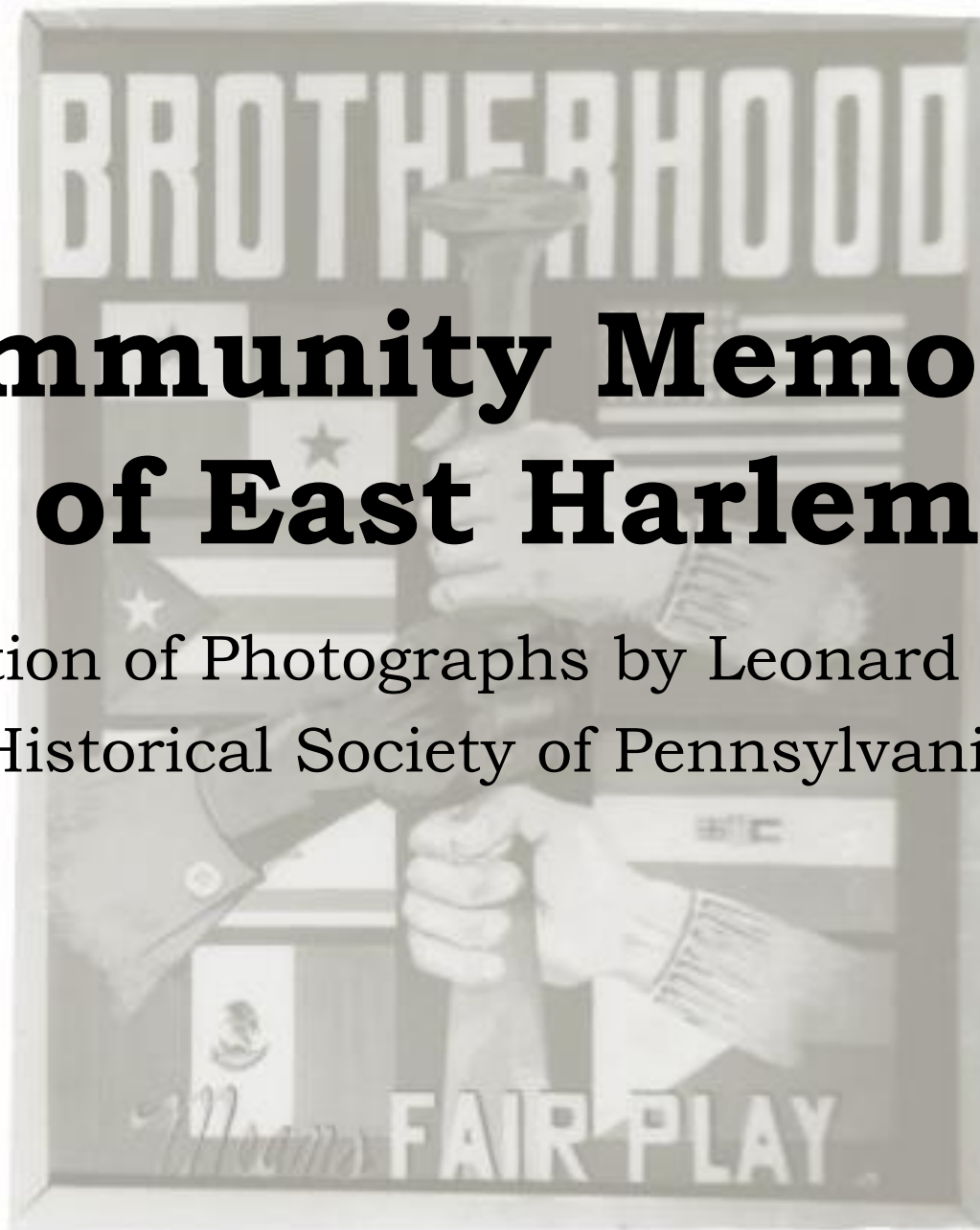


Community Memories of East Harlem

Collection of Photographs by Leonard Covello
Historical Society of Pennsylvania





The **Collection Leonard Covello Papers (1907-1974)** contains over 1,000 photographs Covello gathered throughout his life.

The following gallery of photographs is a sneak peak to the life in East Harlem during the mid-twentieth century.

Picture of Leonard Covello during the construction of Benjamin Franklin High School. NYC, circa 1941-1942.



Leonard Covello was born in 1887 at Avigliano, southern Italy.

At a young age, Covello moved to the United States along with his parents and siblings in 1896. He was only six years old.

Since then, Covello lived most of his life in East Harlem, New York.

Covello died August 19, 1982 in Messina, Italy.





Some of the photographs depict street events Covello organized to create bonds between the community and the public schools.

Other images depict how the streets and buildings looked at the time.



Couple dancing during a community event, n.d.



Special Assembly of the "War Against waste," 1941.



Women attending to the inauguration of the new building for Benjamin Franklin High School, circa 1941-1942.

Covello was involved in various agencies and associations of East Harlem. Some of these organizations promoted cultural activities.



East Harlem Committee on Aging.



Puerto Rican cultural presentation.



Coro d'Italia, an Italian cultural organization.



Photo Group of the Circolo Italiano, DeWitt Clinton High School, NY.

Covello worked at DeWitt Clinton High School. where he served as a French teacher from 1913-1917, as head of the Italian Language from 1922-1926, and as First Assistant in Modern Languages from 1926-1934.

During his time at DeWitt, Covello established the Il Circolo Italiano.

This school club combined social service, recreational, and cultural activities within the Italian-American community.



**Photo Group of the Circolo Italiano during a performance.
DeWitt Clinton High School, NYC.**



Benjamin Franklin School, main entrance of the new building. Photographer: John Albert, 1941

Leonard Covello was the founder and first principal of Benjamin Franklin High School.

In this institution, Covello implemented his teaching methods and promoted cultural integration between the Italian, Puerto Rican, and African-American children.

Covello worked in Benjamin Franklin High from 1934 to 1956.



Photo Group of the students from Benjamin Franklin High School, c. 1940s



Children participating in a public campaign, n.d.

By the 1940s, the neighborhood of East Harlem became increasingly Puerto Rican.

In the same way he did in the past with Italian-immigrant children, Covello encouraged racial integration in the school with the arrival of Puerto Rican families.



Club Borinquen at Benjamin Franklin High School, n.d.



School event at Benjamin Franklin High School, n.d.

The students also made sanitation campaigns to improve the life in the community of East Harlem.

Under the guidance of Covello, the Benjamin Franklin High School developed multiple activities in the neighborhood, such as cultural events.



Students and professors of Benjamin Franklin High School marching in East Harlem to promote the Sanitation Campaigns, n.d.



Photos of East Harlem taken during the Sanitation Campaigns.

As part of the efforts to learn about and improve the community, some of the students also participated in school projects that surveyed and documented the infrastructure of East Harlem.

This image, part of an unbound album, is part of a block survey made by Madeline T. DiGiacinto, a former student from Benjamin Franklin High School.



Backyard at 116th St. center of block. Private homes, all have garden at rear and all are orderly kept.



Backyards of homes on 22nd Ave. at 115th + 116th Sts. These backyards are dirty, rubbish accumulated and fire escapes congested. Kicks are clean.

**Pictures from a block survey project.
Created by Madeline T. DiGiacinto, 1959.**



These photographs reflect the efforts of Covello and Benjamin Franklin High School to make Franklin a leading example of a community centered school.



Pictures taken by students of Benjamin Franklin School during the housing campaigns.



Pictures taken by students of Benjamin Franklin School during their housing projects.