

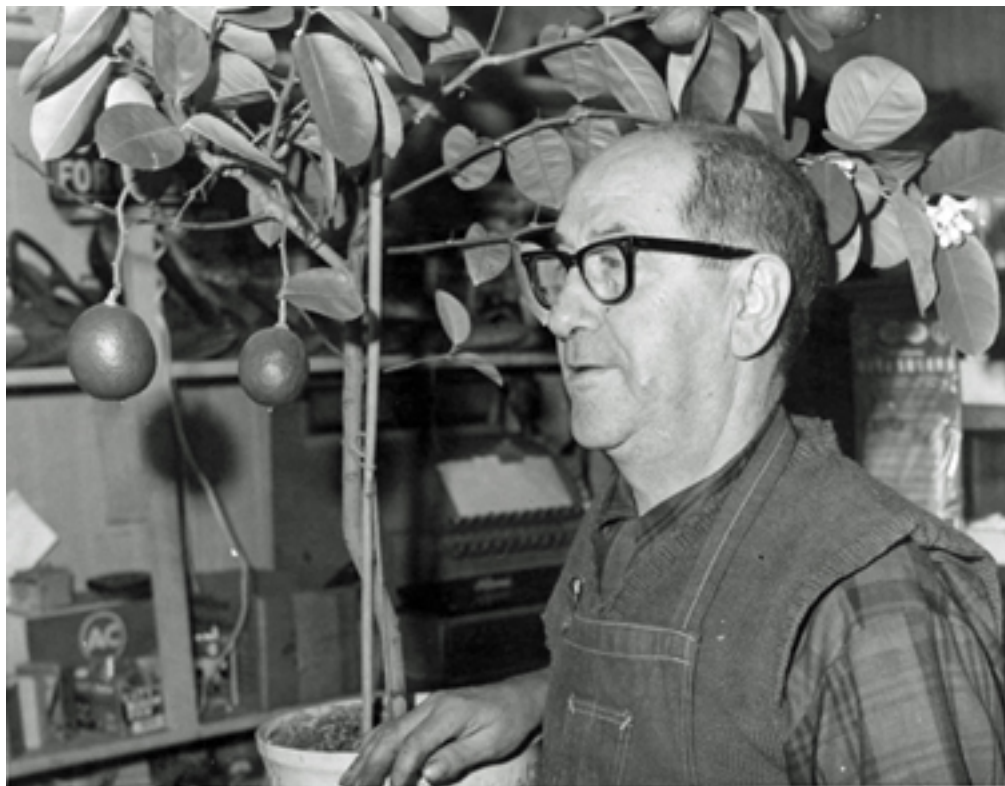
# Tony Basile and his Shoe Repair Shop

Mel Montemerlo

May 2, 2016

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop was across the street from St. Mary's Church in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Those were the years before "athletic shoes" such as Nike and Adidas became so popular. The Converse Co. had been making canvas shoes since 1917, but non-leather shoes were a very small percentage of shoes worn when Tony Basile had his shop on Spring St. In those days, men and boys wore leather shoes whose soles and heels had to be replaced when they wore out. Even women's shoes needed to have their heels replaced periodically. Windsor Locks' premier shoe repair store in those days was Tony Basile's shop. It was a different time. It was a time when top craftsmen were considered professionals. Tony Basile was such a man. He took justifiable pride in his work.

Here is a photo of Tony next to his lemon tree. He is wearing his apron. It's the way Tony looked in his shop.



*Tony Basile*

If you walked out of St. Mary's Church, you saw Tony's Shoe Repair Shop, just off to your right. When you got married at St. Mary's church, snapshots were taken from the steps of the church. Here is a photo of an unknown couple who had just gotten married at St. Mary's Church, followed by a photo of Tony's shop taken from inside of their car as they left the Church.



*Unknown couple after wedding at St Mary's church*



*Tony Basile's Shoe Repair shop.  
Photo taken from car of newly married couple.*

Here is an early photo of the interior of Tony's shop. Tony is on the left. At the right in that photo is Tony DiPinto, who was a friend of Tony's, and who helped out at the store once in a while.



*Interior of Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop.  
At left is Tony Basile. At right is Tony Dipinto.*

It was common in the 1930s and 1940s for small businesses to print up advertising items such as calendars and ink blotters. When most people wrote with a fountain pens, everyone used blotters. Now we have ball point pens which eliminate the need for blotters. Tony Basile had the following ink blotter printed up as an advertisement.



*Tony Basile's advertising blotter*



Tony was born in Springfield, Mass. in 1905. He married Anna Christopher, who was also from Springfield. He opened his shoe repair shop at 29 Spring St. in 1929, and it stayed open for 43 years, until he retired in 1972, three years before he died in 1975.

Tony and Anna had two children, a son named John, and a daughter named Mary Ann. You will see later in one of the newspaper clippings that Mary Ann was a gifted singer, who excelled in high school musical plays.

