Finding Aid for the Orange County American-Italian Renaissance Lodge, Foundation and Italian Heritage Archive 2011.059.r

Finding aid prepared by Rand Boyd

Frank Mt. Pleasant Library of Special Collections and Archives, Leatherby Libraries
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01/31/2012
John N. LaCorte

John N. LaCorte, a champion of Italian heritage who won a national holiday honoring Christopher Columbus and got a major bridge named for a neglected explorer, Giovanni da Verrazano, died on Wednesday at Long Island College Hospital in Brooklyn. He was 81 years old and lived in Brooklyn Heights.

He died of complications from a heart attack, his family said.

For more than 50 years he promoted the accomplishments of Italians and Italian-Americans, who he said were often uninformed about their heritage or ashamed of it.

The campaign for Columbus Day began with a celebration in Brooklyn in 1939. His idea spread in Italian neighborhoods and led to a parade in Manhattan. Inspired by the green stripe down Fifth Avenue for St. Patrick’s Day, he asked the city to paint a purple stripe, a color Columbus liked, for Columbus Day. When the request was denied, he appealed to Mayor Robert F. Wagner, who acceded. A Stamp for Garibaldi

Marching in one parade in 1947, Mr. LaCorte passed the office of an Irish historical organization and decided to found the Italian Historical Society of America, which continues today.

He helped get a postage stamp commemorating the Italian patriot Garibaldi, traced New York’s first Italian settler to 1635, credited the founding of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to Charles J. Bonaparte and claimed that Antonio Meucci, a Staten Islander, invented the telephone before Alexander Graham Bell patented and commercialized it.

Mr. LaCorte won belated recognition for Verrazano, the first European to explore New York Harbor, which Verrazano did 85 years before Henry Hudson sailed up the river that bears his name.

Mr. LaCorte’s causes included preventing juvenile delinquency, controlling neighborhood crime, slowing the spread of high-rise apartments and opposing Communism in Italy and San Marino. A Price on Virginity

His ideas were often quixotic. A wealthy man, he announced a plan in 1987 to give $1,000 to teen-age girls who remained virgins until age 19. The plan drew international attention, criticism from feminists and few if any applicants. Later he tried to promote the idea of human improvement through an organization called the Better World J L Institute.

Born in Jersey City, Mr. LaCorte moved to Sicily with his parents and grew up there. He returned to the United States at the age of 19 with 17 cents to his name. He played briefly in a band, then sold refrigerators and vacuum cleaners before a long career as a salesman for New York Life Insurance and then running his own agency.

He is survived by his son, John J., of Torrence, Calif., and one grandchild.
**Biographical/Historical note**

The Orange County American Italian Renaissance Foundation Inc. (OCAIRF) was an Italian heritage group founded in the 1970s to promote and celebrate the contributions of Italian-Americans to the development of Orange County, CA.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

DeSantis, Frank
Italian Americans.
Orange County (Calif.)--Ethnic relations--History--20th century
Orange County Amerian-Italian Renaissance Foundation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document-boxes 1, 2</th>
<th>Minutes 1985-1996</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Physical Description: 0.834 Linear feet (2 document boxes)</td>
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**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains three volumes and one folder of minutes from the meetings of the OCAIRF for the years 1985 to 1996.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Orange County American-Italian Renaissance Foundation (OCAIRF)

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**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains two volumes of newsletters from the OCAIRF for the years 1972 to 1982.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Orange County American-Italian Renaissance Foundation (OCAIRF)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document-boxes 1, 2</th>
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**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains a binder of slides of various Foundation events and personalities.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Orange County American-Italian Renaissance Foundation (OCAIRF)

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**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains six scrapbooks of OCAIRF events for the years 1981 to 1997.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Orange County American-Italian Renaissance Foundation (OCAIRF)
**Ephemera mid 20th century**

**Document-box 6**

**Language of Material:** English  
**Physical Description:** 0.417 Linear feet (1 document box)  
**Scope and Contents note**  
This series contains several items of an ephemeral nature relating to the Foundation or the Order of the Sons of Italy in America:  
1 Poster; Columbus meeting natives 500th anniversary; 24” x 18”  
1 Medal; gold, Front: “Columbus Day 2007” “Italio Americans”, Back: “Mr. Frank De Santis, 1990”  
1 Vial, sand from San Salvador where Columbus landed (display case)  
1 Pin, “I Got Mine”, green, Order Sons of Italy in America  
1 Medalion, gold; on a gold chain; “Order Sons of Italy in America”  
51 Envelopes, “Columbus Monument 500 project, 1492-1992”; various Columbus themed stamps  
5 Pins, “Order Sons of Italy”; various colors  
1 Coaster, “Renaissance Log & Foundation, Sons of Italy”  
**Subjects and Indexing Terms**  
Orange County American-Italian Renaissance Foundation (OCAIRF)  
Order Sons of Italy in America

**Dedication of the Italian Heritage Archive 2012**

**Document-box 1**

**Language of Material:** English  
**Physical Description:** (1 folder)  
**Scope and Contents note**  
This subseries contains a program from the dedication and a newsletter discussing the dedication.

**Columbus Day celebrations 2012**

**Document-box 1**

**Language of Material:** English  
**Physical Description:** (1 folder)  
**Scope and Contents note**  
This subseries contains a program from the 2012 Columbus Day celebration at the Bowers Museum as well as copies of two speeches delivered at the celebration.  
**Subjects and Indexing Terms**  
Baldwin, Charlene  
Pacchioni, Frederico

**Realia**

**Bin 1**

**Language of Material:** English  
**Physical Description:** 3.0 Linear feet (3 cartons)  
**Scope and Contents note**  
This series contains several statues and busts:  
1 Statue; Wooden Columbus; gold plaque at the base reads, “In Honor and Appreciation…”, 20”, September 19, 1996 (display case)  
1 Statue, white bust, plastic, damaged under left ear  
1 Statue, lion laying down  
1 Statue, white bust, plastic  
1 Statue, Columbus seated (display case)
This series contains an obituary for John N. La Corte as well as a documentary on his impact in New York with the Italian-American movement.

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