

# **Guide to the Edoardo ("Farfariello") Migliaccio Papers CMS.015**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

October 19, 2013

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Center for Migration Studies
<b>Creator</b>	Migliaccio, Edoardo ("Farfariello"), 1892-1946
<b>Title</b>	Edoardo ("Farfariello") Migliaccio Papers
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	Bulk, 1910-1935
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1907-1973
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 boxes. 1 half-size document box and 1 reel of microfilm.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language of Materials note</b>	The materials are in Italian, but use dialect as well as standard Italian, and there is considerable wordplay involving the incorporation of English words into the Italian immigrants' vocabulary.
<b>Abstract</b>	CMS 015 documents, mostly through song sheets, the career of Neapolitan-born Italian-American comic artist Edoardo ("Farfariello") Migliaccio (1892-1946), creator of songs and sketches about a rural-born Italian laborer's misadventures as an immigrant in urban, industrial America. The song sheets are supplemented with stationery and photographs used during Migliaccio's career, clippings documenting his appearances, and photocopies and microfilm of his scrapbooks and notebooks. The collection also contains correspondence, samples of stationery, paper reproductions of signed portraits intended for distribution to fans, song sheets, photocopies of Italian song lyrics interspersed with diary-like entries, and clippings from <i>La Follia di New York</i> and other periodicals published in New York, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Italy.

**Preferred Citation note**

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Edoardo ("Farfariello") Migliaccio (CMS 015); Box 1; Folder name.

## Biographical/Historical note

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Edoardo Migliaccio was born in Cava dei Tirreni, Naples, Italy, April 15, 1892; his brother Teodorico remained there and eventually achieved the rank of general in the army. Edoardo began his comedy career in Naples, but was also pursuing a degree in accounting, and initially emigrated to Hazleton, Pennsylvania, upon graduation, intending to join his father in the banking profession. He resumed his stage career at the Villa Giulia, 198 Grand Street, New York, where he did a comic sketch that included the song "Farfariello," which became his stage name. Borrowing from Italian commedia dell' arte and from the personalities of the rural-born, semiskilled Italian laborers around him, he created the character of the Macchietta coloniale, which he used in comic sketches poking fun at the immigrant experience. He branched out into sound recordings of his comic songs and into film as these media developed. After a 1937 tour of Italy he returned to the United States where he organized a musical company and recorded songs for Victor Records. He died in New York City on March 27, 1947.

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## Scope and Contents note

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Through the lens of a single Italian-American performing artist, CMS 015 documents multiple changes in Italian-American and in American entertainment history. Edoardo ("Farfariello") Migliaccio built on the tradition Italian commedia dell' arte and created a new character, the immigrant whose lack of knowledge of his new surroundings got him into misadventures but whose native common sense, buried under the appearance of a poor educated unskilled laborer from the countryside, always carried him through. Migliaccio introduced his character, Fafariello, in cafes, but kept up with developments in entertainment technology, publishing his comic songs, recording them when sound became available, and playing his comic character in motion pictures.

CMS 015 documents mainly the musical part of Migliaccio's career, with a large folder of "programs" that are actually song sheets with the lyrics, music, and sometimes illustrations, either images of Migliaccio or a clue to the theme of the song. The songs are interesting for what their content reveals about the everyday concerns of immigrants and also for what they reveal about what these immigrants found humorous. The music shows the influence of Southern Italian folk tunes. The language used show a people in transition: moving from the dialect of a particular part of Italy to incorporate words, phrases and syntax to create a short-lived patois common to urban, ethnic working-class and small-business people.

The song sheets are supplemented with stationery and photographs used during Migliaccio's career, clippings documenting his appearances, and photocopies and microfilm of his scrapbooks and notebooks. The collection also contains correspondence, samples of stationery, paper reproductions of signed portraits intended for distribution to fans, song sheets, photocopies of Italian song lyrics interspersed with

diary-like entries, and clippings from *La Follia di New York* and other periodicals published in New York, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Italy.

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## Arrangement note

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The document box contains materials arranged into eight folders and one reel of microfilm.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies

### Revision Description

Mary Brown inputted the finding aid into EAD format using DACS as the standard for description and Archivists' Toolkit as the software. Nicole Greenhouse checked this work. October 2013

### Conditions Governing Access note

Open to researchers by appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use note

Copyright is owned by the Center for Migration Studies. Permission to publish materials must be requested before use.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition note

The Migliaccio Family donated Edoardo Migliaccio's papers and permitted the microfilming of his scrapbook.

### Processing Information note

Some time before the mid 1980s, the Center for Migration Studies processed this collection and prepared a finding aid. In 2013, this collection was entered into the Archivists' Toolkit in compliance with DACS and folder descriptions were simplified from the original print finding aid. (The original finding aid is

available in print upon request). Folder titles in the container list online may vary from the the physical folder titles.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Subject(s)

- Italian Americans in mass media
  - Italian Americans |x Music
  - Italian Americans |z New York (State) |z New York.
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## Other Finding Aids note

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The original inventory is available in print upon request.

## Collection Inventory

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Correspondence	1	1
Photographs	1	2
Programs 1910-1940 (Bulk, 1910-1940)	1	3
Newspaper clippings 1 1907-1971 (Bulk, 1907-1971)	1	4
Newspaper clippings 2 1924 (Bulk, 1924)	1	5
Composition manuscripts 1	1	6
Composition manuscripts 2	1	7
Composition manuscripts 3	1	8
		<b>Reel</b>
Two scrapbooks, consisting of clippings, programs, handbills, and correspondence		57