John married Barbara Ann Perdoni on Nov. 7, 1954. They had a son, John Anthony, who was born on Sept. 15, 1955. He was born in Dallas, Texas, near Arlington, where his parents lived at the time. John Basile was an aeronautical engineer with the Chance Vought Corp.

Tony Basile's daughter, Mary Ann, married Felix N. "Phil" Giannelli on May 4, 1957. Phil had an automotive repair shop at 457 Spring St. Here is a photo of Phil and Mary Ann Giannelli. It was taken sometime during the 1970s.



*Phil & Mary Ann Giannelli*

Phil and Mary Ann had four children: Cecilia, Peter, Anthony and Anna. They resided at 50 Spring St, next to Mary Ann's mother, Anna.

Phil and Mary Ann's son, Anthony, who was called Tony, married Karen Starr, who is now (2016) with the Windsor Locks Historical Society. Karen is the person who made the photos of Tony, his shoe repair shop and the ink blotter available for this article.

Tony Basile belonged to a number of organizations, as you will see in the newspaper articles which follow. He got his fireman's badge on Oct. 19, 1951. He was a member of St. Mary's Church, of the Italian Fraternal Society of New Britain and of the Senior Citizens Center of Windsor Locks.

What did Tony like to do on his time away from the shop? His daughter, Mary Ann Gianelli recently provided the following information. "He loved to visit his in-laws, the Christopher family, at their family farm in Agawam, MA. He enjoyed gardening, and spending time in his back yard. He took many vacations to Italy. When he was younger, he played clarinet at the German Club in Broad Brook. That clarinet was passed down to his nephew through marriage, Anthony Campanelli, a life-long musician who recently retired from his position as Music Teacher and Band Director for Somers Middle School, Somers, CT. Tony's father, Nicola Basile, was musically inclined, and was in a band in Italy. There is a long tradition of music in the Basile family."

Part of the research done for this article was a search of newspaper articles in and around Windsor Locks. This search provided a number of articles from the Springfield Union newspaper, dating from 1937 to 1975. The earliest article says that Tony and his wife Anna just returned from a one week automobile trip to Maine, Vermont and Canada in June 1937. There is another article which says that Anthony Basile and his wife went to visit their son, John, in Texas on March 26, 1956. They left from Bradley Field and would stay in Texas for two weeks. Another article from April 18, 1950, said that Tony added a new front porch to his house. Those articles end with his obituary. The Springfield Union newspaper articles are presented in chronological order at the end of this article.

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop was a fixture in Windsor Locks for over 40 years. Everybody knew Tony. He wasn't only well known, he was well liked and well respected.

Mel Montemerlo

Mr and Mrs **Anthony Basile** and family of Spring street have returned home following a week's automobile trip through Vermont, Maine and points in Canada.

*Springfield Union*  
*June 23, 1937*

**Windsor Locks,** Conn., April 17—The Zoning Commission has announced that the spring season has given them one of the busiest weeks since its existence with the issuing of the following permits:

Mr. and Mrs. Max Wolnick, Whilton St., dwelling on North Main St.; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rachel, North St., dwelling and garage, Webb and Second Sts.; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sheridan, Suffield St., repairing and enclosing side porch at present home; Michael Murkowiez, Old County Rd., dwelling on South Elm St.; Willard E. Sullivan, South Main St., dwelling on Webb St.; **Anthony Basile,** Spring St., addition of front porch and remodel present home; William L. Ranney, Elm St., dwelling on Anthony and Elm Sts.; Aceme Building

*Springfield Union, April 18, 1950*

# Firemen Given Their Badges

**Windsor** Locks, Conn., Oct. 18—At a program at headquarters of the **Windsor Locks** Fire Department, 12 Civil Defense enrollees were presented badges by First Selectman Henry O'Leary, on completion of a course of training as Auxiliary firemen.

At this ceremony, the auxiliary firemen were addressed by Acting Chief C. Harold Wallace, First Selectman O'Leary, Chief Herbert Rockwell of the Bradley Field Fire Department, Richard E. Stanton, local Civil Defense Director, and George D. Clee, assistant.

The following auxiliary firemen received badges: Dominick Ruggiero, Joseph DiPento, **Anthony**, **Basile**, Frank McCann, Harry Preator, Sr., Walter Pohorylo, Nicholas Ruggiero, Raymond Ermellini, Harry Richard, Charles V. McCoy and Oliver Nash.

*Springfield Union*  
*Oct. 19, 1951*



**Windsor Locks**, Conn., June 13—Students of Our Lady of the Angels Academy in Enfield will present "The Singer in Naples," a musical comedy in two acts, at Enfield Town Hall on June 17.

#### Plays Leading Role

The leading role will be played by Mary Ann **Basile**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St., this town. She is a member of the senior class at the Academy, and has a major part in the school's dramatic offering last year.

