

# GEORGE CAPPuccio

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW DATE: OCTOBER 28, 2022



HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of*  
**HAMMONTON**

EST. 1960

**Historical Society of Hammonton Oral History  
George Cappuccio**

<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>October 28, 2022</b>
<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	Janet Hasulak
<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	George Cappuccio
<b>Others Present</b>	Deborah White, Historical Society of Hammonton

**It is October 28, 2022, and I am sitting here with George Cappuccio. I am Janet Hasulak, I am recording George for the Oral History project for Hammonton's Historical Society.**

**Question: How are you named?**

My name is George Cappuccio.

**Question: How old are you, George? How did you get named George?**

How did I get named George? I was born on the evening of February 21, and I was the 11th child. They were not sure what to call me. The doctor come up and he said, "It's George Washington's birthday. Name him George." There is a little story behind that. My sister, my oldest sister, was born on February 21, 1896.

**Question: They share birthdays.**

Same day. She is the oldest , I was the youngest, but there is 10 in-between.

**Question: You are the youngest?**

Yes. What else is there?

**Question: His sister had a child, a nephew older than him.**

Yes. My nephew was older and tall. I remember in school, they always say, "Hey, you're uncle or not?" "No, wait a minute. I am the uncle."

**Question: What do you remember about your mother and father?**

It's hard for me. For me, mostly I remember they were pretty old. Because when I was born, I was number 11. But my father was a very, very hard worker. Good, honest, man.

**Question: What did he do for a living?**

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Well, actually, we had a little farm here across the street. It was all farm. He worked for a store in town. It was in a local store. He could read Italian and English. They hired him because there're so many Italians in those days that they had a hard time taking care of people and the store. When they needed him, he was there.

**Question: Was he born in this country?**

No. He was born in Sicily, my father. My mother was born in Sicily. They were only a few miles apart, but they didn't know each other until they come here actually. Actually, it was a set-up wedding. She was coming to marry him. He didn't know her, and she didn't know him. It turned out to be a pretty good marriage. Here we are. They did a good job.

**Question: This is your son?**

Yes, George.

**Question: I am Debra. By the way, George.**

Nice to meet you.

**Question: Where were you born?**

Where was I born? In that house next door.

**Question: Did you use to live there? You used to live over there?**

Oh, yes. The moment we were married, we lived there too. We took care of mom and pop in their old age. Besides, our four children were raised there.

**Question: Way back then on Pratt Street, that was the farmhouse?**

Yes.

**Question: Was anything else on the street?**

Well, that was the last house, but the houses there now were not there. They've been here for many years, except maybe just one. On this side of the street, there is only one house. French Street, which runs next street, was just all wooded. When they cut through, they had lots on both sides and both houses on both of them.

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**Question: Is the street out here gravel at that time?**

Yes. It was gravel. I remember on the sixth day of July it'd be so dusty for him to see him. The old cars those days.

**Question: Where did you go to school at, George? Where was it that you went to school?**

For the high school, there were three buildings there and all your education was right there. There was a little tiny building for kindergarten and then, three buildings. We went there and I graduated in 1939. I cannot find anybody left.

**Question: You didn't go to school beyond that?**

No.

**Question: College was not really needed back then.**

My father believed in education, but he never made that much money actually.

**Question: What were things like as a teenager? What did teenagers do for entertainment in town back then? Or how would you describe your teen years?**

It's hard to say. One thing, we were in school. When you graduate, you're going to go work at the factory. I think we had 13 clothing factories in town.

**Question: That was the usual? You graduated and you got a job?**

There was work. There was work all the time here really. There was not college, but it worked. What we did is we made enough to send our kids to school. My family has two or three guys who are professors. One of them still a professor, George McCluskey. He said I belong with - I cannot remember what's the name of it. He was in a lot of the space programs. We're pretty lucky we have a good family.

**Question: How many children?**

Do I have? Four.

**Question: What are their names?**

There is Diane and then, there is George. Danny and Jeannie.

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**Question: How long have you been married and how did you meet your wife?**

Yesterday was 76 years.

**Question: How did you meet? How old were you when you got married? Do we get to meet the bride?**

Sure. We used to like to roller skate. When I skated, there was a couple of girls who would skate a lot with me. There is one girl, I was asking her for a skate. She always said, "Oh, I'll think about it." I said, "I want to know for sure." She said, "I'll think about it." This has happened a lot. There was one time I've decided that I am going to get tough. She is, "I'll think about it." I said, "Now." "No, I'll think about it." "Could I have this dance?" She said, "Wait until I get my coat off." That was it. When I met her, there has never been another woman. She is my sweetheart.

**Question: George was just telling the story about how you met.**

Roller skating.

**Question: Congratulations on your anniversary, yesterday.**

Thank you. She was born on June 24 and she's 97 now.

**Question: God bless you. My goodness what a life together.**

It was great. It was a great life. We have good children, good grandchildren.

**Question: What was your maiden name?**

Filo, F-i-l-o.

**Question: F-i-l-o.**

I guess that time it was Filo. Filo is like string.

**Question: Filament. Probably the root word for the word filament. Where were you born?**

Where was I born?

