

Tontitown Storia



The Newsletter of the Tontitown Historical Museum

Spring 2014, Vol. 10, No. 1

Saluti from the Board

After an unusually long and hard Arkansas winter, we're all ready to enjoy some fun spring activities, and we've got one for you! The Tontitown Historical Museum (THM) Board invites you to join us for our May event, **Tontitown Heritage Day**, supporting Arkansas Heritage Month. It's Sunday, May 18th from 1:00-4:00 p.m. in Harry Sbanotto Park. This year we're hosting a bocce tournament fundraiser, and encourage novices to join in. We'll help if you've never played before. See the insert and back cover for more information. Don't miss this fun day!



Arkansas Museums Association (AMA) Awards night - March 20, 2014

l-r: THM Board members Riley Tessaro, Becky Howard, Bev Cortiana-McEuen, with Allyn Lord – Director of Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, and THM Board President Heather Ranalli Peachee. Not pictured but at the meeting were THM Board members Jana Mayfield and Michael Hartman.

THM received fantastic news from the Arkansas Museums Association (AMA) earlier this spring. We were awarded AMA's Outstanding Achievement in Media Award for our *Tontitown Storia* newsletter and facebook page. We were so excited and honored. And, we had icing on the cake that evening as we shared award honors with our dear friend and mentor, Allyn Lord, Director of Shiloh Museum of Ozark History. Allyn deservedly received AMA's lifetime achievement award, the Peg Newton Smith Award. We know Allyn still has lots more achievements in her as she continues to mentor us on our Strategic Plan, and for that we're grateful. Congrats to all!

The AMA Awards Banquet culminated two days of inspirational sessions and friendship building at AMA's 48th annual meeting, held this year in the historic district of North Little Rock, called Argenta. If you haven't visited Argenta lately, it's a place to put on your list. The revitalization of this historic downtown is stellar and a model for cities to follow.

Even though this winter's snow and ice caused many closed times, we want to remind everyone that THM is open year round, weather permitting. And we have an update to our schedule. Starting June 1, we will be open **Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.** We thank volunteer Cathy Mantegani for continuing to support us by donating her time which helps us keep the museum open. We are still seeking volunteers, and your job can be as simple as greeting guests during open times. Please let us know if you can give any of your time or talent to THM. Contact any of the THM Board members listed on page 6 – or send us a facebook post – or email us at tontitownhistoricalmuseum@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you ... and we hope to see you on May 18th!

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Curator's Choice

by Charlotte Piazza

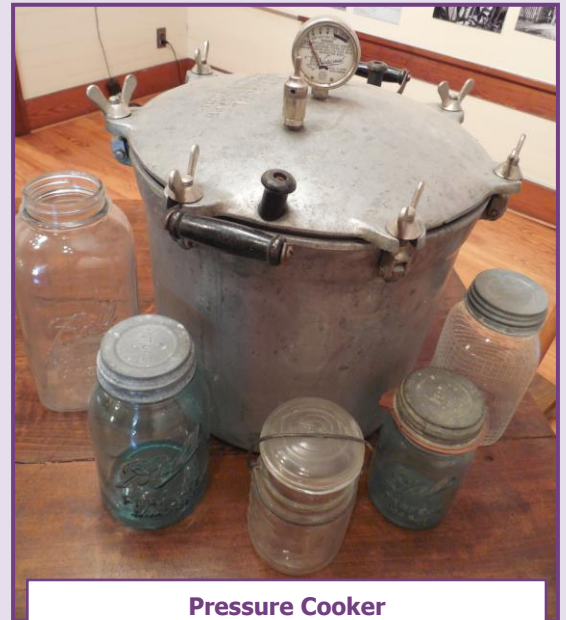
An artifact in our museum which was found in many Tontitown kitchens is the pressure cooker. Pictured here is one donated by Joyce Penzo. She described it as "tricky" – with an explosion a real possibility!

Before pressure cookers, canning was done in an open kettle on a wood fire. Our families canned as much as possible – vegetables, fruits, some meats, juices, and catsup. I even remember canning milk.

Each spring families looked forward to receiving seed catalogs in the mail. Most needed vegetables and fruits for canning so inventory was taken of needed items and orders were made. When the seeds arrived, there was much excitement and the list was checked off.

Canning is something the children could get involved in, and it was a sure bet that they did. Many family canning techniques were handed down from one generation to the next.

The County Extension Office was a good place to get ideas and learn how to get started on new techniques. Come by the museum and tell us your canning stories.



Pressure Cooker
Imprinted on top - National Pressure Cooker
Eau Claire, Wis[consin]
donated by Joyce Penzo



Mille Grazie to Amici Members



Mille Grazie ... Many Thanks to our Tontitown Historical Museum Amici (Friends) members over the years. Your donations are accumulating in the Museum Building Fund for future expansion. As part of our 2014 Strategic Plan efforts, we are launching a membership campaign – *So Big, This Little Museum* – with new membership levels. More on that soon. If you'd like to join or renew your membership, please use the membership form on page 7.

