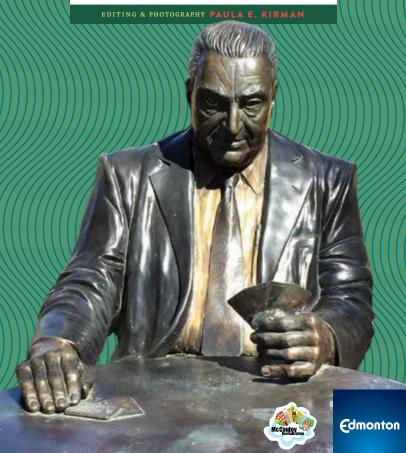


A PLACE OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

# IN McCAULEY

BY ADRIANA DAVIES

CULTURAL CONSULTANT TERESA SPINELLI





have had the pleasure of knowing Adriana Albi Davies for many years. We share a love for our Italian Community and are passionate in sharing our culture. Adriana's Italian ancestry and her journey of integration and belonging to two worlds of Italian and English culture has influenced her writings. She is one of Alberta's prolific writers and poets, and is a respected author and historian. As a past President of the National Congress of Italian Canadians (Edmonton Chapter) and having created the Heritage Community Foundation, working with many ethnocultural communities, there is no one better to share this part of McCauley's history. This well-researched and informative body of work is important culturally to McCauley and the City of Edmonton. The City grew and developed thanks, in part, to Italian immigration. They asked nothing but for work and respect. There is a Little Italy in every major Canadian city and Edmonton is no exception. Immigrants worked hard to build institutions and to boast Italian identity and affirm their place in Canada. I trust future generations will benefit and appreciate the rich Italian heritage in the McCauley neighbourhood as a result of this important project and booklet.

**TERESA SPINELLI** 

# Introduction

The neighbourhood in Edmonton known as McCauley was the traditional home of Treaty 6 First Nations. Fur trading companies – the Northwest Company (established 1608) and the Hudson's Bay Company or Company of Adventurers (established in 1670) – worked with the Indigenous People to harvest furs and ship them to Europe. This work could not have been accomplished without marriages (some temporary, others permanent) between the traders and Indigenous women. Their children helped to run the trade and the forts established including Fort Edmonton, which was built on a terrace near the river bottom around the Low Level Bridge. The location was a traditional gathering place for the Indigenous People of the region.

After Confederation in 1867, the building of the railways westward to create a united Canada brought settlers attracted by an unlimited supply of land, which could be broken to raise crops. They came from Eastern Canada, the United Kingdom, the US, eastern and western Europe and Asia. The railways resulted in the building of new towns and cities but in Edmonton, a city grew out of the established fur trading community.



Matthew McCauley was a prominent settler who was born in 1850 in what would become the Province of Ontario.¹ He was lured by the promise of the riches of the West and established a livery business in Manitoba before moving on to Fort

Saskatchewan and, later, Edmonton where he started a livery and cartage business. In 1892, he helped to establish the Edmonton

Amy von Heyking, "Matthew McCauley," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, URL: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mccauley\_matthew\_15E.html, retrieved May 12, 2018.

Board of Trade and, in the same year, with the incorporation of the Town of Edmonton, became the first mayor. He also served in the Legislature of the Northwest Territories and, with the establishment of the Province of Alberta, in 1905, was elected MLA. In 1906, he became the warden of the Edmonton Penitentiary, the first in Alberta.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Edmonton expanded from the Rossdale Flats in the River Valley to the top of the escarpment on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River. Immigration Hall was built at the edge of the escarpment and it was only natural to have newcomers move into the Boyle Street and McCauley neighbourhoods. At the time, Chinese, German, Ukrainians, Scandinavians, Italians, and other immigrants began to move into the area from Jasper Avenue westward. It seemed fitting to honour McCauley, who was an established public figure, by naming the new community after him.

With the railway lines and major roadways, McCauley was a perfect location for businesses, homes, schools and churches. The Great Western Garment Company (GWG), established in 1911, became an important employer of immigrant women. There were also coal mines along the banks of the river, which provided work for labourers and fuel for the growing city. Syndicate Avenue (later 95 Street) became a main artery since the first streetcar was established there (the bus barns were located in today's Giovanni Caboto Park). Other prominent arteries were Kinistino Avenue (96 Street between 107 and 111 Avenues), Namayo Avenue (97 Street between 105 and 107 Avenues), and Sutherland Street (106 Avenue).

In 1882, Matthew McCauley was also instrumental in setting up the first school in the community and, eventually, the Edmonton

Public School Board. Among the most prominent were Norwood School, which opened in 1909 on Syndicate Avenue and McCauley School, which opened in 1912. Both were impressive three-storey, red brick buildings with state-of-the-art facilities (McCauley offered trades training for boys and domestic science for girls in basement facilities). They were part of the pre-war building boom that saw Edmonton's population rise to 30,000, putting the city well on the way to becoming the metropolis that the Board of Trade envisioned.

McCauley also had a large Catholic population. The missionary order – the Oblates of Mary Immaculate – set up their headquarters in St. Albert. Father Albert Lacombe, OMI, established missions not only there but also in St. Paul before moving south to Calgary to continue his work. As Edmonton grew, it became the centre of the Catholic Church in northern Alberta and many churches were built to serve the new settlers. Sacred Heart Catholic School, a small wooden structure, was built in 1907 and, in 1909, was replaced by an impressive brick structure. To support the school, Sacred Heart Church was built in 1912-14 for English-speaking Catholics.

The early economic boom in McCauley was followed by recession, which began just prior to the onset of the First World War in 1914. It brought hardship and defined the neighbourhood's working class status for the long term. Wealthier individuals built along the river bank and ravines including the model neighbourhood along Ada Boulevard and the later one in Old Glenora in the west end.

McCauley became the home of successive waves of immigrants looking for cheap-housing and laboring jobs including Ukrainians who left their homeland after the establishment of the Soviet



Union in 1922. Immigration had begun in 1891 and block settlements were established in agricultural communities in both central Alberta and Saskatchewan. In 1904, a
Ukrainian church was built at 108
Avenue and 97 Street and evolved

into the large structure with impressive domes and spires, St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, which we know today. Many churches of various denominations were also established to serve the needs of new immigrants and, according to Ripley's Believe It or Not, the area has more churches than any similar area in the world (this claim was not supported by any evidence).

It would be the post-Second World War wave of immigration that resulted in the development of Edmonton's Little Italy. There had been Italian residents in the area for many years. Italian men had worked in the coal mines since at least 1905, and masons and other craftsmen had helped to build the Alberta Legislature, the High Level Bridge and other historic structures. Business premises such as the Hotel Roma (first operated by Giovanni Rusconi and later by Luigi Dini) were located there. A number of Italian businesses including the Venetian Barber Shop (established in the 1930s), and several general stores including the Venetian Grocery followed.

Edmonton's Italian population in the period 1950 to 1980 grew from several thousand to nearly 15,000. Many lived in McCauley because homes were affordable and Italian businesses flourished. Today, Little Italy extends from 107 Avenue in the south to 118 Avenue in the north, and between 97 and 93 Streets.



It was the building of the

3 Santa Maria Goretti Church, in
1958 that defined the area as the
heart of the Italian community.

The City of Edmonton had given land adjacent to Clarke Stadium in

trust to the Cristoforo Colombo Soccer Club to build a facility. Instead, community leaders decided to use the land for the Church viewing it as a higher need. This established a community tradition of going to Mass on Sunday and then shopping at the Italian Centre Shop, established by Franco (Frank) Spinelli, and the Saccomanno Brothers' grocery on 95 Street, visit the Bar Italia for ice cream, and buy bread and cakes from the Italian Bakery begun by Antonio and Aurora Frattin. Clarke Stadium became the location of soccer league games, which attracted Italian families and established the sport in Alberta. Other facilities developed including the Ital-Canadian Seniors Centre and Piazza Italia Seniors residence near the Italian Centre Shop.

