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Collection Summary

Title: Carfi family papers
Creator: Carfi, Carl
Dates: 1893-1974, bulk 1913-1967
Extent: 0.5 cubic feet (1 document box, 20 folders, 3 item boxes)
Language: English & Italian
Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Abstract: This collection consists of the papers and materials related to Giacomo "Carl" Carfi, who immigrated to Rochester, New York from Italy in 1913. The materials span Carfi's lifetime, 1895 to 1974, with family materials both within that date range and as early as 1893. The collection contains materials such as Carfi's immigration papers, certificates, and draft documents. In addition to the materials directly related to Carl Carfi, there are materials related to his brother John and his marriage, as well as larger objects such as a map of Sicily and framed portraits of Carl and John Carfi's parents.
Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition:

This collection was donated to the RMSC Museum & Science Center by Mrs. Nina Cosmas on June 26, 1986, accession # 86.180.

Custodial History:

Carl Carfi’s niece, Ms. Nina Cosmas donated these materials to the RMSC Museum & Science Center in 1986. Ms. Cosmas was the daughter of Carl’s brother John Carfi and his wife, Caroline Carfi, nee Barone.

Preferred Citation:

Carfi family papers, [box#:folder#]. RMSC Museum & Science Center. Rochester, NY.
Restrictions

Conditions Governing Use:

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Conditions Governing Access:

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this collection. Please contact the Archivist at 585.697.1947 to make an appointment.
Biographical Note

Giacomo (Carl) Carfi was born in 1895 in Valledolmo, Italy, and was the youngest of the three Carfi brothers that came from Italy and settled in Rochester, New York. Carl Carfi’s older brothers John and Nicholas came to Rochester around 1906 and 1908 respectively, according to the City of Rochester directories for those years.

Carl immigrated to the United States in 1913 and joined his brothers in Rochester, working as a carpenter and an auto repairman. In 1921, the three brothers went into business together and opened the Carfi Brothers Music store. Eventually, the brothers had three stores in the city, but they changed the stores from music stores to general stores in 1935. The last of the three stores, located on North Clinton Avenue, went out of business in 1959.

From 1913 to 1916, Carl took English courses at both the No. 18 Evening School and the Central Evening School No. 5, and received induction orders from both the United States military and the Italian military during World War I. However, Carl did not have to serve, as the Armistice was signed before he had to report for duty. After the war, Carl took classes to prepare for naturalization and completed them successfully in 1922, though his certificate was lost and he did not receive an official naturalization certificate until 1967.

In 1936, Carl became employed by the City of Rochester as an account clerk and later a Senior Account Clerk in the Department of Public Works. He remained in the employ of the City until his retirement in 1965. In addition to his work for the City, Carl was also a member of the Order of the Alhambra, a Catholic fraternal order. During his lifetime, Carl also did press work for Il Corriere Italiano Publishing Company and assisted in the housing survey conducted by the City in order to ascertain living conditions in the so-called “blighted areas” of Rochester. Carl passed away on October 2, 1974 and is buried in Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in Rochester, New York.
Scope & Content

This collection spans the lifetime of Carl Carfi, with documents dated from 1895 to 1974. There are outlier documents related to his brother John, whose daughter donated the collection to the RMSC. The bulk of materials date from 1913 to 1930, and focus on Carl's immigration to the United States and his path to citizenship. The materials are comprised of correspondence, photographs, certificates, cards, official documents relating to immigration and the military draft, and newspaper clippings. There are also papers entitled “family genealogy” that have a record of Carl’s immediate family both from Italy and the United States.

The collection contains many pieces of information detailing the processes Carl went through in order to gain United States citizenship, including instructions on how to prepare for his citizenship exams and certificates demonstrating his successful completion of naturalization courses. These illustrate the process that immigrants had to go through in order to become fully naturalized citizens, and the work that was required of them.

One of the unique documents in this collection is a telegram granting Carl the authorization to visit his brother Francesco at a prisoner of war camp in Crossville, Tennessee. Francesco was a Captain in the Italian Army during World War II and Carl was granted permission to visit him on July 24, 1943.
Arrangement
This collection consists of one document box divided into 20 folders and three small boxes.

Separated Materials
In addition to these papers, the collection contains three-dimensional objects that have been separated from the paper materials and can be located in the History Department of the RMSC. These objects include a statue of St. Cologero Eremita brought to the United States by Jospehine Barine, a bedding set made by Jospehine for the marriage of her daughter Caroline Barone to John Carfi, socks made by Antonia Carfi (Carl's mother) for his trip to America, and glasses belonging to Antonia Carfi.

