

Tontitown Storia



The Newsletter of the Tontitown Historical Museum

Fall 2014, Vol. 10, No. 2

Saluti from the Board

It's been a busy summer and fall for the Tontitown Historical Museum Board. During the 116th Tontitown Grape Festival we had a special temporary exhibit: *Gowns and Crowns: A retrospective of Tontitown Grape Festival Queen Concordia*. The exhibit was developed by Jana Mayfield, Board Vice-President, with the help of volunteers Kaye Franco and Debbie Verucchi, and our friends at Shiloh Museum. It was a huge success, and we thank all the donors who shared their Queen Concordia items so everyone could enjoy them.

Then, on October 15th we hosted a presentation at the Willie James Event Place in Tontitown. Three reporters from Italy – Paolo Battaglia, Daniela Garutti, and Guilia Frigieri – visited Tontitown on a month-long journey through the United States, coined *The Tour*. Their travels provided Paolo Battaglia, co-author of *Explorers Emigrants Citizens: a visual history of the Italian American experience from the collections of the Library of Congress*, the opportunity to share his book as well as talk about their new project.

Published last year, Paolo's beautiful coffee-table book documents more than 500 years of Italian accomplishments in the United States. It includes a photo on page 159 (which was new to all of us) of a Tontitown harvest celebration with a dish of spaghetti in 1941. Paolo knew there were many stories yet to be told, particularly in rural America. He, Daniela, and Guilia are gathering stories of the Italian experience in America, and will create a documentary on their findings. They interviewed several Tontitowners, and we had a great time sharing with them. We hope to see them next year when the documentary is released. You can like them on Facebook at Anniversary Books or email info@anniversarybooks.it.



Italian reporters visit Tontitown

Daniela Garutti, Guilia Frigieri, and Paolo Battaglia say "Ciao" after enjoying two days visiting and interviewing Tontitowners

Now we are excited for the **13th Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-fashioned Polenta Smear**. We hope you can join us on Sunday, November 9th from 1:30-4:00 p.m. at St. Joseph's Parish Hall. We will kick off our new Amici membership drive, which you can read all about on page 3. Don't forget to bring photos or documents not yet shared for us to copy. We look forward to seeing you!

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Curator's Choice

by Charlotte Piazza and Brenda Pianalto

Our Immigration Room includes one of our most popular exhibit items, a digital photo frame featuring early photos of the original settler families, with a map of Italy showing their home city. During the 116th Tontitown Grape Festival, the frame took on a new look as part of the *Gowns & Crowns* temporary exhibit. For three weeks, a Queen Concordia slide show, compiled by Brenda Pianalto and edited by Bev Cortiana-McEuen, displayed a photo of each Queen and her attendants. Enjoy a complete list of our young royalty on pages 4-5.

While compiling the Queen photos, Brenda's passion for the stories that accompany the slide show became something dear to her heart. Was it because the first story that touched her heart was from her mother, Elsie Mae Fiori Pianalto? She told about her Dad, Pete Fiori, walking from Tontitown to Springdale collecting a penny for each vote for his daughter to be crowned the 49th Grape Festival Queen in 1947. Elsie Mae fondly remembers her dad emptying his pockets on the kitchen table with the winning 400 pennies. Or, maybe it's when Brenda took the time to talk to 54th Queen Antoinette Zulpo Pianalto and heard how grateful she was to her sponsors, Richard and Nettie Mae Ardemagni, who purchased her royal gown along with shoes, jewelry and a necklace. You could see how much she appreciated them and how special the crowning event was to her.

Many stories emerged while gathering photos. Brenda's niece, Jessica Pianalto, said that what amazed her while selling tickets were the people she met and the conversations she had along the way, and there were many as she sold about 34,000 tickets to be crowned the 105th Queen Concordia. One man showed her past ticket stubs he kept as souvenirs through the years. She always felt proud to walk away from her conversations being able to introduce herself as a Tontitown queen candidate. Christi Hale, 90th Queen Concordia, remembers fondly walking through the carnival grounds giving out grape flavored bubble gum to festival guests.

During this year's Polenta Smear, we'll have the slide show running at the Parish Hall. We invite you to bring your personal Queen Concordia photos and stories so that we can copy and add them to our museum collection.



