

Josephine D. Campoli Synnestvedt

Theresa C. Campoli Pieper

b. 1929

b. 1922

Family History

Mom and Pop were married in 1905. A year later Lucille was born, then Larry came in 1908. Eight more girls were born through 1932. Ten children!

Pop came from near Rome in Italy. Mom, her maiden name was Vitale, came from Italy too, Avalino, a town near Naples. Mom's father had a stone quarry there. Our parents didn't know each other there. We don't know how Mom and Pop met. The most that was ever said about coming here was when Mom talked about coming over in steerage. She said, "It was the most horrible thing I ever did!"

We don't know what happened after she arrived. Mom ran away because her parents wanted her to marry someone she didn't like. She had a brother over here who sponsored her coming. Nick Vitale was his name. That is what his daughter told us. We don't know how Pop came here. Both he and Mom come into the country through Philadelphia. Their names were not at Ellis Island. We have pictures of Pop and his brothers. Pop's brothers came over here for a while but didn't stay.

Pop died in 1958 and Mom died in 1970. The house was sold a few years after that. When we were growing up, we don't remember Mom ever leaving the house. Our parents maybe went to church on special occasions. Mom had her children at home. Theresa's older sisters told her that Mom would get down and scrub the floor right before giving birth. Dr. Harvey did not have an assistant.

Our Family Homes

Our family lived in several houses in the area. We lived in the little house along the tracks on Terwood Road, one room downstairs, two small bedrooms on the second floor, one room on the third floor. We also lived near the Bryn Athyn station in a little house that was torn down, on Pennypack Road where we slept three to a bed. This was near Ewald's house which is the historic Fettersmill house. This is where the bridge goes across the Pennypack Creek. There we had a big hill to go up, an apple tree to climb, and Pop had a bocce court. Then we moved to the big house on Second Street Pike (Huntingdon Pike). (See information about the house on page 153).

Pop bought that house on Huntingdon Pike which is near the Bethayres Train Station, close to where the Newtown and West Trenton lines crossed. We could tell the time by the trains there. The Newtown section of the line has been discontinued for years. I remember that every month he would go to the Huntingdon Valley Savings and Loan up the Pike to make a payment. Sometimes we would take it for him. Then that building became a butcher shop. We didn't have cars until later. Pop would be picked up to go to work. He worked first at Bryn Athyn Supply Company, then at Asplundhs.

There was no sophisticated plumbing in the big house when we moved in. We had to pump water up to the third floor. There was a big water tank there. You would pump the handle. Must have been a big pipe for that. Then Pop had plumbing put in. There is a bathroom on the third floor there now. There was only one bathroom in the entire house at first; it was on the second floor and the tub had feet on it. There were also gas lights. We all shared double beds, two to a bed there. The third floor eventually had a small apartment made. A small kitchen was put in. One of our sisters lived up there when she was married.

The Area We Grew Up In

When we lived in the big house, our neighbors were the Giovannangelos, Johnsons, Sopers, Simons, Ellis, Erbs, and Raglins. The young daughter from the Erbs died – they saw her coat under the ice of the creek behind our houses. There was a deep bank down to the creek. We never worried about flooding at our end of the street. The highest it ever came was maybe six feet from the top. But down at the bottom of the street it would flood on occasion. Fill dirt from the new Pike was put down there.

There was no bridge over the stream then. Jo remembers crying about how to get to school. The route to the pike was cut off because of the fill dirt. They raised the Pike. You can see where the old Pike went if you look near Moreland Road by our house. If you look down that road there is still part of the old road down there. The other part of the original Pike is up by Holy Redeemer. You can see part of the road near where the Hand Rehab office is. Near the jug handle, that's the old Pike down there.

The creek behind the house was deep enough for swimming and fishing. Sister Marcy even had a little boat. But there was a better swimming hole where the ballpark is now. That was the best one, around the bend. Then we could go down the tracks to another bend. That was also good.

We could also go down the tracks to Valley Falls Station. There was a big railroad bridge with open wooden ties to walk across there. We swam there too. Once after swimming there, Theresa came home with baby leeches all up and down her legs. We would also swim in the Ridgway pool. We didn't change in the chicken houses because we wore our suits up to that pool. But mostly we swam in the Pennypack Creek. After we got a car, we drove up to Danenberger's lake near Buck Road on Street Road in Southampton. The town's people were permitted to swim and picnic there without charge.

