

Italian Americans: Journey into American Society

Lucia Drench

Senior Division

Paper

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I chose the treatment of Italian Americans as my topic because I was interested in the qualifications to become a “true American.” Italians were forced to earn their rights by proving their loyalty and patriotism to the United States. It was their responsibility to assimilate as seamlessly as possible, yet still remain in the backgrounds of society.

To begin my research, I started with simply troubleshooting anything I could find on Italian Americans during the 20th Century. I started with the broader topics, like events that occurred during the World Wars, and initial immigration. My main goal was to clearly recognize the shift of when Italians truly began to be integrated into society, and how the adaptation of Christopher Columbus contributed to this feat. I began to narrow down to more specific evidence of prejudice, and how nationalistic ideologies changed. I ran into the problem that I could not find any primary sources that aligned with my topic. So, I spent about 5 hours researching all of the data bases I could find, and managed to collect enough sources that ended up making my argument stronger. I learned that patience is very important when conducting extensive research. The most important courses I found were from a scholar, Stefano Luconi, he answered all of my questions by outlining the story of Italian Americans clearly. I also found some newspaper articles that highlighted the prejudice Italians faced, and how their presence contributed to American society and economy.

I mapped out my project by establishing the chronological order of events, and then building off from there. I specifically included newspaper articles to support my argument, and provide some insight for the reader of true perspectives.

With the adaptation of Christopher Columbus, Italian Americans were able to wedge themselves into American society in the face of adversity in order to earn rights for themselves and their kin. Upon initial immigration, Italians were considered inferior, but they were able to prove their loyalty to America yet still maintain allegiance to their ancestral homeland. During the World Wars, it was the responsibility of Italians to be patriotic and loyal, yet they were pitted against Italy, resulting in deep rooted resentment and the increased need for outspoken Italian nationalism.

The actions taken by America towards Italians acts as a case study for the normalization of how immigrants and minority groups are treated today. Now, it is common practice to throw immigrants into the outskirts of society, and make it their responsibility to become established citizens of the United States. With this action, it created this culture and ideology that a “true American” is one who is white and wealthy. Americans have prided themselves on the fact that they live in the “land of the free,” however, “freedom” only applies to the wealthy elite, casting out minority groups.

From 1900 to 1930, an influx of Italians immigrated to the United States to escape the oppressive Italian government that arose following the unification of Italy in the 1860s. Upon arrival, Italian immigrants were immediately considered inferior and were alienated from American society. Following the outbreak of World War II, prejudiced rhetoric against Italian immigrants increased due to Fascist Italy's alliance with Nazi Germany. Many felt torn between their ancestral homeland and their new country, resulting in the adoption of Christopher Columbus as a symbol connecting both aspects of Italian American heritage. Due to World War II, Italian Americans felt it was their responsibility to maintain allegiance to both Italy and the United States, yet the continuous removal of their rights caused collective resentment towards their adoptive land. Initially, Italians were considered to be "enemy aliens," yet the promotion of Christopher Columbus as an Italian American hero proved their allegiance to the United States, and resulted in an advancement in their social status.

Upon their initial immigration to the United States, Italian immigrants quickly learned that their prospects of economic and social prosperity were not going to be easily achieved, and were hesitant to fully commit to American life. Following the unification of Italy, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy created an extremely undemocratic state, causing a mass migration of Italians to the United States (Candeloro). Many Italians formed their own cohorts within American cities in order to assimilate as seamlessly as possible and embrace their newfound "independence" (Candeloro). Consular officer Luigi Villari said about New York City's Little Italy, "...we can find only Sicilians in a street, only people from Calabria in another street, and immigrants from Abruzzi in a third one..." (Luconi). Early migrants used the United States as a hub for economic opportunity, and slowly established an Italian presence from the 1880's to the 1930's. Many Italians only stayed in the United States to work and send their

earnings back to their families at home. Often, many immigrants had their personal liberties stripped from them and were forced to live in poverty. They were essentially treated as outcasts in society. However, “in the period from 1880 to 1920, about \$750 million was sent to Italy.” Though Italians were treated as outcasts, they still were successful in raising their economic status (Candeloro). Immigrants in the United States were the only demographic of people who were willing to do the essential physical labor such as railroad, masonry, and factory work that the dominant white culture refused to do. Thomas Damigella, President of the North End Historical Society says that Italian immigrants were “treated as an unwelcome, but necessary group of people” (Damigella, 2024).

