

Guide to the Giovanni E. Schiavo Papers

CMS.085

Finding aid prepared by Rchard Del Giudice

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies
1988

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Summary Information

Repository	Center for Migration Studies
Creator	Schiavo, Giovanni Ermenegildo, 1898-1982
Title	Giovanni E. Schiavo Papers
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1924-1982
Date [inclusive]	1874-1983
Extent	37.0 Linear feet in 81 boxes.
Language	English

Language of Materials note Materials are in English and Italian.

Abstract Giovanni Ermenegildo Schiavo (1898-1983) was an Italian American writer and researcher. Schiavo mostly focused his studies on Italian American organized crime and the mafia. The collection contains articles, index cards, notes, photographs, correspondence, clippings, books, government reports, and other ephemera related to his research on influential Italian Americans and Italian American history, dating from the late 1800s up until his death in 1983. The collection also covers his body of work as a writer.

Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Giovanni E. Schiavo Papers (CMS 085); Box; Folder.

Biographical/Historical note

Giovanni Ermenegildo Schiavo was born in Castellamare Del Golfo, Trapani, Italy, May 28, 1898. In 1915 Giuseppina Schiavo decided to join her husband Salvatore, who was living in Baltimore, Maryland. Together with her son Giovanni and her daughter Domenica, they left Palermo and arrived at Baltimore on January 6, 1916. Another son Gaspare, had to remain in Italy to serve in the military during the First World War. After the war he also came to the United States.

Schiavo was educated at Regio Liceo Vittorio Emanuele, Palermo; Johns Hopkins, New York and Columbia Universities. In 1932 he completed his studies for the degree in International Relations and Law, Columbia University. In the same year he married Anne Mahon and they had two daughters: Giovanna and Eleanor Schiavo.

He served as a contributor to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, on the editorial staff of the the *Baltimore Sun* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, and as editor of *Atlantic Magazine*. Schiavo, however, is best known for his inchoation and pioneer research studies related to the early history of Italian Americans.

With the founding of the Vigo Press (named after Francis Joseph Vigo, who explored the Northwest Territory) in New York City in 1934, Schiavo published the *Italians in America Before the Civil War*. Other titles include *Italians In Chicago*; *Italian American History* (two volumes); *What Crime Statistics Show About the Italians*; *The Scientific Achievements of Leonardo Da Vinci*, presented by the New York Museum of Science and Industry; *Four Centuries of Italian American History*; *Phillip Mazzei, One of America's Founding Fathers*; *Antonio Meucci, Inventor of the Telephone*; *The Truth About the Mafia and Organized Crime in America*; and *The Italian American Who's Who*, published annually from 1935-1967. Published in 1965, *The Truth About the Mafia and Organized Crime in America*, Schiavo demonstrated that crime was the domain of all ethnic groups. Moreover, during the last years of his life, he researched the mafia, but the book was never completed. Giovanni E. Schiavo died on March 4, 1983.

Scope and Contents note

This collection of Giovanni E. Schiavo papers, is not, by any means, representative of all his material; in fact, the bulk of his papers were sold to Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana. What is present here consists of some of the papers that remained and the material dealing with organized crime and crime in general. Schiavo had been thinking of writing a new definitive edition of an earlier work on the mafia. Moreover, gleaning his papers on crime, two important points emerge: he argues that prejudice rather than facts support the American notion of mafia; mafia is an attitude and that is associated with some of the

characteristics of familiarism in Sicilian culture. Schiavo's principal interest throughout his lifetime was the welfare of the Italian people in the United States, and this is reflected in all his papers.

Arrangement note

This collection is broken down into two series:

Series I: Papers

Subseries A: Biographical Materials

Subseries B: Materials Written by and on Schiavo

Subseries C: Correspondence

Subseries D: Phillip Mazzei

Subseries E: Antonio Meucci

Subseries F: Other Subjects

Subseries G: Index Cards

Subseries H: Magazines

Series II: Italian American Crime Research

Subseries A: Correspondence

Subseries B: Writings by Schiavo

Subseries C: Giuseppe Pezzolini and Luigi Barzini

Subseries D: Articles

Subseries E: Index Cards

Subseries F: Notes

Subseries G: Materials on Subjects

Subseries H: Materials Pertaining to Persons involved with Crime

Subseries I: Clippings

Subseries J: Books and Government Reports

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies 1988

Revision Description

Edited for DACS compliance by Nicole Greenhouse February 2015

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

Donated by the Schiavo Family.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

S. Eugene Scalia Collection (CMS 082)

Giovanni Schiavo Collection, The Italian American Cultural Center Research Library, East Bank Regional Library, 4747 W. Napoleon Avenue, Metairie, Louisiana 70001

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Prezzolini, Giuseppe, 1882-1982

Subject(s)

- Italian Americans |v Newspapers.
- Italian Americans |x History.
- Italian Americans |x Intellectual life |y 20th century.
- Mafia |x History |y 20th century.

