



Raised Italian-American: Stories, Values and Traditions from the Italian Neighborhood

Joseph Bonocore

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Raised Italian-American remembers the history, stories, traditions, and values of growing up in an Italian neighborhood. One of my fondest memories as a child was to take a ride and view the beautiful nativity scenes that were erected throughout the neighborhood each Christmas. The popularity of these large statues, they are called presepi in Italy, started in Italy in the 17th century when it was fashionable to find them in palaces and homes of wealthy citizens. The newfound enthusiasm of erecting a presepi during Christmas may be contributed to Saint Gaetano who openly encouraged people to create the presepi as a sign of devotion. It wasn't until the later part of the 19th century that these presepi became a part of family traditions in nearly every home in Italy. This set is a beautiful piece of art and is a prized possession of the families that own them. I know that Phyllis' grandmother cherished her presepi until the day she died and the family still think fondly of their grandmother every time they see it at Christmas time.

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