Following are member donations since we started Amici membership in Spring 2007. Our sincere thanks for your support, some now shining light on us from above. We continue to work hard to preserve the rich history of all our Tontitown families.

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Mille Grazie to Amici Members



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Family Focus ... Margaret Taldo Roso

excerpts from Margaret's oral interview in *Memories I Can't Let Go Of*, edited by Susan Young
[...] indicates more of her stories on pages 249-252

Margaret Taldo Roso was born May 18, 1920 in Tontitown, Arkansas, to Giacomo (James) and Clementine Costa Taldo. Margaret was 83 years old when she was interviewed in 2003.

In about 1903, my parents came to America with three children: Emilia, Joseph or Joe Jack, and Blanche. After they settled here, they had Edward, who died when he was a young man, Argie, Irma, Olivia, Rita, and me. My dad worked in the mines in Oklahoma.

My mother said the first thing she did when she and Dad got married back in Italy was to go up into the attic where they kept the corn, to see if they had enough food to make it through the winter.

I don't remember too much about my older brothers and sisters. Jack picked up and left one time and was gone for quite some time. Edward went to Chicago and worked for a while. He came back, I guess about 1930, and he was driving a '29 Model A. Then he worked on the farm at home. They used to raise a lot of strawberries.

Mom baked a lot of homemade bread in the outdoor oven. We ate pasta and soup. We canned green beans outside in a tub with a fire built under it. We'd put tiles in the bottom of the tub so the jars wouldn't break. We cooked tomatoes in an open kettle, then cooked them on the stove and put them in jars.



Margaret during her oral interview ~ 2003

We butchered hogs. We had sausage in the wintertime and the summertime, too. We had chicken. We never did butcher beef. Someone used to come around peddling beef, and we would buy some of that. We didn't have a way of keeping it [refrigerated], so we didn't buy much. Sometimes we would hang meat in a container down in the well to keep it cool.

We had milk cows. As far as milk and butter, we just kept it and ate it as fast as we made it. We used to sell milk, so we just kept enough to make a little bit of cream to make butter. I never drank milk. There was a shed on Joe Costa's place, where some of the families would bring milk and they would put it together to make a big, big cheese. They would take turns making it, and they would divide the cheese up.

We had chores to do. We carried in wood to fill the wood box in the wintertime. In the summertime we worked from morning till night, out in the fields. We picked up rocks. Every year we had to pick up wagon loads of rocks. That was the rockiest darn thing I ever saw.

I remember when the school burned [in 1927]. I hadn't started to school yet, but I remember seeing the black smoke about noon. Some of the boys stuffed the gutters with papers and set that on fire to warm their hands during the noon hour. I guess it drew the fire clear up to the roof, and that's what started the fire. [...]

Margaret Taldo
(age 7) and mother
Clementine Costa
Taldo, 1927.

Tontitown Historical
Museum, S-2003-147-12



Family Focus, Margaret Taldo Roso ... continued

Some of my best friends at school were Elizabeth and Josephine Bariola, Florence and Rosalie Pianalto, and Grace Maestri. Luciano Finn and Billy Pianalto used to bring me chewing gum.

I never had a job away from the farm. Oh, I did do my sister's laundry. They had five kids. I got 10 cents an hour. Scrub all day for a dollar! [...]

My husband, Joe Roso, and I grew up together, went to school together. We went to church every Sunday and in the evening we'd go to Benediction. That's what the dating was back then—going to church and walking home with the boys. A whole bunch of us would walk home together.

We married in 1940. Joe was drafted into the Army in 1945. He was in Korea after World War II ended. He drove a mail truck in Korea. After Joe got out of the service, we raised chickens, grapes, and cattle, to begin with. We milked cows. Later we went into the beef cattle business. We have three children, Ruth Ann, Tony, and Eddie, and six grandchildren.



Roso-Taldo wedding, September 25, 1940

l-r: Johnnie Sabatini, Joseph Roso, Margaret Taldo Roso, Rosalie Pianalto Sabatini, Wilsena McVay
Tontitown Historical Museum, S-2003-147-11

I don't think the world is better today than when I was young. It's just too complicated. Too much traffic. You can't just walk somewhere. In fact, you can't even walk to the neighbor's house now without dang near getting run over. Of course, it's all right for younger people. But for old people that can't go out on the road, it's just really kind of rough.

Now television has taken over everything. I think they show too much on TV. Now you see every little thing they're doing. That's not good for people to be watching that stuff all the time. It may be good in some ways, I don't say it isn't. You learn a lot of stuff. Like that inter, what do you call it? Internet.

My hobbies are quilting and crocheting. I enjoy growing flowers. Joe and I had a nice life together. That's about as much as a person can say.



Margaret & Joe's 50th Wedding Anniversary, 1990

Above: The guests of honor at the celebration table.

