



Tontitown Storia

Newsletter of the Tontitown Historical Museum (THM)

A Department of the City of Tontitown
Spring 2021, Vol. 16, No. 2

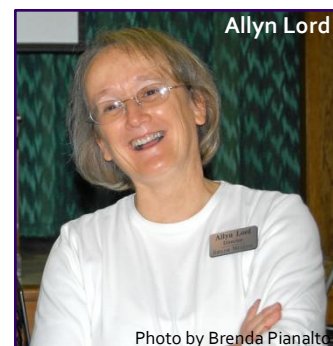


Saluti from the Board

Ciao from the Tontitown Historical Museum Board members. Our museum is still closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in order to ensure the safety of our visitors and staff. As a board, we are continually assessing the situation as vaccinations become more available across the Northwest Arkansas area and recommendations continue to loosen. We thank you for your continued support and patience.

The board has been excitedly preparing for the Tontitown Heritage Day event on May 23rd. For all the details, see the flyer inside and follow us on Facebook. The board is thrilled to bring back this wonderful event in 2021 with some new experiences along with a wonderful afternoon spent coming together as a community. Among the new additions, we'll have a Pie and Cake Silent Auction as well as new food options, so you'll be able to satisfy your sweet tooth. We will still have activities for families to enjoy together along with live entertainment and plenty of socializing. We hope to see you there!

We wanted to take a moment to spotlight a local museum legend. Allyn Lord, Director at Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, is retiring. Allyn has been a wonderful friend to the Tontitown Historical Museum (THM) and champion for local history in our community. Beginning her museum work as a registrar at the University of Arkansas Museum in 1982, Allyn discovered a love for the Ozarks and her people. Allyn's work and dedication took her to the Rogers Historical Museum as Assistant Director and finally to her position at Shiloh Museum. As a board, we'd like to sincerely congratulate Allyn on her nearly forty years working in museums to preserve the collections and stories of Northwest Arkansas communities for future generations. We also want to extend our deepest gratitude to Allyn for always being in THM's corner, ready and willing to provide professional guidance as well as fostering close personal friendships as we worked together. She always made time to help and went above-and-beyond for us. Allyn is a passionate, kind, and stellar museum leader who will continue to make an impact on the world around her.



Happy spring from the Tontitown Historical Museum board. We hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy and to be able to open the museum soon. Thank you so much for supporting our community and our museum.

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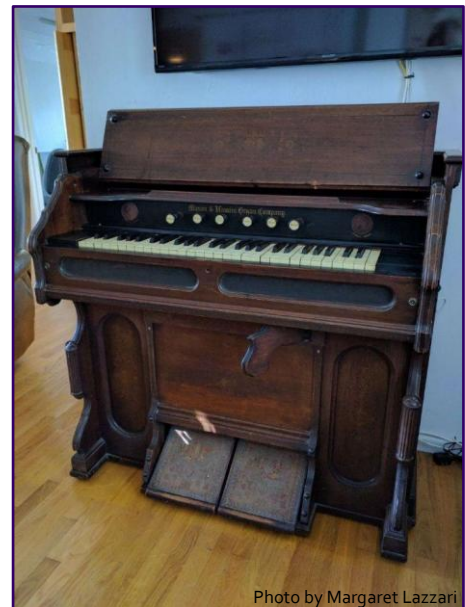
Artifact Spotlight

Lazzari Organ c. 1900

Written by Margaret Lazzari; Edited by Katherine Karras

When I was a child, almost every year during the 1950s, 1960s, and parts of the 1970s, we went to Tontitown during summer vacation. Both my parents had grown up there, and still had family there. My mother was Anna Ellen Aimerito Lazzari and her parents were Giacomo (Jack) and Francesca Aimerito, who lived on Highway 412 between Tontitown and Springdale. My father was Vincent Anthony Lazzari, son of Joseph and Josephine Lazzari, who lived in a large two-story house on a hill on Liberty Avenue, just west of County Road 84.

