then to occupy Italy. John Hersey visited Toscani for four or five days during the war and created Victor Joppolo from him, even noting that he held a job as a civilian clerk in the New York City Sanitation Department.

Chapter 4 : The Italian-American Press - Life in Italy

Italian Immigrants in Rural and Small Town America: Essays from the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the American Italian Historical Association Held a (Hardcover) by American Italian Historical Association.

However, hindered by his lack of familiarity with the vast body of literature created by American writers of Italian descent, Talese reduced the experience of Italian-American writers to his own, and offered a number of explanations which sound plausible, but which, in reality, do not reflect my belief that you are what you read. Since he had not read Italian-American writers, he could only ask the question. The history of the reception of literature produced by Italian Americans can be seen in microcosm through the Talese episode. From the earliest contributions found in Italian language newspapers to the first appearances of Italian-American writers in mainstream American publications, the poetry and prose produced by American writers of Italian descent has been viewed as singular achievements by anomalies. One answer lies in the fact that until recently, Italian-American culture has not depended on a literary tradition for a sense of cultural survival. Yet, it was a literary tradition which literally saved my life. If it were not for reading, I would have become a gangster. This I know for a fact. I grew up in the s, when the only Italians you saw on television were either crooning love songs or singing like canaries in front of televised government investigations. In my neighborhood, we never played cowboys and Indians. Inspired by television programs like *The Untouchables*, we played cops and robbers, and none of us ever wanted to be the cops. While there might have been Italian-American cops in our town, there were none on television. It is no wonder then that many of us young Italian-American boys became so infatuated with the attention given to the Italian American criminals that we found our own ways of gaining that notoriety and power. Once, while I was being chased by the police for disturbing local merchants so my partners could shoplift, I ran into the public library. I found myself in the juvenile section and grabbed a book to hide my face. Safe from the streets, I spent the rest of the afternoon reading, believing that nobody would ever find me there. And I was right. So whenever I was being chased, I would head straight for the library, which became my asylum. *The Godfather* was the first book with which I could completely identify, and it inspired my choice of the Mafia as a topic for the dreaded senior-year, semester-long thesis paper that my Irish-Catholic prep school required. One way or another I had been connected to the Mafia since I left my Italian neighborhood to attend high school, so I decided it was time to find out what this thing called Mafia was. This was the first writing project to excite me. The more research I did, the more I learned about the men I thought I had known. Whenever I saw familiar names I would be amazed that they had done something so important that someone had taken the time to write about them. People never talked, in public at least, about these men. One night I was in the back room of a restaurant for a private party given by my employers. I told them, quite loudly, that I was doing a research paper on the Mafia. Everyone stopped talking and turned to me. I was shocked by the sudden silence; my eyes went around the table and I realized that there were men in that room who had their names in that book. Someone changed the subject and nobody said another word about my project. When I completed that paper I was certain of an excellent grade. The grading committee decided that the essay, although well written, depended too much on Italian sources, and because I was of Italian descent, my writing never achieved the necessary objectivity that was essential to all serious scholarship. I read the "C" grade as punishment for my cultural transgression, and decided to stay away from anything but English and American literature in my future formal studies. Her book literally changed my life. I used it as a map to guide my search for Italian-American stories. With every novel I read grew my shame about my past. The same way that books by Mark Twain, James T. Farrell, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and other American writers had taught me about different worlds, the writings by Italian-American authors taught me different ways of being Italian American. When I suggested that I might do a dissertation on the subject, I was taken aside and told that the subject would not help my career. I fought it for a while, searching for professors to support my change of plans. But when I could find no help, I gave up, left academia, and decided to do the work on my own. I kept wondering why it was that Italian-American literature had gained so little recognition and thus little respect in the academy? One answer I found lies in the fact that until recently, Italian-American

