

A Romantic and Spiritually Courageous People

THE ITALIANS HAVE MIGRATED from their mother country because of natural and man-made disasters. These emigres brought their hard work ethic and bright spirit.

IMMIGRATION BEGAN:

- after 1850, disillusioned soldiers of the Risorgimento left failing to unify Italy
- from Genoa, sailors who simply left their ships to work in Detroit
- severe economic hardships in 1894
- crop failure of 1897
- destruction of vineyards by plant lice, phylloxera
- Messina earthquake in 1908

ITALIANS CAME TO MICHIGAN:

- with opening of Erie Canal
- to mine copper in the Upper Peninsula in 1918
- to work in the new car industries

STERLING HEIGHTS BOASTS of 18,967 Italian residents, 12.5% of the city's population (1990 census)

Physical Characteristics of Italy

ITALIA, "LAND OF OXEN," IS A BOOT-SHAPED

PENINSULA which extends into the Mediterranean Sea from Southern Europe. It is easily recognizable on a map.

- Italy includes two large islands, Sicily and Sardinia, as well as smaller islands of Capri, Elba, Pantelleria, and Lampedusa
- within Italy are two independent states: San Marino and Vatican City

TOPOGRAPHICAL REGIONS:

- 75% hilly, mountainous: Alps extend from France and Switzerland; Apennines stretch from north to the southern tip of peninsula
- one major lowland, North Italian Plain, along Po Valley
- minor lowlands in coastal regions

NATIONAL BORDERS

of mountains and sea:

- Alps form border to north, shared by neighbors France, Austria and Switzerland
- Several seas within the Mediterranean Sea form borders:
 - Ligurian Sea on northwest
 - Tyrrhenian Sea on west
 - Adriatic Sea on east
 - Ionian Sea on south
- closest neighbors across the seas are:
 - African countries of Tunisia and Libya to south
 - Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Yugoslavia and Greece lie eastward



Climate

- temperate in north; south has "Mediterranean" climate: mild winter; long, dry summer
- mainland exposed to strong, hot, dry wind (Sirocco) from northern African desert; often causes drought
- average temperature in Rome: January 74°, July 78.3° F

Cultural Characteristics

- Italian motto: "Faith, Bread and Work". Hard-workers, ingenious, making the most of Italy's limited resources
- love of babies ("bambini"); children highly esteemed
- supreme pride in foods, customs and history, always "The best in the world"
- "Fare uno bella figura" - to make a good impression or appearance: consciousness for fine manners, high fashion
- coffee: a rite rather than a beverage. Coffee houses offer "dolce far niente" - sweet idleness
- each region of Italy boasts of its unique dish of pasta and the sauce; excellent cuisine
- friendly, outgoing, gregarious, people-oriented
- generous, exhibiting love
- seldom hide feelings when sad or angry
- family is source of shelter and strength
- the passeggiata: evening stroll, an age-old custom still practiced by many
- today, northern Italy is among Europe's wealthiest, most modern regions
- creativity: evidenced in art, literature, architecture and fashion:
 - Milan is one of world's fashion, design centers
 - Venetian glassware: an ancient skill over 1000 years old, still world-renowned
- Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari and Maserati lead car industry in design and performance

Holidays

JUNE 2 –Festa della Repubblica: anniversary of Italian Republic

Ancient History

THREE DISTINCT GROUPS OF PEOPLE inhabited the Italian peninsula by the 10th century B.C.

- Etruscans in central Italy in (modern) Tuscany
- Sabine tribe along Tiber River in central Italy, with the Latins in small villages on seven hills
- Greeks colonized southern Italy and Sicily to trade, fish

753 B.C. MARKS LEGENDARY FOUNDING OF ROME

by Romulus and Remus

- 616 B.C.: rule by Etruscans; allied with Carthage (African), controlled trade in W. Mediterranean, prevented spread of Greek colonization
- 509 B.C.: Roman republic established by Lucius Junius Brutus in central Italy
 - Roman Empire spanned 1000 years: building, roads, irrigation, law, public institutions, individual liberty, respect for law; a fragmented world became united
- 264 - 146 B.C.: Three Punic Wars with Carthage; Roman Empire established supremacy in Mediterranean
 - by 1st c. A.D. empire stretched from Middle East to Spain, Saharan North Africa to Britain
- 3rd - 6th c. A.D.: attacks by barbarian tribes destroyed Roman Empire
 - Visigoths (Germanic) occupied Gaul by 419 A.D.
 - Vandals (Germanic) took African land and from bases there sacked Rome in 455 A.D.
 - 376 A.D.: Empire in west collapsed; 1492 A.D.: Eastern Empire became known as Byzantine Empire
- 1175 A.D.: Italian city-states formed Lombard League
- 12th - 15th c. A.D.: land divided into powerful city-states: ie: Venice, Genoa and Florence
- 13th - 15th c. A.D.: Guelph and Ghibelline struggles; Papist and Imperialist parties fight for control of city-states
- 14th - 15th c. A.D.: Renaissance started in Italy, spread over Europe: a period of classical learning and art; humanistic studies of sciences; transition from medieval to modern
 - Medici Family political and religious powers, patrons of Renaissance; produced two Popes: Leo X, Clement VII
- 1492 - 1706 A.D.: French and Spanish invasions of Italy
- 1713 - 1796 A.D.: Italy under Austrian influence
- 1796 - 1814: Napoleon in Italy. First campaigns were in 1796 with Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, crowned King of Naples in 1806
- 1831: Insurrections erupted in Papal States
- 1846: Pope Pius IX began reform programs
- 1848 - 1861: Garibaldi leads revolutionary wars to oust foreign empires from Italian soil
- 1861: Victor Emmanuel II proclaimed King; first to rule a unified Italy in over 1500 years; capital at Turin

