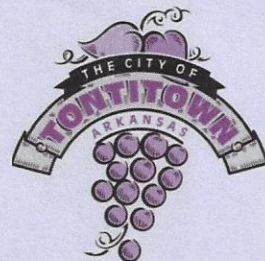


Tontitown Storia



The Newsletter of the Tontitown Historical Museum

Spring 2013, Vol. 9, No. 1

Saluti from the Board

The Tontitown Historical Museum Board invites you to join us for a fun, Sunday afternoon in Harry Sbanotto Park to celebrate Arkansas Heritage Month on May 5th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. This year's theme is ***Saving Our Heritage: Arkansas's Historic Structures***. We especially appreciate this theme as our Museum is housed in a treasured historical structure – the original home of Mary and Zelinda Bastianelli.



Tontitown Historical Museum

Built in 1910, original home of Tontitown settlers Mary and Zelinda Bastianelli

Tontitown has three structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the old St. Joseph Catholic Church, the Tontitown School Building, and the Bariola Farm. There are still many old homes, farms, barns, wineries, businesses, and other historic structures sprinkled throughout Tontitown representing our heritage.

To celebrate Arkansas Heritage Month, we have a fun afternoon planned. As always the Museum will be open for tours, and this year we have special tours for children. You can sign up for a children's tour at the event. We'll also have a table set up to learn how to make a small grapevine wreath, often used to decorate in our little town where vineyards were plenty. And, we'll have an encore performance of Clint Pianalto's super band, ***Fender City Junction***, with Ranalli's cookies on hand to munch while you visit and tap your foot. ☺

The Board is busy on some new projects this year. One is to focus on long-term planning. Vice President Jana Mayfield is leading this project and enlisted the expertise of our dear friend Allyn Lord, Director of Shiloh Museum of Ozark History. Allyn is facilitating work sessions to help with goal setting and strategic planning. We're excited to make headway on our future plans.

We also revised our Mission Statement, and added Mission Tasks to accomplish our goals. Be sure to take a look at these, and see an invite for our new facebook project on page 5. We hope to see you and share your ideas about the future at the May Event on the 5th!

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Curator's Choice

by Charlotte Piazza and Becky Howard

Next time you are in the Museum, you may see a beautiful terrazzo chest that was recently donated by Rozetta (Gasparotto) Nelke and Mrs. (Erna) Lidi Gasparotto.

Terrazzo is usually seen as a type of flooring. It was developed in Venice as a way to utilize the multitude of chips that remained after the construction of buildings that used larger pieces of marble. These pretty leftovers were mixed with much cheaper concrete or cement, allowed to harden, then ground down and polished to create a smooth and beautiful surface. Modern techniques and materials have evolved, but the basic idea remains the same. Terrazzo is still a durable yet attractive material with a distinctly Italian flair.

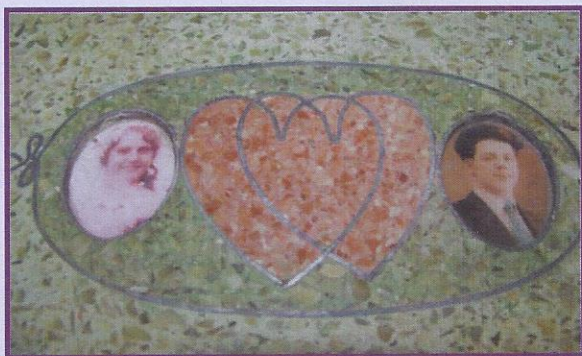
Before it hardens, terrazzo is flexible and can be molded into many shapes and designs. Germano "Mano" Gasparotto, from a village near Venice where terrazzo was originally developed, was gifted in his use of it. You may have noticed his work on the floor of the Venesian Inn, but this whimsical chest was made as a wedding gift for his wife, Albina Mantegani. It is about 21 inches tall, 15 inches wide, and 12 inches deep. Though the couple gazing at the moon is the first to catch your eye, when you have a chance to visit the Museum, you should also examine the beautiful craftsmanship of the entire piece. It is a great example of both the durability and beauty of terrazzo.



