

**ALLA CORRENTE
ITALIAN WASHINGTON D.C.**

The next time you visit Washington, DC take a look at some of the sites that city is famous for. Most Americans realize that the District of Columbia is named after Christopher Columbus, but few people know how great a role other Italians and their descendants played in fashioning the District's classic architecture, including some of its impressive monuments, schools, churches and federal buildings.

A few of the most famous that were worked on by Italians and Italian-Americans are:

- **THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL** -- Neapolitan immigrant Attilio Piccirilli and his five brothers carved the statue of Lincoln, which they began in 1911 and completed in 1922. It is 19 feet high and made of 28 blocks of marble, carefully fitted together. The gifted sculptors worked out of their studio/living complex in the Bronx, New York. Among many other works in New York and across America, they also carved the famous lions on the steps of the New York Public Library and the facade of the Brooklyn Museum.
- **THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL** -- Using techniques handed down by stone carvers since the Middle Ages, Italian artisans created the gargoyles and statues that decorate the facade of this gothic Cathedral, Washington's most famous place of worship.
- **THE CAPITOL BUILDING** -- A concrete symbol of American democracy, the Capitol bears the imprint of Italian talent. Between 1855 and 1870, the Italian artist, Costantino Brumidi, decorated its interior dome, corridors and the President's Room, where Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in July, 1862.
- **UNION STATION** -- Italian construction workers helped build Washington's train station, which was begun in 1905 and completed in 1908, considered one of the most beautiful train stations in the United States. The six statues that decorate the station's facade were sculpted by Andrew E. Bernasconi between 1909 and 1911.
- **METRO** -- Washington is justifiably proud of its quiet, modern subway system, but few of the thousands of commuters and visitors who ride it daily know that more than 60 percent of Metro's 764 subway cars are made in Italy. The DC Transit Authority purchased 466 cars from Breda Costruzioni Ferroviarie in Pistoia at a cost of about \$1.3 million each.

*-Dr. James J. Boitano
(Adapted from the National Italian American Foundation website)*