



## **"Finding the Mother Lode: Italian Immigrants in California"**

(February 27, 2014)

The experience of Italian immigrants in California, which was markedly different from that of their compatriots elsewhere in the United States. An extensive research and weaves together oral histories by community members with scholarly analyses which provide the larger historical context. Screening of the movie by Gianfranco Norelli and Suma Kurien at John D. Calandra Italian American Institute Thursday, February 27, 2014, 6 pm

"This excellent film fills a real gap in our understanding of the complexity of the Italian immigration experience... It is a must see!" Carol L. McKibben, Historian, Stanford University

Finding the Mother Lode is "a thoroughly woven narrative of the Italian experience in the Golden State ... the perfect companion piece to [Pane Amaro](#) [1], which together form a one-two punch of the history of Italians on both coasts of the United States." Anthony Julian Tamburri, Dean, John D. Calandra Italian American Institute (Queens College, CUNY)

Too little known, even in the west, this story of California's Italians provides a bracing contrast to east coast stories and opens a new route to understanding the diversity and complexity of ethnic histories in the Golden State. If you have ever wondered about the origins of that tower in Watts, the workers of cannery row or the transformation of Americans into drinkers of wine, you will find answers here. Filmmakers Gianfranco Norelli and Suma Kurien offer a vivid interpretation of the past—one that recalls the ugly along with the beautiful and the conflicts and tragedies along with the solidarity and triumphs.

Donna R. Gabaccia, Historian. University of Minnesota

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The experience of Italian immigrants in California has been markedly different from that of their compatriots elsewhere in the United States. Initially part of the Gold Rush, these immigrants turned to farming, fishing, viniculture, and commerce. Through stories set in seven Italian-American communities throughout California, Finding the Mother Lode examines how economic and social mobility became possible for many Italian Americans in the Golden State. The film weaves together oral histories from community



members and contextualizing historical analysis by scholars to tell a thorough and engaging narrative of migration, transformation, and self-identification.

Post-screening discussion with the directors led by Joseph Sciorra, Calandra Institute.

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Finding the Mother Lode

Directed by Gianfranco Norelli

Produced by Suma Kurien and Gianfranco Norelli

Edited by Kathryn Barnier

John D. Calandra Italian American Institute

25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor

New York, New York 10036

(Between 5th and 6th Avenues; B, D, F, M to 42nd St./Bryant Park, or 7 to 5th Ave./Bryant Park)

**Source URL:** <http://ftp.iitaly.org/magazine/events/reports/article/finding-mother-lode-italian-immigrants-in-california>

### **Links**

[1] [http://www.findingthemothelode.com/about/bitter\\_bread.html](http://www.findingthemothelode.com/about/bitter_bread.html)