

Roots of Our Club

Circolo Ricreativo Italiano Virus was formed by Robert Grosso, Amedeo Tommasini and Giacomo Patri, along with fifteen other enthusiastic young Italians in June of 1917. The "Virtus" was headquartered on Mason and Green streets. Though already meeting socially to plan athletic events, the organization wouldn't be officially registered as a Club until 1918.

The following is a brief story as told by Amedeo Tommasini "I remember that on the eve of the founding of our Club, while walking through the streets of our district, I was feeling as if I was lost. I had just gotten here from Italy and I had not friends, nor did I understand this country. The nostalgic vision of my Italy, school, friends and games, never left me and I'm not sure if this vision produced more pain or joy."

"Here in San Francisco what could possibly repair my spirit when all around me, outside of my domestic circle, I found indifference and hardship to live life in America. I was yet too young and too Italian to be dragged into that whirlpool."

"At last, one beautiful day, I met a small group of young men, like me, they were Italian. Like me, they had the same ideals and they felt lost in the crowds when they went out. We became friends and decided, almost jokingly, to form a club for us and all other young Italians. That was the beginning of the "Virtus"."

"Tonight while I write this I feel a sense of profound satisfaction because our then small club, who took for its symbol 'virtue' and was baptized 'Virtus', is not only a small virtue but is now shining in the sky as the brightest and beneficent star in our colony. Because this small club of two years ago is today an institution that belongs to every Italian who would like to cooperate in the noble means we have proposed. This is what I would like to emphasize. Up until today, the 'Virtus' has been doing examples of virtue and if sometimes it has erred it was always ready to recognize its faults. If sometimes it got dragged in some undignified consideration or action, it knew how to bounce back in many ways"

"Our colony knows that it is our every purpose in our every new deed to dedicate the best of our forces and of our will to triumph in honor. I had said I felt lost in a strange nation, but now that I have a fraternity with the members of this organization to which I belong, have those feelings been put to rest? Not completely. I do recognize that young people in our colony could do a lot better and a lot more, if we knew how to comprehend them better. I realize that most of our efforts and energy gets lost in small considerations or in personal characters. Personal completion should be absent of egoism and animated by a sincere and honorable spirit."

"Finally, I add that we have brought with us from that land of paradise that is called Italy, all the treasures that are so dear to us and all the virtues of our forefathers and only when we will continue abroad the practice of these virtues, can we call ourselves Italians."

The merger of three Clubs make us what we are today. In 1921 the Sporting Club Italia and Virtus merged under the name of Italia Virtus Club. In 1926 the Unione Sportiva Italiana and Italia Virtus merged to form the Unione Sportiva Italiana Virtus. The name eventually transformed to the Italian Athletic Club which today we call the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club.



SAN FRANCISCO ITALIAN ATHLETIC CLUB

BYLAWS

CENTENNIO 1917 – 2017



Circolo Ricreativo Italiano Virtus, Unione Sportiva Italiana and Sporting Club Italia

Unity is strength!

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