



## Chicago Area: Casa Italia Library to be Relunched June 5

Dominic Candeloro (May 23, 2009)



The Florence Roselli Library at Casa Italia will stage a grand rededication on June 5. In an auspicious atmosphere of growth and collaboration, your blogger invites the national Italian American community, to unite in support of the preservation of Italian Americana.

In the past few years, aided by a grant from the Anthony Fornelli Family we began to revive the Library. The volunteer efforts of Jeannette Rosati Vehedi (Italian Studies MA), Judy Kemp (Anthropology PhD), Vincenzo DiVito, Dan Niemiec, (Leader of PIP 27 of Italian American genealogists), Peggy Fox (Librarian at Fenton High School), Fred Gardaphe' and Dominic Candeloro, Library Curator have brought a renaissance to the library and we have made ambitious plans.

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Italian AMERICAN History is at Risk of being lost!

Italian American history and culture is at risk of being lost. Immigration to Chicago began in the 1880s and virtually ended in the 1980s. The passage of time, the dispersal of Italian neighborhoods, the demise of Italian Catholic Churches, intermarriage, and the loss of the language incurred by the stresses of World War II have squelched the transmissions of basics of the Italian American Experience to the younger generations. If major initiatives are not launched soon, the story will be lost.

We aim to build the most comprehensive archive of Chicago Italian Americana... and if I can quote myself, "Our aim is to seek out, identify and physically and digitally preserve every scrap of evidence that pertains to the lives and times of Italian Americans in Chicago!" Our goal at the Casa Italia Roselli Library is to build the most comprehensive archive of Chicago Italian Americana (5000 published volumes and 10,000 archival items) and the Midwest's most comprehensive collection of scholarly and popular materials in English and Italian on the history and culture of Italian immigrants to the United States.

The library supports the cultural, spiritual, educational, and social mission of Casa Italia. Our Library provides source material for the ongoing public programs of Casa Italia and acts as a resource center for teachers and other educational institutions wishing to present materials relating to Italy, Italian culture and Italian American history.

The library collects materials in a variety of formats in both English and Italian.. In addition to books, the collection includes the 59 years of the Fra Noi newspaper both hardcopy and on microfilm, journals, newsletters, church histories, proceedings, magazines, DVDs, music, road maps and travel guides, large format art books, as well as volumes donated by Italian governmental entities. The library's catalog is online at <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/ItalCulturalCenter> [2] . Texts on genealogy, free Wi-Fi and a subscription to [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) [3] are available for research genealogists.

Our major archival focus is Italians in the Chicago area. Audio tapes and transcripts of 110 oral histories done as part of the Italians in Chicago Project and 60 videotapes and transcript done for the documentary "And They came to Chicago," and file drawers filled with research material accumulated over 30 years by historians. Through our library and the Italian American Veterans Museum and Library (our sister institution at Casa Italia), we have a combined total of 10,000 historic photos to offer the public. We are creating a searchable digital collection of original and unique materials that can be used by scholars and genealogists to piece together the Italian American past. Part of our mission is to make available the masterpieces of Italian cinema.

With the addition of the resources listed below, we may soon be able to deliver easy access to our unpublished holdings both onsite and online of oral histories, parish and neighborhood material, information on towns of origins, 10,000 item photo collection, 30 year old videos of scholarly presentations, and 50 years of our monthly community newspaper (now on microfilm).

- \* Library catalog online <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/ItalCulturalCenter> [2]
- \* 59 years of the files of Fra Noi both hard copy and microfilm
- \* Neighborhood and Parish Sources
- \* 200 interviews on audio and video tape and searchable transcriptions
- \* 10,000 images of Italians in Chicago and IA Veterans Museum holdings



- \* Towns of Origin sources/photos
- \* Professional journals including VIA and Voices in Italian Americana
- \* Free WI-FI and digital camera use
- \* Research travel subsidies
- \* Expert reference consultation

You can help us reach our goal by becoming a Friend of the Roselli Casa Italia Library. Donate/share your photos, documents, books, and memorabilia with the Casa Italia Library and support us.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ <>

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer to be a friend of the Library

\_\_\_ Volunteer Time \_\_\_ Contributor of memorabilia

\_\_\_ Contributor of Books for the Library or Book Sales

\_\_\_ Library Researcher \_\_\_ Help publicize the Casa Italia Library

Please respond to Roselli Library, 3800 Division St., Stone Park, IL 60165 708-345-5933.  
[Candeloro@CasaitaliaChicago.org](mailto:Candeloro@CasaitaliaChicago.org) [4]

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This project is my baby. The revival and rededication of the Casa Italia Library is one of the most important developments in preserving the history of Italians in Chicago in many years. The Library was recently accepted as a member of the Metropolitan Library System in Chicago and is eligible for grant funding from the Illinois Statge Library System. Through the contributions of numerous contemporary authors and the financial backing of Anthony J. Fornelli we have been able to acquire thousands of books and we are now ready for the Grand Reopening and Rededication of the Florence Roselli Library---

We will celebrate with Authors' Night--- Featuring best-selling author Adriana Trigiani in an exclusive 2-way Skype Video phone call. Those who live in the Chicagao are should join us for a wine and cheese reception as we re-introduce the Midwest's most comprehensive Italian American Library---with expanded archives and Italian American holdings of the Casa Italia Library. Others will have to waitr for YourTube coverage.



We'll also hear brief readings by local Italian American writers including Tony Romano, Robert Lombardo, JoAnne Ruvoli, Peter Pero, Kathy Catrambone, Bill Dal Cerro, Annette Dixon, Vince Romano, Calogero Lombardo, Roxanne Pilat and Dominic Candeloro. Attendees will be able to browse the updated Casa Italia Library and join our "Friends of the Library" group. Others can browse the catalog by going to Library Thing at

<http://www.librarything.com/catalog/ItalCulturalCenter> [2] .

### The Florence Roselli Library at Casa Italia

The Library at Casa Italia has existed in one form or another since the Scalabrini Fathers opened it as their seminary library in 1935. In the mid 1970s Librarian Florence Roselli built up the library collection to serve post World War II immigrants and to collect academic and popular materials on Italian American Culture. After her death, the Library went into a dormant period.

**Source URL:** <http://test.casaitaliananyu.org/magazine/focus/life-people/article/chicago-area-casaitalia-library-be-relaunched-june-5>

### Links

[1] <http://test.casaitaliananyu.org/files/9382may-09-lib-0171242851767jpg>

[2] <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/ItalCulturalCenter>

[3] <http://www.ancestry.com>

[4] <mailto:Candeloro@CasaltaliaChicago.org>