My aunt Angela was the one who had the old pump reed organ. The organ belonged to the Ursuline sisters who were stationed in Tontitown before the Benedictine sisters were there. For a short time, it was the first organ used in the first St. Joseph church, but when the newer, more powerful organ arrived, this organ was used in the convent. When the Ursuline sisters left Tontitown, they gave my aunt Angela the organ, who had it while she lived in a small Lazzari family property at the corner of Liberty Avenue and County Road 84. The property had a small house where her parents lived after moving out of the big house at the top of the hill. Next to the house was a one-car garage and small one-room workroom, where Angela lived for many years.



Without a doubt, my aunt Angela was the most eccentric, formidable person in my early life. She was fierce and strongly opinionated, although she had a sense of humor. She went to church every day and sat in a front pew all by herself, because no one dared sit next to her. (My brother Tony did one time; he liked to get her riled.) She wore her long hair in braids wrapped around her head and dressed modestly. She was also judgmental; I remember one trip when she scolded my mother severely for letting her children wear shorts in the summertime.

Weeds covered a lot of her property, but she gardened in patches carved out in the midst of the wild growth, and she knew which greens were edible and which were medicinal. She raised chickens for a while and had a smallish planting of concord grapes that ran along the county road. In the early years, she walked everywhere, but later she bought an enormous 50s-era sedan, when all cars were BIG cars. I had never before seen a front seat with so much leg room. Angela didn't always like the intersection by the church, and sometimes would drive over the church lawn to avoid dealing with it.



In addition to being in awe of her, I was also fearful of her house. One vacation, I was asked if I wanted to stay overnight with her in her "shack" as we called it. I begged my mother not to make me do it. Her shack had a bumpy, uneven dirt floor covered with odd scraps of sheet linoleum. It was heated by a potbelly stove in the middle of the space. She had a worktable along the west side of the room, and it was always covered with rough, old tools. It never looked like a house in any way, but rather always a junky dusty workroom with a bed, which was a pile of covers "walled" off by curtains that occupied the entire north wall.



But one thing about her house was lovely and wonderful, especially to my brother Tony and to me. And that was the old reed pump organ. It was the prettiest piece of woodworking I had ever seen. It had gracefully molded curves on the sides. The original needlepoint covers on the pedals, though now worn and faded, still had some of their original beauty. It had the knobs that changed the pitch, with their 19th century script, and the carved medals -- I thought they were fabulous. But when Angela played the organ, that was when it was truly magical. It had a soft, sweet, slightly wheezy sound, and filled the space where she lived, and transformed it.

Top photo: Margaret Lazzari and Sister Teresina Lazzari. THM, Lena Pianalto Collection, S-2006-20-8.

Bottom photo: Angela Lazzari, Sister Teresina Lazzari, Mary Louise Pianalto. THM, Lena Pianalto Collection, S-2006-20-4.

TONTITOWN HERITAGE DAY



**SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2021
1:00-3:00 PM**

**HENRY PIAZZA PAVILION IN
HARRY SBANOTTO PARK
235 E HENRI DE TONTI BLVD**



- Live Music from Rumours featuring Mike and Alex Franco
- Jenga and Activities for Kids and Adults
- Boxed Hot Dog Lunch and Ranalli's Cookies (suggested \$5 donation unless a member)
- Charcuterie Boxes for \$5 and Candy for \$1
- "A Taste of Tontitown" Basket Raffle
- 1st Annual Cake and Pie Silent Auction

**Enjoy an old-fashioned Sunday afternoon!
Visit old friends - Make new friends!**



**Supporting the Division of Arkansas Heritage
Hosted by Tontitown Historical Museum**

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Staff/Board Member Spotlight

with Jennifer De Martino, Museum Board Member



Jennifer De Martino with her family at Tontitown Heritage Day, 2019

- What is your hometown?
 - I lived in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, until I was 10, then in Naples, Florida, until I went to college.
- How long have you been living in Northwest Arkansas?
 - I moved here at the end of 2000.
- What is your role at the Tontitown Historical Museum?
 - I have been on the board at the museum since 2008. My strength is in museum collections management, so I have contributed to initiatives to improve recordkeeping, cataloguing, documentation, and environmental control.
- What are your hobbies?
 - My number one hobby is reading. I also like to cook, cross-stitch, and play tennis with my family.
- What is your favorite quote/line from a movie?
 - My favorite quote isn't from a movie, but was said by a movie star. "I never said, 'I want to be alone.' I only said, 'I want to be left alone!' There is all the difference." - Greta Garbo (Swedish actress, 1905-1990)
- What makes you the happiest?
 - Being with my family, nothing to do, near water, preferably no cell service.
- What made you interested in getting involved in the THM?
 - When I first moved to Northwest Arkansas, everyone who heard my last name asked if I was from Tontitown, so I had to learn more. I visited the museum, chatted with some board members, and jumped on board. I am proud of my Italian-American heritage, and my career is in museums, so this is a natural fit.