culture has not depended on a literary tradition for a sense of cultural survival. In my little Italy, stories, never died. As long as a good memory was nearby, the past could always speak to the present. Oral traditions were kept alive through regular and ritual interaction among families and friends. But as the years went on, the old neighborhood changed. Whole families moved away and with them went the stories. As long as that oral system operated, the need for reading and writing was limited. When that system started breaking down I turned to the writers. I learned that the first Italian-American writers were immigrants who learned English and responded to their experience in America through poetry and prose more often than not found in the early Italian language newspapers. While these poets have yet to be documented historically, the most significant work was done by labor activist Arturo Giovannitti, whose participation in the great strike in Lawrence, Mass. As a worker-poet, Giovannitti edited political and literary magazines. His first collection of poetry, *Arrows in the Gale*, was introduced by Helen Keller. Through Giovannitti, I was able to hear the voices of hundreds of thousands of Italian immigrants who worked their way into status as Americans. Through these works, I so understood my grandparents that, while they were dead, I felt I had to make up for the ignorance I had about their lives. I began interviewing surviving immigrants, most of whom lived in Villa Scalabrini, a local home for Italian aged. One woman was in tears after she read a story I did about her. Thank you for saving my life in these words. Now nobuddy is gonna forget me. All the reading I had done told me that my story could not only be written, but that it had to be written. The reading I had done became the foundation upon which I would build my own career as a writer. Through his novel, I better understood what happened to me after my father was killed, and how I, at the age of 10, had suddenly become the man in the house. He wanted to be a writer so badly that he sent stories, accompanied by long letters to H. Mencken, then one of the leading voices of American literature. Mencken rejected the stories and published the letters. As he was leaving the hotel with his suitcase in hand, I pulled out a page manuscript that I stuffed into his already over-packed suitcase against his shocked protest. Mangione, one of the most celebrated Italian-American writers, took the work and later gave me the most solid criticism I had ever received. Years later, the Library of Congress honored his career with a special exhibit, and I have become his literary executor. His first book, *Mount Allegro* is the first of four non-fictional books. Her realistic portrayal of the plight of immigrant granite workers in Barre, Vt. All this reading inspired me to try my hand at writing. My first attempt was a novel that received mixed reactions from a number of editors. Not willing to follow any of these suggestions, I put aside my fiction thinking that before I could do anything with my novel, I had to change the mistaken notions of those editors. I believed that if I could prove there was Italian-American literature beyond Mafia stories, and that it did not depend on a distinctive Italian-American audience, then my own writing would have a tradition and I a place in it. From my studies in American literature, I had learned that a tradition is built when writers read each other and learn to either extend or escape what has come before. This process requires literary models, something Italian Americans such as Louise DeSalvo could not find. As she tells us in her memoir *Vertigo*, "Though I had read scores of books, not one had been written by an Italian-American woman. I had no role model among the women of my background to urge me on. Without Italian-American models in educational institutions, those, like DeSalvo who would choose to become teachers and writers, would need to look elsewhere. Toward the end of this essay, Walker writes: They had given me a new respect for my culture, but more than anything, all this reading extended my sense of family. An *Anthology of Writings by Italian American Women* helped me to better understand why women would shift into Italian whenever I would drift near their side of the room. The anthology, by winning an American Book Award, was proof that the rest of the world was beginning to take Italian-American literature seriously. And his latest novel, *The Loss of the Miraculous*, spins a tale of love, art, and loss through an old Sicilian painter. Hendin helped me understand the story my mother tells of how she had once followed her brother across the railroad tracks, and as punishment my grandfather tied her to a chair in the basement. In college I learned that the way to tell if a literature is growing is the arrival of serious humor and parody. His earlier fiction in *The Mediterranean Runs Through Brooklyn* established him as a major voice of Italian-American culture, but his latest work, *Conversation with Johnny* will turn Italian America upside down. In my early days, Rimanelli had tended to me as though he was my literary Godfather, guiding me in new directions of reading. The novel, in some of the most poetic prose to come from the hand

of an Italian American, tells the story of a young girl growing up and out of a dying Little Italy. Unfortunately, after the press that first published it went out of business, the novel disappeared from those shelves, surfacing occasionally in used bookstores and in conference conversations. As the years went by I would send copies to editors and publishers hoping that one would see its value and reprint it. Tony Ardizzone, one of the best short story writers around, has been winning literary prizes for years. His latest story collection, *Taking it Home: Stories from the Neighborhood* features stories set in Chicago and filled with Italian-American and Catholic themes and characters. The writing of Italian-American gays and lesbians have taught me much about why my family shows their respect and their fear of some of my cousins through silence. Her poetry, *How to Sing to a Dago* denies the nostalgia of the immigrant myth through lyric reinventions of what it means to be Italian American. Likewise, the fine novels of the late Robert Ferro explore the complex relationships among gay Italian Americans, their families, and straight and gay communities. Rose Romano, poet, editor, and publisher of Malafemmina Press, presents a more politicized persona through her publications and her own poetry. Besides bringing lesbian issues to the forefront, she has also advocated the Italian-American position in the multi-cultural arena through her books:

