



Tontitown Storia

Newsletter of the Tontitown Historical Museum (THM)

A Department of the City of Tontitown
Winter 2021, Vol. 16, No. 1



Saluti from the Board

Ciao from the Tontitown Historical Museum Board members. Even though the museum is still closed, we have some exciting news to share and celebrate from the past few months. At the end of October, we were able to celebrate the Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-fashioned Polenta Smear with a week of Polenta Smear on Facebook. We shared memories from past Polenta Smears, shared recipes for polenta and umedo, and even had a virtual Show and Share. Thank you so much for participating and sharing your stories with us. As a board, we were so excited to be able to share the Polenta Smear event with everyone, even if it had to be in a different format than how we're used to.

Additionally, we had the privilege of participating in Arkansas State Symbols Day with the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History. For this day, the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History had partner organizations submit videos about different state symbols. They asked the Tontitown Historical Museum to submit a video on the Cynthiana grape which is the Arkansas state grape. The board enjoyed putting together this video to share with educators and students in our area. Thank you so much to Chris Ranalli and Heather Ranalli-Peachee for sharing their time and knowledge about grapes in Arkansas for Arkansas State Symbols Day.



We hope everyone is continuing to stay safe and healthy in 2021. As a board, we are continuing to monitor the pandemic on a local level to determine the best time for us to reopen our small space. We appreciate your continued patience and understanding during these uncertain times.

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Tontitown Then and Now

by Emily Pianalto-Beshears



L-R: Pierina Tessaro Sbanotto with daughter Dora Sbanotto Taldo
in front of the Taldo house, now Tontitown Winery

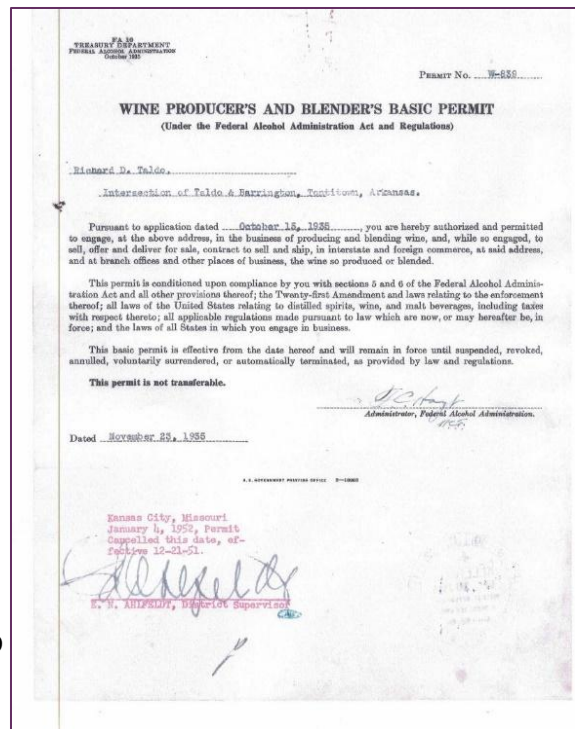
When Heather and David Peachee began throwing around the idea to open a winery, they had no idea how closely the history of their future site and their current ambitions were linked. Their journey began as a conversation, could they open a winery?

Heather's father, Chris Ranalli, a Tontitown native and local business owner, always talked of one day opening a winery. Yet between his produce business, the farm, which additionally included farming a local vineyard, he had little time to pursue his dream. As time passed, Heather and her husband David began to take the idea of this dream on and realized they could do it. The big question became where?

Heather and David wanted a building that was already part of the landscape of Tontitown, to bring some life back to a home. On the corner of North Barrington Road and Sbanotto a two story home built in 1917 sat. Recently taken off the market after a pending sale fell through, Heather's realtor thought they would be able to talk to the owners and see if they would consider selling the home to the Peachees. The owner reconsidered and then sold the property, a spacious home that boasts a basement. The Peachees began setting up shop quickly and on October 15, 2010 they obtained their licenses and were ready to open for business, not only selling wine but making it on-site.

The history of the house was not lost on the Peachees, which was one of the driving factors when offered the chance to buy the home. Originally the Taldos owned the home, and Richard (Dick) Taldo began making wine in the basement. It has been said that the Taldos continued making wine even through Prohibition, providing Little Rock with the fruits of Tontitown. When Prohibition ended Richard D. Taldo applied and was approved for a "Wine Producer and Blender's Basic Permit" (photo next page), the date of his permit was October 15, 1935. Dick's permit for Bonded Winery No. 40 was discontinued on December 21, 1951 following his death.

