

Vincent Pastore
b. 1925

The Beginning of the Collection

In the beginning I was looking for gas pumps. I drove all the way to Virginia. I spent \$5000 on the stuff. I couldn't get them all on the truck and I had to leave one there. Everything was so cheap in those days.

[Photo: Gas pump]



Well, I used to clean out houses, and I used to sell the stuff. So after that everybody used to have garage sales and they would come to see how much I wanted for stuff. So then I put the fence up and I put a sign "I don't sell anything." When people come here and want to know prices, then that's it. So I kept the stuff. These people only wanted to know the price; it got to me so I stopped selling and started collecting.

I used to go to Perkiomenville every Monday. It was like a great big flea market. People from out of state would come there. Well, I used to buy stuff up there, and it got to the point that people didn't want to buy stuff, they just wanted to know how much it cost.

I was going to go into the antique business. I had Mr. Synnestvedt build a place over in Horsham. During the summer when I was cutting grass my wife would work there. Then in the winter I would be there. That's when I always went to the farm auctions, to buy stuff for there. But my wife didn't like being in there by herself. She was getting scared. The building was on the corner with no one around. Somebody wanted to put a restaurant in there. I said "Good". That is there now.

I stored stuff. Then that got to be so much so I had to do something else. That's when I started putting the things in the yard. I still have stuff that is stored away, garage, attic. I've got banks all over. Dolls and everything. In fact a lady comes yesterday. So I could sit down I took the box off a seat and found the box full of baby dolls, right under my table. Twenty five or thirty Barbie dolls. I didn't even know it was there. There was a bank there too. I'm told that some of my things are valuable, but it's like everything else you have to find a buyer.

I don't know whether this item I'm thinking of is WWI or WWII where you buy bonds or something like that. I've got the printer that does that. I don't know what it says but I've got a lot of prints of it. I have it up in the attic.

I remember the Washington House up at Bustleton and Philmont. There were trucks coming in to sell things and Ely would auction the stuff off. Now that's going back a while! I was just a young kid when we used to go up there. My parents used to bring me up there, but what we bought I don't know.

I just go to auctions to buy. Lately I haven't gone to any. I used to go to them every week. Of course if there was a farm auction I would go. The notices used to be in the paper every week but there aren't too many farms around now. At farm auctions they want to get rid of stuff. Now if somebody brought some stuff there you got to watch yourself. You have to judge what the stuff is worth.



Now I'm looking for Mickey Mouse things and banks. Nobody collects Mickey Mouse or banks. Oh, you can find the stuff. Dolls, sometimes I only pay a dollar for. Some places want \$25 for them; somebody who knows what they are doing. When you travel you see them. Yeah, I go out most every day. Mostly on the weekend you see a sign. I've been going up to the flea market at Neshaminy there.

A guy used to be there with tomato plants. He's not there lately so now I buy something else. But now I'd like to buy some tomato plants, plant them in those big pots so the sheep don't get them.

[Photo: Vince with his former dog, Tuffy]

Then I went up to Roosevelt, up on Roosevelt Boulevard. A big flea market up there. Then I went to the race track. That's where I got my bulldog. The guy was from New York. He had NY tags on it. He had two bulldogs there. Someone else bought the other one, which was better, he said. When I bought an Indian I put it on the back of the truck. When I was driving home everybody was pointing at the Indian in the back of my truck.

What do I have on my second floor? Rooms are all full. A lot of banks, a lot of stuff. I always want to sort it out but I never get to it.

Some lady asked me what I was going to do with all this stuff. Do you remember the guy that dies on the television who had a Cadillac and wanted it buried with him. She had to buy some extra lots. That's what I'm going to do. Bury it all down in the field. The lady said "Oh, don't do that, don't do that!" It's like I showed you those marble tables. Marble tops, thick, \$5 each. Marble tables! Two of them! One is a big long one. The other is round. \$5! What would you do?

The Collection Includes

The bear I bought that at Stephenson's Auction.

The gas pump; I got at Butterworth's. It was worth \$500! The old ones go for way more than that now. The one on the porch, the guy who had it had fish in the top part. I can't be bothered with all that work, putting fish in it and cleaning it.

