



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

## Part 4: Making the Italian Community Visible

# 1980s-present

Highlights of Making the Italian Community Visible (1980's-present)

- Current LA Italian-American population is demographically significant: The City of Los Angeles has the nation's 4th largest Italian American population with the LA metro area claiming the nation's 5th largest Italian American population with 568,000 out of a total 16,373,000.
- Recent years have witnessed the influx of a relatively small yet culturally and economically influential group of Italian sojourners representing Italian business, fashion, and cinema, academia, government, and the food industry; a continued influx of highly influential East Coast Italian American transplants is concentrated in entertainment industry!
- Renewed interest and common causes of the Italian American community in Los Angeles include:
  - 1990--Italian community mobilized to preserve the Historic Italian Hall and create a museum; raised more than a million dollars through city, state community and foundation grants; painstakingly renovated and returned to original splendor; ongoing work of Historic Italian Hall Foundation (for more info email [mariann.gatto@lacity.org](mailto:mariann.gatto@lacity.org); website [www.italianhall.org](http://www.italianhall.org) currently under construction.)
  - San Pedro Italian Community fundraises for planned Piazza Italia
  - Other important Italian and Italian American institutions and entities: Scalabrinians (who raised funds to build Villa Scalabrini housing the offices of L'Italo-Americano amongst many common cause contributions); influential Institute of Italian Culture in West Los Angeles; clubs such as Italian Catholic Federation, Sons of Italy, and Unico; umbrella organization Federated Italian Americans of Southern California's Columbus and Republic Day celebrations; St. Peter's and Casa Italiana; Italian Los Angeles web site ([www.italianlosangeles.org](http://www.italianlosangeles.org)), authentic Italian and Italian American restaurants from Eastside Market to Antica Pizzeria to the highly anticipated Mozza
  - San Gennaro Foundation and Feast of San Gennaro Los Angeles: 2006 marks 5th annual festival with estimated 125,000 attendees at Hollywood location; seeks to uphold the principles that were established by St. Gennaro, the patron saint of Naples, Italy, who worked tirelessly and selflessly to help people in need and to bring together the diverse elements of the community into a whole, to celebrate the spirit and culture of Italy, Italians, and Italian Americans of Los Angeles and the world

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](http://www.FeastOfLA.org)



## Did You Know?

In August 2006 The San Gennaro Foundation kickstarted its free CINEMA AL FRESCO program offering free weekend entertainment under the stars! The Foundation plans to grow this community program into a summer-long program by 2007!

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

**Did You Know?** During the Katrina disaster in 2005, The San Gennaro Foundation adopted 21 already financially challenged families with 36 children that became homeless after this unfortunate event.