



# La Notizia Italiana



POINTers in Person: Lou Costello Chapter #15

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**Constantino Brumidi**

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## Uncovering a National Treasure: The Brumidi Corridors

Posted by [U.S. Capitol Historical Society](#) in [Capitol Art](#)

Aug 23, 2013

—by Katie East, USCHS intern

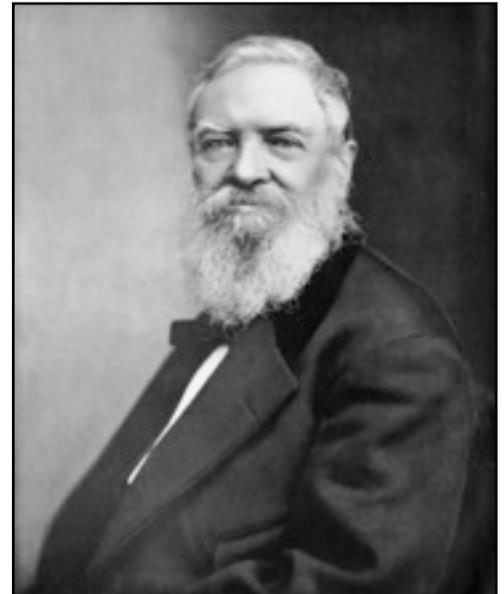
*Uncovering a National Treasure:  
The Restoration of the  
Brumidi Corridors in the  
United States Capitol*

The halls of the Capitol's Senate wing are slowly becoming bright and vivid. It is only because of the recent restoration that Brumidi's intricate frescoes are coming back to their original glorious state. In a recent visit to the Capitol, I was lucky enough to speak with one of the experts restoring the Brumidi Corridors of the Capitol. He explained how the ten-year restoration project plans to uncover the masterful art lost under layers of paint. The specialist also explained the process through which they are to achieve their goals. It is through careful scraping with a scalpel and occasional use of solvents that the highly-skilled workers are able to dig through time and uncover Brumidi's hidden treasures.

### **(Architect of the Capitol)**

From 1857 to 1859, Constantino Brumidi, "The Michelangelo of the United States Capitol," filled the walls and ceilings of the corridor with visually striking images. Birds, flowers, fruits, insects, classical figures, and historical scenes were brought to life with a three-dimensional quality lost up until the restoration. Brumidi's main source of success was his mastery of various styles and techniques. An immigrant from Italy, Brumidi was among the most skilled classically trained painters in the United States at the time. After he painted a trial fresco in 1855, Brumidi and his dedicated team of artist-apprentices began the gorgeous span of frescoes that is currently being uncovered.

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Section of the Brumidi Corridors before restoration. Section of the Brumidi Corridors after restoration.

Over the years, dirt and hallway traffic took its toll on these lovely works. Without knowledge of proper restoration, coat after coat of paint covered the formerly brilliant colors with darker shades and varnish that turned an unpleasant shade of yellow over time. The differences in color, luster, and design are striking. Small portions of sample restorations show the incremental changes to the art over time. In some instances, certain designs and details were completely painted over, as if their importance was not much realized. Up to eight layers of paint build-up have been carefully scraped away to expose original designs and colors. Altogether, the project has combined full and partial restoration with expert replications based on original descriptions of the work.



Conservator Christiana Cunningham-Adams at work on restoring Brumidi's frescoes. (Architect of the Capitol)



The Frieze of American History in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol contains a painted panorama depicting significant events in American history. The frieze's 19 scenes is the work of three artists: Constantino Brumidi, Filippo Costaggini and Allyn Cox. The frieze is painted in grisaille, a monochrome of whites and browns that resembles sculpture. It measures 8 feet 4 inches in height and approximately 300 feet in circumference. It starts 58 feet above the floor.



Brumidi, between 1855 and 1865 pictured above, left. (Library of Congress) Brumidi's wife pictured above, right.

## **STATEMENT BY THE SONS OF ITALY FOR COLUMBUS DAY 2013**



WASHINGTON, D.C. Oct. 2, 2013 - As the biggest and oldest national organization for people of Italian heritage, the Sons of Italy strongly supports celebrating the federal holiday of Columbus Day for several reasons.

First, the day commemorates the remarkable achievement of a skilled 15th century

Italian sea captain, whose voyages opened permanent communication between Europe and the Americas. Second, Columbus Day is the only holiday that recognizes the contributions, achievements and sacrifices of this nation's estimated 26 million men and women of Italian descent, the fifth largest ethnic group, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. It is our day to celebrate our heritage while on the other 364 days we are subjected to a relentless stereotyping of our culture,

our speech, our religion, and even our most treasured customs by the U.S. entertainment, advertising and news media.