Italians began to heavily incorporate their heritage into American life, directly opposing traditional American values and customs of assimilation. They were outspoken and proud of their Italian heritage, instead of submitting to the efforts to cast them out of society. For example, the establishment of the first Italian newspaper in the United States created in 1880, *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, was a strong representation of Italian heritage and culture. As Italians tried to stabilize their lives in the United States, however, they were an easy target for bigotry and abuse. Often, Italians were called, “dagos,” an ethnic slur meaning dogs. They were subjected to accusations of being “dirty,” and they were often charged with resorting to physical fights to remedy personal controversies (Luconi). In New Orleans, Louisiana, 1891, an angry mob of thousands of New Orleanians rushed the Orleans Parish Prison and lynched nine Mafia members who were accused of murdering New Orleans Police Chief David Hennessy. The violence resulted in “one of the largest mass lynchings in U.S. history” (Jackson). The attack was motivated by “longstanding anti-Italian sentiment and racial animosity” (Jackson). The lynching resulted in the increase of Italian nationalism in America, and sparked outrage among both

Americans and Italians. For Americans, the event reinforced their distrust and prejudice against Italians. For Italians, it reinforced their discomfort and resentment towards the United States. As seen in the article above, Italians demanded reparations for the damages caused, and for responsibility to be taken (New York Times, 1892). The title, “the largest mass lynching in the United States,” still resonates among Italian Americans today as a key piece of Italian American history, a representation of the mistreatment and violence they had to endure. This event normalized the mistreatment of Italians for decades to come.

Due to the outbreak of WWI, anti-immigration sentiments rose for fear of espionage among immigrant populations, causing further erosion of immigrant rights. Acts such as the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 were specifically created to control the immigrant population. This act placed harsh immigration quotas and reduced the number of eligible immigrants to the United States from 200,000 to strictly 6,000 people (Luconi). By the 1930s, the total number of American-born Italians surpassed the number of immigrants in the population of people from Italian descent (Candeloro). Following the atrocities of World War I, widespread discrimination was further cemented within American society. The Johnson-Reed Act, a portent to the mistreatment of Italian Americans in World War II, normalized the belief that immigrants were a danger to American culture, society, and overall national security.

In 1922, Benito Mussolini had risen to power which pleased many Italian immigrants because he transformed Italy into a great world power (Luconi). Americans became more wary

SUITS AGAINST NEW-ORLEANS.

EFFORTS OF RELATIVES OF LYNCHED ITALIANS TO RECOVER DAMAGES.

NEW-ORLEANS, La., Nov. 3.—The damage suits filed in the United States Circuit Court by the relatives and friends of the eleven Italians who were lynched in the Parish Prison on March 14, 1891, will be called for trial in the next few days, papers material to the conduct of the plaintiffs' case having been received from Rome to-day.

The actions were brought last March and were not against citizens, but the City of New-Orleans was made defendant. In the first suit filed \$30,000 damages are asked for the killing of Antonio Marchesi (Grimando), and Antonio Viti, Commissary of the Italian Government and Superintendent of the Orphan Asylum Di Santa Maria Degli Angeli, Rome, appeared as plaintiff on behalf of and as legal tutor of Gaspare Grimando, minor son of the deceased, and an inmate of the asylum. The city raised the points that the plaintiff was without capacity to sue or stand in judgment in the case; that he was not the tutor of the minor, and was without authority to represent him, and finally that the boy was not the son and heir of the deceased. Upon these grounds dismissal of the suit was prayed.

The commission was issued by the United States Court for the taking of the testimony in Italy of Antonio Vita, Gaspare Grimando, and Celienda Di Tavanui, Prefect of Rome. The testimony was duly taken, partly in Italian and partly in English, and reached the clerk of the court here to-day.

The list of witnesses summoned is very large, including all the officers and employes of the Parish Prison at the time of the lynching, besides many citizens who were supposed to have been inside the building during the affair or outside on the streets as spectators when Bagmetto and Politz were taken out and hanged.

Mr. Moti, the Italian Consul in this city, has returned from Italy where he has spent several weeks obtaining data to be used in the prosecution of the cases. It is said that a special jury will be called to try these cases and that an attempt will be made to obtain the panel of jurors from another State, on the ground that prejudice in this city will be too pronounced to warrant the belief that an impartial trial can be had.

of Italians when Mussolini allied with Nazi Germany. Additionally, Italians' refusal to completely submit themselves to American assimilation, and insistence on maintaining crucial aspects of their culture, was intimidating for the United States. This position challenged the superiority of American culture, and created an environment where two forces would have to share one space.