Special Terrazzo Chest ~ A Wedding Present

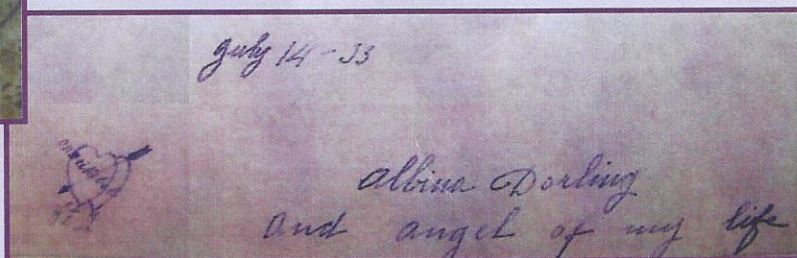
Made by Germano "Mano" Gasparotto for his bride Albina Mantegani. The moon is clear glass, allowing light to shine through. Mano's craftsmanship and artistry are so beautiful!

The Tontitown Historical Museum is very grateful and excited that Rozetta and Erna shared this chest that meant so much to their parents!



Left: Mano and Albina Mantegani Gasparotto's wedding pictures inset on chest top. They were married on September 26, 1933 in a double ceremony with Ernest and Norina Mantegani Stolfi (Albina's sister).

Below: Mano's handwritten note to his bride, "Albina Darling and angel of my life."



Family Focus ... Memories of Giovanni John Mollar

Researched by Charlotte Piazza and Mary Frances Maestri Vaughan
Genealogy by Jan McQuade-Sturm

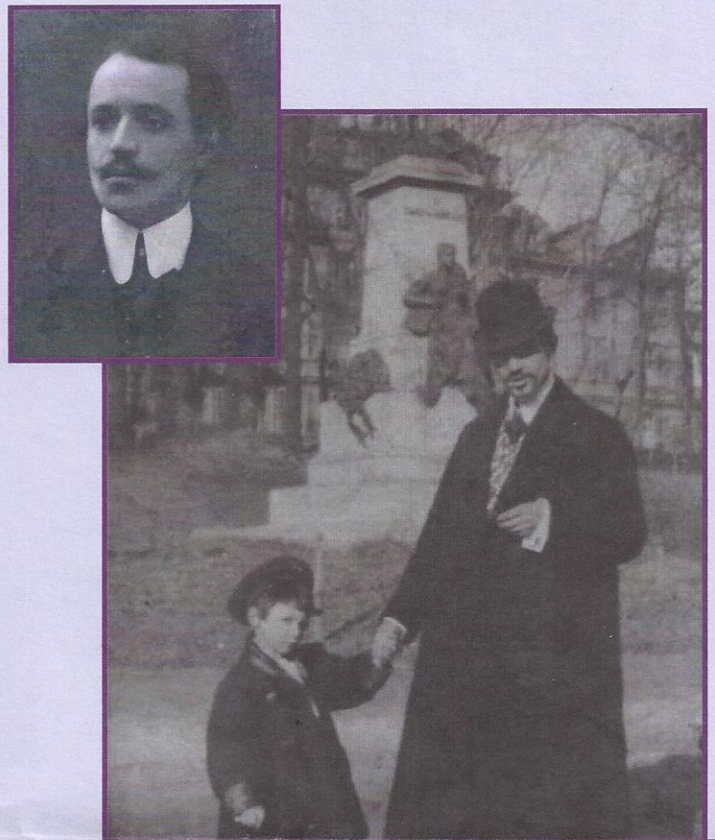
Ask anyone who grew up in Tontitown during the late 1930's and 1940's if they knew Mr. Mollar and you will get a quick response. Of course, he was the kind man who ran Baudino's store and gave away candy. Or, yes, he was a little eccentric. He wore white and wandered around town at night; you'd sometimes hear him in your yard getting a drink of water. He also walked the cemetery during the dark of night while saying the Rosary. If you are looking for a quick superficial answer these replies might satisfy you. But Bishop Fletcher described him best in a letter he wrote to Frank Baudino at the time of Mr. Mollar's death. "He was a man on whom time did not seem to work many changes. His only interest in life was to please and honor the Good Lord."

Giovanni John Mollar was born on September 18, 1878 in Cumiana, Torino, Piemonte, Italy. He was born into a royal family and held the title of Count. Throughout his life he signed his name Count Giovanni John Mollar. During his early years he led a privileged life. He was a scholar and for a time studied medicine. He also studied for the priesthood, but never took his vows.

