

MONTANI FAMILY PAPERS 1883-1988

Collection #
M 0377
BV 2219-2235; 2541-2542
OM 0236

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Processed by
Paul Brockman
21 July 1989, 19 November 1997

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 10 manuscript boxes, 19 bound volumes, 1 oversize folder.

COLLECTION DATES: 1883-1988

PROVENANCE: John Montani, Indianapolis, IN, 1986, 1988; Carole Carlson, Anderson, IN, 1991.

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: John Bova Conti Account Book (BV 2180); *The Italians of Indianapolis: The Story of Holy Rosary Parish, 1909-1984* (pQ 282.772).

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 1987.0162; 1987.0240; 1989.0170; 1991.0774

NOTES:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Montani family immigrated to the United States from the village of Lourenza, Italy, near Naples, in 1878. Ferdinand Montani and his family first settled in Utica, New York, and moved to Indianapolis in 1881 where he opened a fruit and confectionery stand at the southeast corner of Washington and Meridian Streets in 1883 or 1884. Ferdinand Montani was assisted by his sons Guy (1867-1957) and Dominic (1865-1907). The stand was later moved to Washington and Delaware Streets (1886 or 1887). The first indoor market was opened at 312 N. Alabama in 1890, but it was later moved to 103 N. Illinois, which, in turn, gave way to the stand in the City Market, which opened in 1900. The business expanded to include imported fancy grocery items such as olive oil and pasta and home made Italian sausages and fresh roasted coffee. Dominic and Guy continued the family business following their father's death, and Guy assumed sole control when Dominic died in 1907. In 1928 Guy opened a second store in Marott Hotel, and he was assisted in the operation by his children. The City Market stand was closed in 1955, and the following year the store in the Marott was moved to 12 W. 27th Street. The Montani's operated a Gift Basket across the street from the grocery at 11 W. 27th. Guy Montani's children continued the family business following their father's death in 1957. John Montani (1912-) and other family members operated the grocery until 1978 when a series of robberies and declining business caused by a change in the neighborhood forced them to close.

The Montanis were also accomplished musicians. Ferdinand's five sons were educated at music schools in Indianapolis and other cities. Guy was 17 when he started playing violin in local symphonies; Dominic played the harp; Anthony A. (1875-1948) was a violin instructor and music teacher at high schools in Indianapolis, Palo Alto, California, and other cities; Pasquale (1874-1955) was a music professor and instructor at the Jordan Conservatory at Butler University; and Nicola (1880-1948) who in addition to being an accomplished cornet player, was also an internationally famous authority on Catholic Liturgical Music whose accomplishments included editor of the Catholic Choirmaster, founder of the Society of St. Gregory, instructor at Seton College in New Jersey and other institutions, student at Santa Cecilia in Rome, and was knighted by the Pope.

In 1890 the Montani Brothers formed an orchestra that played at numerous formal and private functions throughout the Midwest until the 1920s. Guy and Dominic were also instrumental in forming the Indianapolis Protective Musicians Union Local 3 of the American Federation of Musicians--the third musician's union formed in the United States. Guy was also first violin in the first Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra formed in 1900 and remained with the ISO for 32 years.

The collection also contains letters from Anthony B. Montani (1907-1953), the son of Dominic, an accountant who worked for the Indiana Public Service Commission, was auditor for the Indiana State Alcoholic Beverage Commission, and a sergeant in a ground crew in the 9th Air Force during World War II.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of the personal correspondence of several members of the Montani family, the financial records of the Montani grocery business, and the records of the Montani Brothers Orchestra.

Family correspondence includes letters in Italian from relatives in Italy and the United States to Ferdinand, Dominic, and other family members, 1883-1926, apparently discussing family matters and local news of personal interest. There also are letters to Guy Montani from brother Nicola in Philadelphia, Rome (Italy), Indiana, and other places, regarding family, his music career, and general events, 1902-1948; letters to Guy Montani from nephew Tony (Anthony B. Montani) during World War II written from military bases in the United States and from Europe (England, France, Belgium, and Germany) inquiring about home news and describing every day activities in the military (Tony was a sergeant on the ground crew for the 48th Fighter Squadron of the 9th Air Force), 1942-1945; and letters to Guy from John Yacopino, a friend in the U.S. Navy stationed on the USS Chaumont, Pueblo, Preston, and Lamsom from the Philippines, Nicaragua, Europe, New York, and California, 1922-1930, describing Navy life, his fiancée, home and family, and two letters from North Africa during World War II, 1943-1945. There are also other personal letters, telegrams, and notes from family and friends to various members of the Montani family dealing with a variety of

subjects, 1901-1955, including letters to Guy from his cousin Fred (Ferdinand D'Esopo) from the Base Hospital at Camp Shelby, Mississippi during World War I and later as an attorney in Hartford, Connecticut in the 1920s, and letters to Guy from his brother Tony in New York. A small number of these letters are also in Italian.