Italy's alliance with Nazi Germany during World War II, caused many Italians to be torn between maintaining allegiance to both their ancestral and adoptive homelands. Upon Italy declaring war on the United States, Italian Americans were immediately subjected to discrimination and prejudice by the government. They were referred to as "enemy aliens," and had many strict regulations placed against them. For example, Italians needed special permits to travel within the country. They were excluded from employment in defense industries and forced to relocate to internment camps. They faced limitations on property ownership, and they had to surrender various banned articles (Luconi). The government justified these restrictions as necessary to the war effort and also used the war as an excuse to expel immigrants from society and rally native U.S. citizens against them. The FBI interned a few hundred Italian Americans who had previously been listed as a potential threat to national security due to having had alleged connections to the Fascist regime. These assumptions of espionage fostered deep-rooted resentment in Italian Americans towards the U.S, causing them to be critical and unsupportive of the United States war effort. Walter Firey, fieldworker for the Office of War Information in the US government said, "Most of the second-generation [Italian Americans] resent the fact that they are objects of distrust (Luconi)."

Many Italian Americans felt forced to choose between their adoptive land and their ancestral land, fostering resentment in many towards the United States, yet also felt as if they

were persons without identity due to the American insistence on leaving their heritage behind. There was a large divide in the Italian American community, as they shamed each other for “Americanizing” themselves yet also shamed each other for being too celebratory of the culture of their lineage. The Order of the Sons of Italy in America considered changing their name to the Columbian Order of America in order to conceal that the founding members were of Italian lineage. Luigi Scala, leader of this organization in Rhode Island, opposed the consideration stating, “I consider Italy a title of nobility, making us at least the equal of any other group insofar as our heritage of culture and tradition is concerned” (Luconi). These opposing views caused internal problems that began to tear Italian Americans apart.

Despite the government’s oppressive treatment of them, many Italian immigrants supported the United States war effort. An estimated 500,000 to 1,500,000 of Italian Americans enlisted in the United States army while the total Italian-American population was around five million at this time. Sergio Campailla said fighting Italy on the battlefield was like “waging war against himself.” Leo C. Rosten in the Office of War Information feared that any defamation of Italians in the United States press would enrage Italian Americans to the point where they would no longer support the country’s war effort (Luconi). Many Italians did not feel recognized for their repeated allegiance to the United States, and felt that their needs were going completely unnoticed. An Italian immigrant wrote to Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Italy is my mother and the United States is my father and I don’t want to see my parents fighting.” Operation Husky, the code name for the Allied invasion of Sicily on July 10, 1943, was the first time that Italian and American troops would fight against each other on Italian soil. *La Voce Coloniale*, a weekly published in New Orleans, reported, “it is with deep anguish in our hearts that we watch Italy cut into pieces...Our sons are in a cruel situation by which they have to defend themselves from

their overseas brothers and see our beautiful Italy devastated and destroyed in order to free her and restore her independence” (Luconi).

Because World War II was a home front war, success in the war heavily relied upon the support back home. Historian John P. Diggins argued that World War II “was the fuel of the melting pot” for Italian Americans (Luconi). Leaders of the “Little Italy’s” relied on prewar ethnic associations such as The Order of the Sons of Italy in America and Italian-language newspapers to advertise war bonds. During the World Wars, Italians earned middle class status by working full time, underconsumption, pooling of extended family resources, running small family businesses, and entering into unionized skilled and unskilled jobs helped Italian Americans earn middle-class status (Luconi). The majority of Italian Americans refused to disconnect from their ancestral heritage. Even though they were supporting the US military, they were fighting less as Americans but rather as Italians of American extraction.

In order to wedge themselves into American society and reach the status of “true” Americans, Italian Americans adopted Christopher Columbus as a figure of Italian heritage.

Since Columbus “discovered” America, and the belief was that he was of Italian descent, it allowed Italians to create a connection between their two nations, further cementing their “true” patriotism to the United States. The first Columbus Day was proclaimed a national holiday by President Benjamin Harrison in

Italian Visitors to Give Pageant.

A pageant of the Renaissance period will be staged at the Yankee Stadium in observance of Columbus Day next Friday by 350 students from twenty-six Italian universities. The pageant, which is expected to draw a crowd of more than 60,000 Italian-Americans, will be the climax of a three weeks' tour of about twenty American colleges and universities by the visitors.