National Hero

GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI AND HIS “RED SHIRTS”, an army of thousands of volunteers

- sailed to Sicily in 1860 to help people in their fight for freedom against Kingdom of Naples.
- defeated a large, professional army
- embodied the hope of a unified Italy achieved with its own people against foreign aggressors

GARIBALDI LEFT ITALY (age 28, 1834) in opposition to Carlo Alberto

- 1835: fought in Uruguayan Civil War and in Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul
- stayed for short time on Staten Island, NY before returning to Italy in 1851 to reorganize his “Red Shirts”
- 1861: fought successfully against French, Austrian and Spanish forces which were trying to colonize Italy; Italy unified

Modern History

EMPEROR OF FRANCE, NAPOLEON BONAPARTE TOOK ITALY for himself and his family, crowning himself King of Italy in 1804.

- his brother Joseph ruled over northern Italy
- later, Joachim Murat ruled over Naples; Rome became annexed to France
 - this forced the Pope to reside at Fountainbleau, FR
 - 1815: after defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, Carbonari (The “Red Shirts”) revolted against foreign intruders
 - these armies tried to establish the Resorgimento (resurgence, a national unification movement), but Austrian forces captured the country
- 1831: Carlo Alberto, of royal house Piedmont-Savoy tried to unite Italy against Austrians
 - he abdicated his throne to son, Victor Emmanuel
- 1859: defense agreement with Napoleon III against Austria
- 1860: Giuseppe Garibaldi led “Red Shirts” to victories; later defeated by Spanish, then by French
- 1871: Victor Emmanuel II achieved unity by supporting Prussia; Rome became capital
- 1870-1915: Italy was a fledgling country with many problems
- World War I: Italy entered Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary; an attempt to gain colonies in Africa
- 1915: Italy changed allegiance to the Allies and declared war against Austria
- 1918: Treaty of Paris failed to return territories to Italy
- 1921: Benito Mussolini unified Italy, rectified treaties, brought social reform
- 1935: Under Mussolini, Italy allied with Germany; Italy entered World War II; severe losses for Italy: fewer territories, more problems
- post-war Italy gave birth to a parliamentary government with three parties: Christian Democrats, Socialists and Communists
- 1985, July 3: Francesco Cossiga became President of the Republic

Famous Italians

ITALIANS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO CIVILIZATION

- Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.): General and statesman
- Cicero (106-43 B.C.) Famous statesman and orator
- Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) Religious preacher & reformer
- Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) national hero who freed Italy from Austrian, French and Spanish colonizers; unified Italy
- **Famous Explorers:** Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, John Cabot (Giovanni Caboto) Sebastian, Giovanni Cabot, Giovanni da Verrazano, Umberto Nobile
- **Famous Composers:** Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini, Gioacchino Rossini, Gaetano Donizetti, Pietro Mascagni, Niccolò Paganini, Ottorino Respighi, and Antonio Vivaldi
- **Famous Writers:** Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio, Niccolò Machiavelli, Alberto Moravia, Ignazio Silone and Luigi Pirandello
- **Famous Artists:** Giotto, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, Donatello, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Andrea del Verrocchio, Giorgio de Chirico, Amedeo Modigliani, Giacomo Manzu, Marino Marini and Benevento Cellini
- **Famous Architects:** Filippo Brunelleschi, Donato Bramante, Leon Battista Alberti, Gian Bernini and Francesco Borromini
- **Famous Scientists:** Galileo, Luigi Galvani, Guglielmo Marconi

ITALIAN NAMES IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

- Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917): First United States citizen to be canonized. She was a pioneer in establishing schools, orphanages and free clinics
- Enrico Caruso (1873-1927): operatic singer
- Rudolph Valentino (1895-1926): silent screen star known as “The Great Lover”
- Enrico Fermi (1901-1954): physicist who designed the first atomic piles and produced the first nuclear chain reactor. He worked on the atomic bomb and won the 1938 Nobel Prize for nuclear research
- Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957) symphonic & operatic conductor
- Luciano Pavarotti: a great opera singer
- Frank Capra (1897-1991): Hollywood film director who won many academy awards, known especially for *It's a Wonderful Life*
- Frank Sinatra (1915-1998): American vocalist and actor
- Anne Bancroft (born Anne Marie Italiano, 1931): Famous “Oscar” award-winning actress
- Antonino Scalia (1936) 1st American Italian named to Supreme Court
- Joe DiMaggio (1914) led the Yankees to 10 World Championships
- Lee Iacocca (1924-) former president of Chrysler Corporation and designer of the Ford Mustang

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Getting to know your...

Italian-American Neighbors



The Vetraino family of Sterling Heights keep many Italian traditions part of their daily American life.