The collection also contain financial records of the Montani's grocery business. These include invoices, receipts, and correspondence from merchants in Italy such as Francesco Bertolli of Luca regarding the importing of products such as olive oil and wine, copies of receipts from customer purchases, account books and ledgers, bills for rent as well as repairs and maintenance of the store, and a store inventory, 1890s-1970s. The majority of the business records consists of the daily ledger books listing itemized receipts and expenditures as well as daily sales accounts for the grocery store and the Gift Basket store, 1951-1977. There are also two bound volumes of account books listing income and expenditures as well as individual accounts, 1900-1910. In addition, there are personal finances of the Montanis such as accounts, investments, and receipts, 1893-1947.

There are also the records of the Montani Brothers Orchestra and other ensembles including the orchestra's engagement books, 1884-1924, listing playing dates, location, and number of musicians required. Also, programs from events where the orchestra performed such as graduations and special dinners at restaurants and hotels (1892-1905), and correspondence and related items regarding the Indianapolis Musicians' Protective Union and the orchestra, 1890-1957.

BOX AND FOLDER INVENTORY

BOX 1: Family Correspondence In Italian, 1883-1926; Personal Correspondence (Specific Individuals), 1902-1948.

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| 2 | Correspondence, 1886 |
| 3 | Correspondence, 1887 |
| 4 | Correspondence, 1888 (also OM 0236) |
| 5 | Correspondence, 1889 |
| 6 | Correspondence, 1890-1891 |
| 7 | Correspondence, 1892 |
| 8 | Correspondence, 1893 |
| 9 | Correspondence, 1894-1899 |
| 10 | Correspondence, 1900-1903 |
| 11 | Correspondence, 1907-1926 n.d. |
| 12 | Correspondence Documents, 1880s |
| 13 | Correspondence Documents, 1880s |
| 14 | Correspondence Documents, 1880s |
| 15 | Specification for remodeling building, 1893 |

- 16 Family Letters, 1883-1889
- 17 Family Letters, 1890-1899
- 18 Family Letters, 1900-1930 n.d.
- 19 Letters from Nicola Montani to Guy Montani, 1902-1924.
- 20 Letters from Nicola Montani to Guy Montani, 1925, 1928, 1946-1948.
- 21 Letters from Nicola Montani to Guy Montani, n.d.
- 22 World War II letters from Tony Montani, 1942-1944
- 23 World War II letters from Tony Montani, 1945
- 24 Letters from John Yacopino, 1922
- 25 Letters from John Yacopino, 1923-1924
- 26 Letters from John Yacopino, 1925-1930 n.d.

BOX 2: Family and General Correspondence, 1901-1955, 1988.

FOLDER CONTENTS

- 1 Family Correspondence, 1901-1929
- 2 Family Correspondence, 1931-1947 n.d.
- 3 General Correspondence, 1928-1955.
- 4 Miscellaneous Printed Materials, 1910s-1940s 1988
- 5 Account Books, 1899-1906
- 6 Account Books, 1907-1920
- 7 Account Books, 1921-1932, 1955, n.d.

BOX 3: Financial Records, 1896-1963; Cash Ledgers 1951, 1956

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- 1 Business Invoices, Receipts, and Correspondence, 1896-1906
- 2 (BV 2219-2235, 2451-2452) Financial Records, 1892-1933
- 3 Ledger, 1898-1904
- 4 Business Invoices, Receipts, and Correspondence, 1907-1909
- 5 Business Invoices, Receipts, and Correspondence, 1910-1911
- 6 Business Invoices, Receipts, and Correspondence, 1913-1914

- 7 Business Invoices, Receipts, and Correspondence, 1915-1916
- 8 Check and Deposit Register, 1919-1920
- 9 Business Invoices, Receipts, and Correspondence, 1923-1963 n.d.
- 10 Guy Montani Property Rental Statements, 1942-1947
- 11 Receipts, 1966
- 12 Receipts, 1966
- 13 Receipts, 1966
- 14 Store Inventory, ca. 1970s
- 15 Personal Finances, 1893-1947
- 16 Cash Ledgers, 1951, 1956

BOX 4: Cash Ledgers, 1956-1961

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- 1 Cash Ledgers, 1956-1957
- 2 Cash Ledgers, 1957
- 3 Cash Ledgers, 1957-1958
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BOX 6: Cash Ledgers, 1965-1966

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- 1 Cash Ledgers, 1965, Folder 1
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3 Cash Ledgers, 1966, Folder 1

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BOX 7: Cash Ledgers, 1967-1968

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1 Cash Ledgers, 1967, Folder 1

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3 Cash Ledgers, 1968, Folder 1

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BOX 8: Cash Ledgers, 1969; 1971-1972; 1975, 1977

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1 Cash Ledgers, 1969, 1971

2 Cash Ledgers, 1971-1972

3 Cash Ledgers, 1975, 1977

4 Cash Ledgers, 1977

BOX 9: Montani Brothers Orchestra, Engagement Books, 1884-1924 (37 small bound volumes)

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1 Engagement Books, 1883-1894

2 Engagement Books, 1895-1897

3 Engagement Books, 1897-1903

4 Engagement Books, 1904-1916, 1923-1924

BOX 10: Montani Brothers Orchestra, Programs and Correspondence, 1890-1957

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1 Correspondence and Related Items, 1890-1957

2 Programs, 1892-1903

3 Programs, 1900-1905

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's [online catalog](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

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