1892, a year after the New Orleans lynchings in an attempt to remedy the damaged relationship between Italians and America (Connell). Columbus was a powerful symbol to demonstrate their loyalty to the US during the war (Luconi). Many Italians began to be more outspoken about their

**100,000 to March
Up 5th Ave. Today
To Hail Columbus**

The annual Columbus Day

heritage, staging lavish parades to honor both their ancestral and adoptive homeland as seen in the article above (New York Times, 1934). Thomas Damigella, President of the North End Historical Society said, “parades, military marches...it was this way to mend the hurt and pain that was caused to the Italian Americans at that time” (Damigella, 2024). Columbus was the link connecting their heritage to their nationality. Italian American identification with Columbus showed the US that they had finally gained the support of Italian Americans, and could guarantee their contribution to the war. Even after the war, Columbus remained a strong figurehead of Italian nationalism, connecting them back to their allegiance to America (New York Times, 1964).

The historical mistreatment of Italian Americans serves as a case study for the ways in which many immigrant groups are oppressed by America’s dominant white culture in an attempt to assimilate. Partly through their identification with Christopher Columbus, Italian Americans were able to create a more “American” identity and today possess power and privilege. However, Columbus’s legacy surrounding the trans-atlantic slave trade, and the genocide of the Carribean people raises questions about the appropriateness of using him as a symbol of pride. In the first place, the treatment of Italians reveals the hypocrisy within American ideals, specifically the promise that everyone is afforded basic civil rights and liberties. However, historically, the reality is that, as shown in the Italian American experience, these privileges do not apply equally to ethnic minorities. Indigenous, Black, and other communities of color continue to be oppressed by the dominant white culture which is represented in part by the symbolic nature of Columbus and the Columbus Day holiday. In contrast to the past, progressive Italian American groups today, including Italian Americans for Indigenous People’s Day and the Italian American Heritage Society of Chicago, advocate for rejecting the corrupt history of Columbus. They

reflect on the oppression of their ancestors, and acknowledge the pain similarly experienced by many minority groups. The traumas of their ancestors, while in part were overcome through a connection to Columbus, now inspire them to assume the responsibility of rejecting his legacy. These progressive Italian Americans feel that it is their responsibility to fight for individual rights, to reveal the truth behind America's tainted history, and to stop the cycle of oppression.

Works Cited

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"Blood of My Blood: A Documentary History Of the Italian Americans" is an article written by Jerre Mangione published in the New York Times, June 16, 1974. Mangione was an American writer, and famously was the scholar of the "Sicilian American Experience." The article describes the identity crisis that many Italian-Americans were going through due to the prejudice generations have been subjected to. He recounts how many still feel divided between their ethnic identity and their national identity. Because of the American culture of forced assimilation, it resulted in imposter syndrome for many. They had to sacrifice their rights in order to receive some basic responsibility for their lives.

By RICHARD SEVERO. "Italian-Americans Here Unite to Fight 'Reverse' Racial Bias: Using the Courts \$50,000 Yearly Budget Italian-Americans Unite to Fight Bias." *New York Times (1923-)*, 1974, p. 71. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times*,
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"Italian-Americans Here Unite to Fight 'Reverse' Racial Bias: Using the Courts \$50,000 Yearly Budget Italian-Americans Unite to Fight Bias" is an article written

by Richard Severo and was published in the New York Times, June 28, 1974.

Severo was an American science journalist in the New York Times, and won both the George Polk Award from Long Island University and the Meyer "Mike" Berger Award from the Columbia School of Journalism. The article describes how the adamant prejudice Italian Americans were experiencing was infringing on their ability to move up the social ladder fairly. They felt that their ethnicity was resulting in unfair treatment, and were determined to fight it. Many Italians had to create their own cohorts in order to fight for their own basic rights because the government would not acknowledge that minority group at the time.

Damigella, Thomas. Telephone interview with the author.

Thomas Damigella is the President of the North End Historical Society and the cofounder of the Italian American Alliance. In the interview, we discussed the importance of Columbus Day to many Italian-Americans, and how his historical significance still holds an important space in the Italian-American legacy. In order to be respected in American society, it was felt that minority groups had to prove their allegiance to the United States in order to gain traction to move up the economic ladder. This ultimately is what caused Italians to gain an influx of rights.

"Italian-American League Holds Its Own Columbus Day Ceremony." *New York Times* (1923-), 1971, p. 32. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times*, ezproxy.bpl.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/italian-american-league-holds-own-columbus-day/docview/119240804/se-2?accountid=9675.