Subject Headings
- Emigration and immigration
- Italian American families
- Ellis Island (N.J. and N.Y.)
- New York (State)--Rochester
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<td>Funerary materials, c. 1928</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Personal correspondence, 1928</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Carl Carfi’s birth certificate, 1895</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Passport, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Immigration documents, 1913</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Image of St. Mary, Saint of the Navigators, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Certificate of naturalization, 1967</td>
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<td>Photographs, 1913-1914, 1936</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Military documents, 1917-1918, 1942</td>
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<td>Postcards and photograph, 1916-1926</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Western Union telegram, 1943</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Professional correspondence, 1963-1964</td>
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<td>Certificates and cards, 1922, 1965, 1970</td>
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<td>Education certificates, 1913-1922</td>
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<td>Souvenir books, 1882, c. 1911</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Newspaper clippings, c. 1950s, 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>John and Caroline Carfi: Wedding memorabilia, 1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>John Carfi: Newspaper clipping, 1919</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Marriage certificate, 1893</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(Box 1) Portraits of Carl’s parents, in frame, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(Box 2) Map of Sicily, in frame, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>(Box 3) City of Rochester employee ID button, undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A: Legacy Finding Aid

The Carfi Family Collection

An Inventory of the Material in the Library of
The Rochester Museum and Science Center

Prepared by:
Katherine Leyda DeFazio
Graduate Intern, SUNY Brockport
December 20, 1995
The museum acquired this collection when it was donated in 1986 by Carfi's niece, Mrs. Nina Cosmos. It was quickly processed and parts of the collection were used in a fourth of July exhibit a few weeks after its acquisition. This collection had no apparent order when it was received. Some of the artifacts such as the bedding materials, the statue of St. Cologero Eremita, the wedding photographs and documents pertaining to the Barone or Dispensa family were probably added to the original collection by Mrs. Cosmos at a later date.

All of the three dimensional items included in this collection such as crocheted bedspreads, pillow shams, pillows and sheets with handmade lace, Antonia Carfi's glasses, the religious statue, socks and original frames can be found in the History department of the museum.
Scope and Content

The Carfi Family Collection is a small, but important collection which contains public records, photographs, artifacts and printed items of members of the Carfi family who immigrated from Italy to Rochester New York. The collection has two series, the first is centered around Carl Carfi and the second on his brother John Carfi. Also, there are three dimensional artifacts which were accessioned with this collection. However, they are located in the History department of the museum.

Series I - Carl Carfi

This assortment of documents spans the life time of Carl Carfi with records dated between 1893 and 1974. However, the majority of the documents are dated during the immigration period, World War I, and the 1960's.

The highlight of this series is the many artifacts pertaining to Carl's trip from Naples, Italy to Ellis Island, and finally to Rochester. His passport, customs tag, receipt of money exchange, passage ticket as well as the two pairs of socks that his mother made him for the trip are all part of the collection. This series also contains pieces of information about other members of the Carfi family which were collected by Carl. It includes a brief family genealogy and a letter written in Italian from family members who stayed in Italy. One interesting piece of the collection is the Western Union telegram granting Carl permission to visit his brother, Francesco a captain in the Italian army, at the W.W.II P.O.W. camp in Crossville Tennessee.
Series II - John Carfi

This series refers to Carl's brother and his wife, John and Caroline (Barone) Carfi. It is a very small part of the collection with only a few items dated in 1893, 1916, and 1919. These records were probably added to the first series by Nina Cosmos, John and Caroline's daughter. It contains the couple's wedding invitation dated June 10, 1916, a list of gifts received, two wedding pictures, a small remembrance notebook, and an essay written by John in 1919. Caroline's parents marriage certificate, dated 1893 is also part of this collection. Caroline's mother, Josephine (Dispensa) Barone immigrated to Batavia, New York from Valledolmo, Italy in 1893. She made all of the linen and crocheted items, which are in the History Department part of this collection, for her daughter's hope chest.

The museum acquired this collection when it was donated in 1986 by Mrs. Nina Cosmos. It was quickly processed and parts of the collection were used in a fourth of July exhibit a few weeks after its acquisition. This collection had no apparent order when it was received.
Biography

The Carfi family was originally from Valledolmo, Italy. Three of the Carfi brothers immigrated to the United States and settled in Rochester. According to the city directory, Nicholas Carfi came to Rochester around 1906 with his brother John joining him around 1908. Carl, the youngest of the brothers that came to America, arrived in 1913 at the age of eighteen, bringing with him two pairs of socks and lire worth thirty dollars. Both Nicholas and John worked as barbers in the city after their arrival while Carl worked first as a carpenter and later as an auto repairman. However, in 1921 the three brothers quit their perspective trades and opened the first of three Carfi Brothers Music stores. The Carfi stores were in operation on North Clinton avenue, Portland avenue and West Main street in Rochester. In 1935 the brothers changed the format of the store from a music store to a general variety store. The Carfi Brothers stores operated successfully in Rochester for nearly 40 years before the last store at 417 North Clinton avenue went out of business in 1959.

After immigrating to Rochester, Carl learned English from evening school classes and was almost inducted into the United States army during WW I. The collection contains the canceled induction orders dated the day after the Armistice. After the war, he passed the citizenship requirements and worked in the family stores until 1939 when he became employed by the city. He advanced to senior account clerk in the Department of Public Works and retired from this position in 1965 at the age of seventy. Although Carl passed the requirements for naturalization in 1922, he did not receive his naturalization certificate until 1967 because it had been lost.

