

# **Peter Di Paolo Papers**

## **CMS.086**

**Finding aid prepared by Finding aid prepared by Richard Del Giudice**

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## Summary Information

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**Repository** Center for Migration Studies

**Creator** Di Paolo, Peter, 1908-1986

**Title** Peter Di Paolo Papers

**Date [inclusive]** 1930-1986

**Extent** 1.25 Linear feet in 3 document boxes.

**Language** English

**Language of Materials note** In Italian and English.

**Abstract** CMS 086 documents the life and career of Peter Di Paolo, an Italian-born and -educated sanitary engineer who migrated to the United States in 1930, worked in the sanitation field in the public sector with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the National Institute of Health and in the private sector with the Howard Johnson motel and restaurant chain, and was active in Italian-American, Catholic and Democratic Party activities in the Boston area.

### Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York, Peter Di Paolo Papers (CMS 086); Box; Folder.

## Biographical/Historical note

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Peter De Paolo was born in Cansano, L'Aquila, Abruzzi, Italy, November 14, 1908, the eldest of four children of Anna Lepore and her husband, who worked in Denver, Colorado. His brother Anthony joined their father in Denver, he also had a brother Daniel and a sister Theresa, whose married name was Pelozza. He was educated Collegio Ovidio Nasone in Sulmona, the Royal Technical Institute in Laquila and the University of Rome, where he received the degree of sanitary engineer.

In 1930, his father died, and his mother took the family to Boston, Massachusetts. As Peter's studies had not included English, he began work as a cemetery gravedigger while studying at the Phillips Brooks evening School, from which he graduated April 16, 1931; the graduate program included his essay on "Two Great Americans." In the late 1930s, employed in the field for which he had originally trained, he updated himself with graduate courses at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, the University of Minnesota and the University of Oklahoma.

Now bilingual, he became a familiar figure in Italian-American political, religious and social organizations, and moved back into the profession of sanitary engineer. From 1934 to 1938 he was in charge of Water Resources Studies for the Massachusetts State Planning Board and of the Water and Sanitation Department of Fort Devens in Ayer and Shirley, Massachusetts. This led to a position with the U.S. Public Health Division in Bethesda, but Di Paolo resigned that in 1943 to return to the Boston area and to employment as a sanitary engineer and bacteriologist with the New England-area Howard Johnson motel and restaurant chain.

In 1946, he married Antonina Decina. They had four children: Joeann M., whose married name was Morel, Peter Jr., Paul and Lisa. Di Paolo balanced family with community life. He was sufficiently active in local Catholic affairs to be well known to Richard Cardinal Cushing. He was equally active in the Italian community and local Democratic politics.

In 1966, Di Paolo left Howard Johnson and embarked on a second career in public service with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Boston. He retired in 1980, and died June 22, 1986, in Marshfield, Massachusetts.

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## Scope and Contents note

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CMS 086 documents, in correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs and printed ephemera, the life and career of Peter Di Paolo who was born in Cansano in the Abruzzi Province on the foot of the Italian boot in 1908 and died in Marshfield, Massachusetts, in 1986. It is especially strong on the period between the 1930s and 1960s, when Di Paolo worked as a sanitary engineer, first for the Massachusetts State Planning Board Water Resources Studies and then for the New England-area Howard Johnson motel

and restaurant chain, and when he was active in the local Catholic Church, Democratic Party, and Italian-American community.

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## Arrangement note

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CMS 086 consists of 43 folders in three document boxes arranged in four Series: Personal Papers, Material Relating to De Paolo's War as a Sanitary Engineer; Papers Relating to De Paolo's Social and Political Activities, and Photographs.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies January 1989

### 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 Mrs. Peter (Antonina) Di Paolo.

### Processing Information note

In 2014 the original finding aid was entered into the Archivists' Toolkit in compliance with DACS.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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## Subject(s)

- Italian American |z Massachusetts |z Boston |x Biography
- Sanitary engineering |z United States.

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## Other Finding Aids note

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The original inventory is available in print upon request.

## Collection Inventory

### Personal Papers 1931-1981

#### Scope and Contents note

Series I documents Di Paolo's personal life, which was like that of many other southern Italian immigrants in that he arrived speaking no English and going no further than a seaport city, commencing work digging graves in a Boston cemetery. Di Paolo differed from other Italian Americans in two important ways. He was more educated, receiving university degrees in Italy that he could use in the United States as soon as he learned the local language, a process documented in the Biographical Material folder. Di Paolo also arrived near the end of the mass migration, and so was active in the Italian-American community from the 1930s through the 1960s, during the period of fascism and the rise of Mussolini, a fact documented by files containing clippings from 1930s newspapers.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Di Paolo, Peter, 1908-1986 Biographical Material 1931	1	1
Miscellaneous Awards Given to De Paolo undated	1	2
Wedding Anniversary 1971, 1981	1	3
Material in Italian 1930, 1944	1	4
Newspapers and Magazines 1932, 1937	1	5
Corriere Della Sera, Milano September-October 1937	1	6