"Italian American League Holds Its Own Columbus Day Ceremony" is an article published by the New York Times, October 12, 1971. The article describes the Italian-American Civil Rights League and their insistence to honor Christopher Columbus. After multiple rejections, it was concluded that the rejections were of an exclusionary intent. Italians are passionate about Christopher Columbus because he was the force that allowed them to wedge into American society, and achieve enough rights to be able to engage in a social climb. Italians feel that their responsibility to celebrate Columbus stems from the fact that he is the connector between their ancestral and adoptive homelands.

"ITALIAN-AMERICANS." *New York Times* (1923-), 1941, p. 16. *ProQuest Historical*

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"Italian Americans" is a newspaper article published by the New York Times, December 22, 1941. This article recounts the unwavering loyalty Italians have maintained towards the U.S. even as they were significantly stripped of their freedom and morals in order to achieve the American standard of assimilation. It describes their willingness to fight against the Axis Powers during World War Two, and how their sacrifices must be repaid in the form of their economic and social liberation. This provides an outside perspective to the average Italian's treatment in the U.S. during the World Wars. They had their rights stripped from them, yet they still maintained the responsibility to fight for their adoptive homeland in times of crisis.

"ITALIAN-AMERICANS." *New York Times (1923-)*, 1929, p. 18. *ProQuest Historical*

Newspapers: The New York Times,

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"Italian Americans" is a newspaper article published by the New York Times August 6, 1929. The article describes the presence that Italian-Americans held in society at this point in history. It uses newly nominated mayor, an Italian-American, Fiorello La Guardia as an example of how Italians have inserted themselves into American society after having emigrated to the United States. La Guardia poses as a prime example of how Italians maintained their culture, but still adapted to American life and customs. He was able to rise up from the lack of rights he was given in order to be representation for the Italian minority in New York City.

"Italian Visitors to Give Pageant." *New York Times (1923-)*, 1934, p. 1. *ProQuest Historical*

Newspapers: The New York Times,

ezproxy.bpl.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/italian-visitors-give-pageant/docview/100919510/se-2?accountid=9675.

"Italian Visitors to Give Pageant" is a newspaper article published by the New York Times on October 7, 1934. The article describes an Italian festivity that plans to draw attention from Italian Americans all over New York City. As a part of this celebration, students from Italian-founded universities represent their culture and heritage in sharing the story of Columbus and his voyage. Italians popularity began to grow once they established Christopher Columbus as a role

model and representative for Italian pride and culture. Because Columbus was popular among both Italians and Americans, it gave Italians the responsibility and the right to be outspoken and proud of their heritage in the face of the American public and represent what it means to publicize and celebrate Italian culture.

"100,000 to March up 5th Ave. Today to Hail Columbus." *New York Times (1923-)*, 1964, p. 31.

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"100,000 March up 5th Ave. Today to Hail Columbus" is a newspaper article published by the New York Times on October 12, 1964. The newspaper article recounts the Columbus Day Parade in New York City. It describes the events that take place, and the planning that was involved in executing this important event. Before, Italian heritage would have never been represented or acknowledged in this way, and they were often cast into the outskirts of society. However, the narrative had changed and Italians used their loyalty to the United States to adopt Columbus as a representative of Italian and American culture, ultimately gaining the rights and the respect to be honored instead of ridiculed.

Special to The New York Times. "ITALY AND THE LYNCHING.: NO HASTY DEMAND IS

EXPECTED by WASHINGTON AUTHORITIES -- WAITING to HEAR from

LOUISIANA." *New York Times (1857-1922)*, 1899, p. 1. *ProQuest Historical*

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Italy and the Lynching: No Hasty Demand is Expected By Washington Authorities-Waiting to Hear From Louisiana, was an article published in the New York Times Newspaper, July, 25, 1899. The article discusses the repercussions of the lynching of eleven Italian mafia prisoners led by an angry mob in 1891. This article displays how the United States has not honored their responsibility of investigating these kinds of conflicts, and following through on due process of law with the people involved. Also, it shows the continued alienation of rights from Italians in the United States during this time period, and how even major events like this can be overlooked due to prejudice and discrimination.

Staples, Brent. "How Italians Became 'White': How Italians; Became White; Vicious bigotry, reluctant acceptance: an American story." *New York Times* (1923-) [New York, N.Y.], 2019, p. 3. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times*, ezproxy.bpl.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/how-italians-became-white/docview/2748004819/se-2?accountid=9675.

