



The Spring Italian American Reader

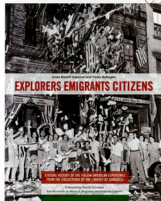
Michelangelo once noted: "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free." The Italian master sculptor, artist and all-around Renaissance man was speaking of one of his incomparable creations, of course. But many authors will tell you that, for them, something similar unfolds on once blank pages.

Just something to consider as you look through our springtime reading list. We've got nonfiction and fiction, and some remarkable photography. All of these once blank pages come from Italian American authors who set their content free, or they're books we think are of interest to Italian American readers, or both.

As Michelangelo clearly understood, sometimes new beginnings can be miraculous. So, besides the book cover, we give you the beginning sentence or so, or maybe a more telling early passage. Our brief reviews and summaries are meant to be just enough to get your attention ... like the first crocuses of Spring!

Buona lettura!

—Don Oldenburg



EXPLORERS EMIGRANTS CITIZENS

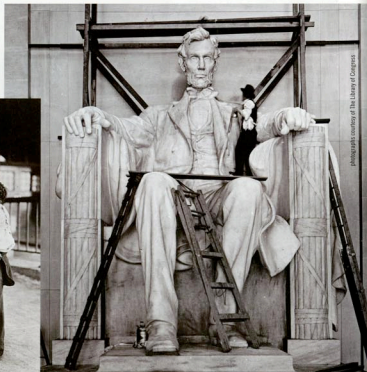
A VISUAL HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

By Linda Barrett Osborne and Paolo Battaglia

Anniversary Books; 320 pages; \$55



Italian mother arriving in New York with her children in the early 20th century



Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Lincoln Memorial's statue of Abraham Lincoln was actually carved in the Bronx by stone carver Giuseppe Piccirilli and his six sons.



Photographer Nick Perrino followed Allied troops landing in Sicily in July, 1943, and captured this photo of Vincent J. Drivello of Milwaukee with cousins he located in Palermo.



New York's Marionette Theater around 1910.

Explorers Emigrants Citizens:
A Visual History of the Italian American Experience from the Collections of the Library of Congress
By Linda Barrett Osborne and Paolo Battaglia
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My grandparents, who came to this country from Sicily at the turn of the century, were Italian. My parents, who were born over here, were Italian Americans. I was, and still am, American Italian. And though I know that they will never forget their origins, my daughters are American. In images and words, this wonderful book charts our transformation across generations....

—Foreword by Martin Scorsese

If there's a coffee-table book of Italian American history, here it is. This beautifully produced, glossy-backed, literary centerpiece showcases the Italian American experience, featuring more than 500 gaze-inducing images (many never before published) pulled from the amazing collections of the Library of Congress, accompanied by fresh and revealing text.

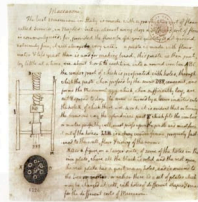
But don't put this volume out if you don't want your Italian American guests to overstay their welcome. When you peer into these pages, you find your ancestors, you regain your family memory, you find your immigrant soul.

Co-authored by an Italian and an Italian-American, the book is thick with historic insight, displaying the diversity of Italian American lives in the United States from the earliest years of exploration and discovery, through the decades of immigration, and forward.

The art includes images, photographs, archival maps, posters and letters—everything from a Thomas Jefferson sketch of a pasta-making machine he devised and the map created by an Italian cartographer to first name the new continent "America," to heart-wrenching shots of often-unwelcome immigrant laborers and photos of famous sports figures such as Joe Montana and Joe DiMaggio.

In fact, the names associated with Italian American accomplishment stack up nicely, from Fiorello LaGuardia and Vince Lombardi to Joe Petrosino and Martin Scorsese. But this is no Pollyanna view of the Italian American experience. The harsh realities and prejudice, as well as the mobster stereotypes and crime-related history, are presented alongside the uplifting stories of the 24 Italian American U.S. soldiers who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor in WWII, and the 120 courageous Italian American firefighters, police officers and rescue personnel who died on 9/11.

This book weaves the cultural fabric of the Italian American tapestry from the first Italian explorers and emigrants to the present—and gets it right. ▶



Thomas Jefferson was close to Italian physician and liberty advocate Filippo Mazzei who had started an experimental farm in Virginia. In 1787, Jefferson sketched a machine to make macaroni, complete with recipe.



An Italian woman, the mother of two soldiers, while sewing the Stars and Stripes in Verona, N.J.