

*Honorary Family Members*

*47<sup>th</sup> Family Party*

*"2016"*

*Theresa Morelli*

*1888-1947*

*Benjamin Ventura*

*1889-1979*



**THERESA MORELLI**  
May 11, 1888-----March 25, 1947

Theresa Morelli was born on May 11, 1888 in San Pietro in Guarano, Italy to Michael Morelli and Fortunato Bruno. Theresa married Pietro Panza and they had 2 daughters Mary & Rosina who were born while they lived in Italy. Sometime after their birth her husband Pietro decided to go to America for the good of their family.

He planned to save up enough money to send for his family to join him in the new world. Pietro made it to America, but after ample time, failed to send for his wife and daughters. Theresa grew tired of waiting and wrote to her brother Ralph Morelli already in America about her situation. Ralph then sent Theresa money to cover her travel expenses to America. Theresa, Mary and Rosina boarded the S.S. France and came to the United States through Ellis Island and then on to Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania to join her husband Pietro.

Reunited with Pietro, the four of them lived on Sisca Street in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania. Later, they purchased a home at 320 Eighth Street, which was on a hill in Sharpsburg. Pietro & Theresa went on to have four more children Joseph, Orest, Emily and Francesco. Varying reports indicate that she had anywhere between two and four additional babies who died at birth or in infancy.

Theresa was a very religious person who went to Catholic mass every day. Her faith was very strong and she used the power of prayer to heal townspeople of minor aches and sprains. The Italian people of Sharpsburg admired and trusted her.

Theresa was an avid canner and had a large garden in her back yard where she grew vegetables and fruits, which she preserved for the winter. Theresa also had a large brick oven in her backyard where she baked bread every day. As you walked up her street you were taken in by that wonderful smell of her homemade bread cooking.

Tragedy struck Theresa's life when her husband Pietro passed away at a young age from a sudden illness. Without an income Theresa opened her home to boarders. Everyday was taxing for her as she cooked, cleaned and did laundry for her children and her guests. A huge flood devastated Sharpsburg in 1936. Theresa's house up on the hill was safe. She took in as many people as she could until they could return to their own homes.

In 1943 Theresa was diagnosed with breast cancer. She fought for four years until the disease took her life on March 25, 1947 at the young age of 59.

Theresa was an amazing woman who had a heart of gold and was loved by all.

# BENJAMIN PETER VENTURA

1889--1979



A hilariously honorable member of the Ventura/Morelli family was born on November 11, 1889 in Spezzano Piccolo, a town in the province of Cosenza in the Calabria region of southern Italy. Born to Anthony and Filamina Ventura. His sisters were Angelina, Catherina and Conchetta and brothers Luigi, Alfonso and Michael. Caterina married Gaetano Morelli and they are the instrumental family members that created a Ventura/Morelli legacy.

Ben came to America at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a teenager whereupon he taught himself to read and write. He later served two years in the U.S. Army in World War I. He married Assunta Grace Stranger and they lived in Grand Junction, Colorado where he worked and retired from the railroad. Ben and Grace had a son, Harold Lee Ventura in 1922. When his wife passed away in 1950 Ben continued to live in Grand Junction with his son Harold and many family members and friends. When his son Harold got married to Dorothy Mary Perry, many spaghetti dinners were spent at Grandma Roe Perry's house where he attended not only Ventura/Morelli reunions in Utah but Perry get togethers and soon he became an extended member of the Perry family.

Ben later married again and later divorced and it was during this period that he moved to Salt Lake City to be closer to his son & family and his brothers Luigi and Alfonso and their families. He was an extremely generous man and upon the death of his first wife Assunta, he gave properties she owned to their son Harold to start a good life and give him a solid start in life so that he would not have to endure the hardships that came with starting a new life in a new country with nothing like he did.

Harold and his wife Dorothy went on to have two children Victoria and Vincent & they remember their grandfather Ben always putting silver dollars in the Christmas tree and other hiding places for them to go find. Ben was quite the jokester and this picture is so typical of his personality. He loved the ladies and was a constant flirt and attention getter, with his sexy Italian accent, it was a lethal combination.

In his latter years and just before his death he went into the Veterans Hospital back in Grand Junction, Colorado. He could not wait for his baths! With that quick wit, adorable smile and the sexy accent he was loved by all the staff. One day on a family visit he got to play with his great granddaughter Tiffany pushing her around in the chairs and spoiling her real good. Sadly he didn't get to know his great grandchildren Carlee nor his great great grandchildren Teri Rose and Jeremy, but they live through the many memories and tales told by the Ventura & Morelli family.

Ben along with Marge Category and several of the Morelli family were the group that started the family party in Midvale in 1969. Ben loved his spaghetti, his family, hot peppers, hotter women and led a full life until he passed away on March 13, 1979. Ben was a sweet and loving gentle soul with love and compassion and humor for everyone. Born on Veterans Day he served and loved his country & his family. Ben truly was an icon Italian-American. He would have been proud of the family we have become.

As "Families Truly Are Forever" God bless you Benjamin Peter Ventura.