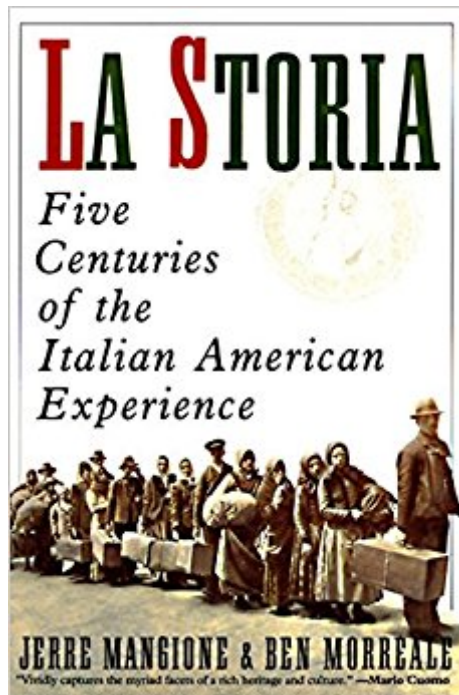




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La Storia: Five Centuries Of The Italian American Experience



Synopsis

From the early Italian adventurers who played an important role in the European expansion across the Atlantic to the political and business leaders of the 1990s, this book tells a dramatic story. The heart of the story is the mass migration that took place between 1880 and 1924, when a whole culture left its ancient roots to settle in the cities and towns of America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The core of this gripping, panoramic chronicle is the mass emigration of Italians to the U.S. between 1880 and 1924. Their road to assimilation was marked by hard work, family solidarity, tradition-laden weddings and joyous festivals, but also by poverty, miserable housing, dangerous working conditions and marriages that "often seethed with tensions" despite a public image of unity and warmth. Mangione (*Mussolini's March on Rome*) and Morreale (*A Few Virtuous Men*) trace discrimination against Italian Americans, arguing that politicians and the media fanned prejudice after WW II by resurrecting the Mafia image of the 1890s. They discuss Italian Americans' awareness or denial of their heritage, providing cameos of Sacco and Vanzetti, Fiorello LaGuardia, Frank Sinatra, Don DeLillo, John Ciardi, Francis Coppola and dozens more. Early chapters discuss Italian adventurers (such as Columbus) and Italians who fought in the American Revolution and the Civil War; a later one touches on intermarriage and divorce, which have contributed to the decline of immigrant culture. A magnificent saga that illuminates a century of accomplishment and struggle. Photos. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

YA-- The richness and variety of the Italian immigrant experience in America are captured here. Portraying the journey from the harshness and poverty of rural Italy and Sicily to the teeming ghettos of New York, Boston, and other American cities, the authors tell of the five-and-a-half million Italians who made the voyage. Utilizing newspaper articles, diaries, and novels to record first-hand recollections, their stories provide a microcosm of the immigrant experience, in general, and a record of the many contributions of Italian-Americans to the cultural mosaic of the United States. A rich source of materials for understanding the multicultural experience.- Richard Lisker, Fairfax County Public Library, VACopyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As the grandson of Italian immigrants who didn't hear a lot about why my family came here from southern Italy I was looking for a book that would fill in some of the blanks. This book does that and more. It goes in depth about immigration, why Italians, especially southern Italians came to America, where they settled, their lives here, the good and bad times. It covers the history of Italy and tells why the unification of Italy caused such a mass migration of people to the US. Mangione goes deep into the oppression and hatred Italians faced, not only from other nationalities but from fellow Italians, Covering the period from the Revolution to the 1990s you read about common, everyday people trying to make a life here, and about the ones who became famous and are household names. A great book, one that makes me proud to be Italian-American.

I grew up in a large Italian family in Massachusetts. I always had a feeling of pride for being an American of Italian descent but I never knew very much about Italian History. After reading this I felt as if I had discovered myself and a stronger sense of who I am came into being. I was amazed at how much the Italian people contributed to this country. We are not all mobsters or priests as the media has portrayed us. We came for a dream of a better life. We assimilated and prospered. God Bless America!

The four extra copies I ordered in December were Christmas gifts for other second-generation Italo-Americans. We greatly loved our immigrant ancestors - grandparents, aunts and uncles and innumerable groups of "commare and cumpari" in varying degrees of filiation to the nuclear family - and from them all learned an honorable way of life, steeped in the rich Italo-Greek culture of the southern Italian "Mezzogiorno". We learned early on, as children, in hours and hours of discourse at

Sunday dinner, what courage and hardship urged them from Italy and what similar hardship met them here, what it meant to kiss parents goodbye and know you would never see them again in this life, never be able to have them embrace their grandchildren and finally hear of their passing by a letter two weeks after the fact. La Storia pays fitting homage to these men and women, our heroic forebears, in a context only a historian can encompass, a rapidly vanishing treasure as their succeeding generations are clueless and have nothing to contribute to vapid Western "culture" increasingly severed from its Greco-Roman moorings. I spoke our Calabrian and Neapolitan dialect fluently from childhood, cherished our culture as sacrosanct, followed our traditions - religious and culinary - with consummate fidelity and do so fervently and proudly to this day, some 110 years+ since the day my Grandpa set foot on Ellis Island in "Nova Yorka". La Storia filled in the blanks - not only undisclosed details of life there and then here, and the fundamental philosophical / religious mindset underpinning their very strict codes of morality and family, but the virtually unknown history of the Italians here [OK - so they were from north of Rome and very questionably "Italian" in our eyes, but...] in America since the Revolution. A riveting read!

This book is a history which is also a good read. Very strong on early immigrant experiences up to the early 1900's. It gave me a perspective on those who preceded me to the US and the hardships they endured as the lowest-on-the-totem pole for decades. It is also a history of the United States and how it treated its newcomers (shamefully). This book is strong on the labor movement. That said, I must comment that the book falls flat on post-WWII history of Italian-Americans. It devotes scores of pages to barely-published poets and barely-known niche authors. It goes on and on with movie reviews. But there is no discussion of Italian-Americans in the hard sciences and medicine (Enrico Fermi has NO mention). The singer Madonna gets more print than SCOTUS Justice Antonin Scalia. And Italian-Americans' most pervasive contribution to US culture after WWII - cuisine - is not discussed at all. I recommend this book. But if you skip the last third, you won't miss anything.

Being a first-generation Italian-American on my father's side, I have to say I have read many books and memoirs, heard many stories and tales over my lifetime, of the experience of immigrants leaving the mezzogiorno to the United States. This is an astounding collection of personal remembrances that holds tightly to the strength, the optimism, the hard work, the love, and the persistence of a huge group of people- mostly poor and uneducated- who came to a foreign land and helped to build it. Many of them joined our military during WW1 and WW2. They were more American than some Americans! They were American first and Italian second. My father, Felix

Caracciolo, is even mentioned in this history. He was a perfect example of an immigrant boy "making good". La Storia captures the depth and breadth of the southern Italian migration to the United States with an honesty and beauty that no other work I have read has managed.

As a New Yorker (originally) and someone interested in the immigrant experience in the USA, this book is a good read. I do feel that the authors, both Italian, are defensive about the bad "rap" Italians have experienced in this country and maybe they are right to be defensive. But I did learn things I never knew e.g. Italian men only go to church on special occasions. They associate the church with their oppression because the church sided with the wealthy class in Italy. I had some difficulty reading this in terms of the way the chapters are arranged. The timeline goes back and forth depending on the subject matter of the chapter. At times I felt confused, I felt as if I read this in another part of the book. With this in mind I'd recommend this if you don't know much about the Italian/immigrant experience and want to know more.

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