The implementation of multiculturalism policy at the federal and provincial levels beginning in the 1970s resulted in an acceptance and celebration of ethnic diversity. Italian community leaders, who wanted to reflect their strong presence in McCauley, were empowered to request a renaming of Patricia Park. Giovanni Caboto was chosen because of the explorer's linkage with North America. He was an Italian navigator and explorer but his name was anglicized in most history books as John Cabot. Giovanni Caboto Park became the site of a festival celebrating Italian culture and traditions, which took place in June.

As Italians prospered, many moved out of McCauley but a critical mass of businesses and community organizations remained, and continue to serve Italians who return to shop, go to church, frequent local restaurants or attend soccer games. The interest in European food resulted in expansion of the client base of the Italian Centre Shop and other businesses. The charm of the historic neighbourhood, as well as the range of ethnocultural festivals and activities, attracts a growing number of visitors to the community.

The Little Italy name, while in use informally for several decades, was officially recognized on February 13, 2007 when the City of Edmonton established Chinatown and Little Italy as a business revitalization zone (BRZ). This has resulted in a number of beautification projects. Teresa Spinelli, who succeeded her father in the family business, has played an important role in these initiatives and lives in McCauley with her family. The ceremonial archway in the colours of the Italian flag (red, white and green), which welcomes residents and visitors alike to the neighbourhood, designates 95 Street as "Via Italia."

McCauley continues to change and evolve: as Italian immigrants left, they were replaced by other groups. Many Indigenous people left their reserves to settle in urban areas, and the Boyle Street and McCauley neighbourhoods became a destination. This saw a growth in the number of agencies addressing issues such as poverty and homelessness. The Bissell Centre had its origins in the All People's Mission established by the Methodists to serve new immigrants in the first decade of the twentieth century. Grace Methodist Church was established in 1904-05 at 106 Avenue and 96 Street. In 1912, the Dutch Baptist Church was built at 106 Avenue and 96 Street and later became First German Baptist. In the 1960s, when members of the congregation moved

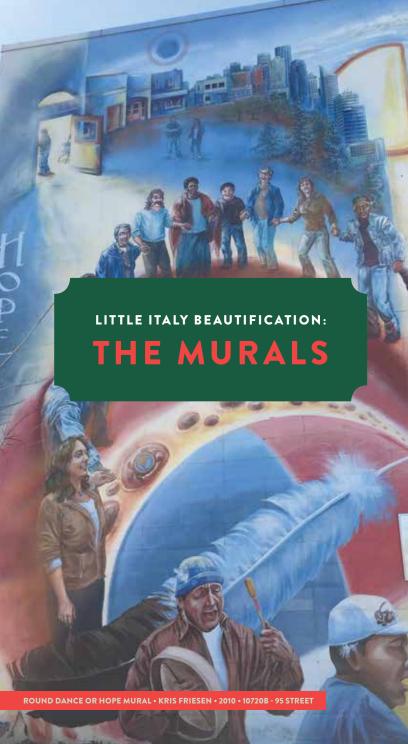
to the suburbs, the building was purchased by entrepreneurs and was run for a time as a restaurant and bar. In 1993, it became the Mustard Seed Church, which also addresses inner-city needs.

While immigration for economic improvement was the norm, it was also prompted by war and civil unrest. From the 1970s onwards Vietnamese, Laotians, Thai, Croatians and other ethnocultural groups settled in the community. More recent arrivals include immigrants from African countries. These waves of immigration have affirmed McCauley and Little Italy's status as among the most ethnically diverse Edmonton communities. Immigration services have once again become important.

As property values in the city escalated, McCauley became attractive to young people looking for starter homes as well as to set up niche businesses. Community activists have championed revitalization such as beautification projects and also community action activities such as community gardens. The Inn Roads Housing Co-op, which comprises six houses (they are named Scarboro, Owen, Kabode, Espiritus, Winslow Homer, and Jubilee) located in McCauley is another community-building exercise intended to help revitalize the area.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>10</sup> 





#### FOR MANY YEARS, INNER-CITY REVITALIZATION

**PROJECTS IN NORTH AMERICA** have used the preservation of historic buildings and creation of murals as tools. It is not only the bright colours and historic scenes frequently depicted in such al fresco paintings that attract the eye and gladden the heart – they have another important purpose: they are meant to replace graffiti that are a sign of urban blight.

Little Italy has benefited from Edmonton's Capital City
Clean Up program funding, which is part of the McCauley
Revitalization Plan, and which has resulted in a number of
public art projects. This is fitting because the word "mural"
has its roots in the Italian tradition of decorating interior
and exterior walls (the word for wall is *muro*) with colourful
scenes. The medium could be paint, coloured plaster
(frescoes), or mosaic in which small pieces of glass and/or
ceramic are used to create a picture or stylized motif.

The Little Italy area today is a multi-ethnic community with a significant Indigenous population; according to a 2012 study, indigenous people make up six percent of Edmonton's homeless. Capital City Clean Up, in conjunction with 630 CHED radio, developed the Giants of Edmonton mural project not only to beautify the city but also to honour citizens involved in community development. The Round Dance mural (also known as the Hope mural), located at 107 Avenue and 95 Street, depicts homeless advocate Hope Hunter. Hope served as Executive Director of Boyle Street Community Services from 1989 to 2008. The mural was accomplished by artist Kris Friesen, who saw the round dance as a way of depicting our common humanity and inter-connection.

The City of Edmonton has engaged artists including at-risk youth to create five murals as part of the McCauley Revitalization Project.3 These highlight the region's human and natural landscapes as indicated in their titles and subject matter: 10 Powwow Dancers, Seasons, Northern Lights, Evening Begins, and Northern Train. They are intended to battle graffiti in the McCauley LRT corridor.

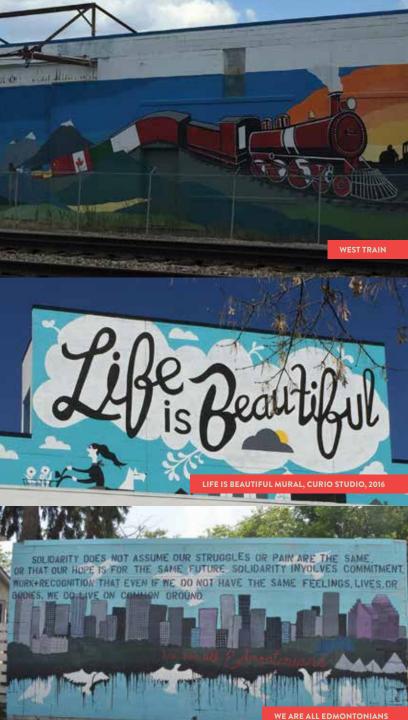
Individual business owners and non-profit groups have also supported mural creation. In 2012, a mural was painted on the side of a residential garage on 95 Street between 107 and 106A Avenue. The We are all Edmontonians mural depicts Edmonton's skyline between the blue waters of the North Saskatchewan River and the prairie sky. The text message reflects the aim of the community for inclusivity and respect for diversity.

A second mural presents stylized versions of the area's historic buildings including homes, business premises and churches. The Reclaim the Lane project is an exercise in community building and involves residents in the alleyway. The Mustard Seed. and the Neighbourhood Empowerment Team (NET).4

The 6 Kelp Patrol Ocean Mural was painted by Kris Friesen on the frontage of Lucki's Exercise Equipment at 9309 - 106A Avenue. The project was part of the McCauley Revitalization Strategy. The mural depicts the ocean life of Canada's west coast including orcas, bull kelp, moon and comb jellies, white plumed anemones, Sitka shrimp, grunt sculpin, lingcod, red rock crab, and a range of other creatures. It brings a touch of exoticism to landlocked McCauley.

<sup>3</sup> Source: City of Edmonton Murals Photo Gallery https://www.edmonton.ca/projects\_plans/communities\_neighbourhoods/murals-photo-gallery.aspx

<sup>4</sup> Anon., "New Murals Liven Up Alley and Reclaim the Lane," Boyle McCauley News, September 2012.