Digital photo frame features "Original Settler Families" (above) or "Queen Concordia: Queens & Candidates" (below)

49th Grape Festival Queen Candidates ~ 1947



Pauline Pianalto Elsie Mae Fiori Lillian Pianalto

49th Queen Concordia ~ 1947



Elsie Mae Fiori

"So Big, This Little Museum"

Museum Membership, the Right Investment

by Jana Mayfield

Are you interested in a solid investment with continuing return? Do you like belonging to a special community who shares your interests? Is preserving the past for future generations important to you? Then a membership in the Tontitown Historical Museum is the perfect investment for you.

When you become a member of our museum, it means you become part of our family. Your investment continues our legacy, allowing us to share Tontitown's fascinating history that began with the arrival of the first Italian families in 1898. Our museum and this unique story are here for all to enjoy, thanks in part to our Amici membership program. A membership is about you and what you want for future generations. It provides a stable monetary supply for building the future of the Tontitown Historical Museum.

We are a museum on the go and this past year has kept us busy! We expanded our hours of operations, developed a strategic plan, sponsored two public programs on Italian history and culture, hosted our two annual events – Tontitown Heritage Day and the Polenta Smear, curated our first-ever temporary exhibit, and received a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and the Department of Arkansas Heritage to increase our membership. Next year's city budget includes a part-time employee. Does that all say, "We're moving ahead?"

Our strategic plan directs us to consider expansion, not only of the building but our collections and programs. We have so many donations of artifacts waiting to come to us – very important objects, photos, and papers – that will enrich our collection and our story, but we simply don't have room to receive them and waiting too long means we may lose them. This is not a good thing for our museum. Wouldn't you agree?

There is nothing quite like the Tontitown Historical Museum. We hear this from people all over the world. Our museum brings in tourists who stay and spend money in our town. This means your membership investment makes us better and is an investment in our city's future. Are you surprised that membership has such a large payoff?

Our first annual membership drive will launch at the 13th Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-Fashioned Polenta Smear on Sunday, November 9 from 1:30-4:00 p.m. This will give you an opportunity to become a member or renew your existing membership. Our new membership form, created by grant funding, is in this newsletter, and you will see that we are also offering membership to businesses. You'll find that membership does have a few perks, but the biggest one is you're with us as we move forward. How exciting is that?

The Tontitown Historical Museum Board hopes that you are as excited as we are with all of our future plans. Without this hard working board of volunteers and a few outside volunteers, the Tontitown Historical Museum would not exist. We are always looking for new volunteers to aid us in carrying out our mission. If you have the slightest interest in helping us out from special projects requiring a few hours to volunteering a certain number of hours per week, check the volunteer box on our new membership form and we'll give you a call to discuss all of our fun and exciting volunteer opportunities. Volunteers have been the backbone of this museum and we will always need a steady supply to call upon.

We believe in our mission, organization, friendship, and community and are hopeful that you will find a membership to the museum is a good investment. If you're not quite sure or need more information, come by during our open hours, Friday-Sunday from 1:00-4:00 p.m., visit with us, and see the Tontitown Historical Museum for yourself. You won't be disappointed. You can always check us out on Facebook and the city website, www.tontitown.com, or email us at tontitownhistoricalmuseum@gmail.com, or call us at 479-361-9800 or 479-361-2700. Let's join hands and move Tontitown Historical Museum forward!

Family Focus ... Family, Friends & Royalty

by Brenda Pianalto

It takes a lot of hard work and time, from family and friends, for several weeks during the hottest part of the summer, from sunup to sundown to sell tickets to support St. Joseph's Catholic Church. And, there are many stories beyond the few shared in the Curator's Choice column. Please help me fulfill my dream of making your Queen Concordia memories part of our recorded history. I can be reached at 479-756-5221, or email me at lscbmp1@cox.net. Browse through this list of hard working participants from all of our Tontitown families and trigger those memories. I look forward to hearing from you!