At Quakertown they had an auction at the railroad station. That's where I got most of my railroad stuff. The guy said "Look around." So I did. I got three or four signs which had the ticket agents name on them. They made a dance hall out of that station from what I understand. I once went up to Bristol and there was a Woodmont Station there. I got that sign. Nobody is collecting that stuff now. People watch "Antiques Roadshow" and think they're going to get rich.

I got the book about the train wreck in Bryn Athyn right above the railroad tracks. I got the date and everything; people got killed It was above where the bridge is.

The most expensive thing I have bought is the dinosaur. Cost me over \$100 to ship it! It comes from North Carolina. The guy that delivered it had a great big truck. I don't know what I said to him. He shook his head like I was nuts. The truck had a lift on the back. Had a hydraulic thing to move it. It took me 2 or 3 hours just to open up the box. Channel 29 wants to take a picture of it.



[Photo: Inside the house]

I got a mannequin in the barn for a long time. At Halloween someone must have smashed the face and broke the arm. I'm thinking about putting that next to the dinosaur like he's chewing it up. I think the mannequin even has red paint on the face. Now this is going back. I think it is still there. I even have the casket, made out of plywood, for the mannequin to lie in. The guy who sold me the mannequin used to work at Sears. That's how he got the mannequins.

Personal History

When I was young there used to be a big bank six or seven feet high of ground at Red Lion Road and Philmont down at the creek and down near the little house that the Moyers lived in (recently demolished on school property next to Fairway Plaza building). We used to cut grass there. Had to go under the barbed wire fence. When the school came there they tore all that down.

I have a bad leg. Nobody would hire me back then. Now they got to hire you. We used to go roller skating in Hatboro. We would go down to Hunting Park Avenue to work in a rug mill at 11:00 at night, the night shift. When I was going through Hatboro, at the Old Mill Inn there used to be a big hump there. So I was going to work from the roller skating rink on a motorcycle with George Shirley. A car had missed the turn at that road, at the Old Mill, and was backing up. The car couldn't see me because of the hill. It backed into me. They took me to Abington Hospital in a car instead of an ambulance. I had a compound fracture and the bone came out. Also had a concussion and my thumb still doesn't work right. But that's what I got my bad leg from. They gave me 24 hours to live. But for two weeks they didn't do anything. I was so delirious they had me tied down. My mother used to bring me egg and milk because I didn't eat what they brought me. Then they took me to Hahnemann Hospital and operated on it. I was the first one they used penicillin on. They straightened my leg out. I had to wear a brace.

I didn't have any friends when I was in school because we all did something. We had no money. We had to buy everything ourselves. If you wanted a bicycle you had to buy it yourself. Then you got to the point when you started to work you would buy your own clothes. We used to go down to Frankford Avenue.

We used to go sit up on the railroad crossing on Red Lion Road and talk to the flag guy. When the train would come he would stand out there with the flag. I got one of the flags in the house. Then right below that on the other side where the Quaker City Gear Company was a factory that stored railroad stuff. Right before the creek there used to be a little house where colored people lived. I can't think of their names, although the boy there went to school with me.

Across the street there, William Ridgway owned all of that where Quaker City was. He also owned up the Red Lion Hill. There was a big house and a swimming pool where everyone went swimming. He sold all of that. He also owned the other side of Philmont Avenue where Fairway Plaza is today. Now there is talk about building houses on that ground. To get to Ridgway's pool you would go off Philmont Avenue where Adcock's is. There used to be a dirt road there and then you would be at Ridgway's pool. He was a politician and would have parties there. He had an old chicken coop where you got dressed. And then the big house on the top there, and the barn. I got the old fan from the barn. It fell apart though.

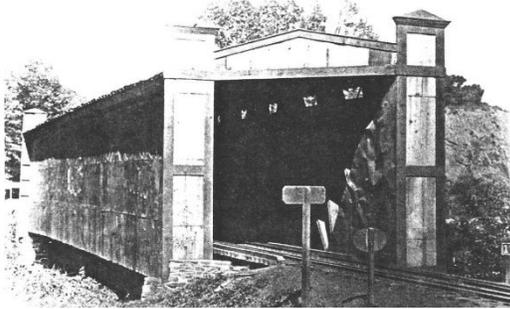
We used to go swimming in the creek down by the Butterworth Company, Buttonball Creek. We used to walk up the railroad track in Terwood Road area above the Bryn Athyn Post Office and go swimming in that creek, even tie a rope on a tree and swing in. I even used to cut the grass in the Bryn Athyn cemetery.