The latian Centre Shop at 10878 95 Street, which had its origins in a corner grocery store established by Franco Spinelli in partnership with Remiro Zalunardo in 1959, is at the heart of what became "Little Italy." Local artist

Alberto Fontana created

a mural for the Spinelli home in the 1960s and this was the inspiration for a mural commissioned in 2012 to commemorate Spinelli's successful efforts to legalize home winemaking in Alberta in 1964. The 19-square-metre (63 square foot) mural, by artists Theodora Harasymiw and Erin Pankratz-Smith, depicts a hillside vineyard with three women one of whom carries a basket full of grapes. The mural mosaic is made up of 12,000 "tesserae," tiny tiles made of glass and porcelain peppered with gold. It is embedded in the northeast wall of the store, located



at 95 Street and 109
Avenue. In July
2012, as a result of a
naming contest (won
by Sandra Hutt), it
was named "Under the
Spinelli Sun," an homage
to author Frances Mayes'
best-selling 1996 memoir,
Under the Tuscan Sun.5



In the fall of 2014, mosaics were installed on pillars marking the ceremonial entrance to Giovanni Caboto Park at 95 Street and 108A Avenue.<sup>6</sup> Artist Harasymiw's aim was to depict objects that represent Caboto, the Italian maritime explorer who reached what would become Canada, as well as Italian culture. One of the images is of *The Matthew*, Caboto's flagship. Heidi Oshry also worked on the project.<sup>7</sup>

- 5 Boyle McCauley News, September 2012.
- 6 Boyle McCauley News, October 2014.
- 7 Boyle McCauley News, October 2014.



Little Italy has also benefited from the Rust Magic international mural festival, which took place in 2016 and 2017 and, in the latter year, received sponsorship from the Edmonton Arts Council. The <sup>13</sup> Life is Beautiful mural depicts a woman flying over the city on a bicycle and covers the second and third floors of the south wall of the Belmont apartments at 10767 - 95 Street. In 2016, Ivan Beljan, of

Beljan Development, commissioned Amanda

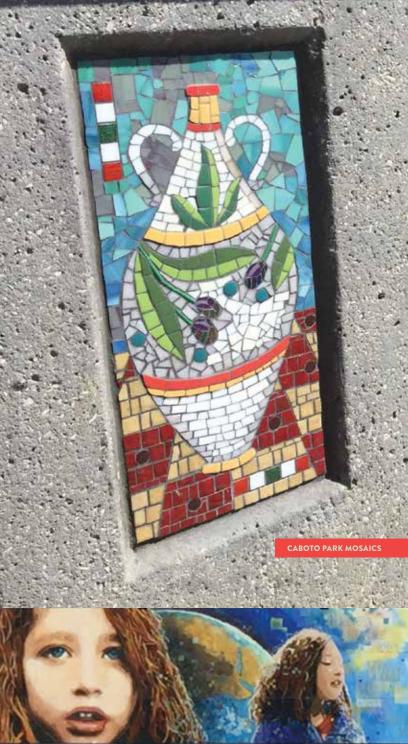
Schutz of Curio Studio to create "a

positive message to everyone that
commuted near the area." She
saw the project as a marvelous
opportunity to beautify public

spaces in Edmonton.

The Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? mural painted on the side of the Boys and Girls Club building in Giovanni Caboto Park was completed in 2007 by the Torontobased Mulder Studios, headed by Canadian

artist Ian Mulder. It is 3.6 by 22 metres (12 by 72 feet) and depicts young Canadian girls in the context of global culture from the beginning of time. It is a kind of "Alice in Wonderland" vision that includes an Easter Island stone head and West Coast ceremonial mask



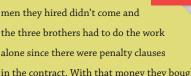


#### **TONY PINO**

The Pino family was part of the 1950s wave of immigration to Canada; two generations left their hometown in Aiello,

brothers Battista and Santo arrived in Alberta in 1952 and went to work on one of the Welch railway gangs. They then worked for two years as labourers for others and, then, around 1955, they bid and obtained a contract to do some clearing for highway construction near Edson. The weather was so cold that the men they hired didn't come and

Calabria for a better life. Pietro Pino and



in the contract. With that money they bought their first house in McCauley. Pietro's son Giuseppe arrived in the mid-1950s and he sponsored his wife Rosaria a year later. The couple had three sons: Peter was born in 1956, Paul, in 1957, and Tony, in 1971. Giuseppe hated working for others and with his wife started two grocery stores in the developing Little Italy neighbourhood. The family is associated most closely with their third store – Great West Foods. It was located in an old Safeway store at 95 Street and 107 Avenue that closed around 1970. A book bindery was located there for a year and then the Pinos bought it (a protective covenant prevented it from being sold for use as a grocery store for a year). The 3,000 square foot store became another anchor of Little Italy supplying a range of Italian foodstuffs. Giuseppe also brought in grapes to make wine as well as wine-making equipment. Tony notes that he and his brothers

grew up in the store and Peter and Paul went straight into the family business: "Our lives were rooted in the community and, for us, Edmonton ended at Jasper Avenue. We worked and lived here. Our food came from the store and our clothes came from the Army and Navy store. Italian was my first language and, when I went to school, I experienced culture shock." Rosaria died in 1986 and Tony remembers his father taking over preparing his school lunches drawing on all the Italian specialties in the store. His lunches were so impressive that his school friends lined up to trade with him. Tony went on to the University of Alberta where he completed a BA degree with a political science major in preparation for going to law school but, as he put it, "I was swept up into the vortex of the family business." With their father's death in 1996, the three brothers took over. When asked how they got involved in property management and development, Tony noted: "Dad didn't have any use for banks and didn't see value in a savings account. So he bought houses, many houses, which were used as rental properties. We also purchased some apartments, not all in the McCauley area."Around 2006, Peter and Tony got involved in building apartments to meet the needs of low-income renters (Paul had died in 2000). The first was built in 2006 and their Brew-for-Less store (the grocery component had been ended) was moved there. The second apartment was built in 2007 on their Great West Foods site and the brewing store then returned to its old location. The building is painted in the rich pale gold and burnt orange of villas in Tuscany. The family also has a construction arm that undertakes painting and tiling work. Paul's son Michael has become involved in the business ensuring continuity to the next generation. When asked about the future of McCauley, Tony observed, "I am hopeful. I've seen the influx of new immigrants and new businesses as well as The Works and

Mile Zero Dance Company. The area still has problems and I am glad to say that the city is committed to working with local businesses and residents to make improvements."

#### **RINA SPINELLI**

Rina Quagliarello was born in San Pietro al Tanagro near Salerno in the province of Campania, Italy. She completed compulsory education and, while her older brother went to university in Naples, she looked after her widowed mother. Teresa Spinelli notes: "My Mother had an enormous sense of adventure and noting how others in the community

immigrated to different parts of the

world, she also longed to cross the ocean." A tall stranger

who had done just that came into her life in May, 1959, Franco Spinelli had left Edmonton, where he had established himself, to come to visit family. He was also looking for a wife. The two kept bumping into each other as they

went on walks with friends, to



the cinema in a nearby town and other youthful recreations and, clearly, there was a spark between them. When Franco left to return to Canada several months later, there was an understanding between them. This pleased his mother enormously because she wanted the ties of family to draw him back to Italy regularly. Rina arrived in Edmonton in September

1960 and remembers that the first snow fell in October that year.

While this dampened her spirits, she had found a family in the customers of the small grocery store that Franco and partner Remiro Zalunardo had established in McCauley. She helped them not only to serve customers but also to help them address their needs for magazines, newspapers, and reminders of Italy. Rina gave birth to Teresa and Pietro and looked after them in the store; there was no distinction between the home and business. Around 1965, she visited family in Italy with her husband and children and she says: "I felt like a queen." As other Italians prospered and moved out, she and Franco decided to replace their little old house with a purpose-built modern beauty. She notes: "I didn't want to have a new home in Castledowns where many Italians had moved; the long bus ride or drive didn't suit me." So they stayed, raised their family and continued their involvement with all aspects of the Italian community: church celebrations, soccer games, societies, and dinner dances, radio programs and other cultural activities. The store grew to cover a whole block supported by various out-buildings. The love of family and friends cheered her when the unthinkable happened and son Pietro died young and, later, Franco. Healing happened through work. Teresa says that her mother worked in the store until around 2007-2008 when ill health forced her to give it up. Rina can still be seen in the café having a coffee with old friends and knows most members of the Italian community who frequent the shop by name. She still insists that marrying Franco and coming to Edmonton was the best thing that could have happened to her. If Canada worshipped seniors as the Chinese and Japanese do, she would be one of the city's designated "historic treasures."