YEAR ~ Grape Festival		QUEEN	ATTENDANTS	
1926		Lavinia Morsani	Ozark Grape Festival, held by Springdale Civic Club	
1932		Albina Mantegani	Agatha Morsani	Florence Fantinel
Reference: "Arkansas Catholic" - July 16, 1932			Alice Cortiana	Olivia Taldo
1947	49 th	Elsie Mae Fiori	Pauline Pianalto	Lillian Pianalto
1948	50 th	Connie Franco	Mabel Zulpo	Luellen Penzo
1949	51 st	Barbara Verucchi	Helen Fiori	Sally Verucchi
1950	52 nd	Juanita Pianalto	Nova Jean Fiori	Claudine Penzo
1951	53 rd	Philomene Ardemagni	Rita Piazza	Earlene Smith
1952	54 th	Virginia Franco	Mary Catherine Beckford	Betty Lou Ceola
1953	55 th	Dolores (Nina) Ceola	Mary Catherine Fiori	Frances Franco
1954	56 th	Antoinette Zulpo	Lee Wana Bariola	Nadine Taldo
1955	57 th	Nora Piazza	Ellen Verucchi	Jeanette Ceola
1956	58 th	Martha Granata	Evelyn Ceola	Dorothy Bersi
1957	59 th	Ruth Ann Roso	Gloria Bariola	Jeanette Pellin
1958	60 th	Carmelita Franco	Adrianne Morsani	Thelma Taldo
1959	61 st	Pauline Fiori	Sheila Perona	Gilda Stolfi
1960	62 nd	Carolyn Granata	Joyce Bettencourt	Marilyn Schmitz
1961	63 rd	Barbara Finn	Judy Bettencourt	Diana Ceola
1962	64 th	Blanche Gaiche	Sondra Green	Evelyn Pellin
1963	65 th	Agatha Ranalli	Phyllis Brunetti	Pat Hartman
1964	66 th	Betty Sbanotto	Marlene Schmitz	Darlene Granata
1965	67 th	Dorothy McGinnis	Joann Sabatini	Marlene Franco
1966	68 th	Barbara Sabatini	Deloris Pianalto	Patsy Carender
1967	69 th	Joan Jaro	Elaine Mussino	Enrica Ardemagni
1968	70 th	Zita Mae Mantegani	Mary Ann Pianalto	Beverly Franco
1969	71 st	Shirley Sabatini	Kathy Pianalto	Louetta Piazza
1970	72 nd	Linda Zulpo	Joyce Pianalto	Deanna Walker
1971	73 rd	Debbie McGinnis	Albina Ranalli	Karen Keith
1972	74 th	Rose Mary Pianalto	Thresa Pellin	Marilyn Taldo
1973	75 th	Cammie Franco	Tina Keith	Marsha Ardemagni
1974	76 th	Karla Ardemagni	Janice Tessaro	Brenda Piazza