His parents were Chiaffredo Mollar and Johanna Rose Picco. Their children were Maddelena Mollar, Giovanni John Mollar, and Luigi Louis Mollar. Luigi became a priest and never left Italy. He died on July 13, 1937.

Frank Baudino met John and Maddelena through their love of music. Frank was from Garzigliana, Italy. John was church choirmaster in the church Frank attended. Frank sang in the choir. John often invited Frank home for dinner and the rest is history. Frank and Maddelena married in Italy and their first child, Leo, was born there. Their other children were born in America: Armando Herman, Vicki, and Pauline.

Mr. Mollar remained close to his sister throughout their entire lives. It is rumored that John was never invited to travel to America. Frank arrived in America first and settled in western Wisconsin.



Giovanni John Mollar in Italy ~ ca 1910

John came to the U.S. in 1910 and to Tontitown in 1911. He is pictured here with nephew Leo Baudino in Italy.

Photos courtesy Tontitown Historical Museum

When Frank sent for Maddelena, John just came along. John Mollar's passport documents describe him as man with brown hair, no facial hair, but that he had a mustache. The above photographs show him to be a very handsome young man.

There have been rumors that Mr. Mollar was French. Documents show that a family of Italians traveled from Italy into France where they sailed to America landing in New York during the same period that John and Maddelena left for America. It may or may not have been John and Maddelena, but is probably what started the rumor.

Mr. Mollar and the Baudino family remained in Wisconsin until 1911. When they came across some of Father Bandini's flyers describing the Tontitown settlement, they chose to come to Arkansas because of the warmer climate.

continued next page

Family Focus, Giovanni John Mollar ... cont.

Frank Baudino, who had been a cobbler in Italy and loved the land, chose to open Baudino's store when they arrived in Tontitown. It was a two-story brick and concrete building. The family lived upstairs and John occupied a small area in the back of the store. The Baudino store supplies came by railroad and arrived in Springdale. Frank picked them up by wagon. It was an all day affair.

Mr. Mollar and his sister both received monies from their royal inheritance. While Frank was busy running the business, John became an integral part of their new community. He played the organ at St. Joseph Catholic Church for over forty years; he tolled the church bell which denoted Mass time. He also rang the bell at noonday designating it was time to stop whatever one was involved with and say the Angelus. He rang out the death knoll when someone died. The bell announced special occasions and served as the community message system during his lifetime.

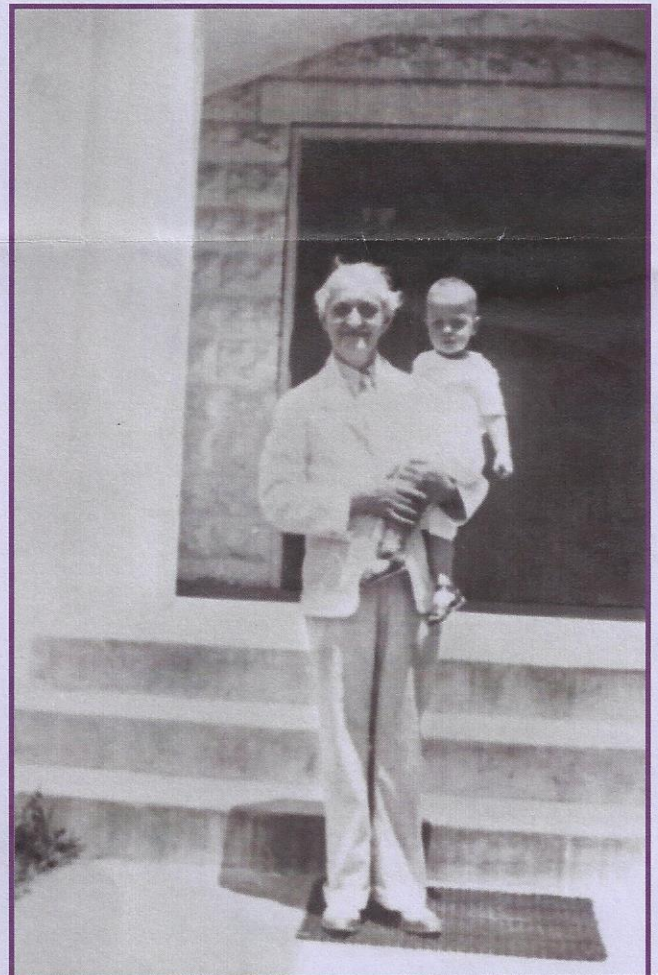
In the winter months Mr. Mollar started the church furnace before the early morning Mass. He played the piano for all St. Joseph School functions, including special events. He worked closely with the church choir where he made lifelong friends with Memo Morsani and Lucy Pozza, as well as the Ardemagni, Perona, Maestri, Fiori, Tessaro, Bastianelli, Ceola families, and many others. Many enjoyed his performances held at the Baudino store in the evenings. Everyone would gather in the store while he entertained them. During this time he also held a sing-along bringing the people together for a short time to forget the hard times they would face next day.

