

Talking Folklore

Joey Skee (May 05, 2011)



Over the next several months, I will be presenting the book *Italian Folk* in venues throughout the New York metropolitan area.

This year, [Fordham University Press](#) [2] published the anthology **Italian Folk: Vernacular Culture in Italian-American Lives**. The book, which I edited as part of the new series "[Critical Studies in Italian America](#) [3]," explores local knowledge and aesthetic practices, often marked as "folklore," as sources for creativity and meaning in Italian-American lives. Sunday dinners, basement kitchens, backyard gardens, accordion music, [Sicilian oral poetry](#) [4], a Columbus Day parade, and neo-stregheria (witchcraft) are some of the dynamic, hybrid cultural forms discussed in the book.

As the contributors demonstrate, folklore provides occasions for observing and interpreting behaviors and objects as part of lived experiences. Its study provides new ways of understanding how individuals and groups reproduce and contest identities and ideologies through expressive means. Italian Americans abandon, reproduce, and/or revive various cultural elements in relationship to ever-shifting political, economic, and social conditions. By taking a closer look and an ethnographic approach to expressive behavior, we see that Italian-American identity is far from being a linear path of assimilation from Italian immigrant to American of Italian descent but is instead fraught with conflict, negotiation, and creative solutions.

Select [images](#) [5] and [excerpts from the introduction and the eleven chapters](#) [6] can be found on the book's Facebook page. You can search and purchase the book online at [amazon.com](#) [7].

As the editor and contributor, I will be presenting the Italian Folk in venues throughout the New York metropolitan area. Follow the links below for additional information about the respective presentations:

May 18th: [Morgagni Medical Society](#) [8] (members only) at the Tiro A Segno Club, Manhattan
June 11th: [Italian American Writers Association](#) [9] at the Cornelia Street Café (29 Cornelia Street), Manhattan, along with poet [Michael Cirelli](#) [10] (Everyone Loves the Situation)
June 14th: [Casa Belvedere](#) [11] (79 Howard Avenue), Staten Island, along with author [Joanna Clapps Herman](#) [12] (The Anarchist Bastard: Growing Up Italian in America)
September 15th: [The Old Stone House](#) [13] (336 3rd Street), Brooklyn, along with Nancy Carnevale ([A New Language, A New World](#) [14]: Italian Immigrants in the United States, 1890-1945), [Jennifer Guglielmo](#) [15] (Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945), and [Joanna Clapps Herman](#) [12] (The Anarchist Bastard)
September 29th: [Columbian Lawyers' Association of Nassau County](#) [16] (members only) at the Westbury Manor, Westbury, Long Island
December 6th: [The Gotham Center for New York City History](#) [17], CUNY Graduate Center (365 Fifth Avenue), Manhattan.

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[2] <http://www.fordhampress.com/detail.html?id=9780823232666>
[3] <http://www.fordhampress.com/series.html?se=41>
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[6] <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=171144759596326&set=pu.135537546490381&type=1&theater#!/pages/Italian-Folk-Vernacular-Culture-in-Italian-American-Lives/135537546490381?sk=notes>
[7] http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0823232662/ref=pd_lpo_k2_dp_sr_1?pf_rd_p=486539851&pf_rd_s=lpo-top-stripe-1&pf_rd_t=201&pf_rd_i=0156454890&pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIK



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[8] <http://www.morgagnimedsocietyny.org/Home.html>

[9] <http://www.iawa.net/get.php?q=index>

[10] <http://www.louderarts.com/poets/cirelli/>

[11] <http://www.casa-belvedere.org/blog/>

[12] <http://www.joannaclappsherman.com/>

[13] <http://www.theoldstonehouse.org/>

[14] <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/37ypq3cc9780252034039.html>

[15] http://www.smith.edu/history/faculty_guglielmo.php

[16] <http://www.columbianlawyers.org/naincludes/nassau.php>

[17] <http://www.gothamcenter.org/>