

# G Arata & Company, Wholesale Liquors

*By Unknown*

Immigrants from both the northern and southern regions of Italy began migrating to Portland as early as 1890. It was between 1900 and 1910, however, that Portland saw the largest growth in the city's Italian American population. In 1900, the Italian immigrant population stood at just over 1,000 residents and by 1910, that number had increased to more than 5,000 residents. Italians settled in ethnic neighborhoods, first on the southwest edge of Portland near Marquam's Gulch and later in the southeast neighborhoods like Ladd's Addition, Brooklyn, and Parkrose in the northeast of Portland. Italian immigrants worked in a wide array of professions. Many hundreds of Italian immigrants worked in Portland's extensive railroad yards or served as street graders and built and maintained roads throughout the city. Italian entrepreneurs, like Francesco Arata, shown in this photo from the 1890s, established shops and restaurants in Italian neighborhoods on both the west and east sides of the Willamette River. Almost 1,300 Italians lived and worked on the east side of the Willamette River. They rented land and grew vegetables and berries and some other families operated truck farms that sold produce to individuals and businesses across the city.

Social organizations provided important services for Italian immigrants. Saint Michael's Church, established in 1901 at the corner of southwest Fourth and Mill Streets, stood as a landmark to the Catholic heritage of immigrants. The Italian-American Republican Club was formed in 1916 as a way to provide Italians with the education necessary in applying for citizenship. Sunday socials were frequently held among farmers and their families and *bocce bal*, was among the favorite games played. The Italian Ranchers and Gardeners Association organized and established the first retail produce market on the west side but frequent flooding forced organizers to move it to the east side in 1906. The new market covered a complete block and growers from Milwaukie, Parkrose, Ladd's Addition, and the west side Marquam Gulch Italian-American community brought their produce to the market to sell before loading the remainder on trucks to be sold throughout the city.

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