Mr. Mollar was deeply religious, a creature of habit, and frugal. He took cold baths, slept on a mattress he filled with shucks and placed on the floor. He kept his white clothes clean by using a cleaner.

During a political upheaval in Italy, both Mr. Mollar and his sister lost their inheritance. It was at this time that his brother-in-law Frank turned his attention to operating a vineyard he owned at what is now Highway 412 and Harmon Road. Frank turned the store over to Mr. Mollar to manage. The store never turned a profit but it did break even.

Mr. Mollar set about rearranging the store merchandise. He constructed a series of strings on the ceiling that looked much like a spider's web. They went to each light in the store. John would reach up, pull a string, and a light would come on in whatever department a customer wished to look for a given item.

continued next page



John Mollar holds godson Ricky Ardemagni, Jr. ~ 1948
Wearing his typical white suit, in front of St. Joseph Catholic Church.
Photo courtesy Rick Ardemagni, Jr.,
Tontitown Historical Museum, S-2003-126-3

Family Focus, Giovanni John Mollar ... cont.

Mr. Mollar kept three cats in the store and often had to move one from the scales when he needed to weigh an item. He carried a large inventory: groceries, sewing supplies, fabrics, writing paper, envelopes, farm supplies, and patent medicine were but a few of the items you could purchase at the Baudino store. For forty years, John dispensed medicine to the sick, set broken bones, consoled those who grieved, and befriended the needy.

Mr. Mollar lost his sister on April 14, 1938. He lived until April 15, 1951. He is buried in St. Joseph Cemetery.

In Susan Young's book, *Memories I Can't Let Go Of*, many of those interviewed had a personal memory to share about this kind, gentle man. Leon Zulpo called him "THE FABULOUS MR. MOLLAR." But Bishop Fletcher's description suited him best when he said his only mission in life was to please and serve the Good Lord. This short essay is a small tribute to the man who humbly served his Lord and his community throughout his lifetime.



John Mollar at the organ ~ ca 1950

*Photo courtesy Rick Ardemagni, Jr. and Sheila Perona,
Tontitown Historical Museum, S-2003-126-10*

Tontitown Historical Museum Mission Statement

The Tontitown Historical Museum is dedicated to identifying, collecting, and documenting artifacts relating to the history of Tontitown, Arkansas. We strive to preserve the history of this small community in order to educate and enlighten lives by sharing the Tontitown story.

Our Mission Tasks are:

- To identify those artifacts that fall within the parameters of the history of Tontitown. It is our task to identify areas needing further documentation and to seek those artifacts for the Museum's collection through donations, purchases, and recordings.
- To record the Museum's artifacts using museum cataloging procedures, digital and audio recording, and to preserve those artifacts using appropriate preservation techniques.
- To share the artifacts of Tontitown history with the general public by pursuing avenues for publicizing, promoting, and expanding the Tontitown Historical Museum.

(rev. 03/2013)



Find us on:
facebook®

Tontitown Stories are coming your way every Monday on the Tontitown Historical Museum facebook page. We will publish a photo with a short story about that photo, and we need your help.

Look over your old and not-so-old photos and send them to us at

tontitownhistoricalmuseum@gmail.com.

Include a short story of who, what, when, and any stories connected to the photo – even if it's simple like, "that was a hot day" or "my Nona made the best pies."