Chapter 5 : Italian-American Fiction (41 books)

The Italian American Press helps promote books primarily written by authors of Italian heritage who write about Italian American and Italian culture, heritage, and/or history. Many of these writers publish, distribute, and promote their own books, and they are often overlooked by the media.

Leaving Italy in 1882, the men came to America desperate to escape the poverty of their mountain village in the region of Apulia, near the Adriatic coast. There they labored as peasant farmers, traveling by foot for up to ten miles each day to reach land owned by the gentry. Some quarried marble from a neighboring town, and those lucky enough to have inherited a craft became stone carvers. The Rosetans lived in cramped two-story homes, the kitchen and stable on the first floor and bedroom above. Like their fellow countrymen throughout southern Italy, they heard about the promise of America. The initial group of eleven men decided to make the journey after receiving encouraging letters from a Jesuit priest named Luigi Sabetti, who had grown up in Roseto Valfortore and emigrated to Baltimore. Eventually, eight of them, after a brief stay on Mulberry Street, found work in central Pennsylvania from a New York City employment agency. They summoned more people to join them, and each year their numbers multiplied. On a hillside they found a cheap and open tract of land empty of trees, which had been stripped for lumber. In these early residents named the town New Italy, eventually changing it to Roseto in memory of their village in the foothills of the Apennines. The ethnic enclave stayed true to its roots, speaking a regional Italian dialect and re-creating life from the Old Country. The Rosetans had reasons to stick to their own: Slate quarries were the principal local industry, and the Anglo-Saxons, many of whom had learned this trade in the British Isles, owned the quarries and kept the best jobs for themselves. They gave the worst ones to the Italians—digging holes or throwing out rubbish—and paid them the pittance of eight cents an hour for a ten-hour workday, doled out only every three months. So, for the ensuing decades, Roseto remained only for Rosetans, creating a safe harbor from what they perceived to be hostile outside forces. They built their own small church and eventually their own school. They built blouse mills in town where the women went to work. Two cousins ran bakeries from their home basements, producing bread loaves, pizza, and pasta for the entire town. Nearly everyone made their own wine and grew all of their own vegetables. And at the time, Roseto received international attention as the home to a medical mystery—or perhaps medical miracle—one that would illustrate the protective effects of an emotionally supportive community in preventing heart disease. The town had caught the attention of two doctors, Stewart Wolf and John Bruhn, after a resident cardiologist mentioned to Wolf, who owned a vacation home in the Poconos, that hardly anyone under fifty-five in Roseto had died of a heart attack or had signs of heart disease. For those over sixty-five, the rate of heart disease was about half that of the neighboring English, Welsh, and German towns and half the national average. At the time, heart disease was the number one killer of Americans, and doctors were concerned that it was affecting men at increasingly younger ages. Wolf and Bruhn decided to study the health records of Rosetans, launching a multiyear effort that began in 1956. The curious doctors ruled out other possibilities. Rosetans chose to live a family- and community-centered egalitarian life. So you catch the evil eye. Their hunch was correct: Gradually, malocchio began to lose its powerful grip on the psyche, and with this demise, in crept envy: Twenty years later, when the same doctors conducted a follow-up study in 1976, they noted that competition outpaced cooperation, and the mortality of the Rosetans was the same as that of everyone else. The story of Roseto challenges some ingrained notions about the primacy of individualism and offers a cautionary tale about the stress-related perils of materialism. The doctors were ahead of their time observing in the 1950s that communities matter—that socially supportive environments can protect against heart disease, while isolation and loneliness are risk factors for it. Today, health researchers have returned to Roseto to analyze the merits of investigating disease by observing community behavior. Similarly, more and more contemporary Americans, feeling alienated from a sterile, fast-paced, and flavorless twenty-first-century life, are also practicing some aspects of Old World ways: The Rosetans, the doctors reported, grew their own lettuce, green peppers, onions, peas, beans, endive, eggplant, tomatoes, corn, beets, cucumbers, figs, peaches, pears, apples, pumpkins, cherries, plums, parsley, oregano, basil, mallow, and other