#### TERESA SPINELLI

Teresa Spinelli likely had more friends than any child growing up in McCauley. Her parents, Rina and Franco, were among the most well-known members of Edmonton's

Italian community - their customers all knew her. The Italian Centre Shop became the heart of Little Italy. She attended Sacred Heart School for elementary and

junior high and, then, went to St. Joe's High School before going on to the University of Alberta. There was

no question that she would continue to higher

studies but this was also her

choice - she wanted to become a social worker. She had grown up conscious of the

problems of the inner city and notes: "I wanted to take anyone who was suffering home and help them." While her brother

Pietro was supposed to take over the family business, his early death in 1996 forced her to follow in her father's footsteps. This

was not a hardship since she grew up in the store and serving

people was in her blood. As she notes, "It wasn't about selling salami but about teaching people about Italian food, culture, and

traditions." While it can be said that her father built the base of

the business in Little Italy, with his death in 2000 Teresa moved beyond that and established two additional stores on 51 Avenue

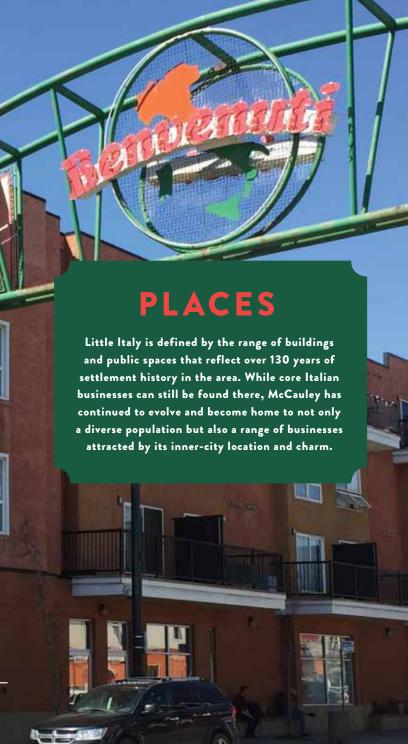
on the south side and at 170 Street in the west end. A Calgary

store followed in 2015. The wholesale arm of the business sells to stores and restaurants throughout Western Canada. Teresa's

INELLI (BACKGROU

accomplishments as a businesswoman have been recognized and in 2018 she was appointed the Allard Chair in Business at MacEwan University. This honours a distinguished business person and community leader, and provides students and faculty an opportunity to meet an inspiring role model. She is a popular speaker and frequently is asked to address the topic of the glass ceiling that prevents women from moving up the corporate letter. She recently told an interviewer: "At some business and political gatherings my husband Mike is viewed as the owner rather than me." From her teens, she was involved in the Giovanni Caboto Festival and notes, "Before the Italian community championed the Italian mariner, explorer and a discoverer of North America, he was known as 'John Cabot' since he sailed for the English." She also volunteered in various McCauley committees set up to deal with inner-city issues and revitalization. The first project was the erection of the Little Italy ceremonial archway in the mid-1990s with its "Benvenuti" (welcome) sign. The beautification of Giovanni Caboto Park turned from a one-year \$100,000 project to a five-year \$1 million project. The park is a playground for children as well as representing the diversity of McCauley from the Indigenous past to the present. Teresa's stake in Little Italy is unwavering - her home is in the community and her son Massimo attended Mother Teresa School. The inner-city issues are still very real but Teresa believes in the power of the business owners and community members working with the city to help resolve them in the long-term. When asked about the future of McCauley, she observes: "Little Italy was once a place where immigrants lived and shopped. Today, the customer base of the Italian Centre Shop is diverse - young families come, people of other ethnicities as well as artistic people. When people speak to me in our other stores, they tell me that they love the Little Italy store because of the sense of place that its McCauley location conveys."







## 3 SANTA MARIA GORETTI PARISH AND CENTRE

11050 90 Street

Edmonton's Italian community did not have a parish until 1958 when Santa Maria Goretti (SMG) Roman Catholic Church was built. Previously, Mass was said in Italian by Salesian priest Father Luigi at the General Hospital Chapel. When more space was required as a result of the post-war boom in immigration, the community was allowed to say Mass in the basement of Sacred Heart Church. Archbishop Anthony Jordan arranged for two priests, Fathers Rino Ziliotto and Giovanni Bonelli, members of the Missionary Order of St. Charles (Scalabrians), to come to Edmonton and they arrived in December, 1957. The location of the Church was quickly decided when the Cristoforo Colombo Soccer Society offered the land given to them in trust by the City of Edmonton next to Clarke Stadium at 110 Avenue and 90 Street. Two saints' names were suggested to the Archbishop Saint Cecilia and Santa Maria Goretti – and he decided on the latter name because he believed she was a "saint of our days" and the Goretti family members were immigrants in Italy. The church, a wooden truss and stucco construction, opened on December 21, 1958. A small rectory was built and a church-hall extension. The church has undergone several renovations and the exterior was redesigned to reflect the style of Italian parish churches. From 1984 to 1986, the SMG Community Centre was built at a cost of \$2 million; a new rectory was also built. The Sunday pranzo (dinner) has become a tradition for many and, today, Santa Maria Goretti is a 1,600 family, city-wide Parish.8

Anon., "Il Centro Santa Maria Goretti Diventerà 'Realtà'." Il Congresso, Febbraio 1985. Heritage Community Foundation, Alberta Online Encyclopedia, Celebrating Alberta's Italian Heritage website, URL: http://wayback.archive-it. org/221/720115220045/http://www.albertasourc.ca/abitalian/illtongresso/articles/ikongresso40.htm, retrieved May 8, 2013. See also Adriana Albi Davies, Italians Settle in Edmonton. Edmonton: Tree Frog Press, 1983.



### **4** CLARKE STADIUM

11000 Stadium Road

Clarke Stadium, which was named after Mayor Joseph Clarke, was built in 1938 on land deeded to the City for construction of a public sports field. The postwar wave of immigration from Italy, comprising largely young men, resulted in formation of the Cristoforo Colombo Soccer team. The team had been given land by the City of Edmonton for development of a soccer field but instead chose to continue to play at the Stadium and gift the land for the building of Santa Maria Goretti Church. In 1956, the team won the City of Edmonton championship and defeated Calgary's Millican United to win the President's Cup, emblematic of Alberta soccer supremacy. In 1957, after a fight at a game and disciplinary action, the club suspended operations. In 1959, Santa Maria Goretti Parish sponsored a new team, Juventus, which drew its players from the Catholic Youth Organization (Azione Cattolica). In 1960, the Ital Canadian soccer team was created and sponsored by Italian Centre Shop owner Franco Spinelli. They won the Bay Cup in 1964 and, in 1966, defeated the Calgary Callies to capture their first Alberta Cup. Clarke Stadium continues to be an important soccer venue in Edmonton.9 Important players and coaches have included Fidenzio Pasqua, Mike Trafficante, Mimmo Longo, and Joe Petrone.

<sup>9</sup> See Adriana Albi Davies, Italians Settle in Edmonton. Edmonton: Tree Frog Press, 1983. Ital Canadians SC website, "Team History," URL: https://sites.google.com/site/Italcanadianss/team-history/memories, retrieved May 16, 2016; Fidenzio Pasqua, Memories: A Decade of Italian Soccer, Edmonton 1956-1966, self-published, 2011; and Brian Swane, "Italian soccer helped shape community." Edmonton Sun, March 15, 2011.