"How Italians Became White," is an article published on October 13, 2019, and was written by Brent Staples, author and editor of the New York Times Newspaper. This article discusses the shift in the dynamic in history, in how Italian-Americans gradually moved up the social ladder through the 20th century. During the 20th Century, America was a hub for immigration, and thousands of Italians emigrated to America in search of a better life. The mistreatment of Italians fostered deep prejudiced feelings set in American culture, causing all political, social, and human rights to be stripped from them.

"SUITS against NEW-ORLEANS.: EFFORTS of RELATIVES of LYNCHED ITALIANS to RECOVER DAMAGES." *New York Times (1857-1922)*, 1892, p. 10. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times*,
ezproxy.bpl.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/suits-against-new-orleans/docview/94988636/se-2?accountid=9675.

"Suits Against New Orleans: Efforts of Relatives of Lynched Italians to Recover Damages", is an article published in the New York Times newspaper on November 4, 1892. The article discusses that following the lynching of eleven Italians in New Orleans, Louisiana, their families sought out a lawsuit to protest against the wrongful deaths of their kin. In the United States during this time, Italians had very little rights as they were seen as, "non-white." Many suffered the consequences of being an immigrant with being wrongly tried and killed. It was the United States responsibility to conduct fair rule of law for all citizens, but they failed at putting aside the apparent prejudice fostered from immigrants in the United States.

"WHO DISCOVERED AMERICA?" *New York Times (1923-)*, 1938, p. 78. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times*,
ezproxy.bpl.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/who-discovered-america/docview/102516254/se-2?accountid=9675.

"Who Discovered America?" was an article published in the New York Times, on October 9, 1938. The article discusses the speculation between different historians on who truly first set foot on the "New World." The author describes how multiple ethnic groups including Italians, Norwegians, Icelanders, and Irish all affiliate

with patriots that claimed they "discovered" America. Italian-Americans have identified with Christopher Columbus and his voyage because it is a strong and loyal representation of both aspects of their culture. However, all the rights that Italians have accumulated by using Columbus as a figure of their heritage may be misled in the fact that Columbus may have not been the voyager to "discover" America. As Italians are struggling to handle the responsibilities bestowed upon them in response to them being an ethnic presence, they continue to struggle to choose which aspect of their heritage to represent and stay loyal to.

DeLuca, Danielle. "Italian Americans for Indigenous People's Day." *ItaliansforIPD.org*, ItalainsforIPD, 14 Oct. 2024, italiansforipd.org/. Accessed 24 Feb. 2025.

ItaliansforIPD.org is a website created by Italian Americans who advocate for renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. The website describes the importance of acknowledging the struggles of Indigenous People, and the harmful implications that Christopher Columbus holds on minority groups. They fight to reveal the truths behind history, and how Columbus' legacy is harmful to many minority groups who still face discrimination today. There is a joint statement with the Chicago Italian American Heritage Society, which strengthens the mission of Italians for Indigenous People's Day.

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American Journal of Sociology. Vol. 77, no. 4, 1972. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bpl.org/stable/2776773. Accessed 7 Jan. 2025.

The Italian Experience in the United States is a work written by Silvano M. Tomasi and Madeline H. Engel. This piece of work is reviewed by Peter H. Rossi, in the *American Journal of Sociology*. Rossi was a prominent sociologist and best known for his research on the origins of homelessness. Additionally, he was professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Massachusetts. Rossi's review of this piece outlines how Tomasi and Engel clearly outlined ideals that help support their recount of the history of Italian American immigration. However, he describes how it fails to specifically target the faults within how ethnicity played a role in their discrimination, and how specifically Italians rose to middle class after being subjected to the lower working class. These critiques all fall under the umbrella of how Italians truly contributed to American businesses and society upon immigration, and in what aspects of American life they were most prominent in. Italian significance in American history is often questioned because their rights were stripped away from them, and it became their responsibility to "earn" them back. Upon immigration Italians had to fight their way up to the top, but the responsibilities they gained in the process of climbing up the social ladder is unclear.

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link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3401802161/UHIC?u=mmln_m_bedhigh&sid=bookmark-UHIC&xid=99e4ac45. Accessed 13 Sept. 2024.