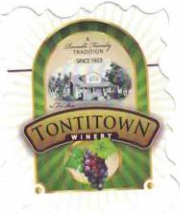
Seventy-Five years to the day saw the reopening of a winery in Tontitown to the public while this past October marked the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Tontitown Winery. In those ten years the Peachees have worked diligently to keep current, to branch out, and to serve their community. The winery now hosts live music events multiple times a week throughout the year, hosts private parties and weddings, and became a “must-go” when visiting Tontitown. They highlight local concord grapes not only in their classic wine but also as a Wine-a-Rita, which has become a highlight on those hot summer days on the decks. As events began to draw crowds the need to add on to the original home as well as the exterior became a priority. Their “new room” as Heather still catches herself saying, was added on nearly two years ago. It holds a new bar and is a spacious area during events or happy hour that opens up to the newest deck. All of these additions have helped tremendously in the most recent months as the COVID-19 pandemic threatened their ability to stay open, but Heather and David have persevered even in hard times to continue to do what they love.



The Peachees worked extremely hard to keep their business open while also keeping their community safe and this goal never changed though times are hard. We hope that our Tontitown Winery will continue to prosper in the home that was destined for the work at hand. When you visit the next time look for the bars on the basement window and think back to the early days and how making wine was a dream from one family to the next, transcending through generations. For the love of the craft and the love of the grape.



Photos courtesy of Heather Ranalli-Peachee and the Tontitown Winery.



Happy Birthday Taldo/Brunetti/Tontitown Winery Home

100 years

Thru laughter and tears

This home first embraced the Taldos

Who were truly brave and strong

Looking toward each tomorrow

With hope, a prayer and a song

Then came the Brunettis

With respect for the Taldo Clan

They were Kissin' Cousins

And their heart was in the land

Now it's the Tontitown Winery

Keeping the heritage with a new flair

Preserving all the memories

With tender love and care.



Taldo



Written by:

Loretta Brunetti



Artifact Spotlight

by Katherine McDaniel Karras



Tontitown settler families in the early twentieth century used corn for a variety of purposes. After shucking, this corn grinder (circa early 1900's), was used to shell and grind the ears of corn by hand requiring a lot of hard work. Families used a thick grind for chicken feed and a fine grind to create the favored meal of polenta with umedo sauce, which is served at our Annual Tontitown Reunion and Old-fashioned Polenta Smear event. Henry Piazza donated this artifact to the Tontitown Historical Museum.



BECOME AN AMICI MEMBER TODAY!

Join by completing and mailing the form at the end of our newsletter or by going to our website at tontitown.com/tontitown/museum.

Play a part in preserving the heritage of Tontitown for generations to come.

ALREADY A MEMBER?

Amici memberships expired on January 1, 2021. Go to the website above or mail the form in this newsletter to renew!

Staff/Board Member Spotlight

with Caroline Franco-Ceola, Museum Board Member



L-R: Caroline and Pam Herron, THM Museum Assistant, at the Polenta Smear

- Where is your hometown?
 - I am a 3rd generation native to Tontitown. My great-grandparents on the Franco side immigrated from Vicenza, Italy and my great-grandfather on the Marveggio side immigrated from Sondrio, Italy. Both entered America through New Orleans and settled in the Tontitown/ Siloam Springs area in the early 1900s. After graduating high school in 2009 from Har-Ber High, I attended college at the University of Arkansas where I received my bachelor's in hospitality management and a minor in communications. After living and working in Fayetteville for 9 years, I made my (short) journey home to Tontitown where my roots and heart belonged. I married, Blake, in 2018 and we have lived here ever since and look forward to raising our family here for many years to come.
- What made you interested in getting involved in the THM?
 - When you are from a unique place like Tontitown, you can't help but want to get involved. What originally sparked my interest was when I ran for "Mayor of the Day" at the Tontitown Heritage Day when I was 18. I saw a need for focusing on the future of our town and I wanted to be a part of it. In 2007, I was asked to perform the Teapot Skit with my dear friends Kara Engle and Kevin Sbanotto at the Polenta Smear and again at the 100th Centennial Celebration in 2009 with Kara and Michael Hartman. This skit was special to me and my family as my great-aunt Mary Franco-Pellin and great-aunt Connie Franco-Pianalto originally performed it years ago. This made me realize that the future of our town isn't all that I was passionate about, but to keep tradition and the many stories alive. Being able to do both is possible by being involved with the Tontitown Historical Museum (THM).