Other Finding Aids note

The original inventory is available in print upon request.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Papers 1918-1982	
Subseries A: Biographical Materials 1918, 1928	Box 1
Scope and Contents note	
<p>This small series contains a photo of Schiavo, a document concerning his service in the U.S. Army during World War II and several articles including one from <i>Italian American Who's Who</i>.</p>	
Subseries B: Material Written by and on Schiavo 1920-1980	Box 1-3
Scope and Contents note	
<p>There is a sizeable body of material here, including 2 copies of a typewritten compilation (233 pages) of classical musical compositions and their composers, writings on international, Italian, and U.S. law, mostly relative to immigration, treaties, etc., and material on Italian scientists, their discoveries and inventions. Included are articles on Italian explorers and missionaries, brought to light as the result of Schiavo's pioneer research work; articles written for the <i>Baltimore Sun</i> regarding the role of Italy in the First World War, and the draft of an unpublished article: "The Second Generation Italians." There are articles, reviews and advertising material relative to his book: <i>The Italians Before the Civil War</i>, articles regarding awards honoring Schiavo and his writings, miscellaneous articles and clippings, and several issues of <i>Atlantica</i>, an Italian monthly review with Schiavo as managing editor.</p>	
Subseries C: Correspondence 1924-1982	Box 3-4

Subseries D: Phillip Mazzei**Scope and Contents note**

Schiavo's correspondence is varied, ranging from letters to and from writers, to casual notes from friends. Some of it is in Italian and originates in the United States as well as in Italy. The correspondence is divided into General Correspondence from Italy and General Correspondence from the United States; moreover, where there is sufficient material to warrant a separate file, it has been arranged by the surname of the correspondent or a group, for example, there is a folder with letters from bishops and priests regarding his book: *The Italians and the Catholic Church*. Except in General Correspondence, incoming and outgoing letters of each correspondent are placed next to each other. The correspondence concerns with Schiavo's publications, Italian Americans, Sicily, Columbus, Meucci, and matters pertaining to the North and South of Italy. An item of interest is Schiavo's letter of February 24, 1977 to Dr. Salvatore La Gumina, of Nassau Community College, in which he states that all ethnic studies are a waste of time as far as the Italians are concerned; the Italians are heirs of a civilization, and that Italian organizations should have as their goal the education of the Italian people.

Subseries D: Phillip Mazzei 1934-1982**Box**

4

Scope and Contents note

This series contains materials by Schiavo and Sister Margherita Marchione, professor of Italian at Farleigh Dickinson University, relative to Phillip Mazzei, whose friendship and writings influenced the thinking of the Founding Fathers, and who called for the independence of the United States from England. Included is Schiavo's book, *Phillip Mazzei: One of America's Founding Fathers*, and a partial copy of Sister Marchione's translation of Mazzei's *Jefferson's Zealous Whig*. There is Sister Marchione's Progress Report on Mazzei for the National Endowment for the Humanities, correspondence between Schiavo and Sister Marchione concerning the continuing research on Mazzei. Included are two articles, letters, reports and clippings regarding Mazzei and the issuance of the Mazzei's stamp in 1980, and materials of two conferences on Mazzei sponsored by the Italian American Foundation held in 1980.

Subseries E: Antonio Meucci 1920-1936**Box**

4

Subseries F: Other Subjects**Scope and Contents note**

This small file contains the Staten Island Italian Historical Society's pamphlet for the Meucci Commemoration held on April 15, 1920, at the Staten Island Academy, Staten Island, New York; and the program for another commemoration held on April 19, 1936. Included are clippings and articles relative Schiavo's publication on Meucci.

Subseries F: Other Subjects 1931-1981**Box**

4-6

Scope and Contents note

This series contains files with copies of Italian American newspapers, including *Corriere Sicillano*, 1938, *L'Unione*, 1938, *Gazzeta Del Massachusetts*, 1946 and *The Rubicon*, 1955; articles and clippings pertaining to Italian Americans and Italian American history; articles on Fascism, including a printing copper plate with the inscription: Ordine Figli D'Italia, Stato Del Rhode Island, and a short paragraph in Italian extolling the virtues of Mussolini. There are seven photographs, mostly of Italian Americans, lists and clippings pertaining to Italian American mayors, Italians in politics and materials commemorating Americo Vespucci and Francesco Vigo. There are twenty-one articles and books, mostly dealing with the Italian as an immigrant, and his experience in the United States. Included are two files pertaining to the correspondence, notes and articles of Schiavo and Professor Francesco Cordasco of Montclair State College, New Jersey, and the Cordasco and Salvatore La Gumina bibliography, *Italians in the United States* (1972). Also included are Joseph Velikonja bibliography, *Italians in the United States* (1963), and other miscellaneous bibliographical material on Italian Americans. Finally, there are two articles in Italian, one concerning an Italian visiting the United States, the other dealing with Southern Italy; copies of articles from *Il Carroccio*, an Italian journal published in the beginning of this century; material pertaining to the culture and dialect of Sicily; miscellaneous notes, articles and reviews of books relative to American life, its history and culture, and sundry other items.