On the Pike the sidewalks began at the intersection near Black's Garage. No sidewalk until you got there. Black fixed Jo's first dent. Got it because she drove into the barn door behind our house. That barn burned down when the house was sold. Our sister Marcy's brand new car was inside and totally destroyed. We hadn't moved out yet. She had coins in that car that were melted. That is how hot the fire was.

Our Home Life

Mom was a good cook. When we came home from school, Mom would be starting dinner. Tomato sauce, I can still smell it. She canned everything. She and Pop grew everything. Tons of tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, strawberries, fresh lettuce, grapes, apples, Bartlett pears, and beets. She was always in the kitchen. In the spring she would go out and gather a basketful of greens, wild mustard or dandelions. The tender hearts were used in salads. She boiled the greens, threw the water out, boiled them again. That was our “spring tonic” and we had to eat it. Bitter! But it was good for us and we ate it, once or twice in the spring.

If we were ill, it was Dr. Harvey who came. He was marvelous. He would always come with his black bag. If we had anything contagious, we were quarantined. Remember those days? That illness would get passed down through the family. My brother’s room was used as “sick bay”. He had his own room since he was the only boy and when he was older, usually worked out of town for the Asplundhs.

What did we do? We would work in the garden with Mom. And in those days all of us kids played differently than the kids do today. All the kids on the street played together. The oldest one was in charge. We played Kick the Can, Hide and Go Seek, Move Up Baseball and Mother, May I? Tony Giovannangelo and his sister Clementine, their dad, Charlie’s first wife, was Frank Tinari’s mother were two of the kids. Charlie’s second wife Lizzie had Mary, Josephine, Dolores and Johnny.

Everything was cash back then. Did we get an allowance? Well, we had an aunt from New York who gave us five dollars. Theresa says, “I used to save that like crazy!” When Theresa was a sophomore, though, her sister Mae got a job at Hogeland’s Ice Cream Store. Mom and Pop didn’t like it, so they gave them both an allowance. Hogeland’s was a store where the girls delivered the ice cream to the car. They were called carhops.

Our mother didn’t want Pop working on the railroad because of her brother being killed in a railroad accident. So he worked with stone, helping to build the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. He also delivered coal and drove a steam roller.

Saturday night was always Pinochle Night at the table in the dining room for my father. Different friends of Pop would come, and sometimes Marcy would join in. On Sundays, we remember people playing Bocce, both in our Bryn Athyn house and the Second Street Pike house.

Pop didn’t go to any school in Italy. When he finally went to a convent school to see if they would take him, he was too old. *Life* was his school. He had a terrific memory. He always said, “If I had half the opportunity for education that you have, I would be president someday.”

When we bought a television set, he listened to all the news programs. You know what our mother said when the television set was brought into our house? “We were doing so well before you brought in that television set!” But she loved it herself. She watched it and also listened to the radio. Walter Winchell, Amos ‘n Andy, Gabriel Heater. Also the Lone Ranger. Ed Sullivan

was a little later. When our TV set first came, the neighbors came in and gathered around to watch. Our brother had a crystal set that he would listen to.

We were readers. “The Bobbsey Twins”, “The Girl Aviators”. We didn’t have a library. I think it was \$40 a week that Pop made. There were never any complaints about not having money. It seemed like our friends had more than we had, but other than once or twice wishing for a new dress, money was not a big problem. We would sew our clothes on an old treadle machine. Mom did handwork. She would get muslin sacks and sew them into pillow cases. In the big house we had a closet to put our clothes in. If we wanted furniture, we would probably go to the Sears and Roebuck on the boulevard. Mom hardly ever went to Sears. Only Pop would go.

Our married sister’s husband worked in the car business. We think that was where Pop got his first car. Back then you would take the driver’s test at Belmont Plateau in Philadelphia. The first family car was a Studebaker, then a Ford.

After supper, Pop and Mom would go out to the garden and tie up the string beans. That was probably the only time they had to get off by themselves and talk without all of us around!

