

Collection: Patricia Federici Collection

Accession Number: 2014.029.01

Finding Aid

Date Range: 1950-1953

Bulk Date: 1953

Creator: Patricia Federici

Containers: 1 File folder

Storage location: PCHS Library and Archives

Aid Created By: Heather Garside, Curator

Biographical Information:

Gaetano Federici (1880-1964) was a prolific Paterson sculptor, working from around 1900 until shortly before his death in the early 1960s. Federici's portfolio includes private statues and cemetery stones, as well as many of the public statues found in the Great Paterson area. Forty Federici pieces can be found within a two mile radius of Paterson city hall, including two of the three statues in front of city hall itself. Most of these pieces are still in place today. Many of Federici's subjects are themselves notable figures, both on a local and national level, including politicians, philanthropists, religious leaders and comedians. The artist worked in many mediums, including stone, bronze and plaster and many of his plaster scale models have also survived, several are held in the PCHS collection.

Gaetano Federici was born on September 22nd 1880 in Castlegrande Italy, the first child of to Antonio and Theresa Federici. Sometime after his son's birth, Antonio Federici immigrated to America in an effort to support his family. Gaetano and his mother followed Antonio to Paterson later, when Gaetano was seven. The family resided in several areas of Paterson including a house on Totowa Ave. and, in 1894, the family moved to Antonio's business quarters in Paterson. Gradually Gaetano was joined by his six siblings: Albert, Antonio, Domenick, Antonetta, Marie, Giuli, Rosa, and Loretta.

In 1894, Gaetano began school at age nine, attending first School 14, followed by School 6 and finally Paterson High School. During these years Gaetano was known to his classmates as "Tom Fredericks," a name developed by his father to mask the family's immigrant origins. At first glance it appeared that Gaetano would follow in the footsteps of his father and pursue a career in architecture. However, it soon became clear that the younger Federici was more interested in the

decorative embellishments of his father's projects than the architecture itself. It was Gaetano's mother Theresa who fostered and encouraged his artistic development.

Gaetano left high school to apprentice in New York City under sculptor Giuseppe Moretti in 1897. His training would progress quickly with Moretti and in 1899 he entered formal studies at the Arts Student League. He also apprenticed to Henry Bonnard Foundry and the Roman Bronze Works as a bronze-caster, to round out his skills.

As his career progressed, Gaetano decided to return to Paterson, despite potential opportunities elsewhere. His first commission came in 1905, for the James F. Stewart memorial. Part of the success of Federici's career is timing, as he began creating public statues for a city which was rebuilding and revitalizing after a major flood, fire and several large strikes in early 1900. Gaetano married Orsola Alois on April 29, 1908. His parents were not thrilled with the match of this mill worker's daughter to their talented son. In 1909 Orsola gave birth to a son, Antonio Canova. Antonio was joined by Teresa Maria in 1914. Gaetano Federici died on February 15, 1964 and is buried with other members of his family in Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, Totowa, under a sculpture of his own creation.

For more information on the life and work of Gaetano Federici, refer to *Gaetano Federici (1880-1964): The Artist as Historian*, edited by Flavia Alaya, 1980.

Scope and Content:

This is a collection of correspondence, all but one of which was received from Harry B. Haines, of the Paterson Evening News. Most of the letters are written about or refer to the Christopher Columbus memorial. Other works by Federici which are also mentioned in this collection are *Dublin Springs*, *Curule chair*, *Nathan Barnert*, and *Alexander and Elizabeth Hamilton*.

Series:

The items in this collection were located in a file folder. Upon receipt of these items, they were placed in chronological order.