- When did you get involved in the THM?
 - I joined the THM Board as a non-voting Junior Member in 2008 while still in high school and continued to support the THM by volunteering at events with the St. Joseph Catholic youth group. In 2016, I was invited and so excited to officially join as a voting board member.
 - What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?
 - This year has been very different for all, including the THM, but what I've enjoyed the most about my role as president and specifically during a pandemic is leading our incredible group of board members through challenging decisions. Seeing everyone think outside of the box and work together on how to handle the closure, future reopening, canceling of events, and continuing with projects virtually, has been truly inspiring.
 - What do you hope to learn from your involvement?
 - I hope to gain a better understanding of how a museum is operated as a department of the city but also as a non-profit who relies on individual giving and donations to allow the mission to be a reality. The work that is done by a volunteer Board of Directors and one part-time Administrative Assistant is remarkable.
 - In three words, how would you describe the mission and work of THM?
 - Valuable, Unique, and Timeless
 - What is your favorite pastime?
 - For me, my faith, family, and community are most important. Embracing those three things makes me the happiest. Blake and I love live music, being on water, traveling with family, and fine wine. Other than the THM board, I also enjoy serving my church community of St. Joseph Catholic Church of Tontitown, and the Springdale and Fayetteville communities by my career and various boards and committees.
 - What is your favorite quote?
 - Helen Walton said it best, "It's not about what you gather in life. It's about what you scatter." I try to keep that mindset daily; personally, and professionally. The more we can build each other up, help our local businesses, and focus on our own communities, the whole world will positively benefit.
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Would you like a digital version of the *Tontitown Storia*?
Send an email to museum@tontitownar.gov to sign up
for our email newsletter. It is all the same great articles
in a convenient format delivered to your Inbox!



Thank you, Amici members for your 2020 memberships and for your advance 2021 memberships! Your support means the world to us and helps us continue to preserve our history. A membership form to renew your membership for 2021 or to become a new member is below. ***Grazie Mille, Amici!***

Heritage

Family of Frank Maestri
Family of Dick & Bernice Ardemagni McCauley

Concordia

Jeff & Kay Franco
Pete & Elaine Sbanotto

Amici

Bill Ardemagni
Frank & Sharon Ardemagni
Richard & Bernadette Ardemagni – 2021
Dennis & Billie Bariola
Barbara Begnel Buckley – 2021
Jim & Sheila Perona Canup
Blake & Caroline Ceola
Holly Childs
Bryan & Bev Cortiana-McEuen
Eric & Julie den Boer
Laura Faraci – 2021
Rep. Charlotte Fite
Mark & Melissa Franco
Craig & Carla Gourley
Adrianne Morsani Graham
Ken & Deloris Pianalto Green – 2021
Betty Hinshaw
Becky Howard
Leland & Mary Cortiana Lawrenz
Allyn Lord

Leslie "Red" Maestri
James McConnell
Bill & Marilyn Mussino
David & Rebecca Oskey
Carolyn Page
Ben & Loretta Pianalto Pappani
Evelyn Pellin
Ralph & Nancy Pendergraft
Andrew & Peggy Penzo
Chris & Annette Pianalto
Cindy Pianalto
Vince & Sandy Pianalto
Janette Ceola Rogers
Shiloh Museum of Ozark History
Oronina Stolfo – 2021
Philip & Mary Ann Taldo
Tim & Melissa Tessaro
Tontitown Flea Market
Tontitown Winery – 2021

Family

Kurt & Penny Anderson
Loyce & Mary Ardemagni
Pauline Bariola
Rachel Bariola
Bob & Patty Besom
Forest & Carolyn Bowen, Jr. – 2021
Robert & Ida Taldo Brady
Preston & Summer Ranalli Carter
Jennifer De Martino
Mark & Annette Pianalto Drake
Clint & Kara Jo Engle
Bary & Jennifer Pianalto Gills
Eugenia Hartman
Jason & Susan Kerr

James & Xyta Lucas
Robert & Cheryl Ardemagni Martin
Karla Ardemagni McKinley
Jim & Kathy Pianalto Miller
Stephanie Begnel Mullane
Larry & Carmelita Newquist
David & Heather Ranalli Peachee
Mike & Denise Pearce
Danny & Pat Pellin – 2021
Bernard & Sherry Pianalto
Gary & Sheryl Shores – 2021
Deborah J. Smith
Celia Cigainero Stigall
Jim & Janice Pianalto Swearingen
Marty Taldo

Amici Members

Individual

Sandy Christopherson
Andrea Penzo Hale
Michael Hartman – 2021
Sharon Maestri

Brenda Pianalto
Roger Pianalto
Betty Sabatini
Patricia Simoni

Senior Family

Ken & Deborah Bailey
Ahmad H. Bayyari
Rick & Kathy Brunetti
Denis & Margie Ceola
Ernie & Norma Deines
Larry & Betty Dutton
Robert & Linda Elia
Vic & Barbara Verucchi Faraci
D. Claud Fields, Jr. – 2021
Raymond & Pauline Franco
Roy & Jettie Franco
Bill Gaiche
Bill & Martha Green
Tommy & Zita Greenlee
Eddie & Nancy Guinn
Marjorie A. Pianalto Horinek
Dale & Darlene Johnston
Jerry & Dorothy Kever
Gina Criman Lankston (Bruno Stolfi family)