I used to plow the roads and mow up in Bryn Athyn and here. I worked for the state and the township. I also used to take Powell's orchard apples down to Dock Street. I had my hands in everything, I guess you would say. I went to watch making school for three years. I still have all my tools. When you graduate you make a watch. I went to the school near North Broad Station.

In Jenkintown we went to the movies at Hiway Theater. One night me and my brother went down to the movies and we missed the 11:00 train coming back. So we walked to Meadowbrook

and we started to walk up Valley road. We saw lights on in a house and an old lady lived there. We knocked on the door to use her phone. She called the cops. The cops came but they made us walk home the rest of the way anyway. Now later I used to mow her fields and I would tell her “You called the cops on me and my brother”! Every time I would tell her that.

The railroad track near Terwood Road used to be a covered bridge. We went ice skating down there. I don't even think it freezes over now. When the water company took over they put signs up for no skating. Then when the weather was warm we would go up further and go swimming.



[Photo: A view of the covered bridge over the Pennypack Creek just north of the grade crossing on Terwood Road across from the old quarry]

I don't think we had any kind of celebration on the 4th of July or Memorial Day. On Christmas our parents gave us a stocking full of nuts and some change. That was it! If you wanted a bicycle you'd buy it yourself. Maybe some clothes. If we did get anything it was clothes. With this bunch in the family there were three in one bed! When the coal heater would go out you would throw your clothes on top of the covers. Every Easter my father would get a baby goat.

My car was the '33 Chevy. I had to carry a can of gas in the back; the gas gauge didn't work. I used it to go to work in it. Where the Navy Base is, Firestone used to be there. They made the molds for the tires. That's what I used to do, make the molds for the tires. I never had to take a driver's test. I don't think they had that test then.

I had someone take my chickens so I fixed my chicken coop so that when you opened the door to the chicken coop my doorbell would ring in the house. But it didn't work; the guy got away. Then I put another one outside to catch a fox and all that happened were the sheep were in it. The wires are still there.

My father left the house to me. My father and mother were still living here when my wife and me were married and lived here. My mother died and my father was still here. He's buried somewhere up on Route 1. My sister Josephine built her house next to mine. My father gave her the land. The school's parking lot was my father's. We raised dahlias and sweet corn there. Mrs. McOwen would see me out there, rush out and buy some corn as I was picking. I went out with Lester Lenhart's sister Thelma for a while. She used to work for Josephine. My wife was from Trevese. My sister knew a lady with a beauty shop and this was her niece. They introduced us. That's how we got involved. We got divorced because my wife told me to get rid of the junk or she'd leave me. I said “Good-bye”. She left.

Family History

My father, Frank Pastore, came from Italy to Philadelphia. He married my mother, Marietta Paretto in Philadelphia on July 20, 1914. My mother was the only one who could speak Italian. My grandfather was a steeplejack. He worked on City Hall in Philadelphia. They lived in Waltonville, PA and he worked on machines. He became a teacher of that trade and earned \$.50 an hour. A strike happened and his pay rose to \$.53 cents an hour. He was a stone cutter at Bryn Athyn. Daddy bought a brand new Model T when he came here. My parents built the house when I was a baby. My brother Eddie, me, Nicky, Albert, Josephine and Frankie. Their first child, my oldest sister, Rosina, was born on June 17, 1915 and died of pneumonia on May 18, 1918.

I don't know who owned the land that my father bought to build our house on. I don't even know the builder of our house. My dad left me the house. Josephine was given the land for her house. My other brothers got money. My mother, dad, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law are buried up in Langhorne. Joey (Vince's Down's Syndrome son) was cremated. I got teed off when my wife wanted to pull the plug on Joey in the hospital. I left. I didn't want to see that happen. After that my wife never came to see me. I wasn't asked what to do. After the divorce everything changed. Joey was taken care of by a couple my wife knew. When the husband died Joey was moved to another place. He choked on peanut butter. That's how he died. I go to see my brothers and at family reunions.