We want to tell the stories of Tontitown. Also for those not on facebook, spread the word and send e-mail addresses to our gmail account. We will send out the same information via e-mail. Let's build the neighborhood and share the stories!



~ *Donations in Memory and in Honor* ~

It is with gratitude and pride that we display memorial and honorarium donations in the Tontitown Historical Museum.

Beato & Violet Haney Ardemagni
Cathy Ardemagni
Cecil Ardemagni
Gene & Irma Taldo Ardemagni
Leo Baudino
Kathleen Brock
Cel & Mary Ceola Cortiana
Gordon & Imogene Ardemagni Cortiana
Rudy Costa
Candida Morsani Crane
Lillian Cortiana Granata
Albina Ranalli Dalla Rosa
Pete & Mary Cortiana Fiori
Joseph Angelo "Andy" Franco
Chuck & Mary Fucci
Rita Taldo Gilliss
Russell Greenlee
Clementine Morsani Haney
Lee Wana Bariola Keck
Anna Morsani Kitchell

Dawn Latham & Michael Latham Family
Amerigo Morsani
Frank & Carol Morsani
Helen Crane Morsani
Arthur Penzo
Ed & Adele Bariola Penzo
Frank & Clara Fiori Pinalto
Gabriel & Elsie Mae Fiori Pinalto
George (Giacinto) & Clara Pinalto
Leo & Lucy Ceola Pinalto
Henry Piazza
Harry & Dorothy Fiori Sbanotto
Agatha Morsani Smith
Lillian Pinalto Smith
John Hugo "J.H." Pozza
Marie Tessaro
Bruce Vaughan
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Leon & Sally Verucchi Zulpo

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Tontitown Storia is published by the Tontitown Historical Museum Board, usually in the Spring and Fall. Please submit story ideas or other comments to Bev Cortiana-McEuen at 479-361-2609, or at email bcortiana@cox.net.

☺ COUPON ☺

Bring this coupon to the **Tontitown Historical Museum** during the 2013 regular weekend hours and receive a **\$10.00 discount** on our first book:

"So Big, This Little Place"
The Founding of Tontitown, Arkansas
1898-1917

by Susan Young
with Genealogy by Jan McQuade-Sturm

Also available, released last year:
Memories I Can't Let Go Of,
Life Stories of Tontitown, Arkansas
edited by Susan Young

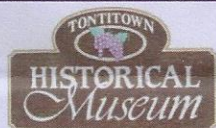
\$20.00 each

Tontitown Historical Museum
June-Sept ~ Sat & Sun ~ 1:00-4:00 p.m.

✓ Mark Your Calendar ...

2013 Museum Events

Date	Event
May 5, 2013	2013 Arkansas Heritage Month Celebration Theme: "Saving Our Heritage: Arkansas's Historic Structures" Tontitown Heritage Day at Harry Sbanotto Park, 1-4 p.m. Music by Fender City Junction with Clint Pianalto
June – September 2013	Tontitown Historical Museum, Regular Season Hours Open Saturdays and Sundays, 1 – 4 p.m. or by special appointment, call 479-361-2498 or 479-361-9800
August 6-10, 2013	115th Tontitown Grape Festival, It's About Tradition Tontitown Historical Museum, Special Hours Thursday, August 8 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Friday, August 9 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturday, August 10 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. 
November 4, 2013	12th Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-fashioned Polenta Smear Co-sponsored by the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History St. Joseph's Parish Hall, 1:30 – 4 p.m.



Tontitown Historical Museum Amici (Friends)

☒ Yes, I want to be a member of Tontitown Historical Museum Amici!

Benefits

- ✓ Satisfaction in supporting the growth of the Tontitown Historical Museum to preserve and protect the heritage of Tontitown.
- ✓ Receive annual membership card.
- ✓ Receive 10% discount on Museum books:
"So Big, This Little Place" -- The Founding of Tontitown, Arkansas 1898-1917
Memories I Can't Let Go Of -- Life Stories from Tontitown, Arkansas

Mail your tax-deductible check to:
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 P.O. Box 144
 Tontitown, AR 72770
 (or give it to any Museum Board member)

Annual Membership Levels

- ☐ Individual – \$10
- ☐ Family – \$20
- ☐ Senior Individual – \$8
- ☐ Senior Family – \$15
- ☐ Sponsor – \$50 to \$249
- ☐ Lifetime – \$250+