Tontitown Historical Museum, S-2003-147-8

Family below, l-r: Tony, Margaret, Ruth Ann, Joe, Eddie



We are excited to share Margaret's 94th birthday with our Tontitown Heritage Day celebration on May 18th! Here she is at home on May 5, 2014. Thank you, Margaret, for sharing your stories and have a Happy Birthday!!



All photos courtesy Ruth Ann Roso Ritchie.



Sharing AMA Award

Bev Cortiana-McEuen shares the AMA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Media with Mary Maestri Vaughan, our outstanding contributor of newsletter articles and ideas! Thank you, Mary, for all you do!

Tontitown Historical Museum 2012 Board of Directors

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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.

~ 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
 Gilbert & Lucia "Shortie" Cortiana
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 George (Giacinto) & Clara Pianalto
 Leo & Lucy Ceola Pianalto
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 John Hugo "J.H." Pozza
 Gloria Mae Maestri Sallis
 Harry & Dorothy Fiori Sbanotto
 Agatha Morsani Smith
 Lillian Pianalto Smith
 Marie Tessaro
 Bruce Vaughan
 Daniel "Danny" Ray Watson
 Elizabeth Morsani Williams
 Leon & Sally Verucchi Zulpo

✓ **Mark Your Calendar ...**

2014 Museum Events

Ongoing	Tontitown Historical Museum, Regular Hours Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m. or by special appointment, call 479-361-2498 or 479-361-9800
May 18, 2014	2014 Tontitown Heritage Day at Harry Sbanotto Park, 1-4 p.m. Music by Mike (Franco) & Grady (Mathews) <i>Supporting Arkansas Heritage Month</i>
August 5-9, 2014	116th Tontitown Grape Festival, It's About Tradition Tontitown Historical Museum, Special Hours Thursday, August 7 1 – 4 p.m. Friday, August 8 1 – 7 p.m. Saturday, August 9 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
November 9, 2014	13th 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:
Tontitown Historical Museum
P.O. Box 144
Tontitown, AR 72770
(or give it to any Museum Board member)

Annual Membership Levels

- ☐ Individual – \$15
- ☐ Family – \$20
- ☐ Senior Individual – \$10
- ☐ Senior Family – \$15
- ☐ Amici – \$50 to \$249
- ☐ Concordia – \$250 to \$499
- ☐ Heritage – \$500+



Name _____

Address _____

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

***Don't miss our May Event ~ Tontitown Heritage Day!
Sunday, May 18 ~ 1:00-4:00 p.m. ~ Harry Sbanotto Park***



The Tontitown Historical Museum Board invites you to a fun afternoon of friendship, music, bocce, and history! Come visit the museum and enjoy special childrens' tours, bocce tournament, raffle, park playground, and treats – yummy Ranalli cookies; water supplied by Everett dealership. Bring your lawn chair, and this year sing along to tunes by **Mike (Franco) & Grady (Mathews)**. It's sure to be a great Italian time! Hope to see you there!

2013 May photos by Brenda Pianalto



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insert follows

*Tontitown Historical Museum Board
cordially invites you to a fun, free afternoon!*

Tontitown Heritage Day

Sunday - May 18, 2014

1:00 - 4:00 pm

Harry Sbanotto Park & Tontitown Museum

- Music by **Mike & Grady** duo, featuring Mike Franco & Grady Mathews
- Bocce Tournament (more info on back)
- Museum open ~ Special tours for children
- Water ~ Hot Dogs ~ Ranalli's cookies
- Visit with old friends ~ Make new friends ☺

Supporting Arkansas Heritage Month
Mille Grazie – Many thanks to our sponsors!



*Sponsored by Tontitown Historical Museum
Everett Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram
Bryan McEuen, Benton County Farm Bureau
Bring lawn chairs or blankets if you like*

Tontitown Historical Museum

presents the inaugural

Bocce Tournament

fundraiser during Tontitown Heritage Day!

You do not have to be pros like these guys to play bocce at Tontitown Heritage Day! Even if you've NEVER picked up a bocce ball, we invite you to form a team and sign up. We'll teach you if needed! Details below:



- You need a team of 4.
- It costs \$5 per person. All funds raised go to the Museum Building Fund.
- To sign up, send team name and list of team members to:
tontitownhistoricalmuseum@gmail.com
When you sign up, we'll email you more details about start time and brackets.
Or, you can contact Riley Tessaro to sign up at 361-2607.
- If you are a bocce pro and want to spare the newbies the awe of your talents, having a few people to help run the tournament would be great! You can contact Riley Tessaro or email us at the address above.

The above photo was taken across the street from the Venesian Inn in about 1940. The formidable bocce players are: man behind the man in overalls: Gordon Cortiana, then L-R: Dominic Franco, Evert Morsani, Virgil Verucchi (front), Earl Mussino (rear), Buster Granata, Celeste Cortiana, Charles Fiori. Photo in Tontitown Historical Museum Collection, donated by Andy Franco, 2004-94-39.

Come play or watch! It will be great fun!!