Dictionary of American History is written by Dominic Candeloro. Candeloro was the former President and Executive Director of the American Italian Historical Association. This source describes the early challenges Italians endured upon first immigrating to the United States. They initially used the US as a haven for economic and social prosperity in order to support their families back in Italy. However, Italians realized how the US held a lot of opportunities for starting a new life, unfortunately this resulted in the removal of their rights strictly because they were a minority group.

Connell, William J. "Who's Afraid of Columbus?" *Italian Americana*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2013, pp. 136-47. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bpl.org/stable/41933001. Accessed 6 Oct. 2024.

Who's Afraid of Columbus? Written by William J. Connell, a historian and holder of the Joseph M. and Geraldine C. La Motta Chair in Italian studies at Seton Hall University. This article discusses the connection between Christopher Columbus and Italian Americans. It analyzes the qualities the legacy of Columbus has assumed, and how they became so prevalent in modern American culture. Italian-Americans feel the right to adopt an icon to represent Italian heritage in a positive light, thus the becoming of Columbus Day. Many felt it was a responsibility to their ancestral homeland to do themselves justice and represent Italian heritage in America through a figure as well-known as Columbus. In American culture, Columbus' voyage is an iconic one, a story Italians took advantage of to have their importance represented in American history.

DeLUCIA, Christine. "Getting the Story Straight: Press Coverage of Italian-American Lynchings from 1856-1910." *Italian Americana*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2003, pp. 212-21. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bpl.org/stable/29776894. Accessed 6 Oct. 2024.

Getting the Story Straight: Press Coverage of Italian-American Lynchings from 1856-1910, is written by Christine DeLucia, former Associate Professor of History at Mount Holyoke College and current Associate Professor of History at Williams College. In this article, it discusses the repeated wrongful lynchings of Italian-Americans by hate-fueled mobs in the American South. With these lynchings, it is described that these events inclined Italian-Americans to reanalyze their purpose in the U.S, taking that culture of being in the minority into present day. In America during this time period, the definition of being "American" was extremely rigid, causing Italian immigrants to be forced to earn their rights. A country literally constituted off of individual freedoms made it an immigrant's responsibility to prove their own legitimacy to the American people.

Jackson, Jessica Barbata. "Before the Lynching." *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2017, pp. 300-38. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bpl.org/stable/26290914. Accessed 6 Oct. 2024.

Before the Lynching: Reconsidering the Experience of Italians and Sicilians in Louisiana, 1870s-1890s, is written by Jessica Barbata Jackson, an assistant professor of history at Colorado State University, specializing in immigration history, race and citizenship studies, Italian American studies, and social studies education. This article recounts the history of the largest "White Lynching" in the United States. Upon this event, 11 Italian immigrants were killed, causing a whole

minority in the United States to fear for their safety and security. Because of the lynchings, Italians in America were alienated from authoritative positions in society, considered "non-white," and forced into hiding in order to conceal their presence from the American people. Their rights were now completely diminished, and caused this minority to assume the identity and responsibility of defending their ancestral homeland and heritage.

Luconi, Stefano. "Becoming Italian in the US: Through the Lens of Life Narratives." *MELUS*, vol. 29, nos. 3-4, fall-winter 2004, p. 151+. *Gale Literature Resource Center*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A128169762/LitRC?u=mmln_m_bedhigh&sid=bookmark-LitRC&xid=abf00e3e. Accessed 6 Oct. 2024.

Becoming an Italian in the US: through the lens of life narratives, is written by Stefano Luconi a U.S. history professor at the University of Florence specializing specifically in Italian immigration to the United States. This article discusses the construction of social classes in the United States and how Italian immigrants were integrated into them, using narratives from people who had to live through the discrimination and prejudice. Many recounts are Italian-Americans, the first generation of children from Italian immigrants, who lived through the torment of forceful assimilation and alienation. This source highlights the divide that many felt between the responsibility of honoring their ethnicity, but also having to earn the right to be treated as a "true" American

---. "Contested Loyalties: World War II and Italian-Americans' Ethnic Identity." *Italian Americana*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2012, pp. 151-67. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bpl.org/stable/41495581. Accessed 22 Sept. 2024.

Contested Loyalties: World War II and Italian-Americans' Ethnic Identity is a journal written by Stefano Luconi, a U.S. History professor at the University of Florence, specializing in Italian immigration to the United States. Stefano Luconi goes into depth about how the outbreak of World War II affected the treatment of Italian immigrants and Italian-Americans in the United States, discussing the double edged sword of maintaining allegiance to their motherland, but also assimilating to the standards of the United States. Italian-Americans had the responsibility to their culture to honor and acknowledge it, yet they also faced limited rights and opportunities in the United States, making it a difficult choice which aspect to prioritize.

