

Saint Anthony of Padua, Buffalo, New York, Records CMS.049

Finding aid prepared by Nick Falso

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

March 11, 2016

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies

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Summary Information

Repository	Center for Migration Studies
Creator	Saint Anthony of Padua (Church: Buffalo, N.Y.)..
Title	Saint Anthony of Padua, Buffalo, New York, Records
Date [inclusive]	1902-1987
Extent	1.0 Linear feet 2 document boxes
Location note	CMS.049 is at the Provincial House of the Province of Saint Charles, Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, 27 Carmine Street, New York, New York 10014.
Language	English
Language of Materials note	The materials in CMS.049 are in English and Italian.
Abstract	CMS.049 documents life at the parish of Saint Anthony of Padua in Buffalo, New York, from shortly after its founding in 1891 to the 1980s via correspondence, souvenir publications, newspaper clippings, photographs, financial records and miscellaneous documents. Saint Anthony's is notable for its location in downtown Buffalo, which made the parish a witness to the city's urban renewal program in the 1960s and 1970s. It is also notable as an early mission of the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, and so its history is central to that of the Scalabrinians' Saint Charles Province.

Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Saint Anthony of Padua, Buffalo, Records (CMS.049); Box;
Folder.

Biographical/Historical note

Buffalo is the port city that connects Lake Erie to the Erie Canal. Its position as a transportation hub fueled its industrial growth in the nineteenth century, and both those traits made it the largest city in a largely agricultural area in western New York. Genoans, Lombards and Tuscans from the Italian peninsula took advantage of its diverse economic opportunities beginning in the 1870s. By the 1880s, they were being joined by immigrants from Southern Italy and from Sicily.

The first recorded instance of the Catholic Church's outreach to the Italian immigrant community in Buffalo was in 1887, when Bishop Stephen V. Ryan assigned Hungarian-born, Italian-speaking Father Kofler to the ministry. By 1888 Italians were gathering for Sunday Mass in the chapel behind Saint Joseph's Old Cathedral, under the leadership of Irish-American, Italian-speaking Father James Quigley. By February 1889 the congregation had purchased land at 160 Court Street downtown. By 1890, the bishop had made contact with a congregation of male religious known then as the Pious Society of Saint Charles and known now as the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, an organization committed to the migrant ministry. The first Scalabrinian priest, Antonio Gibelli, arrived in 1890 and was there when the parish incorporated on 29 June 1891, when the cornerstone for the church was laid 2 August 1891 and when the building opened for worship 20 December 1891. The parish added a parochial school in 1912.

Saint Anthony of Padua's fortunes were tied to those of downtown Buffalo, and to those of the Scalabrinians. When use of the canal declined in the twentieth century, Buffalo lost population and Saint Anthony of Padua lost parishioners. The parish suffered another blow to its population in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the city of Buffalo implemented an urban renewal program. The urban renewal plan did not include attracting new immigrants to Buffalo, and that affected the Scalabrinians' relationship to Saint Anthony's. In 2012, the Scalabrinians ceased to staff the parish.

Scope and Contents note

CMS.049 documents the history of Saint Anthony of Padua, a Roman Catholic parish located at 160 Court Street in downtown Buffalo, New York. It is a history intertwined with that of immigration, the city of Buffalo, and an order of priests known as the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians.

The earliest document in the collection dates from 1891. By that point, Saint Anthony of Padua in Buffalo was five years old. It was being staffed by Italian immigrant clergy from a new religious congregation, one founded in 1887 by Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini of Piacenza, Italy, to minister to migrants in transit and in their new homes. Today, the congregation is known as the Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, after its founder.

American Catholic historiography on Italian immigration began in 1946, with Henry J. Browne's article on "The Italian Problem." Browne put the title in quotes because he was quoting from sixty years' worth of American prelates and parish clergy who complained that the Italians did not attend Mass, contribute to collections, send their children to parochial school, exhibit vocations to the priesthood or religious life, or seem to know that they should be doing all these things. To some extent, the documentation in CMS.049 supports Browne's thesis. The correspondence and financial clergy and parishioners at Saint Anthony of Padua continued to use the Italian language through the first half of the twentieth century, and newspaper clippings and souvenir journals indicate they continued to identify as Italian Americans a century after their community had been founded. However, the material also show the clergy's swift assimilation to their American work situation. The Scalabrinians supported their parishioners in activities few congregations in Italy did: collecting money, saving it, buying land and building a new church thereon. The souvenir journals and financial documents indicate the fathers adopted American patterns of fundraising quickly. During the 1960s, the clergy staffing Saint Anthony's was still coming from Italy, but it was adapting quickly to American circumstances; it was the Italian-born Father Tarcisius Bagatin who led the parish through the period of urban renewal in downtown Buffalo.

