

One Life in Lodi

A brief biography of Nunzio Paparozzi

By Artie Maglionico

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The Paparozzi name is almost as old as the borough of Lodi itself. Nunzio Paparozzi, a lifelong resident fuels his journey into the past with high octane humor. Now and then he'll pause for a moment just long enough for you to feel the warmth and compassion for his family, his country and his community .

Mr. Paparozzi was born on Farnham ave . in Lodi on March 25, 1920. His father, Michael, arrived in Lodi as a child from Campobasso Italy. In 1914 he married Amelia Garcifano. The newlyweds took up residence at the bride's home on the Franham Ave. hill. It was there that Nunzio and his siblings Frank, Carmela, Mike, Christine, Lucille and Vincent were born and raised. " We were a very happy family." Recalls Nunzio. "Through good times and bad we still managed to pull together as a family and make life worthwhile."

Nunzio, as did many children growing up in Lodi during the 1920's, learned early the value of a dollar. His grandfather used to offer him .25 cents to feed the goats. Unfortunately, for the young Nunzio, the offer never turned into money. He never saw a nickel for his efforts let alone two bits. "I used to follow a horse and buggy with a pail and shovel. "Says Nunzio , I sold the fertilizer to our neighbors."

Lodi, especially the hill section, was mostly lush pastures and dairy farms which were predominantly Dutch owned. Among them were the Yagt family who red barn remained standing overlooking Hillside Place until the early 80's.

Nunzio entered the Columbus School in the mid 1920's and remembers a few of his teachers... among them Miss Walsh, Miss Felter, Miss Dupree, Mrs. Hull and principal Miss Manfred. " I had a crush on Mrs. Hull." Admits Nunzio. " She must have liked me back because she kept me back a year." Nunzio's

childhood classmates were John Paladino, Tom Luggiero, Fred Buffa, Anthony Caniano, Ralph Orsini, the Pesenti and Costa children.

In 1934 Lodi High School held its first classes and through its doors walked the handsome and enterprising kid from the hill Nunzio Paporozzi who was among the school's first graduates. "Before Lodi High was built the property was nothing more than a hill with a vacant house on it." Says Nunzio "The land was owned by the Gulliota family. It cost the town \$ 476 thousand to build and remains till this day among the best investments the town ever made."

As for recreation during Nunzio's teen years stick ball and basketball were the most popular. To cool off during the summer months Nunzio and his pals would go swimming in the northern end of the Saddle River. "The closer to Home Place you swam." Recalls Nunzio "the better your chances were of glowing in the dark from the dye that was filtered into the water by the United Piece Dye works.

The Paporozzi family took great pride in their resourcefulness and in their ability to rise above obstacles. During the depression years Nunzio would help his dad make bleach and sell it for 20 cents a gallon. The family would also make wine and sell it at Bocce ball tournaments.

In 1943 during the height of WWII, Nunzio was called to serve in the Army. He left his job at U.S.Rubber and was shipped out to Camp Robinson, Arkansas to train in the Medical Division. From there he went to Camp Grubar, Oklahoma then to Camp Barkley Texas where he became an instructor in Medical Technique. Soon afterwards Nunzio was on the Queen Mary destination Normandy France . On the way over Nunzio met fellow Lodian Tony Astor who was already in his early thirties. "Tony had ready cash." Says Nunzio "He had the run of the ship and got anything he wanted."

Nunzio's regiment arrived in Normandy 90 days after the initial landing and by then the shooting had ceased. "We climbed the wall where the Nazi's were installed." Remembers Nunzio "We looked down from the top and saw all the crosses and stars of those who were killed during the invasion. I knew then that war was no picnic, it was hell!" After his discharge in 1946 Nunzio returned

home and in June of that same year married Edith Triola. The following December he and his brother Mike opened Pap's Wine and Liquors. " We bought the business from Tony Rafy and Tony Cardinale." Says Nunzio " We later purchased two trucks from Joe Leto who owned a chicken market on Hillside Place."

Nunzio and Edith have raised two daughters Amelia and Cheryland two sons Mike and Frank, The couple delights in their three granddaughters Aimee, Christy Ann, and Jenna as well as grandson Frank.

" I'm convinced that somebody up there likes me." Says Nunzio " I give thanks every day for my full and wonderful life in Lodi."