Phill & Kathy Bariola Laursen
Larry & Carmelita Newquist – 2021
Mike & Rhonda Pellin
Claude & Agatha Penzo
Husk & Rita Penzo
Patricia Perona
Leonard & Evelyn Pianalto
Richard & Antoinette Pianalto
Phillip & Margaret Piazza
Ron & Ruth Fiori Poynor
Norbert & Judy Ranalli
Fred & Ruth Ann Roso Ritchie
Gary & Deanna Shackelford
Deborah Shouse & Ron Zoglin
Max & Kay Taldo
Frank & Dolores Verucchi
Norman & Carol Walker
Nova Jean Fiori Watson
Ron & Toni Maestri Wirts

Senior Individual

Paul A. Bariola
Loretta Brunetti
Jeanette Burditt
Jim Cortiana
Helen George
Ellen Verucchi Goff
Patsy Taldo Phillips Graham

John P. McGlone
Mary Catherine Neil
Elizabeth Pianalto
Martha Pianalto
Lou Sharp
Mary Frances Maestri Vaughan
Dolores J. Wilson

Lifetime (Level Retired in 2014)

Loyce & Mary Ardemagni
Richard & Bernadette Ardemagni
Kenneth Brock
Mike & Bernadette Pianalto Collins
Genevieve (Genny) Della Rosa Deutsch
Paul & Dolores Maestri Stolfi Dicks
Leona Della Rosa Kasting
Allyn Lord
Frank & Evelyn Maestri
Lawrence McGlone

Frank & Carol Morsani
Art & Joyce Penzo
Clint Penzo
Shawn & Letty Penzo
Henry & Charlotte Piazza
Robert Serio
Dennis & Evelyn Shaw
Mary Costa Wersky-Colombero
Mike & Toni Zulpo

Enjoy the Virtual Polenta Smear 2020 via Facebook!

Tontitown Historical Museum
October 25, 2020 · 🌐

Welcome to our Virtual Polenta Smear 2020 Kick-off! Join us this week for a walk down memory lane and some special moments starting with a few photos from past Tontitown Reunion and Old-Fashioned Polenta Smear 2002 ~ 2019 events. You are invited to share any of your special moments too! A special acknowledgment & thank you goes out to Brenda Pianalto for the photos here and her years of documenting the museum events through her photography. 🍕🇺🇸🇮🇹🇪🇺🇸🇪🇺🇸🇪🇺🇸
#communityoftontitown #annualpolentasmear
#tontitownarkansasatradition #tontitownhistory #shilohmuseum
#italianheritage #celebrate



Yummy!

Tontitown Historical Museum
October 26, 2020 · 🌐

Each year the Polenta Smear has been different from the last. For the Virtual Polenta Smear 2020, let's look back at this Coffee Pot Song performance from 2007 by Caroline Franco, Kara Jo McKinley, and Kevin Sbanotto. These fun moments make this event so special every year! ☺☺ #communityoftontitown #tontitownarkansasatradition #shilohmuseum #virtualpolentasmear2020



Tontitown Historical Museum
October 27, 2020 · 🌐

A few photographs from the fun day of Jan Morsani Taldo sharing how to make her polenta & umedo with Helen Tyson Middle School EAST students. 🍕🇺🇸🇮🇹🇪🇺🇸🇪🇺🇸🇪🇺🇸
#polentasmear2020 #cookingathome #tontitownarkansasatradition #polenta #umi




2 1/2 cups butter - 10 sticks
1 1/2 cups chopped
Cook onions till soft
add 1 cup tomato paste
add 4 cups water
+2

Tontitown Historical Museum
October 29, 2020 · 🌐

Don't forget, tomorrow is the Show and Share for our Virtual Polenta Smear 2020! We are looking forward to seeing your objects and hearing why they remind you of food and family.

What an amazing photograph of Virginia Morsani, ca 1915, at a well with a large copper pot balanced on her head. This photo is on page 50 of our "So Big, This Little Place" book, and is part of the Bastianelli Collection. Felix and Virginia Reeves Pozza brought that beautiful copper pot to share w... See More



Notice: Temporarily closed due to COVID-19.

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

**Contact us:
(479) 361-9800
museum@tontitownar.gov**

Tontitown Historical Museum Board Members, 2021

Tontitown Storia is published by the Tontitown Historical Museum Board. Please submit story ideas or comments to Katherine McDaniel Karras at museum@tontitownar.gov.

Katherine McDaniel Karras, President
Misty Piazza, Vice-President
Emily Pianalto-Beshears, Secretary
Bev Cortiana-McEuen, Treasurer

Caroline Franco-Ceola
Heather Ranalli-Peachee
Jennifer De Martino
Riley Tessaro



*Happy New Year and
Winter Season*

From the Tontitown
Historical Museum board and
staff



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



*"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 magnet

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!