

**The New York Public Library
Humanities and Social Sciences Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Gino Speranza Papers
1887-1935**

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June 1989**

Biographical Note

Gino Speranza, attorney, journalist and author, was born in Connecticut on April 23, 1872. He was the son of Carlo L. Speranza and Adele Capetti. Speranza spent his early childhood in Verona, Italy. After returning to the United States in 1881 he attended school in New York City and in 1892, graduated from the College of the City of New York. He received his law degree from New York University Law School and was admitted to the Bar in 1895. In 1897 Speranza became legal counselor to the Italian Consulate General in New York. Speranza's interest in immigrants and immigration became the focus of much of his writing and his efforts on behalf of immigrants included the founding of the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants and his work for the Investigation Bureau for Italian Immigrants which was established in 1906 by the Italian government to protect the rights of Italian immigrants.

Having given up his legal practice in 1912, Speranza embarked upon a journalistic/literary career and in 1915 he went to Italy as a feature correspondent for the *New York Evening Post* and the *Outlook*. After the War Speranza became Attaché on Political Intelligence at the United States Embassy in Rome and in 1919 he returned to the United States.

Speranza's writings in the 1920's focused on his theories regarding the basic and unique Anglo-Saxon, Protestant nature of the American character and the effects of recent immigration on American culture and politics. His book *Race or Nation*, published in 1925 was his major study on these themes. What Speranza perceived as the disintegration of American society led him to ever more extreme positions in his efforts to stop the flow of immigration and to restrict voting rights of foreigners already in this country.

Speranza was married to Florence Colgate (1873-1951) in 1909. He died in 1927.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Gino Speranza span the years 1887 to 1935 and include correspondence, writings, legal papers, research materials, financial papers, diaries, scrapbooks and printed matter. Also included are papers relating to several organizations with which Speranza was involved and a small series of Florence Colgate Speranza's papers. The largest group of organizational papers are those relating to The Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants. There are smaller files devoted to the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane and the Westchester County Committee for Belgian Relief.

Series Descriptions

I. General Correspondence (1887-1933) reflects Speranza's life-long personal and professional interest in immigration issues and especially his involvement with the Italian community in the United States. Speranza's work with the Investigation Bureau for Italian Immigrants, the National Italian Labor Exchange, the Labor Information Office for Italians, The Prison Association of New York, the Richmond Hill House and the Committee on Crime and Immigration of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology are all documented to varying degrees in this section. There is some overlap between the General Correspondence and the correspondence in other series.

As counsel to the Consul General of Italy, Speranza investigated claims of the families of Italian citizens who died in the United States. Many of these were laborers killed in job-related accidents and Speranza worked to procure some compensation, or at least, back wages for the families of these men. The Legal Files, which are arranged alphabetically, contain additional information on some of these cases. This correspondence documents the often harsh conditions of immigrant laborers in the early years of the century. A May 25, 1906 report by Speranza describing the conditions of workers for the Carolina Company is of particular interest. The Carolina Company brought many Italian immigrants to North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia to clear land for the South & Western Railway Company. Among Speranza's correspondents in his work for the Consul were Raybaudi Massiglia and Adolfo Rossi.

In 1915 Speranza went to Italy as a feature correspondent for *The New York Evening Post* and the *Outlook* and in July of 1918 he was appointed assistant in the American Embassy in Rome. Most of the letters from this period are copies (the originals may be at Stanford with Speranza's diary from the war years). His correspondents while in Italy included Thomas Nelson Page and Norval Richardson of the American Embassy in Rome and B. Harvey Carroll, of the American Embassy in Venice. Speranza also corresponded with Ernest Hamlin Abbot and Lawrence F. Abbot of the *Outlook*.

The correspondence for the later years of the series includes letters regarding publications of Speranza's work. Speranza continued to publish in the *Outlook* and also in the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Yale Review*. Speranza corresponded extensively with French Strother regarding a series of articles he published in *World's Work*. The articles, published in 1923, reflect Speranza's increasingly restrictionist views and his theories on the nature and influences of "foreign stock" on American society. Other correspondents on these matters include Talcott Miner Banks, Robert M. Yerkes and John Jay Chapman.

A small number of personal /family letters are included in the general correspondences, most notably, letters from Speranza's father, Carlo.

II. The Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants (1901 - 1923) contains material relating to includes the Society's constitution, correspondence, reports and printed matter. Correspondents include Eliot Norton, who served as president of the Society and William B. Howland who served as its treasurer. These papers also include a 1903 report by Speranza on conditions in labor camps in West Virginia.

III. Scuola d'Industrie Italiane (1905 - 1927) include by-laws, minutes, correspondence, financial papers, printed matter and two photographs. The school sought to teach and promote traditional Italian needlecrafts and to make the practice of these crafts a viable economic venture. Florence Colgate Speranza was active in the schools programs both before and after her marriage and she served for a time as the President of the Executive Board. Volume 17 is also made up of material related to the Scuola.