Subseries G: Index Cards 1980s**Box**

7-13

Scope and Contents note

Subseries H: Magazines

This series contains index cards on Italian-American subjects such as culture, history, newspapers and organizations.

Subseries H: Magazines 1975-1982**Box**
13**Scope and Contents note**

Included are copies of the *Messenger* (an Italian American magazine in Missouri), 1977-1982; copies of the *Italo-American National Union*, 1975-1977; *Italian American Review*, 1976-1977; *Trade With Italy*, 1973-1975 and *UNICO*, 1975. Also included is San Francisco's Columbus Day Souvenir Program of the October 1980 celebration, and miscellaneous other magazines.

Series II: Italian American Crime Research 1874-1983**Subseries A: Correspondence 1957-1981****Box**
14**Scope and Contents note**

Covering most of the years 1959 to 1981, this series consists of general correspondence in English, and correspondence with Francesco Ianni of Columbia University, and Jerre Mangione of the University of Pennsylvania. There is correspondence in Italian, most of which are letters sent, correspondence with Mario Pipitone, Department of Police, Palermo, Sicily; Eugene Scalia, who was born in Sicily and was professor of Italian at several colleges; Gaetano Falzone of Palermo University and Vincenzo Martinez in Sicily.

The correspondence deals mostly with crime and crime related subjects. An item of interest is Ianni's letter of June 16, 1971 stating that mafia is an attitude, and that it is associated with some of the characteristics of the family in Italian culture. There is a clipping of Schiavo's letter of November 16, 1957 to the New York Times regarding the misuse of the word mafia, and noting that there are criminals of Italian extraction just as there are criminals of other nationalities. The letter ends by appealing to American fair-play to call criminal organizations "gang" - "band" or ring. With regard to Italian

Subseries B: Writings by Schiavo

correspondence, an item of interest is the October 31, 1961 letter of response to Schiavo from Mario Pipitone relative to the question of mafia's existence. Pipitone says, that the mafia as an hierarchical organization with laws and statutes, no longer exists as such; and that at the present time, the appellation of "mafia" is used for any common group of delinquents. The correspondence with Scalia deals with the culture of Sicily, the Sicilian in the United States, the origin of the word "mafia" and the etymology of other words. The correspondence with Falzone refers to information requested by Schiavo regarding certain terms used in the organization of the mafia. Included with the letters are Falzone's monographs: "Voluntarismo Siciliano" relative to Sicilian volunteers that fought with Garibaldi during the Italian Risorgimento, and "Mafia e Patriottismo Un Secolo Fa" (Mafia and Patriotism a Century Ago).

Schiavo himself sometimes filed correspondence in his subject file (e.g., Giuseppe Prezzolini), and that correspondence was left in place during archival processing.

Subseries B: Writings by Schiavo 1957-1963**Box**
15**Scope and Contents note**

This small series contains miscellaneous articles and reviews relative to Schiavo's book: *The Truth About the Mafia*, published in 1962; and several articles also on the same subject.

Subseries C: Giuseppe Prezzolini and Luigi Barzini 1957-1975**Box**
15**Scope and Contents note**

Giuseppe Prezzolini was a professor of Italian at Columbia University from the 1930s through the 1950s. Luigi Barzini was a writer and a member of the Italian Parliament. Schiavo had a short but lively relationship with Prezzolini and to a lesser extent with Barzini. Both writers elicited Schiavo's interest because of their writings on Italians and mafia.

Included are Prezzolini's articles in Italian and English on subjects such as the Mafia, immigration, politics, and Italians in the United States and Italy; and copies of articles he

Subseries D: Articles

wrote for *Il Borghese*, an Italian magazine published in Italy. There are Schiavo's notes and reviews of Prezzolini's book, *I Trapiantati*, notes on the article "Variazione Sulla Mafia". There is a file of correspondence, including a January 10, 1963 letter by Schiavo addressed to *Il Tempo*, a paper published in Rome, regarding an article by Prezzolini in which he sarcastically refers to Schiavo as the champion of Italian American causes, and miscellaneous articles and clippings on Prezzolini.

With regard to Barzini, the material deals primarily with his books: *The Italians* and *From Caesar to the Mafia*. In *The Italians* Barzini impugned the character of the Italians which offended many of them in the United States. Included are letters written mostly to *Il Progresso*, pamphlets and articles protesting the content of the book. Also included are Barzini's reviews of books on the mafia and other miscellaneous articles.

