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The Italian Cultural Society & Italian Center & Museum
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OCTOBER 2021 EDITION

It's Official!
Sacramento's Little Italy Historic District



BRAVO!
Little Italy Historic District
Recognized In East Sacramento

After several years of community effort by the Italian American community, the Sacramento City Council passed a Resolution on September 21, 2021, officially recognizing Italian East Sacramento as a "Little Italy Historic District."

Sacramento now joins other California Cities with “Little Italy” districts including San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles/San Pedro and San Jose.

A special Recognition event was held in East Portal Park on October 9, 2021, to celebrate the new “Little Italy Historic District.” East Portal Park is the neighborhood park in the district and is the location of the areas Bocce court complex where Bocce Leagues are conducted.

The Festive event was attended by members of the city council, the mayor and members of Sacramento’s Italian Community. Leaders of the Italian American organizations of Sacramento attended as well as past and current Italian American residents.

One of the highlights of the event were the performances by the Italian Cultural Society Folk Dancers. It was a great way to celebrate Italian American Heritage Day in Sacramento.

PHOTOS BELOW:

(Top) Balliamo Dance Troupe performance, (L) Vincenzo Cerruti pours vino for guests (R) Italian immigrant and ICS Director Patrizia Cinquini Cerruti visits with guest Ottavio Luchini, a 96 year old Italian immigrant who resides in the Little Italy Historic District.





The organizing team for the Italian Community, *Bill Cerruti, Fabrizio Sasso and Steven Maviglio* were thanked for their effort in being the driving forces behind the “Little Italy” project.

City Councilmember *Jeff Harris*, who represents the area and who was instrumental in sponsoring the Resolution, was presented with a plaque recognizing his role in the creation of the new “Little Italy” District

Future plans for “Little Italy” include the placement of signs to designate the district which runs from 48th street to 59th street bounded by J street and Folsom Blvd., a 24 square block area.

PHOTOS BELOW:

(TOP) Fabrizio Sasso and Family, (BOTTOM) Little Italy Celebration Attendants - the turnout was excellent!....



Italian History Committee

Other plans include establishing an Italian History Committee to collect the history of the people and places of "Little Italy Sacramento." Already a number of residents have come forth to offer their family stories.

Anyone who is interested in being part of the history project should contact

the Italian Cultural Society at 916-482-5900 or by email to Bill Cerruti at: italy1@surewest.net



[CLICK ON THE PHOTO ABOVE](#)

**FOR VIDEO OF LITTLE ITALY HISTORIC DISTRICT
CELEBRATION**

**[CLICK HERE TO READ LITTLE ITALY SACRAMENTO ARTICLE in the
East Sacramento News](#)**

Italian History of Sacramento's Little Italy

Italian Americans were the largest immigrant group to come to the United States through Ellis Island and one of the largest immigrant groups to settle in California. By World War II in 1941, they were the largest immigrant group in California.

Italian roots run deep in Sacramento. Italian Americans were among the earliest pioneers of Sacramento and have been settling here since the Gold Rush. They settled in many parts of the City with concentrations in South Side, Oak Park and East Sacramento. In the 1930's and 1940s almost half the households in Oak Park had come from Italy, particularly along 39th Street then called Carmello Boulevard. Many moved to East Sacramento with the building of the St. Mary's Church there in 1948.

East Sacramento was originally a rural area but by the 1920's the East Sacramento area was home to many Italian immigrant families and truck farmers who developed

the area. **The stone farmhouses of the past - “The Stone Sisters” – built and lived in by the early Italians still stand out as they border the districts neighborhood park.**

The high concentration of Italian families throughout the district gave the neighborhood a distinctly Italian flavor and identity. Many streets in the area have been predominately Italian from the start such as the two blocks of 48th Street between J Street and Folsom Blvd where some two dozen Italian Families lived between 1920 and 1950. Many Italians continue to reside in the district.

PHOTOS BELOW:

(L) Italian Cultural Society Dancers

(BELOW) ICS Director Bill Cerruti and Family (R) Councilmember Jeff Harris and Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg



The geographical heart of the "Little Italy" neighborhood is identified as the zone located between 48th and 59th Streets, and bounded by J Street and Folsom Blvd.

Here the Italians established a thriving social community and business district to serve their needs as a community. Folsom Boulevard and J street became the main business streets for the Italian businesses in the area. Italian businesses, including grocery stores, nurseries and restaurants, funeral home, barber, hardware and auto shops and others continue to operate in the zone along Folsom Boulevard.

The Italians also created social, religious and community institutions that continue to the present. In 1948, the Italian church, Saint Mary's, was built in the district by the Italian community as an Italian National Catholic Church to serve the needs of the Italian people with Italian priests conducting masses in Italian. Later the Italians built Giovanni Hall adjacent to the Church for parish events.

Italian community organizations from the past including the Italian Catholic Federation, the Italian Cultural Society, the Piemonte Reale, the Dante Club, the Marsala Lodge, the Sons of Italy, the Arberesh of Sacramento, and the East Portal Bocce Club, still operate in the area.

The St. Mary's elementary school and St Francis High School in the district are among the few city schools that have offered Italian classes. Popular Bocce leagues are held in the neighborhoods East Portal Park Bocce court complex. The office of the Italian Vice Consulate of Italy for Sacramento was located in the zone at 54th Street and Folsom Boulevard to serve the needs of the Italian immigrants until as recently as 2015.

