



# Milwaukee's Italian Heritage: Mediterranean Roots in Midwestern Soil (American Heritage)

*Anthony M. Zignego*

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The shores of Lake Michigan might seem a far cry from the coastline of the Mediterranean, even for a country famous for its opera singers. Nevertheless, enough Italians responded to the call--and returned home to repeat it confidently to brothers, brides and strangers--to create a thriving community in Milwaukee. Historians often emphasize Milwaukee's German heritage, content to relegate the story of Italian migration to New York or Chicago, but Anthony Zignego passionately explores the ways in which Italians shaped the Brew City and were shaped by it in turn. From the Gardetto family to the enterprising women of the Third Ward to Festa Italiana, Zignego presents a portrait of the immigrant experience with personal stories and interviews with "ordinary" immigrants and Milwaukeeans, explaining the community's traditions and dispelling some of its myths. Milwaukee's Italian Heritage highlights the struggles and triumphs that have always made immigration an opening clause and concluding question in the American story.

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