Subseries D: Articles 1877-1980**Box**
15-28**Scope and Contents note**

This series, one of the most important, contains 413 photocopies of articles, chapters of books, and other publications relative to organized crime, crime in general and related subjects. Accompanying the material are Schiavo's notes abstracted from books and articles, and in many instances, clippings pertaining to the author or his publication, and correspondence between Schiavo and other writers. The material, alphabetically arranged, by the name of the author, spans the period from the early part of this century to 1980.

Schiavo's intention had been to write a definitive work on the subject of the mafia; he, thus, began an exhaustive search to gather all available studies relative to crime. Interspersed in this series are articles, and sections of books that do not seem to be related to crime; for example, the article on "Comparaggio", is a study regarding the choice and role of the Godfather in the Sacrament of Baptism. The material is mostly in English, but a substantial amount is in Italian. The articles are mainly from scholarly journals and are written by noted authors in the field of crime.

Subseries E: Index Cards undated**Box**
29-30

Subseries F: Notes**Scope and Contents note**

These index cards list authors and their publications relative to crime, crime related subjects, Italians in the United States and Italy. Included with the cards are Schiavo's notes with comments on the publications.

Arrangement note

The cards are arranged in a rough alphabetical order.

Subseries F: Notes undated**Box**

31

Scope and Contents note

This series consists of miscellaneous typed, penned and penciled notes. They are in both English and Italian and could not be included in any of the other series simply because they are notations jotted down or typed and were found interspersed with the collection. There is a large amount of fragmentary writing on the mafia covering historical, economical, social and literary aspects; an explanation of the etymology of words such as omerta, compare, mafia, cosa nostra, componente, cosca, and innumerable quotations and comments on other writers and historians - here in the United States and Italy. There is information on the social, political and economical conditions of Sicily in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and comments and criticism on articles on crime as reported by newspapers in the United States and Italy and other miscellaneous items.

Subseries G: Materials on Subjects 1879-1983**Box**

32-35

Scope and Contents note

In the process of gathering information for his second book on the mafia, Schiavo collected a large amount of material dealing with crime. The material, dated from 1897 to 1981, is in English and Italian, and is arranged by subject in a rough alphabetical order. Accompanying many of the subjects are Schiavo's notes and articles. Included in this series are materials from an ABC-Nightline program dedicated to crime; articles from the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, and two clippings, one a 1897 article from the *New*

Subseries H: Materials Pertaining to Persons involved with Crime

York Daily Tribune, titled, "Dago (the), and the Loafer", and the other, dated 1936 from the *New Telegram*, Portland, Oregon. The second article concerns the penalty an Italian paid while driving under the influence of alcohol. There are bibliographies on crime, material on the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a text of the research report on Italian Americans on TV, immigration crime, and articles from magazines, several extant - *The Independent*, *The Interpreter Lippincott*, *Littell's Living Age Life*, *Literary Digest*, and *The Nation*. Also included are materials from the *New York Times*, articles on the Italians of New Orleans, material on the cosa nostra, Ndraghata (a crime organization in Calabria) and Unione Siciliana, and articles on the Secret Societies of Southern Italy. Finally, there is material on the mafia, omerta', latifondo (landed estates in Italy), the movie and book, *The Godfather*, and miscellaneous other subjects.

Subseries H: Materials Pertaining to Persons involved with Crime 1960-1982**Box**
36-40**Scope and Contents note**

This series includes the records, mostly clippings, some articles and notes on persons connected with crime or concerning crime. The clippings are from the *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Post*, *El Paso Times*, *Dallas Times Herald*, *Il Progresso* and several newspapers in Italy. The material is dated circa 1960 to circa 1982.

Arrangement note

Arranged alphabetically by surname.

Subseries I: Clippings 1960-1982**Box**
41-56**Scope and Contents note**

The clippings are organized in a rough alphabetical order by crime related subjects and are in English and Italian. They fall within the period of 1960 to 1982 and are taken from the *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Post*, *El Paso Times*, *Chicago Sunday Times*, *Chicago Daily Tribune* and *Dallas Morning News*. They are also from Italian American newspapers and newspapers from Italy. The subjects

Subseries J: Books and Government Reports

range from gambling, prostitution and pornography, narcotics, bribery, to auto theft, bootleggers, loan sharking, government fraud, extortion and kidnapping. Included are articles and notes by Schiavo.

Subseries J: Books and Government Reports 1874-1979**Box**
57-81**Scope and Contents note**

This series consists of 109 books in English, 42 books in Italian, and reports from the federal government, mostly from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, hearings on crime from Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate Committees, the State of New York and the State of Illinois. The books are listed alphabetically by the author's name: the English authors first followed by the Italian authors. The reports are listed roughly according to the date of publication. The books include biographies of noted criminals, books on the mafia, histories of crime mainly in the United States, and books in both languages with studies on crime.