### **31 ITAL-CANADIAN SENIORS' CENTRE**

9111 110 Avenue

The Ital-Canadian Seniors Association was formed in 1986, to provide senior citizens with a drop-in centre where they can socialize with their peers, participate in recreational activities as well as help fellow members in distress. The Centre is located across the street from the Santa Maria Goretti Parish at 9111 110 Avenue. It consists of a large hall for festivities, offices, a full-service kitchen, recreation area, and outdoor and indoor bocce courts (three in total). Bocce is a traditional Italian game resembling lawn bowling. Whereas lawn bowling is played on grass, bocce is played on a smooth, packed surface composed of clay and fine sand; the court can be located indoors or outdoors. Tournaments are organized by the Association. The Centre also houses the Alberta Italian Museum with exhibits of cultural artifacts and exhibits that tell the story of the development of Alberta's Italian communities and the coal mining heritage.



#### **3DITALIAN CENTRE SHOP**

10878 95 Street

Franco (Frank) Spinelli was born in San Pietro al Tanagro, near Naples to a farming family; he chose to seek adventure in Canada, in 1951. An accident while working in the mines in the Yukon Territory resulted in a broken back and over a year in traction in an Edmonton hospital. In 1959, he bought a small store on the corner of 95 Street and 108 Avenue with partner Remiro Zalunardo. With the huge increase in Edmonton's Italian population, Italian goods were very much in demand and the business prospered. In 1964, Spinelli became sole proprietor and built the Italian Centre Shop at 10878 - 95 Street as well as starting a wholesale operation. The Shop became an anchor of Little Italy. The small café is a popular gathering place and encourages shoppers to stop and enjoy a taste of Italy. Spinelli was also a community builder who supported a range of recreational and cultural activities including helping to found and sponsor the Ital Canadian soccer team in 1960. Spinelli died in 2000 and the entrepreneurial tradition he embodied is continued by daughter Teresa, who has expanded shop locations beyond Little Italy (including one in Calgary) and now brings over 20,000 Italian items not only to the Spinelli chain of stores but to other stores throughout Alberta. Spinelli was inducted into the Junior Achievement: Alberta Business Hall of Fame in 2013 and his statue sits in the Park he contemplated throughout his working life.10

<sup>10</sup> Anon., "Franco Spinelli," in Il Congresso, 2 Febbraio, 1986. Heritage Community Foundation, Celebrating Alberta's Italian Community website, Alberta Online Encyclopedia. URL: http://wwyback.archive-it.org/2217/2010215220104/http://www.albertaounce.ca/abitalian/likongresso/articles/ilkongresso/37.htm, retrieved May 8, 2018.



## 27 GIOVANNI CABOTO PARK

9425 109A Avenue

Giovanni Caboto Park was formerly Patricia Square Park, established in 1922 by the Gyro Club. The Club, in 1921, had chosen as its slogan – "Playgrounds for Children." The Park was named for Princess Patricia, the daughter of Canada's Governor General, the Duke of Connaught, and patron of the Princess Patricia's

Canadian Light Infantry. The Club raised \$960 and obtained a city grant of \$760 and opened Edmonton's first Gyro Park at Patricia Square (95 Avenue and 108 Street) in August, 1922. As official multiculturalism became established in Edmonton and Alberta. the Italian community requested that Patricia Park be re-named to reflect an Italian hero with ties to North America. The campaign was led by Al Iafolla, who first approached the City of Edmonton in 1975.11 It would require a 10,000 name petition before City Council approved the name change in 1981. In the same year, the Giovanni Caboto Cultural Society of Alberta was established and their first initiative was a one-day festival held the last Sunday of June. The block adjacent to the Park was closed off and merchants sold various types of Italian food and activities included a cycle race (reminiscent of the Tour of Italy), pasta eating contest, climbing of a greased pole as well as cultural displays and entertainment. By around 2000, the volunteer society had run out of energy and a festival was not held for several years until local businesses decided to take it on. In 2011, the Italian Youth Association of Edmonton (Associazione Giovani Italiani di Edmonton) took on the festival and it was rebranded as "Viva Italia, Viva Edmonton." In 2019, it rebranded as Festa Italiana. The Viva Italia District Association established around 2013 represents local businesses and now uses the slogan "Viva Italia, Viva Edmonton!" Beautification of the park has occurred. The ceremonial gateway pillars have Italian-style mosaics and a park centre piece is the Ortona Fountain, which is a replica of one in the town square of the Italian city where so many young men of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment lost their lives in one of the most important battles of the Second World War. Other improvements include the spray park for children, the mural on the wall of the Boys and Girls Club, an Aboriginal Medicine Wheel made of boulders and plantings of native Alberta trees. Overlooking the park, and his business, is a bronze statue of Franco Spinelli seated at a table playing cards. This was commissioned by daughter Teresa. His benevolent presence overlooks the range of multicultural activities held in the park including a performance of Puccini's opera, Madama Butterfly, performed by Mercury Opera in a big tent.

<sup>11</sup> Al Iafolla, "Verrazano, Columbus and Vespucci; Why Caboto?" In II Congresso, 7 Luglio 1986. Heritage Community Foundation, Celebrating Alberta's Italian Community website, Alberta Online Encyclopedia. URL http://wwy.bakc.archive-icorg/2217/201021522011/http://www.bakcsource.ca/abitalian/illiongresso/atticles/ilcongresso/8.t.m; retrieved May 8, 2018; and Salvatore Romano, "Giovanni Caboto Day." In II Congresso, 4 Luglio, 1984. Heritage Community Foundation, Celebrating Alberta's Italian Community website, Alberta Online Encyclopedia. URL http://wayback.archive-it.org/2217/20101215220032/http://www.albertasource.ca/abitalian/illicongresso/articles/ilcongresso23.htm, retrieved May 8, 2018.



#### 32 PIAZZA ITALIA SENIORS RESIDENCE

9521 108A Avenue

The National Congress of Italian Canadians (NCIC), Edmonton Region, founded in 1979, desired to see a residence for seniors built in Little Italy. Establishment of such a residence would allow seniors to remain in the community when they could no longer manage to live in their own homes. Funding was obtained from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the residence was built in 1982. Piazza Italia, a six-storey, low-rise independent living facility, is located at 9521 - 108A Avenue. The building is of concrete construction with a brick exterior and has 54 one-bedroom apartments and an elevator. On the main floor, there is one unit that is wheelchair accessible and a common-area room for social gatherings. In the rear is a small garden. Members of the NCIC and some directors-at-large served as the Board of Piazza Italia and ensured that services were provided to residents including medical support and a range of recreational activities. While, initially, the Centre was dedicated to Italian seniors who occupied about two-thirds of the suites, the changing demographics of McCauley saw the majority of Italians relocate to other areas of the city. When this occurred, residency requirements were expanded to include people of all ethnocultural origins. Today, Italian seniors are a minority of the residents. Vista Housing for Seniors is the management agency responsible for running the provincially-owned facility.

# SACRED HEART SCHOOL (NOW SACRED HEART CENTRE)

9624 108 Avenue

Sacred Heart School, located at 96 Street and 108 Avenue, was established in 1907 in a one-room wooden

building. It accommodated 35 students. In 1909, to cater to the growing community, a four-room brick structure was built. A convent was erected next door for the Faithful Companions of Jesus, a teaching order. They were succeeded by the Sisters of the Assumption and Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate. Further expansions occurred in 1913 and 1919 and, by 1921, there were more than 500 students representing nine nationalities. As the population of the area changed, French and Ukrainian were taught. With the immigration boom of the 1950s, basic English instruction was added. In 1961, a new school was built and, in 1963, an addition was required. The student population peaked at 900 elementary and junior high students in 1975. Many were children who had recently arrived from Italy with their parents. As the local Italian population moved to the suburbs, the enrollment began to decline and, in 1988, the enrollment dropped to 150 students. In 2003, the Edmonton Catholic School Board ceased to operate it as a school teaching the Alberta Program of Studies. To reflect the needs of immigrants and refugees, the Sacred Heart Foundations Program was introduced - the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). It is funded by the Government of Canada and provides language instruction to refugees, landed immigrants and permanent residents. The program is one of the few in Edmonton that exclusively offers literacy classes not just for children who had no formal schooling in their homeland (some parents needed their children to find work or to stay home to look after younger children) or had their education disrupted by war, but also adults. The school also provides a free licensed daycare and after-school care program.