- What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?
 - The relationship I have with the other board members is my favorite aspect. They are all truly remarkable and inspiring people.
- What do you hope to learn from your involvement with THM?
 - I hope to learn how to grow and sustain a small historical museum, how to stay grounded in tradition but open to broader communities, and how to elevate THM as a contributor to the cultural offerings in Northwest Arkansas.
- In three words, how would you describe the mission and work of THM?
 - Heartfelt, Ambitious, Generous

SUPPORT TONTITOWN HERITAGE DAY

Pie and Cake Silent Auction

We are looking for bakers to donate baked goods for the silent auction at Tontitown Heritage Day. If you would like to donate your baked speciality, please contact Misty Piazza at misty_piazza@yahoo.com to learn more and volunteer. Proceeds go to support the Tontitown Historical Museum.

**DROP OFF - SUNDAY,
MAY 23 1 PM**
HARRY SBANOTTO PARK



~ Donations in Memory and in Honor ~

It is with gratitude and pride that we display Memorial and Honorarium (H) donation plaques in the Tontitown Historical Museum.

Beato & Violet Haney Ardemagni
Cathy Ardemagni
Cecil Ardemagni
Gene & Irma Taldo Ardemagni
Mike & Loyce Ardemagni
Gene Baker
Leo Baudino
Don & Philomene Ardemagni Begnel
Kathleen Brock
Kenneth Brock
C.J. and Olivia Pianalto Cigainero
Cel & Mary Ceola Cortiana
Gilbert & Lucia "Shortie" Cortiana
Gordon & Imogene Ardemagni Cortiana
Rudy Costa
Candida Morsani Crane
Lynda Cross
Albina Ranalli Dalla Rosa
Angelo & Irene Gaiche Dalla Rosa
James & Dominica Dalla Rosa
Bill & Fern Haney Fiori
Pete & Mary Cortiana Fiori
Joseph Angelo "Andy" Franco
Chuck & Mary Fucci
Emelio & Caterina Piazza Gaiche
Rita Taldo Gillis
Lillian Cortiana Granata
Tommy Granata (H)
Russell Greenlee
Phyllis Brunetti Hale
Clementine Morsani Haney
Betty Hinshaw (H)
Anita "Sunny" Hinshaw
Lee Wana Keck

Anna Morsani Kitchell
Michael & Dawn Hinshaw Latham family (H)
Frank Maestri
Lynn Maestri
Paul & Judy Maestri's 50th Anniversary
Annabelle Lee Pozza Miller
Amerigo Morsani
Frank & Carol Morsani (H)
Helen Crane Morsani
Denise Pellin
Arthur Penzo (H)
Ed & Adele Bariola Penzo
The Perona Family
Claudine Penzo Pianalto
Frank & Clara Fiori Pianalto
Gabriel & Elsie Mae Fiori Pianalto
George (Giacinto) & Clara Pianalto
Leo & Lucy Ceola Pianalto
Henry Piazza (H)
John Hugo "J.H." Pozza
Nancy Jean Roso Robbins
Lizabeth Roso
Margaret Taldo Roso
Gloria Mae Maestri Sallis
Harry & Dorothy Fiori Sbanotto
Agatha Morsani Smith
Lillian Pianalto Smith
Marie Tessaro
Raymond & Juanita Toler
Bruce Vaughan
Daniel "Danny" Ray Watson
James & Luellen Penzo Weiss
Elizabeth Morsani Williams
Leon & Sally Verucchi Zulpo