YEAR ~ Grape Festival		QUEEN	ATTENDANTS	
1975	77 th	Laura Zulpo	Karen Ardemagni	Beth Beckford
1976	78 th	Lisa Zulpo	Christine Pianalto	Vivian Beckford
1977	79 th	Denise Pianalto	Lydia Zulpo	Patricia Piazza
1978	80 th	Pam Franco	Sandra Pianalto	Annetta Kay Piazza
1979	81 st	Lisa Zulpo	Edith Pianalto	Melanie Pianalto
1980	82 nd	Kym Weathers	Doris McKenzie	Lisa Neil
1981	83 rd	Silvia Pianalto	Cindy Pozza	Nancy Maestri
1982	84 th	Theresa Mansell	Lisa McKenzie	Leona Pianalto
1983	85 th	Judy Taldo	Cheryl Ardemagni	Cindy Verucchi
1984	86 th	Denise Verucchi	Elizabeth Penzo	Traci Mansell
1985	87 th	Diana Verucchi	Lezley Ceola	Carmen Ceola
1986	88 th	Tammy Hale	Pam Beckford	Jennifer Pianalto
1987	89 th	Jackie Pellin	Alison Pianalto	Tina Pianalto
1988	90 th	Christi Hale	Tina Franco	Tina Buhr
1989	91 st	Dena Mussino	Angi Penzo	Raquel Pianalto
1990	92 nd	Denise Carender	Regina Finn	no third party
1991	93 rd	Brande Bariola	Denise Pellin	Jo Ann Fantinel
1992	94 th	Tammy Verucchi	Lisa Maestri	Tanya Baumann
1993	95 th	Amy Greenlee	Kate Benedict	Tiffany Shatzer
1994	96 th	Christie Ranalli	Lyla Benedict	Angela Schaefer
1995	97 th	Monica Mhoon	Summer Ranalli	Stephanie Wilburn
1996	98 th	Kelli Geiger	Jacqueline Coffman	Pam Peacy
1997	99 th	Melanie Wright	Heather Ranalli	Pam Peacy
1998	100 th	Amy Beckford	Laura Luckett	Angie Peacy
1999	101 st	Amber Miller	Brandy Geiger	Chassie Marsh
2000	102 nd	Alicia Sabatini	Suzy Della Rosa	Michelle Pianalto
2001	103 rd	Stacy Anderson	Tiffany Neff	Robin Simmonds
2002	104 th	Megan Ranalli	Alicia Greenlee	Kimberly Kottenkamper
2003	105 th	Jessica Pianalto	Brittney Sabatini	Kristen Placek
2004	106 th	Lauren Taldo	Kellie Taylor	Brittany McCamey
2005	107 th	Cecely Franco	Juli Rhyne	Amanda Davis
2006	108 th	Megan Pearce	Channing Ceola	Rachel Simmonds
2007	109 th	Kara Jo McKinley	Rachel Pianalto	Lexi Powell
2008	110 th	Caroline Franco	Chelsea Sabatini	Candice Bright
2009	111 th	Lauren Zulpo	Martha Swearingen	Lauren Elsie
2010	112 th	Nicole Pianalto	Maggie Verucchi	Laura Worthen
2011	113 th	Jordan Miller	Kiley Magee	Valerie Reina
2012	114 th	Blair Ceola	Kaitlyn Cheader	Patricia Rothmeyer
2013	115 th	Kaitlynn Holt	Ann Marie Laney	Caitlyn Sabatini
2014	116 th	Cheyenne Bright	Ashleigh Brock	Lelsey Kozak

~ 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 & Shortie Fuqua Cortiana
Gordon & Imogene Ardemagni Cortiana
Rudy Costa
Candida Morsani Crane
Lynda Cross
Albina Ranalli Dalla Rosa
Angelo & Irene Gaiche Dalla Rosa
James & Domenica Dalla Rosa
Pete & Mary Cortiana Fiori
Joseph Angelo "Andy" Franco
Chuck & Mary Fucci
Emelio & Caterina Piazza Gaiche
Rita Taldo Gilliss
Lillian Cortiana Granata
Russell Greenlee
Phyllis Brunetti Hale
Clementine Morsani Haney
Sunny Hinshaw
Lee Wana Bariola Keck
Anna Morsani Kitchell
Dawn & Michael Latham Family
Lynn Maestri
Paul & Judy Maestri's 50th Anniversary
Amerigo Morsani
Frank & Carol Morsani
Helen Crane Morsani
Denise Pellin
Arthur Penzo
Ed & Adele Bariola Penzo
Frank & Clara Fiori Pianalto
Gabriel & Elsie Mae Fiori Pianalto
George (Giacinto) & Clara Pianalto
Leo & Lucy Ceola Pianalto
Henry Piazza
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

Tontitown Historical Museum 2014 Board of Directors

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Roger Pianalto, 479-361-2207
Riley Tessaro, 479-361-2607

*We were deeply saddened by the loss of Tontitown
Alderwoman, Museum advocate, veterinarian,
musician, and dearest friend, Sunny Hinshaw.
Sunny was a member of our Strategic Planning
Committee, invaluable with her input for our
5-Year Strategic Plan. She was always in our
corner, and we will miss her beyond words.*

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 email bcortiana@cox.net.

Spring 2015 Capitol Exhibit "Show and Tell"

In Spring 2015, the Arkansas State Capitol's
main exhibit turns the spotlight on the Arkansas
Museums Association (AMA) and its member
institutions with "*Show and Tell: the Many
Faces of the Arkansas Museums Association.*"
At the Association's Spring 2014 meeting,
members were invited by Capitol Historian
David Ware and exhibit designer Jen Hughes to
select items from their collections which
illustrated their respective museums' mission or
themes. A selection of these items will be
displayed in the Capitol's first-floor cases, along
with information and graphics from as many
member institutions as possible.