## SACRED HEART CHURCH OF THE FIRST PEOPLES

10821 96 Street

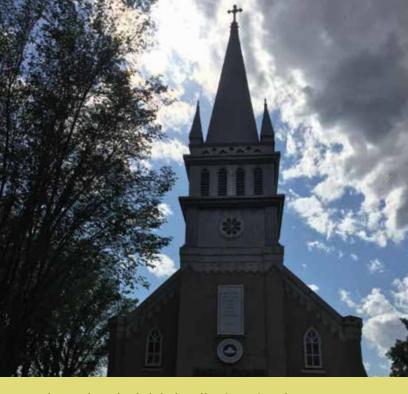
Sacred Heart Catholic Church, an impressive red brick structure in the French Gothic Revival Style, was built in 1912-14 to provide support to the Catholic school of the same name. Like the school, it catered to worshippers from various nationalities. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Oblate priests who spoke Italian celebrated Mass in that language in the basement until there were sufficient numbers to build their own church in 1958 (Santa Maria Goretti). The same process occurred with Spanish, Portuguese and Croatian immigrants who later developed their own parishes: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Fatima and the Nativity of Mary, respectively. In 1990, Archbishop Joseph MacNeil assigned the missionary order the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to serve Indigenous People living in the area. In 1991, he designated Sacred Heart Church the first Native parish (it is believed to be the first in North America). Fathers Jim Holland and Garry LaBoucane have been pastors at the church. Fr. Susai Jesu is the current pastor. Sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and tobacco are used in the liturgy and drums accompany songs including some in the Cree language. Native spirituality and traditions are part of all aspects of worship.

# VIETNAMESE (NHA THO) CATHOLIC CHURCH (MARY QUEEN OF MARTYRS, NOW RHEMA CHAPEL)

10830 96 Street

In 1906, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church was erected at 96 Street and 108 Avenue, the first of the many churches built on Kinistino Avenue. It catered to English and French-speaking worshippers but, by 1911, it was bursting at the seams and the Bishop Emile Legal decided that a dedicated church for Anglophones was required and Sacred Heart was built. It was the second Francophone church in Edmonton, the first being St. Joachim on 110 Street and 99 Avenue. By 2000, the declining number of parishioners resulted in the shutting down of the church and it was later sold to members of the Vietnamese community who established their own parish. This reflected a change in the demographics of McCauley and the community's status as the entry-point for many immigrants. The parish has since moved to 13210 133A Avenue and the building is now





home to Rhema Chapel, which relocated here from its former location in Chinatown. It is a parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God which has parishes in numerous African countries and worldwide.

## 21 MCCAULEY SCHOOL -

#### **EDMONTON INTERCULTURAL CENTRE**

9538 107 Avenue

McCauley School opened in 1912 on Syndicate Avenue. It is an impressive three-storey, red brick building with a blend of Tudor and Gothic architectural features. It had a large library and assembly room, and state-of-the-art facilities for the time. It offered trades training for boys and domestic science for girls in the basement. Inner-city schools are faced with declining enrollments as families move to the suburbs and, in 2011, the Edmonton Public School Board shut down McCauley in spite of community protests. The enrollment had decreased to 170 students in elementary and junior high school and the building had space for up to 550. It was given a new life and focus in helping to care for the needs of new immigrant



and refugee families (some from Africa) who were attracted to the area by the low cost of housing. The Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op was established in the school and offered a range of supports including health, family services and education. A daycare and an after-school care centre were also established to support children from kindergarten to grade 12 whose education had been disrupted by war and whose needs could not be met in ordinary classrooms. The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers also started free Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. These activities evolved into the Intercultural Child and Family Centre, an initiative of the Government of Alberta. McCauley is now an accredited Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Centre, a non-profit entity.

## **"SORRENTINO'S**

#### 10844 95 Street

The Sorrentino's restaurant site in Little Italy is associated with several entrepreneurial Italian families. Brothers Franco and Maurizio Saccomanno arrived in Edmonton from Grimaldi, Cosenza, Calabria in 1951. They initially worked on railway track repairs and construction and, in 1965, set up Saccomanno Brothers Grocery Store on 95 Street and 108 Avenue. They were assisted by their wives in running the business. For a time, they leased space to Ralph and Bonnie Maio, who ran a restaurant there before moving on and creating the popular Sceppa's. After working together for a time including running a restaurant on the site themselves, the Saccomanno brothers set up their own, separate enterprises. Frank established Saccomanno Importing Ltd., a wholesale food company. Maurizio's daughter Stella married school teacher Carmelo Rago and

<sup>40</sup> 



Maurizio and his son-in-law went into business establishing the first Sorrentino's restaurant in Castledowns. After Maurizio's early death, Carmelo and Stella have developed the Sorrentino's Restaurant Group, which employs not only the Rago children but also several of Stella's siblings. The Little Italy Sorrentino's provides a range of Italian specialties, which can be served family style in

large platters. The restaurant was designed in the style of a rustic Tuscan tavern with a large fireplace that gives it an old-world bistro atmosphere.

# TONY'S PIZZA

9605 111 Avenue

Tony Mazzotta emigrated from Cosenza, Calabria to Edmonton, in 1959, to join his family. He worked in hotels including the Hotel Macdonald and learned all he could about being a chef. In 1964, when Tony decided he was ready to run his

own restaurant, he chose not to stay in Edmonton

but rather went to New York. There he married into a pizza-making family and started his first restaurant, which grew to three locations. In 1974, he started Tony's Pizza Palace in Edmonton on 118 Avenue and Fort Road. In 1979, Tony moved his family to Edmonton and opened a new restaurant on 96 Street and 111 Avenue. He was joined in the family business by oldest son, Silverio (Sal), in 1993.

Younger son, Tony Jr., joined the business in 1997. For over 40 years, the Mazzotta family has been offering New York-style pizza to Edmontonians. In 2015, luxury magazine Condé Nast Traveler named Tony's Pizza Palace Edmonton's best pizza provider and named Edmonton the eighth-best pizza city in the world.

## 32 ITALIAN VILLAGE APARTMENTS AND BREW-FOR-LESS

107 Avenue and 95 Street

Brothers Peter, Paul, and Tony Pino grew up in Little Italy where their parents Giuseppe and Rosaria operated several grocery stores from the mid-1960s. In 1971, the couple purchased the old Safeway Store at 95 Street and 107A Avenue and set up Great West Foods, which became another successful Italian business in McCauley. Giuseppe also began to purchase homes which were rented. After his death in 1996, his sons continued the family businesses. Paul died in 2000 and Peter and Tony continued to purchase properties. Seeing the rise in residential rents in the inner-city, they decided to set up Pino Brothers Affordable Housing Inc. In 2006, they finished one apartment building and, in 2007, they built a 78-unit apartment building at the site of Great West Foods. These were for fixed-income earners including seniors.<sup>13</sup> They received \$3.9 million in federal and provincial funding as part of a scheme to increase the number of affordable rental units on the market. Their Brew-for-Less store (10774 95 Street), which succeeded Great West Foods, is located there. [Brew for Less.jpg] All the apartments are occupied and the brothers' efforts can be viewed as helping in the revitalization of McCauley.

## 18 ZOCALO

#### 10826 95 Street

While the name of the unique business in McCauley that is a combination of a florist/garden shop/greenhouse, purveyor of beautiful life style items including glassware, ceramics and linens, and a coffee shop sounds Italian, it actually refers to a public square in Mexico. That is what Italian immigrants who set up businesses in the area wanted to evoke. To create such a store in an inner-city area and have it thrive since 2003 took courage and imagination. Owners Ken Bregenser and Miranda Ringma have these qualities in spades. Zocalo has become a destination not only for the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> See Andrea Sands, "Brothers say no to 'insane rents'," The Edmonton Journal, May 13, 2007; and Anna Mehler Paperny, "Affordable-housing units snapped up," The Edmonton Journal online, August 31, 2007.



services that it offers but also as an escape into more pleasurable surroundings, in particular, in winter. Sitting at the long table in the greenhouse, it is forever summer no matter the season.