herbsâ€”a cornucopia mirrored today at the varied stalls of local farmers markets. A one-hundred-year look at Roseto, Pennsylvaniaâ€”from the time the immigrants first arrived in until the follow-up study by Wolf and Bruhnâ€”poses some important questions about the way we live today. Could Old World communities like Roseto offer a countercheck to an increasingly alienated society? If the ideology of contemporary American life is one of individualism, competitiveness, and materialismâ€”and we know that these traits invite bad health and unhappinessâ€”can we find the means within ourselves to change course, to choose a path of cooperation and egalitarianism over competition and inequality? Well into the new millennium, Americans have an uneasy sense that not all of modernity is healthy or pleasing to the senses, while also knowing they would not replicate a life forged in part by Old World superstitions or one that shuns geographic mobility. One inclination would be to meld elements of the Old World with the New, but to accomplish this delicate feat without being trapped by the distorting effects of nostalgia, Italian Americansâ€”and all other Americansâ€”might want to explore this rich and varied past. To another one hundred years! Excerpted from *The Italian Americans: A History* by Maria Laurino. First American Edition With permission of the publisher, W. An essayist, journalist, and speechwriter, Laurino also teaches creative nonfiction at New York University. She lives in New York City with her husband and son.

Chapter 6 : The Italian Americans PBS Documentary Series - Home | PBS

The Significance of Nicknames in Italian-American Culture and the novel Christ in Concrete by Sharon Leggio The Legacy of the Mafia Minstrel Show by Steve Antonuccio When Being Italian Was a Crime by Sarah Goodyear.

There are lots of movies featuring Italian-American characters, and most of them are about the mob, or at least involve the Mafia in some small way. But even *Raging Bull*, an incredibly powerful flick, features a Mafia-subplot. She is convinced that he works all of the time for them until she finds out he has been fooling around for years. Being Catholic, divorce is out of the question, so she and her mother and her best friend decide to kill him—over and over and over again. This is dark and funny as hell. A young couple from Brooklyn get engaged and the families go nuts with the wedding plans, leaving the two of them dazed and confused. Best bit is when the caterer asks if they want the mashed potatoes to match the color of the bridesmaids dresses. Stanley Tucci also directed and Tony Shaloub are Italian immigrant brothers who own a small restaurant. Shaloub is the chef who absolutely will not compromise, even when a big, cheesy faux Italian place opens down the block. This funny little film was directed by and starred Anne Bancroft A great Italian actress herself, and wife of Mel Brooks. It captures the essence of Italian families, one minute yelling, the next hugging. When he does, everyone tells him to dump her. Especially his mom and his friend, Ang. Famous for the lines: Everyone in this movie is absolutely perfect. Olympia Dukakis is wonderful as the matriarch. It was a miracle! I lost my girl! The underdog from South Philly makes good. Despite all the lousy sequels, the original remains a true classic. Stallone, who wrote the script, owned this character. You go through an entire range of emotions with him, and care about him.

Chapter 7 : Five must-read novels that will transport you to Italy - The Local

The following is an excerpt from The Italian Americans by Maria Laurino. The Roseto Effect To better understand the ethos of Italian-American culture—its stubborn insistence on the primacy of.

Chapter 8 : Italian American Press

The Italian American Press helps promote published books primarily written by authors of Italian heritage who write about Italian American and Italian culture, heritage, and/or history. STEP TWO Any author wishing to list his or her book on the IAP website must send a printed copy of the book.

Chapter 9 : Popular Italian Americans Books

The Italian Americans condemns those cultural stereotypes that still permeate media depictions of Italian Americans before returning to Roseto, Pennsylvania, a small working-class town with a large Italian-American population. In the early s, a medical survey found its residents had a lower-than-average incidence of heart disease.