During his lifetime Carl was active as the President of the 5th ward Young Republican club, a member of the Garibaldi Society and the Alhambra chapter of the
Knights of Columbus. He was also a part of St. Anthony of Padua parish and the Numismatic Society. Carl died on October 2, 1974 at the age of 79 and is buried at the Holy Sepulchre cemetery in Rochester. Carl Carfi never married. However, his brother John did, and it was his daughter, Nina Cosmos, who donated this collection to the Rochester Museum and Science Center in 1986.
Descendants of [Francesco] Carfi

Carfi
1842 - 1932

Antonia
Taccia
1891 - 1938

Mario Carfi
1878 -

Joseph Carfi
1882 -

Nicholas Carfi
1882 -

Mariana Carfi
1884 -

John Carfi
1897 - 1946

Caroline Barone

Marietta Carfi
1895 -

Carl Carfi
1897 - 1974

Francesco Carfi
1908 -

Rahaello Carfi
1911 -

Nina Carfi
Items in the Library Archive

Series I - Carl Carfi

Box 1: Portraits of mother and father in frame

Box 2: Map of Sicily in frame

Box 3: Employee ID button, City of Rochester

Folder 1: Family Genealogy

Folder 2: Portrait of mother, photograph of mother laid out for funeral, lock of her hair and crypt plan

Folder 3: Letter reporting death of mother in Italy, written in Italian

Folder 4: Carl Carfi: birth certificate, born in Valledolmo, Italy June 8, 1895, written in Italian

Folder 5: Carl Carfi's passport

Folder 6: Carl Carfi: foreign exchange receipt, custom's immigration tag from Ellis Island, ticket for passage from Naples to NY, November 23, 1913

Folder 7: Religious picture of Mary Saint of the Navigators, probably carried with him during trip to America

Folder 8: Carl Carfi: Certificate of Naturalization

Folder 9: Photographs: of Carl Carfi, portrait possibly 1913-1914, portrait made into a postcard, 2 photographs of the Carfi Music Store, Nicholas Carfi in front- May 20, 1936

Folder 10: Giacomo (Carl) Carfi's WW I induction orders - United States and Italy, 1917 and 1942 U.S. military registration certificates, 1917 military census and inventory card, motor transport corps card, 3 selective service registration cards.

Folder 11: Postcards: Palermo, 1916, 1918; Caltagirone, 2-1920, written in Italian; photograph of Carl & John Carfi and Ferrari? in costume for a carnival before lent, 1925-1926
Folder 12: Carl Carfi: July 20, 1943, Western Union telegram granting permission to visit his brother, P.O.W. Francesco Carfi, Captain in Italian army, W.W.II P.O.W. camp, Crossville Tennessee

Folder 13: Carl Carfi: 2 letters recommending Carfi be changed from senior account clerk- 33hrs to senior account clerk- 44hrs, payroll authorization card- July 9, 1964

Folder 14: Certificates and Cards:
- Certificate of appreciation from City of Rochester, August 8, 1939 to September, 1963, Certificate of membership: order of the Alhambra (Branch of the Knights of Columbus) July 18, 1970, Dept. of Public Safety courtesy pass: representative of Il Corriere Italiano Publishing co., ID card: Senior citizens action council, American Citizenship information card- time and location of English classes to prepare for examination

Folder 15: Education: Evening School certificates, 1913-1914, 1915, 1916 and citizenship course completion certificate, June 27, 1922

Folder 16: Souvenir books of Rochester: Rochester Illustrated and Souvenir of Rochester

Folder 17: Carl Carfi newspaper clippings: 55th birthday, obituary 1974, article "Needy keep spirits up, housing survey shows" on a housing survey that was done by Carfi

Series II - John Carfi

Folder 18: John and Caroline Carfi: Marriage, invitation- June 10, 1916, small notebook- addresses and account of money for sister in Italy, photograph of John and Caroline, two wedding photographs, lists of gifts given at wedding

Folder 19: "I am proud to be an American" by John Carfi, 3rd winner in Americanization essay conducted by the Chamber of Commerce, June 17, 1919

Folder 20: Marriage Certificate: Luigi Barone and Guiseppa (Josephine) Dispensa 1893, written in Italian, St. Anthony's Buffalo, NY
Related materials in
The Rochester Museum and Science Center

The Cerino File: Archival collection of a Rochester Italian-American that served overseas during WWII. WWII military travel guides.


Found in the Vertical Files of the RMSC Library:


--------- Transcripts of Interviews with Italian Americans in Rochester.


--------- "Lewis Street Center and the Integration of Rochester's Italians." unpublished
Artifacts which can be found in the History department of the museum.

1. Statue of St. Cologero Eremita brought from Italy by Josephine Barone. She celebrated Saint's feast day each year by preparing a shrine for this statue.

2. Crocheted bedspread and two pillowshams

3. White bedspread with crocheted borders

4. Three sheets with handmade lace

5. Thirteen pillowcases with handmade lace

6. Two pieces of sheet with embroidery

7. Crocheted bedspread

8. Antonia Carfi's glasses

9. Two pairs of socks, one with the initials "C.C." Made by Antonia Carfi for her son Carl Carfi when he came to the U.S. in 1913.