

Guide to the James Visceglia Papers

CMS.025

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies

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Summary Information

Repository	Center for Migration Studies
Creator	Visceglia, James, 1896-
Title	James Visceglia Papers
Date [inclusive]	1929-1975
Extent	0.75 Linear feet One full and one half-size document box.
Language	English

Language of Materials note Collection is mostly in English.

Abstract James Visceglia was born in 1896 in the town of Aquavina delle Fonti in the province of Bari, Italy. He received a Doctor of Economics and Business Administration degree from the University of Genoa. During World War I, he was a fighter pilot with the Italian Air Force earning the Croix de Guerre. In 1928, he emigrated to the United States, married and settled in California. This small collection documents the activities of James Visceglia; his involvement in Catholic causes, in business ventures, charitable drives, civic enterprises, and in journalism. The materials consist of correspondence, photographs, souvenirs booklets, autobiographical writings, and a scrapbook of clippings from 1929-1975.

Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; James Visceglia Papers (CMS 025), Box; Folder.

Biographical/Historical note

James Visceglia was born in 1896 in the town of Aquavina delle Fonti in the province of Bari, Italy. He received a Doctor of Economics and Business Administration degree from the University of Genoa. During World War I, he was a fighter pilot with the Italian Air Force earning the Croix de Guerre. In 1928, he emigrated to the United States, married and settled in California. He and his wife opened a fruit and vegetable business. In 1933 he built his first store and later owned multiple food centers.

He took part in charitable campaigns, active in the USO and the United Crusade and Community Chest, and gave assistance to Italian seaman visiting the harbor of San Pedro. During World War II he aided Italian prisoners of war and later decorated by the Italian government. He was a member of the archdiocesan speakers bureau and vice president of the Mater Dolorosa Laymen's Retreat League. He headed the Southern California Chapter of the American Committee on Italian Migration (ACIM) and worked for changes in the United States immigration laws.

He wrote for the newspaper *L'Italia* and also had his own column entitled, "Cronica Di San Pedro" in *L'Italo-Americano di Los Angeles*. In 1960, he published the *National Chronicle*, a weekly publication dedicated to the encouragement of Italian-American culture and civic responsibility. His wife, Mary, Sicilian-born, wrote a biography of her husband and accounts of their travels together. He died in 1985.

Scope and Contents note

CMS 025 documents James Visceglia's activities other than work. Born in Italy, Mr. Visceglia came to the California in 1928. In 1933 he entered the fruit industry by building his first store, and eventually owned a chain of food stores. He passed away in 1985.

Mr. Visceglia entered public life in California in 1929; he has clippings dating back that far in his scrapbook. During World War II he was part of the U.S.O. and also active in aid to Italian prisoners of war in the area. He continued to be active through the early 1970s, when he was on a Community Development Advisory Committee to consider the need for urban renewal in San Pedro, California.

Visceglia engaged in civic affairs that reflected his Italian and Roman Catholic heritage. Various folders document this activities. He was behind a plan, eventually abandoned, to erect a larger-than-life statue of Saint Francis of Assisi, patron of San Francisco, on Alcatraz, an island in the city's harbor. More fruitful were his activities with the Italian Committee on American Migration; with ACIM he was part of the group that lobbied for change in U.S. immigration law. He was part of the archdiocesan Mater Dolorosa Laymen's Retreat League, which arranged for men who were not priests to spend short periods of time living, praying and listening to spiritual talks together; he was also available to speak as part of the archdiocesan speaker's bureau. Sometimes Mr. Visceglia only attended an event, and he saved several

programs from affairs that he presumably attended, and photographs of himself with other participants in community events.

The collection also documents Mr. Visceglia's personal life with his Sicilian-born, California-bred wife Mary. "Jimmy" as she called him, wrote for local Italian-language newspapers. Mary documented their life together, producing two travelogues and a privately published biography of her husband that are included in this collection.

Arrangement note

CMS 025 is a small collection comprising 3/4 linear feet of material housed in ten folders arranged alphabetically in two boxes: a full-size and a half-size document box. There is one folder of unsorted photographs.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies

Revision Description

Edited in compliance with DACS by Mary Brown. June 2014

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

Gift of James Visceglia.

Processing Information note

About 1977, CMS employees prepared a finding aid for CMS 025. In 2014 Mary Elizabeth Brown entered the finding aid 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 upon request). Folder titles in the contains list only may vary from the physical folder titles.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

James Visceglia was active in the Southern California chapter of the American Committee for Italian Migration, the papers of which are in CMS 001.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- American Committee on Italian Migration.

Geographic Name(s)

- Los Angeles Harbor (Calif.)

Subject(s)

- Italian Americans |v Newspapers.
- Italian Americans |z California |z San Pedro.

Other Finding Aids note

The original finding aid is available in print upon request.

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Alcatraz Statue of Saint Francis of Assisi 1963-1970	1	1
American Committee on Italian Migration 1964-1975	1	2
Baroni, Cleto, Chi Siamo Nella California Del Sud (Los Angeles: L'Italo Americano di Los Angeles 1932	1	3
Community Development Advisory Committee, San Pedro, California 1970-1971	1	4
Mater Dolorosa Laymen's Retreat League 1965-1970	1	5
Photographs undated	1	6
Souvenir Programs: Columbia day 1969, Festa Italiana 1968, Fisherman's Fiesta 1963, Italian Catholic Federation Convention 1970 1963-1970	1	7
Visceglia, Mary, "Around the World in 380 Days" undated	1	8
Visceglia, Mary, Jimmy Visceglia 1970	1	9
Visceglia, Mary, "Other Faces, Other Places"	1	10

Scrapbook 1929-1960

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