Because Saint Anthony in Buffalo was founded within five years of the Scalabrinians' arrival in the United States, and because the Scalabrinians continued to staff the parish until 2012, CMS.049 is also rich in the history of the congregation. The correspondence includes letters from leaders of that first generation such as Antonio Demo, pastor of the strategically placed parish of Our Lady of Pompei in Greenwich Village, New York City, and Father Pio Parolin, who frequently covered for absent clergy at Saint Anthony's. The Demo-Parolin correspondence documents a warm friendship, a mentor-mentee relationship (Father Demo had been one of the upper class students when Father Pio entered the seminary) and a professional relationship between a provincial superior and someone sent out on pastoral assignments.

Arrangement note

CMS.049 is arranged in six Series:

Series I: Letters

Series II: Journals/Histories

Series III: Newspaper Clippings

Series IV: Photographs

Series V: Miscellaneous Documents

Series VI: Financial Records

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies

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 items in CMS.049 came from Saint Anthony of Padua in Buffalo via Father Secondo Casarotto.

Processing Information note

In 2016, 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.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

CMS.078, Province of Saint Charles, Society of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, Records.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Buffalo (N.Y.).

Subject(s)

- Church work with immigrants |z Catholic Church.

Other Finding Aids note

The original inventory is available in print upon request.

Series I: Letters

Collection Inventory

Series I: Letters	Box
	1
	Box
Letters (2 items) 1902	1
Letters (1 item) 1903	1
Letters (1 item) 1904	1
Letters (2 items) 1905	1
Letters (2 items) 1906	1
Letters (1 item) 1907	1
Letters (20 items) 1908	1
Letters (9 items) 1909	1
Letters (6 items) 1910	1
Letters (8 items) 1911	1
Letters (6 items) 1913	1

Series II: Journals/Histories

Letters (5 items) 1914	1
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Letters (4 items) 1915	1
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Letters (3 items) 1917	1
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Letters (2 items) 1918	1
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Series II: Journals/Histories 1912-1968	Box
	1

Scope and Contents note

CMS.049 Series II, contains the following parochial publications:

- a) Scuola Scalabrini, 1912, celebrating the opening of the parochial school
- b) Chiesa di S. Antonio di Padova, 1921, commemorating the parish's thirtieth anniversary, original and photocopy
- c) Golden Jubilee, 1941, commemorating the parish's fiftieth anniversary
- d) Second Annual Reunion and Grand Ball, 1942, two copies
- e) Lawn Fete-Carnival, 1945, for benefit of Saint Anthony's school
- f) Sixty-fifth Anniversary Journall, 1958
- g) Diamond Jubilee Journal, 1986
- h) Eightieth Anniversary Program of Celebration, 1968

Series III: Newspaper Clippings 1908-1926, circa 1941-1987	Box
	1

Scope and Contents note

Series IV: Photographs

CMS.049 Series III, Newspaper Clippings, contains about 30 items. The earlier ones document Saint Anthony's parish, Buffalo's Italian community and Italian Protestant activity. The later ones document anniversaries at Saint Anthony's.

Series IV: Photographs 1960s-1970s**Box**

1

Scope and Contents note

CMS.049 Series IV, Photographs, contains a dozen images, both black-and-white and color, in sizes ranging from 3 1/2 x 4 1/2" to 8x10", depicting the church's interior and exterior of the church and the exterior of the parish center, erected in 1968. There are also photographs of Father Tarcisius Bagatin, c.s., pastor from the late 1960s through the 1970s and co-author of the history of the parish in the Miscellaneous Documents series.

Series V: Miscellaneous Documents 1896-1986**Box**

1

Scope and Contents note

CMS.049 Series V: Miscellaneous Documents contained the following items:

- a) Large manuscript accounting sheet listing income and expenditures of the church for 1896
- b) Program of an entertainment given by the Saint Anthony's School students 7 June 1914
- c) Invitation from the Bazaar [sic] General Committee to attend a formal opening, circa 1915-1918
- d) Pilgrim Track Society of North Carolina publicating regarding ex-Scalabrinian Joseph Zachello, circa late 1940s
- e) Booklet Saint Anthony's issued in 1955 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini
- f) One-page Italian-language typescript on the Tenth Congress of the National Confraternity of Christian Doctrine held in Buffalo, circa 1950s-1960s

Series VI: Financial Records

- g) Clipping on Buffalo's Italian Americans from the magazine Ethos, 1975
- h) Tarcisius Bagatin, c.s., and Dick Klug, "Brief Histor of Saint Anthony's Church," 1971, with a focus on urban renewal
- i) Saint Anthony of Padua Newsletter, March, April May and September 1968
- j) Photocopy of two brief newspaper articles about celebrations held at Saint Anthony's in October and November 1986
- k) Secondo Casarotto, c.s., one-page leaflet on Mother Cabrini, 1986
- l) Il Paesano, another newsletter of Saint Anthony of Padua, for 1974-1975

Series VI: Financial Records

Box

Account Book January 1889 to June 1913

2

Annual financial reports 1903-1922

2