My family went to St. Ann's Church in Fox Chase. Then we went to Southampton and to get baptized we went all the way up to Feasterville. The church is still there but it has something else in there. My sister made us go to church. I think my mother maybe put her up to it. My sister would take us in the old '33 Chevy.

My dad was a huckster after the building was finished in Bryn Athyn. He use to sell the Bryn Athyn people all kinds of vegetables. I would see his truck sitting in front, waiting for me to come too. He sold our own vegetables that we raised. Also eggs and chickens.

He used to take me with him to Dock Street to watch the truck while he bought things. Then the cop would come over. My dad would hand him something. Then he could park there. He wasn't the only one who sold up here in Huntingdon Valley. There was another man, Redmile, Tom Redmile. He worked in the post office after that, didn't he? After my father retired he was around the house always doing something. My mom? Oh, she outworked him. She was always downstairs dressing chickens. She had a stove and sink down there. She had a lot of colored people from the area, Jenkintown, who would buy the chickens. They would come to the house. We would sell eggs to the Crowe family around the corner.

My parents had a farm here. We used to have horses. Once, my brother was going over to the railroad tracks on a horse. A train came along; killed the horse but my brother was okay. I never asked him how it happened.

My father used to clean out houses and sell the stuff. I don't know where he sold it. He would put the things in the garage until he could sell them. Remember the Taxis family over on the

Pike. We were moving some stuff for him. He had a desk; that's the desk in my dining room. My dad didn't put anything out in the yard.

My dad was a mail carrier after a while. Took the mail at Bethayres Train Station. When he was down there getting the mail I'd ride home with him. Now this is going back.

My father worked in one of the little Bryn Athyn shops when the cathedral was being built. He was a sculptor stone mason or something like that. He cut one of the first things that is on top of the cathedral in the early 30's.

Our property went almost down to Anne Street behind the school. It was all fields. We used to have Model T's and run them all over the fields. I don't know where we got them, but we used to buy them and then sell them for junk back in those days. Me and my brothers did this. My dad didn't do nothing like that.

See all those buildings down there? (points down toward his house). That's where my mother raised chickens. We had cows. We milked the cows before we went to school. The teacher says, "Why are you late?" "I milked the cows". We had to stay home and plant. We trapped and caught a skunk, me and my brother. We put a long stick up his hinny so he wouldn't squirt but he got us anyhow. I go to school. Everyone in the hallway was saying "I smell skunk". Mr. Anglemoyer got a hold of us and told us to take a couple of days off. I took a bath, put all kinds of perfume on.

We used to buy milk from Schmidt's dairy. We would have two cows. Mrs. McOwen called us about our cows who were in heat and mooing all the time. "Come get this cow, it won't stop mooing!" When a cow gets in heat that's all it does, holler for a boyfriend! We used to put them in a truck and take them up to Byberry Road. There was a bull up there. It didn't take long. That's all that bull did.

My sister used to go dancing and push the car out of the garage, so Pop wouldn't hear, so she could go dancing. She would coast it down Red Lion Road and then start it up. I remember one night she and my cousin from New York came in at 3:00 AM. My mother was waiting for her. Man oh man, my mother was pickin' on my cousin and she didn't have anything to do with it. Up at Street Road and Philmont Avenue in Feasterville is a child care place. Well, that used to be a dance hall and that's where my sister would go. She and Carol Terry's mother used to go with someone named Walsh and Marie Lodge. I think she's still living.

Red Lion Road and Murray Avenue used to be two lanes with humps on each side. We never got really flooded from the creek.

People Can Drive You Crazy

I got one of these stones for sharpening knives and everything, the old fashioned kind that you sit down at with a wheel and peddle that you step on with your feet. It had a little cup on it; water goes on when you turn. One guy got teed off because I wouldn't sell it to him. I knew he didn't want to buy it; he wanted to know how much it was because he had one he wanted to sell. Well,

I wouldn't tell him how much it was. He finally left with his nose in the air. I didn't get this at Perkiomenville. I got it at a farm auction. I like to go to farm auctions.

