

# **Marian Caltagirone Papers**

## **CMS.108**

**Finding aid prepared by Finding aid prepared  
by Sarah Insalaco and Mary Elizabeth Brown**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Migration Studies

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Center for Migration Studies
<b>Title</b>	Marian Caltagirone Papers
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	Bulk, 1930-1955
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1898-1997
<b>Extent</b>	3.0 document boxes
<b>Location note</b>	Collection is located at The Center for Migration Studies at 307 East 60th Street NY,NY 10022.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	CMS.108 documents the family history of Marian Caltagirone (1929- ) of Brooklyn, New York, through family papers that she collected, histories that she wrote, and photographs that she assembled into albums.

### Preferred Citation note

Center for Migration Studies of New York; Marian Caltagirone Papers (CMS.108); Box; Folder.

## Biographical/Historical note

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Marian Caltagirone's story starts with her father Agostino, who immigrated from Sicily by himself when he was about 20 years old. Trained as a barber, he found work in Brooklyn in the barbershop of Gerlando LaRocca, then met Gerlando's daughter Concetta, or "Tina." They fell in love, married, moved to an apartment in Williamsburg, and had a daughter whom they named Marian after Agostino's mother. The baby lived only a day, leaving Agostino and Concetta griefstricken. When in 1929 the couple had a second daughter, they named her Marian also. This time, the baby was healthy, and, as of the fall of 2015, living independentl in a tiny Coney Island apartment.

Marian grew up during the middle of the Great Depression. In an interview she remembered going to school and seeing the Irish kids recieving free meals and such, but not getting anything herself, perhaps because, as she put it, her family did "ok" during the Depression. Her father, Agostino, was a barber by trade. He settled in Brooklyn and found work at Gerlando LaRocca's shop, where he met Concetta "Tina". They fell in love, married, and started their new family in an apartment in Williamsburg, Brooklyn with a baby girl they named Marian, after Agostino's mother. The child lived only a day. Agostino and Concetta were griefstricken. When Conetta gave birth to another girl a few years later, she and Agostino named that girl Marian, also. This time, the baby was healthy.

Marian lived a somewhat different life than the daughters of other Italian immigrants. For example, she thought most Italian Americans were devout, but an incident in her life led her to be less religious. When she was five years old her grandfther, the aforementioned Gerlando LaRocca, died of pneumonia, which Marian blamed on his leaving his sickbed and going out into the cold to provide barbering services for a priest. Similarly, her educational pattern differed from that of many of her peers. Like many girls of her generation, she finished high school. She then utilized her diploma and skills to help her parents financially, living at home and working in an office in Manhattan. Over time, her parents became less financially dependent on her and it became clear that she was not going to marry. Her parents took an unusual step and encouraged her to go to college. She graduated from Hunter College, then the City University of New York's women's college, and started a second career as a teacher. The career did not last long. Marian happened to enter the field during the 1970s, a period of high crime in New York City. When one of her colleagues, a nun, had her throat slit, Marian decided to return to clerical work in Manhattan, and remained in that field until her retirement.

Marian filled her time away from work with family activities. She traveled to her parents' ancestral homes in Italy, and met relatives there. In the United States, she had many cousins, and maintained contact with them. Even when she was not with her family, she concerned herself with them, researching the family history, collecting photographs, and assembling scrapbooks. When Marian was ten years old, her parents had a boy, whom they named John. He grew up to marry, twice, to raise a famiy, and to live on Long Island. In her old age, he was the one who took care of her; she said he treated her more like a daughter than a sister. She continued to live in Brooklyn, moving to a tiny apartment on the first floor of a building in the Coney Island area, where she was still living at the time this collection was processed.

## Scope and Contents note

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CMS 108 documents the life of Marian Caltagirone. The documentation is of two types: papers and photographs. The papers are also of two types. Photocopies of papers obtained while Marian was researching her family's history document individual experiences in military service or travel. Marian also synthesized her knowledge of the family history into a typed narrative.

The 374 photographs of this collection comprise a history of photography, as they include images from Italy and the United States, studio portraits and snapshots, carefully posed baby and wedding pictures and candid. They photographs also provide visual evidence on several twentieth-century topics: Brooklyn, New York, Italian-American families, and women's costume. Marian Caltagirone collected these photographs and arranged them into albums with captions for most of the images. In the interests of conserving the photographs, photocopies and .pdf files of the albums were made. The albums were dismantled. The photographs were numbered, scanned front and back at 300 dpi in .jpg form, and put into individual envelopes, which were then labeled and boxed. This finding aid contains an index to allow researchers to locate images of particular families members or of particular events, such as a wedding.

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## Arrangement note

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CMS. 108 is arranged into 2 series; photographs and papers.

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## Administrative Information

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### 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**

This collection was donated in 1991 by Marain Caltagirone.

### **Processing Information note**

In 2015, this collection was entered into the Archivists' Toolkit in compliance with DACS.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Genre(s)**

- Photographs

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Brooklyn |z New York, N.Y.

### **Subject(s)**

- Italian American families

Photographs

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