

The Italians in Rhode Island

Giovanni da Verrazano, a Florentine, explored Narragansett Bay in 1524.

Overwhelmed by its beauty and tranquility, he aptly called it “un rifugio”, a place of refuge.

By 1900, about 9,000 Italian immigrants had settled in Rhode Island. Within thirty years the number grew to over 100,000

Federal Hill was the principal area of Italian settlement. Immigrants eventually moved out to the suburbs of North Providence, Johnston, and Cranston.

The Italians were employed in textile mills, machine shops, and in the jewelry and construction industries. Italians took the initiative to start their own businesses as vendors, tailors, seamstresses, barbers and cobblers.

Today nearly 200,000 Rhode Island residents are of Italian heritage, the largest ethnic group in the State. Italian Americans are represented throughout the State in every walk of life: education, law, medicine, business, government, and sports.

Italian American Historical Society, Inc. of RI



**P.O. Box 40160
Providence, RI 02940-0160**

Italian American Historical Society



~Established 1979~

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Society is to foster the appreciation and preservation of the culture of Italy in America and to celebrate the contributions of her sons and daughters, the Italian Americans, to the history and development of the State of Rhode Island.

***We are the bridge** that spans the ocean and connects the past to the present. There is a small spark that lives in our hearts and easily ignites with memories of what once used to be.*

As our generation passes, so will those memories. Those wonderful and often bittersweet stories need to be preserved and passed down to our children and grandchildren so that they, too, can take pride in their rich heritage and not identify with only the negative stereotypes which are still portrayed on television and in the movies.

They need to know that the seeds of courage, pride, strength and honor are in each of them as they were carried in the hearts of men and women who sailed in steerage in aging ships.

It's an inheritance – a gift to be treasured.

IAHS Sponsored Programs and Activities

- Lectures on Italian American social, economic, and historical issues
 - Italian American Authors and Artists
 - Genealogy
 - Regions of Italy
- Award-winning documentary films
 - *Prisoners in Paradise* – The story of Italian POW's in the U.S.
 - *Prisoners Among Us: Italian American Identity and World War II*
- Musical programs
 - Operatic/Neapolitan
 - Classical and Folk Music
- Presentations for children
 - The Legend of La Befana
 - Christmas Tree Decorating
- Organized tours to Italian Art exhibits, Museums, Immigrant landmarks, and “Little Italy” neighborhoods.
- Celebrations and holiday traditions
 - St. Joseph's Day
 - Carnevale
 - Festa della Donna
 - La Vigilia

Membership Form

__ I would like to become a member of the Italian American Historical Society. Enclosed is my annual membership fee:

___ \$25 Individual

___ \$40 Family

___ \$100 Corporate

Name

Address

City

State Zip

Phone

Email

Please make check payable to:
Italian American Historical Soc., Inc. of RI

Membership includes:

- Quarterly Newsletter
- Discounts on IAHS sponsored events

Mail to: IAHS
P.O. Box 40160
Providence, RI 02940-0160