IV. Legal Papers (1895 - 1927) are arranged alphabetically and make up the largest series in the collection. The files represent both Speranza's private cases and cases undertaken in his capacity as counsel to the Italian Consulate. The latter often involved investigating the cases of Italian citizens injured or killed while working in the United States. A list of file names is provided in Appendix A.

V. Westchester Committee for Belgian Relief (1914 - 1915) papers include correspondence and clippings. Gino Speranza served as secretary.

VI. Writings are divided into several categories:

A. Writings on immigration include articles, lectures, reviews and reports, mostly in typescript form.

B. Notebooks on Italo-American relations include research notes and holograph and typescript copies of Speranza's writings on Italy and the contributions of Italian immigrants to American culture. Also included are materials related to Filippo Mazzei. See Appendix B.

C. Filippo Mazzei photostats were collected by Gino and Florence Speranza, both of whom were interested in the life and work of this 18th century Italian democrat. This section is made up entirely of photostats from the Mazzei Archives in Italy.

D. The General writings include articles, fiction, essays, reports and reviews. Several articles relate to Speranza's war time experiences and the aftermath of the war in Europe.

E. Research notes are made up of many holograph notes, sometimes incomplete, on subjects including politics, religion, education and immigration.

VII. Diaries (1904-1927) for the most part record Speranza's European travel including trips to Italy, Holland, Mexico, Czechoslovakia and England. Several trips within the United States are also documented. See Index 6 for a list of individual volumes.

VIII. Financial Papers (c.1897-1927) include account books, personal accounts and check books.

IX. Printed Matter/Subject Files contain material on education, immigration, Latin America, religion, the Ku Klux Klan and other topics. A file of published articles by Speranza is also included.

X. Florence Colgate Speranza (1898-1935) papers include correspondence, a diary, a commonplace book and printed matter. Her correspondence as a trustee of Barnard College (1899-1912) is of particular interest.

In addition to the series listed above, the collection contains small a small file on Speranza's estate, Jerrycroft in Irvington, New York, and memorabilia from his European trips in 1914 and 1915.

The 44 volumes, described at the end of the box list, include scrapbooks and other notebooks compiled by Gino and Florence Speranza.

Container List

Box

- 1 I. General Correspondence
 1887-1905, August
- 2 1905, September - December
- 3 1906, January - July
- 4 1906, August - 1907, December
- 5 1908, January - 1911, January
- 6 1911, February - December
- 7 1912, January - 1913, January
- 8 1913, February - 1914, December
- 9 1915, January - 1918, September
- 10 1918, October - 1924, April
- 11 1924, May - 1933, December
- 12 II. Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants
 1901 - 1904
- 13 1905 - 1923
- 14 III. Scuola d'Industrie Italiane (see also volume 17)
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- 15 Unsorted
- 15 IV. Legal Papers (See Appendix A for case file list)
 A - Bal
- 16 Ban - Bo
- 17 Bri - Can
- 18 Can - Cat
- 19 Cav - Con
- 20 Cosco - Div

Box

21	Fan - Fem
22	Fer - Gav
23	Gia - Ill
24-26	Illinois Surety Company
27	LaG - Los
28	Lou - Mast
29	Mel - Nat
30	Nic - Pis
31	PI - San
32	San - Ter
33	Ter - Zam
34	Unsorted and Legal Accounts

V. Westchester County Committee for Belgian Relief, 1914-1915

VI. Writings

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A

Application of the U.S. Immigration law in relation to the number of Italians
admissible under its provisions, June 1922
L'Attitudine Americana verso L'Immigrazione Italiana

B

The Bright Side in the Life of Our Immigrants

G

Getting Evidence in the Labor Camps of West Virginia

H

How It Feels to be a Problem
How Italy Watches Over Her Four Million Immigrants

I

The Immigrant Peril
L'Immigrante nelle Corte Americane, 1911
Incipit: La vita dell'Italiano in America
Incipit: I have said that Stevenson's Xmas sermons
The Influence of America on the Italian Immigrant
The Industrial and Civic Relations of the Italian in Congested Districts
The Interpreter Service in our Courts

Box

Italian Immigrants and the War
L'Italiano in America nei suoi Rapporti cogli Americani

—
M

The Meanest Fraud of All
The Melting Pot and Literature

—
N

La Neccesita di un Accordo Internazionale in Riguardo agli Emmigrante
The Newer Spirit in Immigration

—
P

Political Representation of Italo-American Colonies in the Italian Parliament
The Possibility of International Cooperation Regarding Italian Immigration to
the United States
The Problem that Confronts the American Charity Worker Aiding Needy
Italians
La Protezione del Emmigrante Italiano agli Stati Uniti

—
S

Some Aspects of the Immigration Problem
Some Considerations on Conditions in the Labor Camps of West Virginia
Strife Due to Immigrants

Lectures

Report to Conte A.R. Massaglia, May 26, 1906, Re: Labor Camps of the
Carolina Company in North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia

Review of Immigration Crossroads by Constantine Panunzio,
February 23, 1927

B. Notebooks on Italo-American Relations (See Appendix B)

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40	21 - 33
41	34 - 37
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C. Filippo Mazzei Research Material (Photostats from the Mazzei Archives)

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44	Folders 71 - 124

D. General

45	The Adventures of Two Gentle Knights: A Comedy in Two Acts The American Committee for War Relief in Florence, 1915 The American Hospital in Florence American Idealism
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Box

American Stories
L'Amministrazione della Legge Civile in America
Artisans in America and other essays on American subjects
Austrian Prisoners in Italy

Characteristics of the Italian Soldier

Disrupting Forces in American Democracy
Dutch Sketches

Europe during and after the War (several articles)
European Judaism and the War

Fairy Stories
Fillston Corner
For Love of Italy

Gardens

Have the Churches Betrayed Religion? [incomplete]

Incipit: The reader of the news from Italy is struck in these days
Italia
Italian Parliamentarism (A study of the last general elections in Italy)
Italian Stories Laid in America

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Jerrycroft Stories

My Beloved New England

New Horizons in Penal Law
The Newest Freedom

A Pair of Shirts (play)
Political Views and Tendencies of the Modern Papacy from the Standpoint of
American Political Thought

Report of the Committee for the Relief of Russian Children
Reviews (book reviews by Speranza)

Significant changes in the Latest Ministerial Combination in Italy
Some Political Aspects of Roman Catholicism
The Sphinx
Stories Laid in Europe
Survey of the Political Situation in Italy

Texas and Southwestern Cattlemen's Association

Uncensored Retrospect of War Damage to Italian Art, 1919

Vintage Time in Warring Italy, 1918

Box Westchester County, New York Stories
Young glory
Unsorted Writings

E. Research Notes

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The Church (Protestant) and Roman Catholic Papacy
Democratic Questions
Education
- 47 Immigration (unsorted)
Italian Immigration in California
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Italy and World War I
Latin America
New England
Political Theories and Sovereignty
Racial Questions
Religion in the United States
Social Problems
Studies in Italian Thought and Life
Vatican Questions and the Papacy
Unsorted
- 48 VII. Diaries, 1904 - 1927
- 1- 2. Journal of a trip to Italy on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants, 1904 – 1905
- 3 Traveling expenses, wedding trip to Italy, 1909
- 4 Jerrycroft, 1912
- 5 Holland & Italy, 1914
- 6 Notes/Expenses, 1915
- 7 Florida & New Hampshire, 1919-1921
- 8-9 Italy, Austria & Czechoslovakia, 1922
- 10 Washington, D.C., New Mexico, Texas, Mexico, Chicago, 1923
- 11 England, Portugal & Spain, 1925
- 12 Travels, summer 1925
- 13 Health of Florence Colgate Speranza

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New Mexico
The Papacy
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X. Papers of Florence Colgate Speranza

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Diary, 1935
Commonplace Book, 1935
Printed matter (general)

Box

58 Correspondence as trustee of Barnard College, 1899 - 1912
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- 2 Writings in Italy by Gino Speranza, 1915 - 1916
- 3 Scrapbook of clippings, 1900 - 1922
Articles by Gino Speranza in the *Evening Post* and the *New York Times*
- 4 Press Reviews and comments on "The Immigration Peril" and *Race and Nation*
- 5 Personal Scrapbook, 1897 - 1907
- 6 Personal Scrapbook, 1892 - 1943
- 7 Press Reviews, comments, letters on *The Diary of Gino Speranza*
- 8-9 "Avanti Savoia" - Studies and Pictures of Italy at War, Rome 1915 - 1919
- 10 Writings in Italy, 1916 - 1918 (typescript)
- 11 Journals relating to Ugo Capetti:
La Ronda, Oct. 21, 1883 and Nov. 20, 1887
Conversazioni della Domenica, Oct. 31, 1886 and June 5, 1887
- 12 *Manifatture Cotoniere Meridionali*, Naples 1922
(decorative, promotional trade publication) Transferred to Rare Books
- 13 Harding & Speranza Ledger (legal), 1898 - 1904
- 14 Speranza Ledger (legal), 1903 - 1906
- 15 Account book (personal), c. 1921 -1923
- 16 Scrapbook, Florence Colgate Speranza
Clippings about Fascism, 1929
- 17 Scrapbook, Scuola d'Industrie Italiane: Minutes, Reports, Printed Matter
- 18 - 22 Removed from collection (Added to Methodist Episcopal Church Records)
- 23 Inter-Municipal Research Committee Report on Condition of Immigrants, 1906
- 24 *Gli Italiani Negli Stati Uniti d;America* New York: Italian American Directory Co., MCMVI.
- 25 - 26 West Virginia Investigation, 1913

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- 27 - 27B Louisiana, 1923 (3 volumes)
- 29 Blackstone Notes (New York Law School)
- 30 Law of Contracts (New York Law School)
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