The Italian presence in the historic heart of East Sacramento represents over a century of Italian American history embedded in the roots of the area. Generations of Italian Americans have grown up and lived in the area. The Italian presence in the historic "Little Italy" district continues with longtime residents and businesses.

Italian Americans have played an integral role in the cultural and economic landscape of Sacramento since its inception. The enterprise and contributions of these Italian pioneers and their descendants is a unique legacy and one shared by us all. It is important to preserve the local memory of Little Italy and the Italian history of the neighborhood. The story of East Sacramento's "little Italy" neighborhood and the Italian people that made that story deserves to be kept alive and recognized.

The designation of the "Little Italy Historic District" highlights the culture and history of the Italians in East Sacramento and promotes the area's historic identity and still living part of the heritage of the City. It also creates a wonderful opportunity to develop and protect the neighborhood quality of life.

PHOTOS BELOW:

(L) Balliamo Dance Troupe

(R) Patrizia Cinquini Cerruti, ICS Travel and Language Director, hands out cake to guests



CLICK HERE TO READ LITTLE ITALY SACRAMENTO ARTICLE in the East Sacramento News

If you have questions or would like information about the Italian Cultural Society or the Carmichael Italian Cultural Center please contact Executive Director Bill Cerruti by phone (916-482-5900) or email (italy1@surewest.net)

Or VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.ITALIANCENTER.NET FOR MORE INFORMATION.



OTHER CREDITS:

THE ORGANIZING TEAM FOR THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY:
Bill Cerruti, Fabrizio Sasso and Steven Maviglio

**SPECIAL THANKS FOR THE LITTLE ITALY EVENT to the Italian Cultural Society,
Romano Luchini and The East Portal Bocce Club, Corti Bros,
and Sacramento City Staff Members David Gonsalves, Valerie Mamone-Werder and Leslie
Fritzsche**

**IRENE BROWN and the ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY DANCERS
DIANA QUILICI and the ICS BAMBINI DANCERS
LITTLE ITALY CELEBRATION PHOTOGRAPHER: Robert Perricone, ICS Society Member
LITTLE ITALY DISTRICT BANNERS: Created by ICS Society Member Janna Doucette**

October is Italian-American Heritage Month

Discovering Columbus Day



Every October, the Italian American community celebrates Columbus Day and Italian American Heritage Day in the United States. During this time we recognize the numerous achievements and contributions of Italians to American life.

The Columbus holiday and the many monuments that Italian Americans have erected of Columbus are tributes to the contributions of the Italian immigrants and their descendants as much as they are to Columbus.

The Columbus holiday is part of the Italian American cultural heritage. Generations of Italian Americans have celebrated the Columbus Day holiday as a symbol of their identity and pride. In many cities across Italian America it is celebrated with parades and festivals and Proclamations of support from American leaders.

As we Italians like to say, "When Columbus discovered America, it stayed discovered."

The amazing voyage of Columbus across uncharted seas into the unknown in 1492 changed the course of world history by uniting the earth's continents. For centuries, Columbus has been a symbol of unity among peoples in the United States who immigrated here from the far corners of the earth. He is celebrated in nations across the world for his achievement and determination in uniting the world.

Columbus is considered by historians as one of the most important persons in world history. He is often not recognized for what he did for us. For those who do not get it, he has been symbol of America. The federal district of the United States is the District of Columbia in recognition of the Columbian legacy of our founding.

The contributions of Columbus to the world are legend and recognized and celebrated in many countries. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to diminish the role Columbus has played in world history. His landing brought in an era of trade and movement of peoples that continues to this day. We would not be here but for Columbus. But by the judgement of history we are here.

There are currently attempts in the Congress and across the nation to replace the Columbus Day holiday with an Indigenous Peoples Day holiday. But Columbus Day is an American Holiday celebrated by most Americans as well as Italian Americans. Columbus Day celebrates a nation made up of many peoples, each with their own story and heritage. It would be a shame if Indigenous Peoples Day was used as an excuse to take Columbus Day away from Americans and Italian Americans. Italian Americans are on the front line to preserve the Columbus Day holiday as part of their historical Italian and American heritage.

In recognition of the importance of this Day to Italian Americans we have attached the **Columbus Day Proclamation by Ron DeSantis**, the Italian American Governor of Florida. In his Proclamation, he honors the legacy of Columbus and addresses the defamation by those who seek to portray Columbus and Western history in a negative light rather than a force for good. [CLICK HERE TO READ GOVERNOR DESANTIS' PROCLAMATION](#)

The national TV network, **One America News**, covered **Columbus Day with an interview of Andre DiMino of the Italian American One Voice Coalition** by news anchor Stephanie Hamill. In the interview, the Italian American position on Columbus Day and the false characterizations made about him by those who would cancel the Holiday, are discussed. [CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE INTERVIEW](#)

The Conference of Presidents of Major Italian Organizations has published a brochure on **"WHY COLUMBUS DAY MATTERS"**
[CLICK HERE TO READ/DOWNLOAD THE BROCHURE.](#)

The following article was published by the Italian Cultural Society in 2020;
"WHY COLUMBUS DAY MATTERS TO ITALIAN-AMERICANS"
[CLICK HERE TO READ/DOWNLOAD THE ARTICLE.](#)



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