Documents for the History of Italians in Canada Donated to York University Archive

Olga Zorzi Pugliese
e Gabriele Scardellato

TORONTO - Dr. Angelo Principe, a retired part-time lecturer who taught at the University of Toronto and at York University, is well known as an energetic political commentator in our community, and also as the author of important books and articles on the history of Italians in Canada. Some months ago Dr. Principe made history himself with the donation of his extensive newspaper and book collection to the Clara Thomas Archives at York University.

During his decades-long research Dr. Principe gathered materials, many of which were entrusted to him for preservation by Italian-Canadian activists from the first half of the twentieth century like Attilio Bortolotti and Benny Bottos. In June 2014, with the assistance of Profs. Emeriti Germaine Warkentin (U of T) and John Warkentin (York U), the "Principe Collection", as it is now called, consisting of more than 110 cartons of materials, was received by Michael Moir, head of the Archives and Special Collections at York University, where the precious documents are being organized and catalogued and will be professionally conserved. The significance of this act of generosity cannot be overstressed. Researchers and students of the experience of Italians in Canada will henceforth be able to consult rare Italian-language newspapers from the early twentieth century published in North America, in many cases titles and issues not available anywhere else. These include *La Tribuna canadese, Il Progresso italo-canadese, Il Messaggero italo-canadese,* and *L'Emigrato.*

The addition of the "Principe Collection" to the York University Archives, whose mandate covers Canadian history inclusive of its multicultural facets, is particularly felicitous, given, moreover, that the Archive of the Province of Ontario, the second largest in Canada after the national archive in Ottawa, was relocated to the York University Campus in 2009. In this location students of the history of Italians in Canada will have a wealth of resources to draw upon in their research.

It is important to note that this groundbreaking donation of the "Principe Collection" was facilitated by board members of the Italian-Canadian Archives Project (ICAP). Established in 2010 as the result of a working conference held at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, this network of scholars, archivists, and community organizers has sought to encourage and assist individuals and associations throughout Canada in the preservation of their valuable documents, letters, and photos and, in appropriate circumstances, to suggest suitable places and institutions for the storing of their archives. It should be noted that ICAP does not directly collect historical material; rather it serves as an advocate for Canadian archives and Italian-Canadian collections by connecting individuals, organizations, and experts.

It is hoped that ICAP will be able to facilitate the donation of other important collections of Italian-Canadian materials to the York University Archive and to other suitable repositories. It is even contemplated that an Italian-Canadian Resource Centre (possibly named through a private endowment) might also be established within the university archive.

All those seeking advice or interested in collaborating are invited to consult the ICAP website (www.icap.ca), to contact us, and, especially, to consider becoming members of this worthwhile enterprise.

Olga Zorzi Pugliese, Prof. Emerita (U of T) and Member of the Board, ICAP

Prof. Gabriele Scardellato, "Mariano A. Elia" Chair in Italian-Canadian Studies (York University) and Member of the Board, ICAP