

# **Center for Migration Studies Italian American Photograph Project Photographs**

**Finding aid prepared by Mary Elizabeth Brown**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies  
26 August 2016

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Center for Migration Studies
<b>Title</b>	Center for Migration Studies Italian American Photograph Project Photographs
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1880-1975
<b>Extent</b>	18.0 Linear feet
<b>Location note</b>	CMS.103 is housed at the Provincial House of the Province of Saint Charles, Missionaries of Saint Charles-Scalabrinians, 27 Carmine Street, New York, New York 10014.
<b>Language</b>	English

**Language of Materials note** Photograph captions are in English.

**Abstract** CMS.103 consists of a set of photoprints gathered in the early 1980s and framed to create "Images: A Pictorial History of Italian Americans, a traveling exhibit that could be displayed at the Center for Migration Studies or lent, freely or for a rental fee, for display elsewhere. The photographs range in date from the late nineteenth century to the mid 1980s. The sources include the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, state and local historical collections, reproductions from publications, and collections in private hands that were investigated and copied by T. (Trentino) J. Marino, a professional photographer who served as a consultant for the project. The original dates for the photographs range from the late nineteenth century to the mid 1980s. Taken together, the images are a visual narrative of Italian American history from the mass migration of the 1880s to the rise of Italian Americans into positions of prominence in various walks of American life.

**Preferred Citation note**

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Collection Name (CMS.103); Number.

## Scope and Contents note

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CMS.103 is a collection created by the Center for Migration Studies. Then-Executive Director Lydio F. Tomasi, c.s., Ph.D., wanted to communicate CMS's holdings in a day before the Internet and at a time when interest in ethnic history was peaking. Accordingly, he determined to create a photographic history of the Italian Americans; Father Tomasi himself was born in Italy and lived his professional life in the United States, so he had contacts in that community that would allow him to tap donors for funds and photographs. For the execution of the project, Father Tomasi relied on Diana J. Zimmerman, Director of the Library and Archives at CMS, her assistant, Maria Del Giudice, and a consultant, professional photographer T.J. Marino.

The project workers gathered photographs from a number of sources: the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library and other public educational institutions, state and local historical societies, books, and private collections which T.J. Marino located and photographed. One side effect of this project was the addition to the CMS archives of one stand-alone photograph collection, CMS.095, and one collection of photographs aggregated from the research, CMS.091. The best practices at time dictated that a photograph shoot two 35mm negatives of each photograph, one to use to create photoprints and one to save as a back-up in case of the destruction of the first copy. That was done; the negatives are stored in CMS.091.

The results were photographs that were entirely in black and white and all rectangular, but differing in size, and in the proportion between height and length. The photographs were framed on white matting and enclosed in metallic frames suitable for hanging. The photographs were arranged to tell, in visual form, the story of Italian Americans. The heart of the story was the arrival of the mass migration of the 1880s and that group's slow advance from poorly paid work and impoverished neighborhoods to influential positions in the fields of the arts, business, education, entertainment, labor, the military, politics, and sports.

During the 1980s, the photographs were lent out to several venues. By the mid 1990s, they were hung in the CMS archive at 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, New York 10304. The shelves covered only half the floor space in the archive; the rest was given over to a large table inherited from the builder and first owner of the building, architect Ernest Flagg, and chairs suitable for meetings; the collection was a well received decoration for the space. When in 2011 CMS left 209 Flagg Place for new quarters at 27 Carmine Street, New York, New York 10014, the photographs were boxed. In 2013, CMS moved its headquarters and part of its archives to 307 East 60th Street, New York, New York 10022. Coincidentally, the Church of the Holy Rosary in Washington, D.C., borrowed the images to use in conjunction with its centennial, and returned them cleaned and neatly wrapped. The inventory in this finding aid was created using a print inventory found in Box 1 of the nine banker's boxes of images. As Holy Rosary returned the boxes to 27 Carmine Street, they were stored in that location.

## Arrangement note

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The finding aid is based on an inventory of the photographs created to communicate with potential users, so the order is roughly chronological.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Center for Migration Studies 26 August 2016

### 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

CMS.103 is a collection created at the Center for Migration Studies under the direction of Lydio Tomasi, c.s., Ph.D., with the assistance of Director of the Library and Archives Diana J. Zimmerman, her assistant, Maria Del Giudice, and consultant T.J. Marino.

### Processing Information note

In 2016, this collection was entered into the Archivists' Toolkit in compliance with DACS and descriptions taken from an inventory of the photographs.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note

## Controlled Access Headings

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### Genre(s)

- Photographs

### Subject(s)

- Italian Americans in mass media

## Collection Inventory

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Statue of Liberty, photographer unknown	1
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