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!*



Thank you, Amici members, for your 2020 and 2021 memberships received through May 1! Your support means the world to us and helps us continue to preserve our history. A membership form to renew your membership or to become a new member is on the back cover of this newsletter. ***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 – 2021
Eric & Julie den Boer
Laura Faraci – 2021
Rep. Charlotte Fite
Mark & Melissa Franco
Craig & Carla Gourley
Adrienne Morsani Graham
Ken & Deloris Pianalto Green – 2021
Betty Hinshaw
Becky Howard
Leland & Mary Cortiana Lawrenz – 2021
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
Rachelle 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
D. Claud Fields, Jr. – 2021
Bary & Jennifer Pianalto Gills
Eugenia Hartman
Jason & Susan Kerr

James & Xyta Lucas
Robert & Cheryl Ardemagni Martin – 2021
Karla Ardemagni McKinley
Jim & Kathy Pianalto Miller
Stephanie Begnel Mullane
David & Heather Ranalli Peachee – 2021
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
Max & Kay Taldo – 2021

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
Paul & Bernice Bariola – 2021
Ahmad H. Bayyari
Rick & Kathy Brunetti
Denis & Margie Ceola
Ernie & Norma Deines
Larry & Betty Dutton
Robert & Linda Elia
Vic & Barbara Verucchi Faraci
Raymond & Pauline Franco
Roy & Jettie Franco
Bill Gaiche
Bill & Martha Green
Tommy & Zita Greenlee – 2021
Eddie & Nancy Guinn – 2021
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 – 2021
Norbert & Judy Ranalli
Fred & Ruth Ann Roso Ritchie
Gary & Deanna Shackelford
Deborah Shouse & Ron Zoglin
Frank & Dolores Verucchi
Norman & Carol Walker – 2021
Nova Jean Fiori Watson
Ron & Toni Maestri Wirts

Senior Individual

Loretta Brunetti – 2021
Jeanette Burditt
Jim Cortiana
Helen George
Ellen Verucchi Goff
Patsy Taldo Phillips Graham
John P. McGlone

Mary Catherine Neil
Cindy Pianalto – 2021
Elizabeth Pianalto – 2021
Martha Pianalto
Lou Sharp
Mary Frances Maestri Vaughan – 2021
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

Learn How to...Make Polenta and Umedo

by Misty Piazza



One of the first dinners I had with my now husband was Polenta and Umedo at his Grandparent's house. I had absolutely no idea what it was and little did I know there was history behind it. Here was how it was explained to me: In the old country, you used whatever wild game was available, usually squirrels or rabbits, and you stewed it into a red sauce. Then you make polenta, cornmeal mush, to go on the bottom. This was an inexpensive meal that could feed the whole house and everyone walked away full and satisfied. For my husband, growing up in an Italian household, this was a staple item growing up. His favorite variation is with rabbit.

I thought it would be helpful to hear from other Italians in the area about their Polenta and Umedo so I reached out to my friend Ryan Pinalto. Here is his recipe for this classic Italian household dish.

Polenta

I use two cups of boiling chicken stock and whisk in cornmeal (I use yellow) until it becomes very thick. Then turn it out onto a greased cookie sheet and flatten it down to about ½ inch thick and let cool.

Some people like to eat it fresh out of the pot, I like to cool mine and fry it in oil until it's browned and crispy.

Umedo

2 quarts of stewed tomatoes

1 small can tomato paste

2 cups water

1 large onion, chopped
2 tbsp. chopped garlic
1 tsp. black pepper (or to taste)
1 tsp. salt (or to taste)
1 tbsp. rubbed sage
16 oz. of the protein of choice like chicken, beef, rabbit, deer or squirrel.

Traditionally, it would have been made from the toughest cuts of wild game. Especially rabbit. Rabbit is by far my favorite.

Stew this all down for 4-5 hours on low heat until the meat breaks down and falls off the bone or shreds easily.

Serve piping hot over fresh or fried polenta. Top with a little Parmesan cheese you like.

Thank you, Ryan, for sharing your recipes with us. I hope this adds a new dinner idea to your table.

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 Karras at museum@tontitownar.gov.

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This Little
Museum"*

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or Join
Today!**

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E-MAIL _____

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