Other **Windsor Locks** girls in the cast are: Joan Traverso, Rose Borracci, Patricia Gantley, Jane Pastormerlo, Francis Biardi, Eileen Rabbett, Rena Colo and Carol Tenerowicz. Tickets for the affair are now on sale, the local girls on the ticket committee being Frances Biardi, Carol Tenerowicz and Elaine Quagliardi.

*Springfield Union*  
*June 14, 1952*



## Miss Perdoni Engaged

**Windsor Locks**, Conn., Sept. 24—Mr. and Mrs. John Perdoni of Elm St. announce the engagement of their daughter, Barbara Ann, to John P. **Basile**, son of Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St. The wedding will take place in St. Mary's Church on Nov. 6. Miss Perdoni is a graduate of Mt. St. Joseph Academy in West Hartford and St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing in Hartford. She has a position with the Transocean Air Lines at Bradley Field as a flight nurse. Mr. **Basile** is a graduate of Cathedral High School in Springfield and Indiana Technical College. He is now employed by Chance Vought Co. in Dallas, Tex., as an aeronautical engineer.

**Springfield Union**  
**Sept. 25, 1954**

## BARBARA PERDONI WEDS JOHN BASILE

Windsor Locks, Conn., Nov. 7—Miss Barbara Ann Perdoni, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Perdoni of Elm St., was united in marriage to John P. Basile, son of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Basile of Spring St., in St. Mary's Church yesterday morning at 10. Rev. August M. Finnance officiated.

Miss Mary Ann Basile, sister of the bridegroom, was maid of honor. Bridesmaids were Miss Ann Marie Raccone, the bride's cousin, and Mrs. Paul R. Ferras of Hartford. Robert Raccone of this town, cousin of the bride, was best man. Ushers were Guy Mercadanti of Agawam and Anthony Basile of Bristol, cousins of the bridegroom.

A reception and dinner took place at the Italian Progressive Club on Suffield St. The couple left on a motor trip to Florida and New Orleans, en route to Texas where they will live in Dallas. Mr. Basile is an aeronautical engineer for the Chance Vought Corp., there.

*Springfield Union*  
*Nov. 8, 1954*

### SON TO BASILES

**Windsor Locks, Conn., Sept. 23--** Mr. and Mrs. John **Basile** of Arlington, Tex., are parents of a son, John **Anthony**, born on September 15 in Dallas. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. John Perdoni of Elm St., and Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St. Mrs. Perdoni has been spending the month with her daughter, and Mr. Perdoni left here by plane today to join them.

*Springfield Union, Sept. 24, 1955*

Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St., will leave tomorrow from Bradley Field for Texas, where they will spend two weeks with their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. John **Basile**.

*Springfield Union, March 24, 1956*



### Engagement Announced

Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St. have announced the engagement of their daughter, Mary Ann, to Felix N. Giannelli, son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Giannelli of Springfield Gardens, Long Island, N. Y. The wedding will take place in St. Mary's Church here on Saturday, May 4.

*Springfield Union*  
*Jan. 31, 1957*

### **Anthony Basile,** **Retired Cobbler,** **Dead at 69**

**Anthony Basile**, 69, of 52 Spring St., **Windsor Locks**, Conn., died Monday in Hartford Hospital. He was born in Springfield and had lived in **Windsor Locks** 45 years.

Mr. **Basile** was the owner and operator of Tony's Shoe Repair Shop in **Windsor Locks** for 43 years until his retirement three years ago.

He was a member of the Church of St. Mary, **Windsor Locks**, the Italian Fraternal Society of New Britain and the Senior Citizens Club of **Windsor Locks**.

He leaves his wife, Anna (Christopher) **Basile**; a son, John **Basile** and a daughter, Mrs. Mary Ann Giannelli, both of **Windsor Locks**; two sisters in Italy and six grandchildren.

The funeral will be Thursday morning from the Johnson-Kania funeral home, Oak Street, **Windsor Locks**, with a liturgy of Christian burial in the Church of St. Mary. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery.

*Springfield Union, May 20, 1975*



## BASILE

In Hartford, Conn., May 19, 1975,  
**Anthony Basile** of 52 Spring St.,  
**Windsor Locks;** husband of Anna  
(Christopher) **Basile;** father of  
John **Basile** and Mrs. Mary Ann  
Giannelli. The funeral will be  
Thursday at 8.30 a.m. from the  
Johnson-Kania funeral home, 105  
Oak St., **Windsor Locks,** with a  
Mass of Christian burial in the  
Church of St. Mary at 9 a.m.  
Burial will be in St. Mary  
Cemetery. Friends may call at  
the funeral home today from 2  
to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m.

*Springfield Union*  
*May 21, 1975*



*Basile Family Gravestone, St. Mary's Cemetery*