Gas pumps were hard to find and then cheap back then. Also water pumps. I get a lot of people coming to buy them. There was a guy once who wanted to buy a gas pump. He was one of these wise guys. He picks out \$200, counts it for me and I asked him "When was the last time you were at the doctors?" He went in his pocket and brought out \$300 more so that was \$500. I said again "I should make an appointment for you at the doctors." So he got up to \$700. I said "I still got to make an appointment for you." So that was the end of it. I didn't want to sell it.

Everybody Wants to Make a Dollar

Some of these places they bid on their stuff. Say you go to an auction and you got stuff there and you didn't get your price. The auction guy would buy it back, but he would pay the interest on it. Say it cost \$10 and it cost him 5% to sell it. He would pay the 5% and take it back. You're bidding against yourself. You don't always get your price.

So that's why I go to estate sales. The kids and the former owners want to get rid of the stuff at any price. If you go to the ones that have auctions every week, well, they're the ones you got to watch. Now the bear I have I got at Stephenson's Auction. I scared the girl there. I didn't even give her time to think. She knew she wasn't going to get it. She said \$10 and I said \$25. This way she knew I wanted it. If she really wanted it she might have gone up to \$75. That's how I got that. Oh, I've been around!



[Photo: Vincent's bear]

Residents

Then there was Cypress Street. All the way in the back at the end of the road there were two double houses. One was Smiths. George Smith was the son. Next to that, I don't know what that name was. Then next to that were people named Casey. I don't know who was in the other house. Four families were down there. Then came Snell, on Red Lion, a big house with all kinds of pine trees. Then another little house which is still there.

On Red Lion Road next to us was a Black family, Fauntleroy. Their house used to sit right on the road (Red Lion Road) before the road was widened. In the back of that is where the hole was for the fireworks factory, but I don't remember that.

[Photo: Metallic Cap Manufacturing Co office, built in 1878. They made explosive caps used in blasting. The facility was located at the bend in Red Lion Road where the playing fields are for the current Murray Avenue School. The factory exploded and the Philadelphia Ledger for April 2, 1880 carried the story. "The cap works at Bethayres wrecked by explosion. Shock felt for miles. Thought to be an earth quake. Supt. Burrows died in the blast. His body parts were removed by undertaker Fullmore and placed on ice]



Who were my friends? My brother played with George Smith. When we were young we used to go caddying at Philmont Country Club, served papers, mowed lawns. Old man Gimbel (one of the owners of Philmont Country Club), he only gave you a quarter for caddying for him. At Christmas we all were given raincoats. Gimbel probably got them for ten cents each! My brother used to work in the kitchen. He wouldn't eat the chicken there, only the ice cream. We would serve The Evening Bulletin.

Now I have the first police gun of Synnestvedt who worked in Bryn Athyn. Some guy was selling it. Synnestvedt is dead now, but he was the first policeman up there before Ryan and the others. He fixed watches. Sometimes when he was on duty on the Pike he'd be sitting up there looking down. He was working on watches.

There were three houses next to the fire house on Red Lion Road. Eddie Schmidt (owner of the dairy) lived in one next to the fire house. Joe Jones lived in another. I don't know who lived in the other one. Joe worked for Schmidt. I don't remember any of the little houses on Schmidt's place next to the school.

Black was on the corner of the Pike and Philmont Avenue and ran a bus. Reading Railroad used to repair buses there. Stapfer use to sell cars in there and sell gas there. After that there was a house. He used to be a preacher, then came Montayne. I don't know if that bar was there or not. But we called Chestnut Street "Tin Can Alley". Once when there was a flood down there Danenberger floated his boat there. Asplundh had the nursery across the street where the ball fields are behind the shopping area and that all got flooded.

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BLACK'S GARAGE

Atlantic Products — Lee Tires

JOHN H. BLACK

BETHAYRES, PA.

Across the street lived Hoke who worked at the school. Next to the school lived the Flack's, then the big stone house was the Claytons, and then Tinari's. There used to be apartments in the back of Doc Brown's drug store on the Pike. I remember the Messina's Store on Murray Avenue

in front of the school. We used to go there for lunch. On Hallowell Drive the only house there was the big house, the Hallowell house.