---. "Forging an Ethnic Identity: The Case of Italian Americans." *Revue Française D'études Américaines*, no. 96, 2003, pp. 89-101. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bpl.org/stable/20874906. Accessed 22 Sept. 2024.

Forging an Ethnic Identity: The Case of Italian Americans, is a journal written by Stefano Luconi, a U.S. History professor at the University of Florence, specializing in Italian immigration to the United States. The journal encapsulates the journey Italian immigrants voyaged on in reshaping their identities to fit with the societal norms of the United States. It describes the difficulty in still engaging with their Italian ethnicity, but also having been forced to leave their identities behind in order to provide for themselves. As being immigrants, it was their responsibility to create lives for themselves and their children, however Italian immigrants were faced with having to leave the knowns of their past lives and adjust to a completely new world.

McKevitt, Gerald. "Christopher Columbus as a Civic Saint: Angelo Noce and Italian American Assimilation." *California History*, vol. 71, no. 4, 1992, pp. 516-33. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25161627>. Accessed 22 Sept. 2024.

Christopher Columbus as a Civic Saint: Angelo Noce and Italian American Assimilation, is an article written by Gerald McKevitt, a professor of history in the Department of History at Santa Clara University, California. Gerald McKevitt delves into the truth behind the meaning of Columbus Day, dissecting the roots in which this story was fabricated, and understanding the importance and affirmance it holds for Italian-Americans. Since Italian-Americans immigrated to the United States, their rights were extremely limited, and they had no figure in history to shine them in a positive light. A solution to this problem was Columbus Day, a celebration of Italian heritage, bringing awareness to the presence of their minority.

Paul, Heike. "Christopher Columbus and the Myth of 'Discovery.'" *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*, Transcript Verlag, 2014, pp. 43-88. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bpl.org/stable/j.ctv1wxsdq.5. Accessed 20 Oct. 2024.

Christopher Columbus and the Myth of 'Discovery', is the first chapter in the book, *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*, and is written by Heike Paul, professor and chair of American Studies at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, and member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities. This chapter discusses how Christopher Columbus' voyage became such an iconic tale in the United States, and how it's

history has been fabricated into what it is today over the years. Today in the United States, Columbus was the figure that discovered America, yet the truth is now surfacing on how Columbus was not the hero generations have been taught about. Columbus was responsible for the genocide of thousands of Indigenous People, and it is their right to be able to have their history represented in classrooms across the United States. This source highlights how the United States abandoned their responsibility of depicting their history accurately, in order to fabricate an iconic figure for American representation.

Pozzetta, George. "Italian Americans." *Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America*, edited by Thomas Riggs, 3rd ed., vol. 2, Gale, 2014, pp. 505-22. *Gale in Context: U.S. History*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3273300100/UHIC?u=mlyn_m_bedhigh&sid=bookmark-UHIC&id=33228c6a. Accessed 22 Sept. 2024.

Italian Americans is an excerpt written by George Pozzetta, professor of history at the University of Florida, and editor of the Florida Historical Quarterly. In this book, it discusses the process Italians went through in immigrating to the United States. It describes the history of Italy during the late 19th Century to the early 20th Century that caused these large waves of Italian immigrants to come to the U.S. Although Italians had every right to escape the persecutions of Italy, they still were responsible for the heritage they brought with them.

Tomasi, Silvano M., and Madeline H. Engel. *The Italian Experience in the United States*. New York City, Center for Migration Studies, 1970. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/italianexperienc0000toma/mode/2up. Accessed 7 Jan. 2025.

The Italian Experience in the United States is a book written by Silvano M. Tomasi and Madeline H. Engel. Tomasi is an Italian prelate of the Catholic Church, and has been serving since 2020 as the Special Delegate to the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Engel is a Professor of Sociology and deputy chair of Sociology at Lehman College, City University of New York. This piece recounts the immigration of Italians to the United States, and how they were treated upon immigration. It also describes their contributions to society, and how the initial perception of the Italian ethnicity was changed as they began to insert themselves more into American culture and society. As Italians began to slowly integrate into American society, their rights and responsibilities were heavily influenced by the fact that they were immigrants, and unfamiliar to United States citizens. As a result of this, it caused a surge in Italian nationalism, causing Italians to take power into their own hands and fight for their rights within American society.