
Guide to the Alberto F. Porta Papers, 1881-1990

Collection Number: PP-Porta

Santa Clara University Archives

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Descriptive Summary

Provenance: Santa Clara University Archives Santa Clara University

Title: Alberto F. Porta Papers,

Date: 1881-1990

Repository: Santa Clara University Archives

Santa Clara, CA 95053

Extent: 1 linear foot

Collection Number: PP-Porta

Abstract: This collection documents a portion of the career of architect and professor Alberto F. Porta. Included in collection are clippings, correspondence, academic writings, newsletters, architectural drawings and photographs.

Languages: [code "English," not found in ISO 639-2 list], and [code "Italian" not found in ISO 639-2 list].

Access

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Alberto F. Porta Papers, Santa Clara University. University Archives.

Acquisitions Information

Gift of Alberto Porta's granddaughters, Alma Porta Brennan and Catherine Porta Gilligan, in 1996. Accession Number 996-029.

Biography

Alberto Francisco Porta, born in Mondovi, Italy in 1853, was a civil engineer and architect trained at the University of Turin. In 1894, at the request of the Guatemala government to serve as architect for the reconstruction of structures damaged by earthquakes and revolutions, Porta moved his family to Quesaltenango, Guatemala. The request to come to Guatemala was handled through the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). In Quesaltenango, Porta worked on rebuilding bridges and buildings.

Due to political unrest and natural disasters, including earthquakes and the eruption of the volcano, Santa Maria, the Porta family immigrated to San Jose, California in 1901 with the help of Jesuit friends. Porta first came to San Jose alone to find work, then sent for his family. Through Jesuit connections, Porta was hired at Santa Clara College in 1907 to teach Mechanics, Descriptive Geometry, and Architectural, Mechanical, Figure and Topographical Drawing. He remained at Santa Clara from 1907-1914. As a teacher, he has been described as a colorful professor devoted to the institution.

In 1914, Porta left Santa Clara, moved his family to San Francisco, and opened his own architect business. While in San Francisco, he published a newsletter on weather prediction entitled "Institute of Planetary Sciences." He soon became ill with cancer of the liver and died in 1923.

Scope and Content

The Alberto F. Porta Papers consist of correspondence, clippings, manuscripts, architectural drawings, and prints and negatives of drawings. The materials, in both English and Italian, reflect Porta's career as an architect in Guatemala and San Francisco, and a professor at Santa Clara College. Included in the collection are materials on weather forecasting, earthquake predictions, and his invention of a helicoidal aeroplane.

Subjects

Porta, Alberto F.
Architecture
Aeronautics
Meteorology

Box 1, Folder 1 **Clippings Scrapbook, 1914-1920**

Box 1, Folder 2 **Correspondence, 1913-1930**

Box 1, Folder 3 **Degrees and Certificates, 1881-1896**

Language of Material: and [code "italian" not found in ISO 639-2 list].

Box 1, Folder 4 **Correspondence regarding SS. Peter and Paul Church, 1921-1922**

Box 1, Folder 5 **Paper titled "Ss. Peter & Paul Church" by Anne Gilligan Fornaciari, 1990**

Box 1, Folder 6 **Correspondence regarding weather predictions, 1919**

Box 1, Folder 7 **Clippings on weather forecasts, 1916-1923**

Box 1, Folder 8 **Clippings-biographical, 1919-1923**

Box 1, Folder 9 **"Contratto di Societa" [contract to develop a new type of airplane], 1916**

Language of Material: and [code "Italian" not found in ISO 639-2 list].

Box 1, Folder 10 **Engineering Drawings, specifications, and working papers for "Porta's Helicoidal Aeroplane," 1917**

Box 2, Folder 1 **Typescript, "The Historical Earthquake of San Francisco (April 18, 1906) Explained in Conformity with Sunspot Theory..."**

Box 2, Folder 2 **Typescripts and notes, including "Can We Communicate with Mars,"1920**

Box 2, Folder 3 **Typescripts, "The League of the Planets," and "The Quadrature of Jupiter is Approaching,"1919**

Box 2, Folder 4 **Typescript, "Eclipse of the Sun"**

Language of Material: and [code "Italian" not found in ISO 639-2 list].

Box 2, Folder 5 **Newsletter, "Institute of Planetary Sciences,"1918-1921**

Box 2, Folder 6 **Typescript addressed to Benito Mussolini, "Heliospotology," [1922]**

Language of Material: and [code "Italian" not found in ISO 639-2 list].

Box 2, Folder 7 **Typescript with notes and annotations, "Earthquakes and Volcanoes,"[1909]**

Box 2, Folder 8 **Typescript with annotations, and correspondence regarding "The Epidemic of Influenza Connected with the Motion of the Planet Jupiter,"1919**

Box 2, Folder 9 **Typescript with annotations, "Earthquakes and Volcanoes,"1909**

Box 2, Folder 10 **Typescript, with correspondence, "Causes of Earthquakes." Includes correspondence with SCU faculty Jerome Ricard, S.J.1911**

Box 2, Folder 11 **Correspondence regarding patent of flying machine,1917-1929**

Box 2, Folder 12 **Manuscripts on conversion tables and calculations, topography and seismography,1910-1917**

Box 2, Folder 13 **Typescript, "Effect of Planetary Phenomenon on Humans"**

Box 2, Folder 14 **Typescript, articles, and notes on weather predictions, 1913, 1915**

Language of Material: and [code "Italian" not found in ISO 639-2 list].

Box 3, Folder 1 **Designs and diagrams of Porta's Helicoidal Airplane,**

Physical Description: Negatives, and black and white prints.

Box 4, Folder 1 **Architectural drawings and plans for buildings in Quesaltenango, Guatemala, and San Francisco, 1898-1923**

Physical Description: Ink on linen. 17"x19"

Box 4, Folder 2 **Illustrations of SS. Peter & Paul Church, San Francisco, and St. Antonio de Padova, Italy**

Box 4, Folder 3 **Interior photographs of buildings in San Jose, Santa Clara, Oakland, Turin, Italy, and Quesaltenango, Guatemala.**

Physical Description: Black and white prints mounted on matt board.