#### 37 LA PIAZZA 95

#### 95 Street and 108 Avenue

Another Little Italy fixture for many years was Santo's Pizza & Steak, the centre piece of the small strip mall titled La Piazza 95 on 95 Street and 108 Avenue. 14 It was begun in 1989 by Santo and Silvana Cardamone, who operated the restaurant for 20 years until ill health forced their retirement. In 2011, they sold the business. The new owners undertook a massive renovation in 2012 and re-opened as Santo's Resto-Lounge with six VLTs and real-time off track horse racing. A fire in 2017 forced the business to shut down and new owners want to change its focus to an adult's only bar and gaming outlet. La Dolce Vita Café also operates in the same mall. Whenever the World Cup series takes place, these and other Italian restaurants along 95 Street fill up with men cheering for Italy's team.

<sup>14</sup> Bernard Soberg, "The New Santo's Resto-Lounge," Boyle McCauley News, May 2012.

#### **24 ITAL-CANADIAN MEATS**

10757 95 Street

Dominic Andreana purchased a butcher shop on 97 Street from Peter Lupul in 1977; the latter had a shop in the old City Market from 1950 to 1964 before relocating. <sup>15</sup> Dominic worked at Queen City Meats for 15 years before deciding to set up on his own. Seeing the developments in Little Italy, he built new premises for Ital-Canadian Meats at 95 Street and 107 Avenue in the mid-1990s. For many years, he provided the high-quality meats and specialty cuts favoured by Italian families and other discerning customers. The best-selling item was his Italian sausages, both mild and hot. Dominic remembers making over 3,500 sausages a week with the help of his wife and small staff. The lean and tasty sausages were roasted at Edmonton's Heritage Days Festival at the Italian Pavilion as well as at

Giovanni Caboto Days, and inevitably sold out.

On retirement, in 2006, Dominic sold the business to Rose Bossio, who had been in the food business for a number of years (including operating a green onion cake booth at various festivals before the introduction of food trucks). Rose grew up in the inner city and was excited about purchasing a business there. She closed the butcher shop and focused on producing sausages and other specialty meats. She supplies restaurants and retailers not only with

meats but also cheeses and a range of marinated products. Rose is a strong supporter

of revitalization and allowed a brightly-coloured mural to be painted on an outside wall of her building. It is an abstract cityscape with tiny individuals in silhouette taking part in a range of outdoor recreational activities

ITAL-CANADIAN MEATS

<sup>44</sup> 

<sup>15</sup> Cathryn Chase Merrett, A History of the Edmonton City Market. 1900 to 2000: Urban Values and Urban Culture (Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press, 2001), 158.

#### 10803 95 Street

Kafana is owned by Svetlana Radmanovic and is located at 108 Avenue and 95 Street, It showcases Serbian food including grilled meats and it is said to be only one of two eateries in Edmonton specializing in this cuisine. The section in its menu headed "The Taste of the Balkans," features girice (deep-fried smelts), šopska salad (resembling Greek salad without the olives), chicken, beef and pork raznići (kebabs), as well as other meat specialties. The "gypsy platter" is made for sharing. The meal ends with domaća kafa, a strong and intense coffee with a hazel-nut-filled pastry (loukoum). The restaurant is divided

into two sections: a sports bar in front and a dining area in back. The

large yard provides outdoor dining for summer days.

## **WENETIAN BARBER SHOP**

#### 10816A 95 Street

The Venetian Barber Shop is likely the oldest Italian-run business in Little Italy and its history reflects the different eras of immigration. The first location, established in the early 1930s, was on 97 Street and 103 Avenue; it was operated by Florindo (Florence) Comin. The shop was a gathering place for new immigrants who came for haircuts, to catch up on news as well as find out about jobs. Newlytrained barbers such as Louis Biamonte began work there before setting up their own businesses. Carmelo Veltri, on his arrival in Edmonton from Grimaldi, Calabria in the 1950s, worked for Florence, and took over the business on his death in the mid-1960s. New immigrant Tony Tassone (pictured) got his start working for Carmelo in 1966. Subsequently, Carmelo moved the shop to 95 Street and 108 Avenue where Zocalo's courtyard is currently located (another move took it to its present nearby location). Tassone, who



for a time left barbering to work in construction, returned to work there and, on Carmelo's retirement around 1992, bought the shop and continues to operate it.16

#### MESOBENA RESTAURANT

10810 95 Street

In the 1980s, many refugees arrived in Edmonton from wartorn Ethiopia (the historic name

first homes in McCauley. They introduced their

culture and cuisine and enriched the neighbourhood. The Mesobena Restaurant prepares Ethiopian and Eritrean food and is located on 95 Street and 108 Avenue in an expanded former residence. Besides the restaurant proper, there is a patio and garden area for summertime outdoor eating. Besides roasted meats (Ethiopian lamb, beef and chicken), it offers vegetarian/vegan dishes. Some dishes come in platters for sharing. Food is eaten with injera, an Ethiopian sourdough flat bread with a spongy texture. It is made with teff, an ancient grain, which is gluten-free. Both lamb and beef dishes are prepared by slicing the meat into small pieces, which are then sautéed. The injera is used to pick up the meat instead of cutlery. Eating from communal platters is part of the dining experience.

## 22 NOI THAI RESTAURANT

10724 95 Street

Edmonton's Thai community developed from the several hundred students who attended the University of Alberta in the period 1966 to 1971. They came as a result of an agreement between the Canadian and Thai governments to help change the educational system in the latter country through training a new generation of teachers. Some decided to stay in Edmonton. Laotian refugees fleeing the horrors of war began to arrive in Canada in the 1980s and some settled in McCauley. They set up businesses, places of worship (for example, the Lao Alberta Buddhist Temple at 93 Street and 103A Avenue) and associations. Viphalay Laos and Thai Restaurant was established by members of the Mounma family in 2008. It was named for three women in the family: Vipha (the mother and chef who created the menu based on traditional Thai and Laotian recipes), Phalay (daughter Lily who ran the restaurant) and Vilay (another sister). In 2018, other family members took over the restaurant

10816 - 95 St

and renamed it Noi Thai (Viphalay's downtown location at 105 Street and 99 Avenue is still open).

The restaurant serves a range of specialties including green curry, pad thai noodles, orange cashew chicken. penang beef, coconut rice, tom yum soup, papaya salad, and glass noodles.



10816 95 Street

The Mile Zero Dance Company is a contemporary dance company with an established reputation for creating dynamic, interdisciplinary works.17 It was founded in 1985 by Andrea Rabinovitch and Debra Shantz, and its initial home was at Grant MacEwan College. The move into Little Italy and the creation of the Spazio Performativo (Italian for "performance space") at 10816 95 Street in 2016 was made possible by the low cost of business and residential space in the community. The Spazio functions as a community-based studio that serves a number of functions including rehearsal and performance space, office, community rental and gallery. Under Gerry

<sup>17</sup> Lee Bale, "Mile Zero Dance Company: Art in Motion," Boyle McCauley News, May 2016.

Morita, current Artistic Director, the company has focused on dance, interdisciplinary work and performance art. The range of activities is designed to foster live performances and stimulate multi-generational audience development. Weekly classes range from improv to hip hop. Besides performing in purpose-built buildings, MZD animates the streets of Little Italy with performances that encourage community involvement.

## WILLIAM PASKINS HOUSE – THE WORKS FESTIVAL

#### 10613 95 Street

The William Paskins House at 10613 95 Street was the first Queen Anne Style residence built in Edmonton. 18 The 1902-structure has mouldings, scrolled brackets, decorative spindles, and other types of fancy woodwork

demonstrating the skill of its carpenter
owner Paskins. It also features a front
veranda and turret. By 2001, the

house was derelict and about to be demolished. The city

purchased it in 2004 and it
was designated a Municipal
Historic Resource. Linda
Wedman, Executive
Director of the Works
International Visual Arts
Society, spearheaded an
appeal to the city that
would enable the non-profit
society to purchase and
restore the home, and use it
as its offices and for community
programming. In 2007, the Society
was able to do this and the house was

moved to 10635-95 Street and restored. An addition was built on the back in 2009. A strong case can be made for non-profit societies, who cannot afford uptown rents, receiving public support to relocate to inner-city neighbourhoods and, thus, aid in revitalization.