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257 E. Henri de Tonti Boulevard
P.O. Box 144
Tontitown, Arkansas 72770

Don't Miss Our May Event ~ Arkansas Heritage Month Celebration!
Sunday, May 5 ~ 1:00-4:00 p.m. ~ Harry Sbanotto Park

The Tontitown Historical Museum Board invites you to a fun afternoon of friendship, music, and history! Come visit the Museum and enjoy special activities for the kids, bocce, door prizes, raffles, and yummy Ranalli cookies. Back by popular demand – ***Fender City Junction*** – will provide great music in the park. We look forward to celebrating our Tontitown heritage together!



Fender City Junction ~ May Event 2012

L Jason Bowen, Alan Showalter, Ken Griggs, Clint Pianalto

Photo by Brenda Pianalto

Tontitown Stora
Spring 2013, Vol. 9, No. 1
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*Tontitown Historical Museum Board
cordially invites you to a fun, free afternoon!*

Tontitown Heritage Day

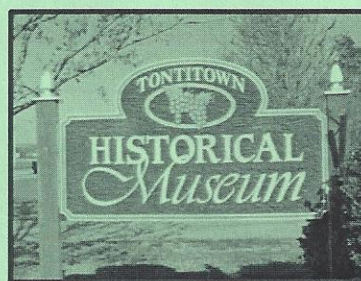
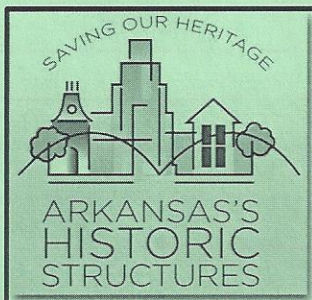
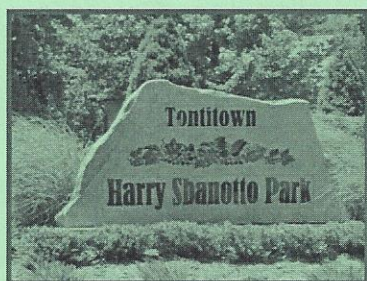
Sunday - May 5, 2013

1:00 - 4:00 pm

Harry Sbanotto Park & Museum

Tour the Museum ~ Sign up for Children's Tour
See Grapevine Wreath Demonstration
Hear "**Fender City Junction**" Band, with Clint Pianalto
Visit with old friends ~ Make new friends
Play or watch Bocce
Enjoy Ranalli's Cookies

An Arkansas Heritage Month Event



*Sponsored by Tontitown Historical Museum
Bring lawn chairs or blankets if you like
~ Cancelled if raining; No rain date ~*

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Get your copy by
mail or at:

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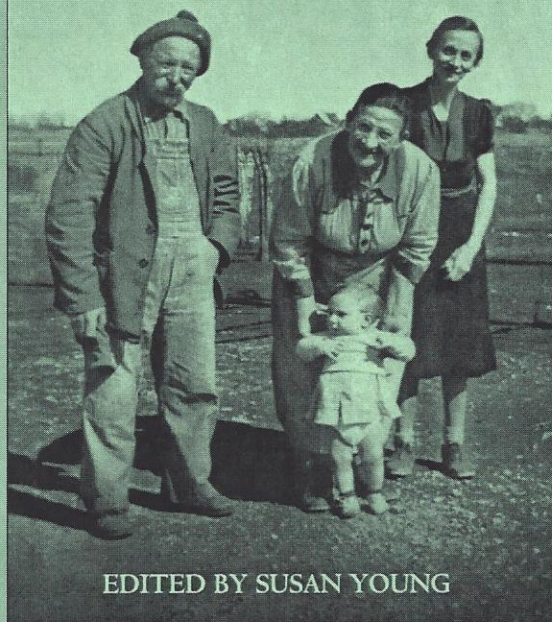
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Memories I Can't Let Go Of

Life Stories from Tontitown, Arkansas



Oral Interviews:

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Richard Ardemagni Jr.
Lloyd Bariola
Leo Baudino Jr.
Lenor Brunetti
Cletus Cigainero
Olivia Pianalto Cigainero
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Richard Pellin
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