Dominick Vettraino, 1914-2003

1.0 linear ft.

Acquisition Number: 1990-15

Acquisition: Items were given to the Archives in June 1990, and April and August 1998 by Dominick and Anne Vettraino. Subsequent materials were given to the Archives from Cecilia Vettraino Strine in August 2003.

Access: Access to the collection is unrestricted

Copyright: Copyright to this collection is held by the Cranbrook Educational Community

Preferred Citation: Dominick Vettraino Papers, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Photographs: Oversized Photograph Folder, and the Photograph Special File

Processing: Lance Stuchell, 2008
Biography

Dominick Vettraino was born 22 Dec. 1914 in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, the son of Michael and Michela Vettraino. Michael had been employed at Cranbrook since he was hired by George Booth in 1905. In his capacity as grounds superintendent, Michael planted most of the trees and gardens that adorned Cranbrook’s early years and helped shape the campus that is seen today.

Dominick grew up at Cranbrook, where he “hobnobbed with Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen and spoke Italian with Swedish sculptor Carl Milles.” As a child, Dominick helped his father plant trees on the campus and brought water to the construction crews working at Cranbrook. His relationship with Cranbrook was formalized when, in 1931, he began working as one of his father’s handymen. Three years later, after studying at the University of Michigan’s Fire School, Dominick was named the chief of the Cranbrook Fire Department. Dominick used his considerable mechanical skills to build Cranbrook’s first fire truck, converting a Ford chassis into a working piece of firefighting equipment. He even married his wife Anne at the fire station in 1939. Upon his father’s retirement in 1955, Dominick took over the position of grounds superintendent. Dominick would also serve as the head of Cranbrook’s Police Department, where he was often seen patrolling the campus in his blue Ford. As the Cranbrook Cranium put it “Dominick is an interesting person to meet—but not after lights Friday night.”

Dominick’s contributions were not limited to the Cranbrook Community. Dominick used his knowledge and experience as a firefighter to help form the Bloomfield Hills Fire Department in 1942. He continued to serve the community when he was elected to the Bloomfield Hills City Commission in the 1950’s, and in 1958 was elected the village’s mayor, the first native born resident of Bloomfield Hills to hold that position. Dominick was also very involved in the Boy Scouts, founding a troop at the Cranbrook Fire Department in the 1950’s.

Dominick and his family have made an indelible mark on the Cranbrook community. Upon his retirement from Cranbrook in 1981, Dominick received the Founders Award for 50 years of service, 26 years after his father received the award. In 2005, Festa Vettraino commemorated 100 years of Vettraino family service to Cranbrook. Michael and Dominick were honored, along with Dominick’s brother John, who also worked on the grounds at Cranbrook, and John’s daughter Cecilia Vettraino Strine, who teaches at Brookside School Cranbrook. Cranbrook also honored the family with the naming of Piazza Vettraino.

Dominick passed away on April 16, 2003. At his memorial at Christ Church Cranbrook, the fire truck he built stood guard out front, a tribute to his commitment to Cranbrook and the Bloomfield Hills community.
Scope and Content of Collection

This collection is organized into five series. I. BIOGRAPHICAL. II. BLOOMFIELD HILLS. III. CRANBROOK FIRE AND POLICE. IV. PHOTOGRAPHS.

The Personal series contains material from Dominick’s involvement with the Boy Scouts, newspaper clippings, and correspondence, which especially focuses on Dominick’s elections and the passing of his father. The folders in this series are arranged chronologically. Bloomfield Hills contains correspondence and records relating to the administration of the community, with an emphasis on property issues and the management of the Bloomfield Hills Fire and Police Departments. The folders in this series are arranged alphabetically by topic, then chronologically. Cranbrook Fire and Police contains correspondence regarding the payment of firefighters and services performed by both entities. These folders are arranged chronologically.

The photographs from this collection include family photos, images of Dominick’s engineering and fire and police work at Cranbrook, and photos of objects and landscape of Cranbrook. Two oversized photographs are housed in the Oversized Photograph folder, located in Box 1. A scrapbook containing images of Cranbrook Fire Department’s Boy Scouts troop comprises Box 2. The remainder of the photographs in this collection can be found in the Photograph Special File.

These papers also contain material relating to the rest of the Vettraino family, including Dominick’s wife Anne, his father Michael, his brother John Vettraino, and John’s daughter Cecilia Vettraino Strine. These members of the family are heavily represented in the photographs section.

Related Collections

- Cranbrook Foundation Records (1981-05)
- Festa Vettraino (2005-1)
- Henry Scripps and Carolyn Farr Booth Papers (1982-05)
SERIES I: PERSONAL

Box 1

2. Boy Scouts Recognition Ribbon, 1961
5. Correspondence, 1949-1957
6. Correspondence, 1958-1959
7. Correspondence, 1963-1988
8. Lions Club, 1957, 1960

SERIES II: BLOOMFIELD HILLS

9. Abstract of Title, Vaughan Property
10. Charters, 1932, 1957
12. Election Results, 1953-1963
15. Property and Zoning Records, 1956-1957

SERIES III: CRANBROOK FIRE AND POLICE

16. Correspondence, 1955-1973
17. Correspondence, Christ Church Cranbrook, 1955-1978

SERIES IV: PHOTOGRAPHS

18. Oversized Photographs

Box 2

Boy Scouts Scrapbook, 1953 to ca. 1954
Index

Anthony Soave House 1:18
Allen, Sanford 1:7

Bloomfield Hills Fire Department 1:14
Bloomfield Hills Police Department 1:14
Booth, Henry S. 1:5, 1:6, 1:16
Booth-Henrikson, Melinda 1:6
Brae Burn Inc. 1:15

Cranbrook Fire Department 1:1
Cranbrook Fire Truck 1:16
Cranbrook Music Guild 1:16

Detroit Lions Football Team 1:16

Kingsley Inn

McManus Residence 1:15

Palmer Bee Building 1:15

Stonycroft 1:15

Vettraino, Ann 1:5
Vettraino, Benedetto 1:5
Vettraino, Maria 1:5
Vettraino, Michael 1:5, 1:6