The boy [now author of these chapters] was identified by various names like: Murph, Mootz, Murzy, Tony Baloney, Wop or Dago. Whatever the appellation, he responded. In those days it was common to use terms like: Pollock, Hunkie, Frog, Greaser, Crow [Croatian], or any other demeaning designation. Usually it was employed in a friendly fashion and, unlike today, no offense was taken. Thus, if one addressed another by using some such degrading term, he could well expect to be rebuffed in a similar or more derogatory way. People had thicker skins then. Only occasionally did someone take umbrage at a particular selection of terms. In such cases, retribution would be swift and severe... like a knuckle sandwich to the chops or a rap in the nose. So it behooved one to know the nature of the person who was being addressed in such a manner.

There were other social errors one could make. For instance, to mistake a Croatian for a Serbian or vice versa was an unforgivable faux pas because those two sects have been feuding since the beginning of time. Among Italians one wouldn’t dare confuse a Calabrese for a Sicilian or a Sicilian for a Genoese, for example. Being more than somewhat provincial, they each considered themselves the true Italians and looked down with disdain upon the others who were unfortunate enough to be a cut or two beneath them. The reason for such behavior may have been that everyone had difficulty making ends meet and it damaged their pride. Therefore they resorted to a type of pecking order by which they assuaged their sense of inadequacy. To the author, it seems a logical explanation; to the reader, perhaps not. . .

Youngsters of those days are now today’s oldsters, and they must certainly confess to a sense of guilt when they think back to those times, because they thought it was hilarious to hear those Pollocks, Wops or Magyars destroy the language. In their youthful ignorance they tended to associate lack of communication with inability but they couldn’t have been more mistaken. Those stalwart people left their homelands in search of a better way of life. They dared to emigrate to a country separated from theirs by a vast ocean and whose language and customs were completely alien to them. That required a large measure of courage, no matter that they may have been driven to it. They were painfully aware that they would be low man on the totem pole and that they would be fully exploited, as indeed they were. Perhaps victimized is a more apt term. But they came and they toiled to eke out an existence while beseeching God to help them provide hope and opportunity for their children. . . . Instinct dictated that they rise above adversity and head for the light. And they did.

**Photograph Credits**

*Come on to America*
Pages 100-112 Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Archives

*“Tales of Penowa”*
Pages 114-125 All photographs courtesy of Dorothy Muzopappa

*Guiseppe Moretti’s East End Bronzes*
Pages 126-132 All photographs courtesy of the author

*Gaining Gateway Center*
Pages 134-142 Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Archives

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**In Conclusion . . .**

By David Demarest and Eugene Levy

Surprisingly perhaps, in addition to Muzopappa’s “Tales of Penowa,” three other excellent memoirs have been written about the Penowa area. A 10,000 word unpublished manuscript called “Pit Boss of Penowa, PA” (written c.1970), now in the archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, describes a male child’s family life in Penobscot from 1915 to 1920; the author, Andrew Bradley, died in California in 1981. In Icon of Spring (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), Sonya Jason presents the life of a girl in Jefferson patch in the 1930s. A nationally known book, I Went to Pitt College (1934), an account by New York reporter Lauren Gilfillan of hard times in the mine fields during the Great Depression, focuses on Avella and the patches west of it.

Ruth Petricca has identified her uncle, Philip Brower, in the middle at the Penowa train station, left. Date and photographer are unknown. Above: Unlike baseball, football was a pick-up sport in Penowa. Muzopappa identified the backfield: Bill Foder, Ralph Dorisio, Al Ezarik; and line: Tom Fodor, Mike Korpos, Pete Rotundo, Joe Zick, Steve Chuburko; date and photographer unknown.