At Christmas time, Italian people didn’t give gifts. Instead, we would have a big dinner, including the seven kinds of fishes. But later, our older sisters were like Santa Claus to us. Small presents.

We remember the ice truck. We would get chips. A block of ice went in the ice box in the cellar. We all had our chores. Cleaning the kitchen was a big huge cleaning job. Someone had to scrub the linoleum kitchen floor. The dining room was large too, and then there was the dusting of the banisters for the stairs. Jo remembers doing the ironing on Monday nights. There were very high ceilings, lots of baseboards. Rugs were only in the living room.



[Photo: The Campoli sisters.
Top: Lucille, Lillian, Hattie
Middle: Jane, Mae, Theresa
Bottom: Marcy, Jo, Peg]

During WWII we had blackout curtains. Some of us worked for a first aid group. Our brother Larry went into the service. Our brothers-in-law Ray Murray and John Pratt were in the service also. On the day the war ended, we took the train into Philadelphia “just to be crazy. Everybody was crazy!” The train was full. We got off at Reading Terminal. Lots of activity in the city!

Christmas trees stayed up for a long time. The older sisters would do the tree trimming. Our parents probably went to bed. We don’t remember them doing the tree. We weren’t allowed to

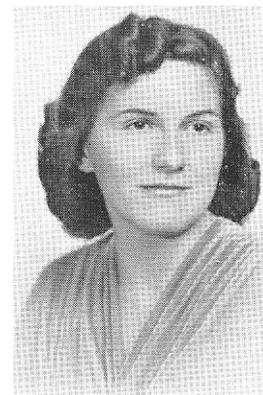
see the tree other than Pop setting it up. We would come down the steps on Christmas morning. The tree would all be done.

Our parents were strict. Black was black and white was white. You couldn't go out on a date without their permission. But being in the younger group, the rules weren't so strict. What did the family do for fun? We played cards, Pinochle mostly, and danced with each other. We had a 4th of July picnic every year, "Pop's picnic", which included all of us children and the married sisters and their families. We used to go to Long Beach Island in the middle of August. My father would invite anyone, not just family. This happened when some of us were older. Our parents would rent a house. Later when Pop retired they bought a house there with Hattie, Larry, Jane and Marcy. The kids would use their car seats for beds when there was too much company. Our mother would always find excuses for not going, but she eventually went.

School Days, School Days

We went to the Lower Moreland Schools. How did we get there? We WALKED! It was 1 ¼ miles to go to school. We only thought about it when we saw the buses go by. The bus would go right past our house. It would go up Moreland Road to pick up students there and then turn around and come right past our house. There was a mile-and-a-half rule about buses. We were just a little too close. Remember how we would run into the post office in Doerings Store (which was at Huntingdon Pike and State Road – also called Philmont Avenue) to warm up on our way to school in the winter.

Mr. Franklin Hoke was principal. Actually he was supervising principal. We had county superintendents in those days. Miss Nielson was the 5th grade teacher as well as being principal. When we were down in the high school on Murray Avenue, if you wanted lunch, you would have to walk to the Red Lion School cafeteria. We mostly packed our lunch and ate in the classroom. But we all got Thanksgiving dinner at Red Lion School. I remember going up and peeling potatoes to help. We would also take turns cleaning the lunch tables.



[Photo: Theresa's Lower Moreland High School graduation photograph]

At Easter, Theresa remembers that the school would show movies to us, interesting that the movies had a religious theme, now would cause contention. Theresa remembers "The Crucifixion" being shown. Opening exercises in school included Bible reading. At graduation, there was a Baccalaureate service that included Bible reading. The priest from our church in Fox Chase said that was all right for us to be there. On the other hand, one uneducated religious individual spoke about a person who was a Catholic before becoming a Christian. Really!

We had home economics and shop in the high school. Too bad these are not included any more. We had Mr. Charlie Shafer. Other favorites were Miss Crowe and Miss Nielson. Miss Nielson was especially nice because she acted like coming from another country was good instead of something that was looked down on. Was there discrimination then? Well, we may have been looked down on a bit for being Catholic, as well as Italian, but that made us work harder in school. This attitude seemed to have dissipated later since in Theresa's class the only Jewish student was president of the Senior Class, and the sophomore class president was a first generation Italian.