**Material Relating to De Paolo's Work as a Sanitary Engineer**

Il Grido Della Stirpe and Il Progresso Italo-Americano 1930, 1937	1	7
Sons of Italy undated	1	8
Travel on Food and Drug Administration goodwill tour, to the Abruzzi region, and to Rome 1963-1971	1	9

**Material Relating to De Paolo's Work as a Sanitary Engineer 1942-1965****Scope and Contents note**

Besides documenting an aspect of Di Paolo's life, this Series documents the work of sanitary engineers in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly the public-service aspect of the profession.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Health Department and Muskagee Times-Democratic, Muskagee, Oklahoma 1942-1943	1	10
Food-handling lecture, Quincy, Massachusetts 1945 May 7	1	11
Howard Johnson Company, laboratory photographs, clippings 1955-1963	1	12

**Papers Relating to De Paolo's Social and Political Activities 1931-1968****Scope and Contents note**

As part of the Di Paolo papers, CMS received a deteriorating scrapbook documenting Di Paolo's activities in the 1930s and 1940s. The scrapbook was disassembled and filed in the best approximation of chronological order; this Series is the result. It therefore documents the Boston Italian community



## Papers Relating to De Paolo's Social and Political Activities

during Mussolini's fascist dictatorship, World War II, the ascent of Italians into Massachusetts politics, and the simultaneous depopulation of the traditional Italian-American neighborhood.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1931, 1941, 1944	2	13
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1933-1934, 1940-1941	2	14
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1936-1938	2	15
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1936-1938	2	16
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1934-1939	2	17
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1938-1939	2	18
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1939	2	19
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1940	2	20
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1940	2	21
Clippings, Letters and Other Miscellaneous Items 1951-1953	2	22
Correspondence 1934-1959	3	23
Photocopies of the Correspondence 1934-1959	3	24

## Photographs

Outdoor Advertising Authority, Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1952-1952	3	25
Invitations to Political Events 1941-1968	3	26
Personal cards, Christmas cards, clippings undated	3	27
<b>Photographs circa 1930s-1970s</b>		
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
<p>The twenty-seven black-and-white glossy photographs in this collection include some family images, such as one of Peter Di Paolo and his wife Antonina and one of the baptism of one of his children, but they mainly document his public life; the one of the baptism indicates that Jennie Volpe, wife of the governor, attended the event. Other photographs show Di Paolo with other Massachusetts politicians, with colleague at the National Institute of Health and at community events.</p>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Peter Di Paolo and wife Antonina undated	3	28
Governor and Mrs. Furcolo, Paul Di Paolo, brother Peter, sister Jo Ann, Di Paolo's sons and cousin Jo Ann undated	3	29
Governor Paul A. Dever (1st row, 2nd from right) and Di Paolo (3rd row, 5th from left) at Catholic men's retreat, Saint Francis Friary 1937 January 22-24	3	30
Massachusetts Attorney General Paul A. Dever undated	3	31

## Photographs

Massachusetts Governor Paul A. Dever, Di Paolo and Di Paolo's daughter Jo Ann undated	3	32
Massachusetts Governor Paul A. Dever, President Harry S Truman and Di Paolo undated	3	33
One photograph of Massachusetts Governor John A. Volpe and two of Volpe speaking with Di Paolo undated	3	34
Mrs. John A. (Jennie) Volpe attending the christening of DI Paolo's child (2 copies) undated	3	35
Massachusetts Governor John A. Volpe with Di Paolo and wife Antonina undated	3	36
One photograph of Massachusetts Governor Francis W. Sargeant and one of Sargeant and his wife Jessie Fay and Di Paolo and his wife Antonina undated	3	37
One photographs of Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Elliott L. Richardson and one of New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Di Paolo and Di Paolo's wife Antonina undated	3	38
Three photographs: Di Paolo, the Italian-American Committee for Boston and Mayor John B. Hynes; Mayor Hynes with Di Paolo and wife Antonina; and Mayor Hynes and Di Paolo watching while the Mayor of Sulmona, L'Aquila, Abruzzo, signs the Boston's visitors' register undated	3	39

## Photographs

Brockton, Massachusetts, Mayors Hjalmar Peterson and Michael McGrath and Boston Mayor John F. Collins undated	3	40
Two photographs: Massachusetts Governor Foster Furcolo, Rev. Gregory H. Tom of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Jamaica Plain, and Di Paolo and wife Antonina, Easter banquet, Ukrainian Hall, Boston, and Di Paolo with Giannandrea Montanarella, manager of Alitalia in Boston undated	3	41
Di Paolo at the National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, with other scientists undated	3	42
Three photographs: Massachusetts Governor Endicott Peabody and De Paolo, Howard Johnson Laboratory, Brockton; Di Paolo himself in the Howard Johnson laboratory; Howard Johnson, Jr., De Paolo and wife Antonina undated	3	43