



Highlights *of* Italian-American **History** *in* Los Angeles

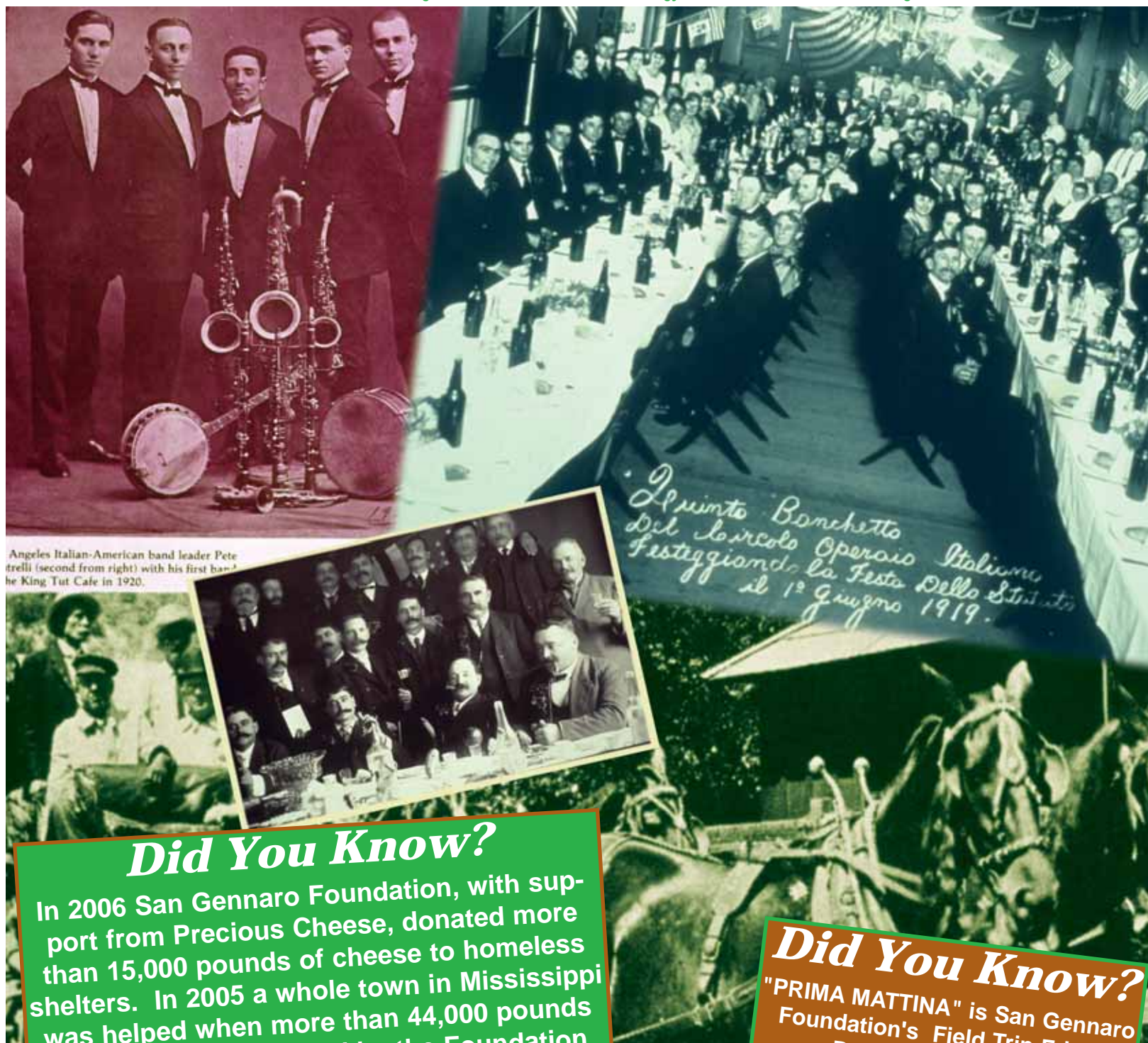
Part 2: The Establishment and Growth of Urban Cluster 1900-1940s

Highlights of The Establishment and Growth of Urban Cluster (1900-1940s)

- 1900: Italian American population in Los Angeles numbered about 2000, one of the largest minority ethnics of the time.
- Larger numbers of Southern Italian (Puglia, Sicily, Calabria) in the early part of the 20th-C (limited by immigration quotas); decade following World War I the LA Italian population nearly doubled from 9,650 to 16,851, reflecting a broader diversity of regional groups and a wider range of educational and economic backgrounds; by 1930's the Italian community numbered 30,000.
- Many immigrants from Ischia and Sicily arrived to settle in San Pedro and work in the fishing industry
- Some achieved prosperity in sales and manufacturing; others in Southern California's growing film industry; others were political activists both protesting and promoting Italy's Fascist regime.
- During the initial period of WWII, Italians found themselves restricted and/or interned because of the same wartime hysteria that led to the internment of the Japanese. Some found themselves declared enemy aliens and restricted, removed or interned in isolated concentration camps (referred to as Una Storia Segreta).
- Establishment of St. Peter's Church on N. Broadway (1904), and Italian Hall (1907) (corner of now Chavez Avenue and North Main Street); Italian American newspaper L'Italo Americano in 1908 (still in print); Little Italy (now Chinatown) stretched from the El Pueblo area (North Main and Cesar Chavez) to Elysian Park; greatest density found along North Broadway/College Street area.
- The Italian Hall was a popular site for weddings, banquets, and other social and cultural events such as the vendemmia, or fall wine harvest and weekend foot races that commenced at the Italian Hall and concluded in nearby Lincoln Heights.

For more historical background see: Gloria R. Lothrop, "Italians of Los Angeles: An Historical Overview," SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY (Fall 2003). Available in reprint from the Historic Italian Hall Foundation.

For additional information go to the Cultural Outreach Genealogy Booth or visit www.FeastOfLA.org



Angeles Italian-American band leader Pete Strelli (second from right) with his first band at the King Tut Cafe in 1920.

Did You Know?

In 2006 San Gennaro Foundation, with support from Precious Cheese, donated more than 15,000 pounds of cheese to homeless shelters. In 2005 a whole town in Mississippi was helped when more than 44,000 pounds of cheese was delivered by the Foundation. SGF provides an extensive homeless feeding program throughout the year.

Did You Know?

"PRIMA MATTINA" is San Gennaro Foundation's Field Trip Friday. Both sponsored and underprivileged children are used in to participate in cultural and academic activities, rides and games and an Italian circus!
In 2006 almost 2,000 children were fed and entertained at the best field trip of Los Angeles!

For more information please visit the Cultural Outreach/Genealogy Booth
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- Mariann Gatto, Curator, El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument and Historic Italian Hall Museum
- Gloria Ricci Lothrop, Ph.D., W. P. Whitsett Professor Emerita, CSU Northridge.
- Jean Bruce Poole and Tevvy Ball, El Pueblo: The Historic Heart of Los Angeles, Oxford University Press USA, 2002. All Rights Reserved.