Church Life

We attended St. Cecelia's. We had to take the train down there. Mom would give us money. Then we would take the train home. We even walked home a couple of times to save the dime fare. Right up the railroad tracks. We would stop at a candy store in Fox Chase.

On Sundays sometimes we would take walks down the tracks to Lorimer Park. We would walk to Walnut Hill and then out to Pine Road and then Moreland Road. We didn't even mind. Made a big circle.

Where We Shopped

We would go to Wanamaker's in Philadelphia on the train. Our sister Lucille worked there and would bring things home for us sometimes. Back then, women and girls wore dresses. We didn't know what to do when you wore pants. We would buy our shoes at Fel Modes in Jenkintown. Before that, we traced our feet on a piece of cardboard when new shoes were needed, and Lucille brought them home. There were machines that you put your feet in at Fel Modes. It showed our feet.

Then there was Cheap John who came to our house with huge hampers filled with dry goods on his shoulders. How did he carry them?! He walked, too! Then we had the Pastore huckster truck. Someone named Gaetano came from Frankford. Mom would give him the order for the next visit, flour, canned goods. He came from Church Street in Frankford. Probably got his things from Dock Street.

Of course, we could walk up to the American Store on the Pike and Red Lion Road. Elliot's had a butcher store at Fettersmill and the Pike. Fifty cents with some change for a pound of chip steak. We remember the cookie tins in the front of Clayton's store. Theresa can remember carrying the filled wicker basket that made lines on her arms.

Theresa's wedding reception was in the big house on the Pike. The bar was on the front porch. In those days, that's how things were done. Wedding cakes came from Bond Bakers. You could order them and they would deliver. We went in town to Termini's for their wedding cookies. Bread was delivered by Bond Bakers along with milk from Schmidts and later Supplees. Marcy worked for Schmidts when she was in school. They left the milk on the step in the milk box. In the winter the cream would freeze up out of the top. Sometimes the items were left inside our

front door. We never locked our doors then. You could throw your car keys under your seat. No worries.

Pete Messina, the brother of Joe whose wife Enna ran Messina's Store on Murray Avenue, worked with Pop at the Bryn Athyn Supply Company. The high school students would go Messina's store at lunch time. They would be three and four deep waiting at the counter. Eena didn't serve a regular lunch menu, but they sold ice cream and things like that.

Off To Work We Went

Hattie and Lillie and later Mae worked at the telephone exchange on Murray Avenue after high school. We had a party line. The operators were so nice. If the line was busy, they would call you back. You didn't have to keep trying. Jane worked at SKF at Front and Erie. Marcy worked at Budd Field, now a country club there on Red Lion Road but formerly the Budd Company. They did government work, making planes first, then 240 mm shells in WWII. "Fire Power For Eisenhower" was a motto. There were underground tunnels there.

When Theresa graduated from Lower Moreland High School, she stayed home a year because she was only 16. Then she went to Comptometer School and started working for the government. What is a comptometer? It was a calculator that added, subtracted, multiplied and divided. Before computers. This makes us really feel old. The school was at 15th and Cherry in Philadelphia. They recommended we take Civil Service Exams.

When Josephine attended Lower Moreland High School, teacher Lydia Ganser persuaded her to take the Academic Course. But after one year Jo thought, "I can't afford college." So she took the commercial course. After graduation she worked at Standard Pressed Steel in Jenkintown until her son was born. Then when she went back to work, she was temping over at the Voc-Tech School but had also put her name in at Lower Moreland. When the right job there came along, she took it. She was secretary to the superintendent.

Our Summary

Josephine

I will always love my family and Huntingdon Valley. There could not be a more ideal place in which to live and grow as a child. Even today I can walk and explore a few of the spots where we played and swam. My children too, were raised to have an appreciation of the great outdoors. The school district provided an excellent education for each of my children.

Theresa

We had a nice childhood growing up in Lower Moreland. My only regret is not quizzing my mother more about her previous life.