Places of Business

Now Butterworth's down here on Philmont Avenue. I cleaned that factory out. They used to make railroad stuff. There were gas pumps there. The guy there who was from Massachusetts was the one cleaning it out. I said "How much do you want for the gas pump?" He didn't know what I was talking about. I said "Will you take \$10?" He said "Yeah". I went home and got my tools to take the gas pump apart before he knows what I got! Then after that I cleaned out all the place for him. I got the old stock certificates, way back, real old dates on them from the safe there. I still got them somewhere. I have Butterworth bonds in a box in my basement. They go back to the 1800's.

Right next to Butterworth's was the stocking mill, Bethayres Hosiery Mill maybe. I got their hosiery reel from there.

Across the street from the Bethayres Train Station, down at the intersection there used to be a little stand there, Mr. Hutchins. He ran it, served ice cream and stuff. He had a bulldog. All he did was sit in a chair with the bulldog next to him. He had someone else selling the ice cream. He moved to the restaurant on Philmont Avenue and Red Lion Road. My mother taught him how to cook spaghetti.

There used to be horse race tracks here. One was at Pine and County Line Roads. Another was where Wheelworks is now, back in that area. Railroad tracks used to cross there (Newtown/West Trenton lines) and a man was stationed at a watch tower to look for trains there. I mowed grass there and also at Dr. Bennett's place, Hoover farm, where the old and new Greenridge Farms are now.

Schmidt's farm was sold at a not real good price. I don't know what the school district bought it for, but immediately after Schmidt signed the papers a builder who wanted it offered him a whole lot more. That's what I understand. How true it is I don't know. It's the same old story. Something sits unsold for so long, then all of a sudden after it is sold everybody wants it.

Schmidt got all his land from his father. The father owned all the land. He used to give my father hell all the time because when our cow was in heat she would always go over to the farm to get to his bull. He was worried that his cows would catch a disease from our cows.

In back of the library it used to be a pasture for Schmidt's farm. There also used to be an apple orchard, not Powell's, someone else. I used to go to the orchard because there were a lot of broken milk bottles that were thrown there. I was looking for good milk bottles. They used to dump the bottles up there.

I bet Schmidt had two to three hundred cows. He used to rent down the Pike where St. Joseph's Manor and the Meadowbrook Apartments are. It was all farm land, and also the other side

across the Pike where the hand doctor is, because I used to mow it for him. I think the owner of the hand doctor's property used to be Williams.

Now the Smith dairy that used to be next to us (currently where the road to the back of the Middle School is), he had his cows up in Southampton at Byberry and Buck Road. Bill Smith's grandfather.



[Photo: Delivery vehicles for the William Smith Dairy established in 1919. Mr. Smith became a resident in 1921 and built the milk house on Red Lion Road in the vicinity of the current access road to the rear of the Murray Avenue School]

We used to cut across Schmidt's field up there and go across the farm on the other side there. If you go there now it would be Asplundh. Who owned that farm? I don't know. They used to keep their trucks up there and everything else.

Then there was Raytharn Farm. I got some of their bottles. If you go down Tomlinson Road before the school, if you turn left and go straight, then that was where the farm was. If you go up Buck Road and go down the hill that was all farm. I think that belonged to Pitcairn too. Before Byberry Road one of the Bryn Athyn sons got me to plow the field up there so he could land his plane there. But if I go back in my books I could find his name. To tell the truth I don't remember how I got the milk bottles. About two months ago I went up to the Thrift Shop in the old barn in Bryn Athyn. They had about fifty bottles there. The lady that was there before me bought Raytharn Farm bottles. Did I buy any? Yeah, I bought about \$30.

There was a big house next to the hospital (currently Holy Redeemer Hospital), on top of the hill, owned by Quakers, I think. Somebody died there and they just left. Kids from Rockledge got in there and burned it down.

We used to get lumber, cement and stuff from Leedom's Lumber Yard down the Pike. They used to live back on Walton Road. Before Yerkes the cleaners on the Pike there was a butcher shop.

We would get gas at Hutchies. The father had a gas station there. I guess we also got it at Blacks there at the 2nd Street Pike and Welsh road. Then the bank, Wachovia, used to be just Huntingdon Valley Bank.