Watch for more information soon, and don't miss
this special exhibit on your visit to the Capitol
from mid-January through May 2015!

✓ **Mark Your Calendar ...**

2014-2015 Museum Events

Date	Event
Ongoing	Tontitown Historical Museum, Regular Hours Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 1 – 4 pm or by special appointment, call 479-361-2498 or 479-361-9800
November 9, 2014	13th Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-fashioned Polenta Smear St. Joseph's Parish Hall 1:30 – 4 pm
Mid-January 2015 - May 2015	State Capitol Exhibit - "Show and Tell: the Many Faces of the Arkansas Museums Associations" - Little Rock, Arkansas State Capitol Building, Daily 8 am - 5 pm, Weekends 10 am - 5 pm
May 2015 - Date to be announced	2015 Arkansas Heritage Month May Event <i>From the Delta to the Hills:</i> <i>Different landscapes, a common heritage</i> 
August 4-8, 2015	117th Tontitown Grape Festival, It's About Tradition Tontitown Historical Museum, Special Hours Thursday, August 6 1 – 4 pm Friday, August 7 1 – 7 pm Saturday, August 8 10 am – 7 pm 



*"So Big,
This Little
Museum"*

Benefits

- Satisfaction in supporting the growth of the Tontitown Historical Museum to preserve and protect the heritage of Tontitown.
- 10% discount on Museum purchases
- Amici window cling

Mail your tax-deductible check to:

Tontitown Historical Museum
P.O. Box 144
Tontitown, AR 72770
(or give to any Museum Board member)

Annual Amici Membership Levels

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

**Renew
or Join
Today!**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Volunteers are the backbone of Tontitown Historical Museum. May we call on you to volunteer? ☐ **Yes!**



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

***13th Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-fashioned Polenta Smear
~ Sunday - November 9, 2014 ~ 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. ~***

The Tontitown Historical Museum Board extends a cordial invitation to our **13th Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-Fashioned Polenta Smear** on Sunday, November 9, 1:30-4:00 p.m. We will kick off our "**So Big, This Little Museum**" membership drive, which is supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and Department of Arkansas Heritage.

Join or renew your Amici (Friends) membership and receive a window cling to proudly show your Tontitown Historical Museum support, and encourage others to do the same. Loretta Brunetti will sing her traditional Tontitown *That's Amore!* Don't miss this special day— yummy polenta and umedo, fond friendships, photo sharing, and fun time!



Tontitown Stora
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insert follows

13th Annual Tontitown Reunion & Old-Fashioned Polenta Smear

and ... Amici Membership Drive

SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 9, 2014 – 1:30 TO 4:00 P.M.

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH PARISH HALL

1:30 – 4:00 Copy photos, Enjoy photo displays, Visit & Laugh! ☺
Enjoy Loretta Brunetti's "That's Amore" – Tontitown Style!
Win great door prizes and have FUN!!

Join or renew your membership to Tontitown Historical Museum Amici (Friends) and get an Amici window cling to show your support!

To save time at the photo copying table, record **Who, What, When, Where** on a piece of paper ahead of time ... then you'll have more time to visit. And, this year Brenda Pianalto invites all Queens Concordia and Attendants to bring any personal photos or stories for us to copy. She has a dream project planned to save all those treasured, royal memories!

2:00 – 3:15 Polenta & Umedo, Dessert served – No Charge



Polenta



2013 Polenta Smear Chefs

Photos by Brenda Pianalto



Umedo

*Sponsored by Tontitown Historical Museum.
Amici Membership Drive supported in part by a grant from the
Arkansas Humanities Council and Department of Arkansas Heritage.*

Italian American Country

Finding Italy in Smalldown U.S.A.

Paolo Battaglia discussed his book, *"Explorers Emigrants Citizens,"* co-published with the Library of Congress in Fall 2013, and *The Tour of the U.S.*



With reporters Daniela Garutti and Giulia Frigieri. October 15, 2014 Willie James Event Place Tontitown, Arkansas



Photos by Brenda Pianalto
Sponsored by Tontitown Historical Museum