But Columbus matters for a third and even more important reason. After him came millions of other Europeans who brought their art, music, science, medicine, philosophy, law and religious principles to America. Columbus matters because Greek democracy, Roman law, Judeo-Christian ethics and the tenet that all men are created equal are European contributions that helped create the nation we live in today.

Despite all this, Columbus Day is under siege by revisionist historians who paint him as a villain. He was a man of his times for better and for worse. Is it logical or even fair to judge a 15th century man by 21st century standards? Think about it. Do we ban St. Patrick's Day celebrations because of the long and bloody struggle between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland? Do we abolish Thanksgiving because the Pilgrims invaded Indian territory? Take away Columbus Day and what's next? The Fourth of July?

Established in 1905, OSIA has hundreds of thousands of members and supporters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. OSIA works at the community, national and international levels to promote the heritage and culture of an estimated 26 million Italian Americans, the nation's fifth largest ethnic group according to the U.S. Census Bureau. To learn more, visit [www.osia.org](http://www.osia.org).

For interviews, contact Dona De Sanctis/Communications at the Sons of Italy's national headquarters in Washington, D.C. Tel: 202/547 2900 Email: [d-desanctis@osia.org](mailto:d-desanctis@osia.org)

### **Columbus Day Parade 2013, New York City**



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**The Lou Costello Chapter**

POINTers In Person

Chapter 15

Northern New Jersey

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## OFFICERS

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**A Luigi Del Bianco book is in the making!**  
**Here's your chance to help spread the word...**

I have very exciting news. A critically acclaimed journalist by the name of Doug Gladstone is writing a very powerful book about my nonno, Luigi Del Bianco. **The book is targeted to be published by May 2014.** This will coincide with the dedication of a memorial honoring Luigi in his adopted hometown of Port Chester, NY. This is all very exciting stuff!

You and your organization have been such big supporters of Luigi's story. Won't you host a pre-launch event to help get the word out? In this fast paced competitive age of publishing, we need all the help we can get to make this book the success it deserves to be. Doug has been working so hard to get Luigi recognized and I am reaching out to you to help. Time is of the essence!

Please let me know asap if we can set something up for the time period in and around the Spring of 2014. Doug and I would love to come speak to your membership and promote what promises to be a groundbreaking publication of an untold story in Italian-American History.

I thank you so much for your swift attention to this exciting news and I look forward to hearing from you asap.

Sincerely,

Lou Del Bianco

**Calendar****POINT Chapter 15 Future Meetings:****Future Meetings:**

Elmwood Park Municipal Building, 10 AM

**February 1, 2014:**

Annual Member Exchange of Information

*Bring your stories, pictures, and questions on research!*

**Passaic County Genealogy Club: Genealogy Club Meeting****November 9, 2013**

10 a.m. at Louis Bay Library, Hawthorne:

Informal Chat - Finding and Using Original Family Genealogical Records. *Attendees are encouraged to bring their original (or copied) family records for discussion.*

**Passaic County Historical Society & Lambert Castle Events:****November 8, 2013****Holiday Boutique Wine & Cheese Preview Night**

Lambert Castle

Admission: \$15 includes 2 return Visits

*Enjoy wine & snacks as you preview the elegant selection of items from over 150 vendors.*

**November 9 - 30, 2013****Holiday Boutique**

Lambert Castle

Admission: \$6 includes 2 return visits

Wednesday-Friday, 10AM-9PM

Saturday-Sunday: 10AM - 5PM

Closed Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thanksgiving

*Holiday shopping in the magical setting of our Victorian Castle.*

*Over 150 vendors, wide selection of prices and elegant merchandise. Enjoy lunch in our Mini-Cafe. Proceeds from Boutique will benefit the Passaic County Historical Society.*

*Show Manager: Joan Adams*

**November 13, 2013****PCHS Quarterly Meeting**

7 PM, Louis Bay Library, Hawthorne

*Roswell Colt:*

*"A Biographical Puzzle of the Greatest of All the Colts"*

*Presenter: Glenn Corbett*

**December 13, 2013****Wine Tasting Party**

7 PM, Lambert Castle

*Admission: \$50 by reservation*

**December 15, 2013****Storytelling with Santa & Mrs. Claus**

1-3PM, Lambert Castle

*Admission: \$15 for one child and parent by reservation*

**December 20, 2013****Valley Bell Ringers at Lambert Castle**

6-9PM, Lambert Castle

*Admission: Adults: \$12, Seniors: \$10, Children over 6, \$6*

**For more information on  
PCHS & Lambert Castle Events:  
973- 247-0085 ext 200  
[www.lambertcastle.org](http://www.lambertcastle.org)**