



 American Italian Club - Local #2172 (Spokane)

# AMERICAN ITALIAN CLUB #2172

## Spokane, WA

### Brief History of Italians of Spokane

1890-1892- Great Northern Railroad owner Jim Hill advertised in Southern Italy for men to come to the United States and help build a railroad (Priest River, Idaho to Spokane Washington and beyond). The Hillyard community started with 486 residents and grew to 4,000 by 1916. The men worked as gandy dancers (making ties) and laying track. The men began to send for their wives and children. They also sent for women of Italian heritage to marry and grow families. They set up a hotel, three churches, and six saloons in Hillyard.

1905- The national club, The Order of the Sons of Italy in America formed. It's original purpose was to assist Italian Immigrants with their new life in America. Soon the railroad workers began to notice the rich and fertile land which sent many back to their farming roots. Others abandoned the railroad for barbering, shoe repair, set up fruit and vegetable stands like the Washington Market at Washington and Main.

1928- Two lodges were formed in Spokane, Lodge #1500 and Washington Lodge #1504. They were formed with the purpose of preserving Italian Heritage and Culture, as well as fostering Americanism.

1953- The two lodges merged into the Spokane Lodge #1500, however dissolved one year later.

1965- A small group of Italian gentlemen started another lodge. September 17, 1966 the lodge was officially dedicated under the name of the American Italian Club of Spokane #2172. Some descendants of these founding fathers are still members of the club today.