Our houses:

First: 1909	Southampton house near a school and railroad station (address unknown)
Second: 1910-1914	Terwood Road house on the tracks; 3 babies born here
Third: 1914-1929	Pennypack Lane (house is torn down) near Bryn Athyn Train Station
Fourth: 1929 -1980s	Big house on Second Street Pike

Children of Domenic and Mary Campoli

Lucille (Lucia) Mary Campoli
Born July 7, 1906
Died April 1, 1994

Lawrence J. Campoli
Born August 10, 1908
Died December 16, 1986

Lillie (Elena) Campoli	Married David E. Caldwell April 18, 1936
Born February 4, 1911	Born September 20, 1907
Died March 1, 1997	Died September 22, 1983

Hattie (Pasquelina) J. Campoli	Married Fred Foster December 24, 1933
Born March 22, 1913	Born September 17, 1906
Died March 31, 2004	Died... "Tuesday" published August 2, 1962

Virginia (Vincenza) Campoli	Married John Wesley Pratt Sept 28, 1940
Born August 6, 1915	Born October 4, 1907
Died May 7, 1984	Died June 20, 1994

Mae (Philomene) Louise Campoli	Married Raymond Clyde Murray
Born June 9, 1920	February 14, 1942
Died December 5, 2004	Born November 13, 1919

Theresa Cecelia Campoli	Married Robert Anthony Pieper October 24, 1953
Born September 8, 1922	Born July 6, 1921; Died September 8, 1984

Marcy Campoli
Born July 9, 1925

Josephine Dolores Campoli	Married Fred Homer Synnestvedt January 18, 1946
Born August 18, 1929	Born July 30, 1924; Died October 3, 1991

Margaret Ann Campoli	Married Dave Markloff September 8, 1962
Born February 20, 1932	Born October 1, 1929; Died July 17, 1998

The information below is a description of the Campoli house from Sylvia M. Fesmire's book, Window on the Past.

A "grand dame" in the Victorian tradition is hemmed in by "progress" in road building—namely the latest Huntingdon Pike improvements eliminating left turns into Welsh Road and Moreland Road south of the Reading-Trenton tracks. The house itself has three floors - front view - and four from the rear. An excellent house for rearing a large family in the 1920's—so thought Mr. Domenic Campoli and his good wife when they first moved to the Valley.

The 15 large square rooms were uncrowded even by the ten children plus one Mrs. Campoli chose to raise. The porch in the front has the traditional turned balustrades. The gingerbread at the top is in conservative good taste. The wrought iron railing on the cupola is of unique Victorian design. The whole structure is "four-square" and exceedingly substantial in appearance. It is one of the very few houses to escape the ravages of modernization.

The carriage house turned garage had stalls for horses as well as accommodations for carriages. Its design is complementary to and compatible with the imposing house it serves. One of the early deeds pertaining to the house is dated March 28, 1872, transferring the property from a George Shelmire to Christopher Hein. It passed through several hands until it came to the present owners. At one time it was on the Huntingdon Turnpike from Fox Chase to Sorrel Horse and beyond. The rear of the property is on Penny-pack Creek.



Victorian House - Bethayres

Below is a Lower Moreland Township tax bill.

PHONE Bethayres 133

TAXES FOR 1933

Bethayres, Pa., August 1, 1933

Domino Campoli
Bethayres Pa

DRAW ALL CHECKS TO THE ORDER OF HARRY G. ELY, Receiver of Taxes

Real Estate Assessment	5500	
" " "		
" "		
.....		
.....	100	
.....	5600	

Taxes Levied in Lower Moreland Township for 1933

Township Assessment	5 1/2 Mills	
Fire Tax	1/2 Mill	
Street Lights	1 1/4 Mills	
Fire Hydrants	1/2 Mill	
School Assessment	15 Mills	82 50
School Tax (Per Capita)		5 00
<small>5% Penalty added after September 30, 1933</small>		
County Assessment	3 Mills	16 50
Personal Property Tax	4 Mills	
Poll Tax		50
<small>No Rebate for prompt payment, but a Penalty for Non-payment will be added on and after October 1, 1933. All Taxes are now due and payable.</small>		
Total Tax		104 50
Penalty		82
		103 68

Received Payment,

Date Aug. 15, 1933

Harry G. Ely
RECEIVER OF TAXES

No Receipt Will be Mailed Unless Stamp is Enclosed *F.O.S.*