

# **Societa' Maria Santissima Dell'Assunta Minutes CMS.122**

**Finding aid prepared by Mary Brown**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

February 16, 2018

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies  
16 February 2018  
307 E. 60th Street  
New York, New York 10022

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Center for Migration Studies
<b>Creator</b>	Society of Maria Santissima DellAssunta.
<b>Title</b>	Societa' Maria Santissima Dell'Assunta Minutes
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1927-1932, 1940-1942, 1946-1951, 1954-1957
<b>Extent</b>	0.5 Linear feet
<b>Location note</b>	CMS.122 is housed at the Cener for Migration Studies, 307 East 60th Street, Third Floor, New York, New York, 10022.
<b>Language</b>	Italian
<b>Language of Materials note</b>	CMS.122 is handwritten in Italian.
<b>Abstract</b>	CMS.122 contains an incomplete run of the 1927-1957 minutes of an Italian-American men's social organization of Westbury, Long Island, the Societa' Maria Santissima dell' Assunta (Society of Mary Most Holy, Our Lady of the Assumption).

### Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Collection Name (CMS.122); Box 1; Folder.

## Biographical/Historical note

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The Societa' Maria Santissima Dell' Assunta traces its origins to Italians from the villages of Durazzo, Nola and Saviano, all in the area around the Italian port city of Naples who migrated to the area around Westbury, Long Island, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The patron saint of their birthplace was the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of Our Lady of the Assumption. The immigrants held the first feast in honor of their patroness on the Roman Catholic Church's feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1910.

On July 11, 1911, a group of men formally organized the Societa' Maria SS. Dell'Assunta. In Italian-American history, societies such as this one are known as mutual benefit societies because one of their purposes was insurance. Members' due went toward the care of sick members and/or death benefits for deceased members. The society also took charge of the annual feast day celebration, making arrangements with the local clergy for Mass and with the local civil authorities for processions with the statue of Our Lady of the Assumption through the streets.

On October 12 (Columbus Day) 1933, the Societa' Maria SS. Dell'Assunta dedicated its hall at 373 Maple Avenue in the 11590 zip code. The hall has served as a meeting place for the organization and at some points in its history also served as a source of funds, as the organization rented it for wedding receptions.

Most mutual benefit societies declined as Italian migration did. The Societa' Maria SS. Dell'Assunta adapted to changing populations and changing times. Most notably, it has become a vehicle for Italian-American philanthropy, raising funds for a list of local charities.

Updated information about the society may be available at its website: <http://www.dellassuntasocietyofwestbury.com/home.html>

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## Scope and Contents note

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CMS.122 documents one aspect of the history of the Societa' Maria Santissima Dell'Assunta, meetings that its members held between 1927 and 1957.

The organization kept its minutes in specially printed ledger books from the firm of Stamperia Italiana V. Ciocia, 211 Centre Street, New York, New York, which in the early twentieth century would have been in Lower Manhattan's Little Italy. The registers were printed with spaces for the date, location, and presiding officers of the meetings, allowing researchers to see how often meetings were held, where they were held before the organization built its own headquarters, and who the leadership was. (As the records extend over thirty years, it is also possible to get a sense of who the leading families were.)

After the standard information was filled in, the secretary for the meeting had lines on which to write the minutes. These were written in ink in Italian all the way through to the 1950; unlike other Italian American organizations, this one did not switch to English. The minutes document the flow of funds through the society; there are few notes about the amount of dues collected or the state of the bank balance but there are occasional budgets for expenses for building maintenance or for an event the organization held. There are also occasional lists of new officers or the note that a particular person has been assigned to a particular task. Although the society has both men and women members today, during this period membership was a male activity.

There is already a rich body of research into Italian American organizational life. Most of this research focuses on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and on organizations in urban settings. The minutes of the Societa' Maria Santissima Dell' Assunta allow for a study of an Italian American that has persisted over generations into the twenty-first century.

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## **Arrangement note**

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The collection is arranged chronologically.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Center for Migration Studies 16 February 2018

### **Conditions Governing Access note**

Open to researchers by appointment.

### **Conditions Governing Use note**

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Subject(s)

- Italian American |z New York (State) |z Long island x| History
- Italian Americans |x Social life and customs

## Collection Inventory

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	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Minutes 1 September 1927-1 February 1932	1	1
Minutes 4 January 1940 - 21 September 1942	1	2
Minutes 19 April 1947 - 28 March 1949	1	3
Minutes 4 April 1949 - October 1951	1	4
Minutes 6 July 1954 - 6 May 1957	1	5