10644 97 Street

Antonio and Assunta
Frattin were newly-weds
in 1956 when they
immigrated to Edmonton
from Castelfranco, Veneto.
He obtained work as a baker
for Honeyboy Bakery and,
as a result of his hard work
and talent eventually became
superintendent. Aurora also worked at
the bakery. The couple began to bake buns
for family and friends and, in 1960, they set up the
Italian Bakery at 90 Street and 121 Avenue. In 196

Italian Bakery at 90 Street and 121 Avenue. In 1962, they moved to the current location at 106 Avenue and 97 Street. The family resided on the second level of the premises. It is not just the range of Italian-style breads and pastries that attract customers to the bakery, a small deli provides a range of meats and cheeses and specialty goods, and there is also a coffee bar. The family business has expanded to involve their children and to other locations in the city. When the City of Edmonton promoted the beautification of Edmonton's inner city, the couple had a mural painted on the side of their 97 Street building.

## **7** LAND OF COMPASSION BUDDHA

9352 106A Avenue

The Land of Compassion Buddha is a temple located at 9352 106A Avenue. It is a multicultural education centre focused on the teaching of Tibetan Buddhism. It belongs to the Galupa Order, the same order as the Dalai Lama. The official opening occurred on July 30, 2016. The spiritual director is the Venerable Khensur Rinpoche Lobsang Tsephel, who founded and directs the Land of Compassion Buddha organization worldwide. The holy books are translated into English and Mandarin Chinese. There are two resident teachers and most of the work is accomplished by volunteers. A range of classes are offered and spiritual practices such as meditation are taught. The building reflects temple architecture and is a great addition to McCauley. It contrasts with the many historical Christian churches which have survived in the neighbourhood and reflects the diversity in this inner-city community.



While "community gardens" have become trendy in cities in the last 20 or so years as part of revitalization projects attempting to replace over-grown empty lots filled with trash, they have a long history. In Edmonton, George Harcourt was instrumental in setting up the "Vacant Lots Garden Club" in 1916. He was born in Ontario in 1863 and attended the Ontario College of Agriculture in Guelph. In 1905, he was appointed Alberta's first Deputy Minister of Agriculture and helped to set up the Faculty

Alberta. George was a member of the Edmonton Horticultural Society (established in 1909) and supported its goals of beautifying the city. In 1916, he was instrumental in setting up the Vacant Lots Garden Club focused on promoting the growing of vegetables to address war-time shortages. This initiative became particularly important during the Great Depression of the 1930s. At that time lots were

of Agriculture at the University of

allocated free of charge to citizens who were trying to live on relief. The practice continued in the Second World War as part of the Victory Gardens movement but the affluence beginning with the coming in of the Leduc No. 1 well in 1947 turned many away from the growing of vegetables in their own back yards.

The Italian residents of Edmonton disregarded this middle class trend away from gardening and McCauley backyards continued to produce fruit and vegetables for their owners and families. With the Italian wave of immigration, beginning in the early 1950s, McCauley's backyards flourished. Tall runner beans staked to poles towering above fences were a typical sight as well as Roma tomatoes with their distinctive pear-like shapes, zucchini, peas, fava beans,

Adriana A. Davies, "George Harcourt," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, to be published.

potatoes, and other vegetables. These not only helped to feed families, they were a tie to the homeland. Very skilled gardeners were even able to grow grape-bearing vines. Some even created grottoes commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The notion of community gardens became important as part of the McCauley revitalization strategy. The Mustard Seed Church developed the Peas Be With You garden on 96 Street but this did not last. With the support of McCauley Revitalization and Action for Healthy Communities, a number of dedicated residents and partner organizations, such as E4C and Multicultural

Health Brokers Co-operative, the

2 McCauley Community Garden group was formed and, in 2013, built raised beds on the

grounds at McCauley School.20

A goal of this garden
program was to develop a
"community food centre"
where neighbours could
share growing tips, use
food grown in the garden
for a collective kitchen, offer
cooking classes, canning
workshops and much more.

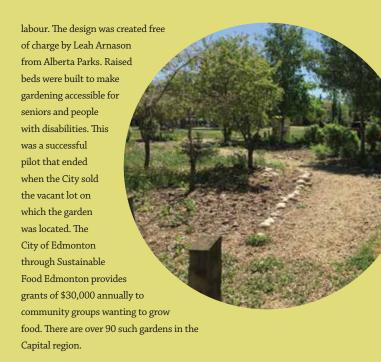
In 2018, the program was supervised by The Mustard Seed

Society. 21 Operation Food Rescue

Edmonton (OFRE) designed and installed

a micro-orchard at McCauley School in 2014. The organization began as a volunteer group in 2009 and rescues fruit in the greater Edmonton area including Stony Plain, Sherwood Park, and St. Albert.

The Little Italy Community Garden, located just south of The Works office on 95 Street, was established in July 2014 by the Skills Society with funding support from the Neighbourhood Revitalization Matching Fund. It was a three-year project with the Skills Society members and community volunteers providing the



grown urban spaces into mini paradises through luxurious plantings. They can happen anywhere and result from private or public efforts.<sup>21</sup> In fall 2016, Affordable Storage encouraged development of a community garden – the 5 Stadium Garden – with raised beds at its property on 86 Street and 106A Avenue. The 35 Rose Garden is maintained by the owners of Zocalo, Ken Bregenser and Miranda Ringma, who provide rose bushes to enhance the gateway to Giovanni Caboto Park. The McCauley Community League has created the 28 Friendship Garden on the northeast corner of Caboto Park as a meditative space for residents and visitors. The 12 Garden of Truth was established by the Excel Society to remediate a site on 97 Street and 108A Avenue, the site of a former Husky gas station. It provides spaces for flowerbeds and heirloom plants. Resident and Community League board member Lily Mounma has spearheaded development of the Kids Garden Park on a private lot in McCauley. It provides a safe place where children can interact and learn about gardening.

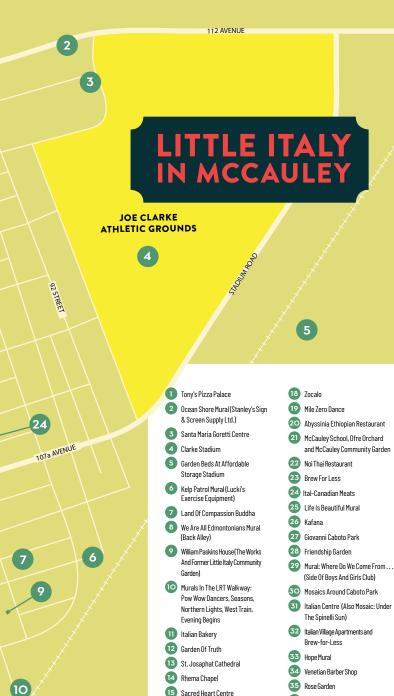
The beauty of such projects is that they transform unsightly, over-

<sup>21</sup> See Dustin Bajer, "Cultivate McCauley," Boyle McCauley News, April 2018; and URL: https://cultivatemccauley.ca/, retrieved May 26, 2018.









Sacred Heart Church

Sorrentino's

36 Vista Housing for Seniors/Piazza Italia37 La Piazza

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adriana (Albi) Davies was born in Grimaldi, Cosenza, Italy and came to Edmonton with her mother Estera, sister Rosa, and brother Giuseppe in 1951. Her father, Raffaele Albi, had arrived in 1949. She grew up in Edmonton's west end and obtained BA and MA degrees from the University of Alberta and a PhD from the University of London in the UK. She has worked as a researcher, writer, curator, and editor including work as a Senior Editor on The Canadian Encyclopedia. Adriana created the Alberta Online Encyclopedia (www. albertasource.ca), which includes 84 multimedia websites. She has recently completed a book titled Alberta's Italian History: From Sojourners to Citizens culminating over 30 years of work as a community and immigration historian. An active volunteer in Edmonton's Italian community, she served as president of the National Congress of Italian Canadians, Edmonton and Alberta regions.