**Question: Yes.**

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Egg Harbor.

**Question: In a hospital or were you born at home also?**

Home.

**Question: That was the usual.**

There used to be what was it called?

**Question: Birthing homes? Midwives that would come?**

Yes, they would come.

**Question: How old were both of you when you married then? I don't want to have to do the math. How old were you when you married?**

How long have we been married?

**Question: How old were you?**

Oh, I was just - I am trying to think.

**Question: 25 I think. I guess 25 I think when you do the math.**

I was 26, I guess.

**Question: You were 21 or 22 probably, your wife. When your wife married, she was 4 years younger?**

Yes.

**Question: About 21.**

She was 17 when I met her. I think I was just 21.

**Question: Where did you skate in town? Where was the skating area?**

At Mays Landing.

**Question: You went way down there?**

Oh, yes. Boys had always somebody – my brother's car or my father's car. Get two or three guys and put in quarters to get gas.

**Question: I wonder is it the same place still at Mays Landing?**

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No. That building burned down. I don't remember when. Anyway, it was right by the river like where you are now. This should be the driveway that went in to the old skating rink.

**Question: Did you continue skating for years after that? Did you continue to skate?**

No. We never skated again. I went in the army. I come back. I didn't have a car those days. I just take a bus at Egg Harbor and come home at 2:00 every night. By the weekend, I was so tired. We said we were going to wait a year or two, but we got married. I had come home on October. We got married in February.

**Question: Did you have any children before you went into the army? Did you start the family before you went into the army or after you came home?**

No. We're married - what did I say the days were? I don't remember anymore.

**Question: When did you go into the army? How old were you when you went into the army?**

I went in the army October 1st.

**Question: Of what year? Remember what year?**

'41, I guess. '42.

**Question: Were you drafted, or did you just join?**

I was drafted. Well, when they first started drafting, I was the only incoming that my mother and father had so I was not drafted right away. They changed the rules where they gave so much amongst to people like my mother and father and then they called me in. My brother, he was home too at the time. He was in the army.

**Question: Where did you train?**

Fort Bragg.

**Question: You went into artillery?**

Heavy artillery.

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**Question: Did you marry after you got out of the service?**

We got married after I got out of the service. Like I said, we waited and when I come home - I worked a year and saved some money to get married. But we couldn't wait.

**Question: From Bragg did you go straight to Europe?**

Yes. I went to Africa. We went up in Fort Dix as a - what do you call when you get together? A unit. Preparation to go overseas. After there, we went to New York on board ship and wound up in Africa.

**Question: The whole troop ship.**

Yes. Africa was just about done at the time we got there. We went from there to -

**Question: Was it Italy right after?**

Yes. I am trying to think of the town.

**Question: Monte Cassino?**

Oh, yes. But we landed in - it was a big - I cannot think anymore. But anyhow, from there, we went to Monte Cassino, which was, at the time I guess the biggest battle and war. It was considered one of the biggest battles. We were heavy artillery, and we were stuck there I'd say for about four months. We couldn't break them through from Monte Cassino. It finally broke through when we went up to - what's the name of that building that's slanted?

**Question: Leaning Tower of Pisa.**

That's as far as we went.

**Question: You didn't cause the building to lean, did you? That was not you who did that?**

No. It was leaning. No, it was already bent. We went there going to Southern French. We landed in Southern France, and we did the whole thing. France, Austria, Germany.



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**Question: When you were in Italy, this may sound like a strange question, because I don't know. Did you mostly fight Germans or was there some of Mussolini army?**

It was mostly German. When the troops landed in Italy, the attired troops almost by the hundreds quit. They just dropped everything. It didn't work quite as well. Actually, it was an easy battle, except when we got to Monte Cassino.

**Question: What are your memories of the concentration camps?**

We rode into the city and the concentration camp was right there. I remember we have parked and the fence over here were all these people standing there hungry. We saw them. There is no way anybody could say it was not true. I saw them.

**Question: Was it Buchenwald? The name of the camp?**

No, it's Southern Germany. What the heck was the city?

**Question: It was not Auschwitz, was it?**

No. It was one of those cities.

**Question: At that time, when you went into the concentration camp, the Jewish people were still locked up at that point or confined?**

Oh, yes. We were the first ones in there. The Germans have taken off.

**Question: The Germans were actually escaping as you were going in.**

The doctors said, "Don't you dare. Don't get close." Because they found out that some of them, they try to feed died. Because they were starving. When they fed them, they give them a little bit of water first thing and maybe they took almost two days before they start feeding them actually. I remember one trip we took. We saw a guy; a former soldier and he was in Japan when they quit. He said, "We caught a few Americans that died. When they came in, they were so starving. We fed them and they died." Our doctors were not quick enough to tell us.

**Question: How long were you in the camp? How long did you interact with the Jewish folks that were there?**

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We didn't interact at all. This happened maybe within four, five, six hours. Our job was to move forward. During our marriage, we went back to Germany. I went through there.

**Question: That was my next question if you'd ever been back.**

Yes, I went back. Actually, we had guides, and they do all they can to keep us away from the camps. I don't blame them after all. But we didn't go into the camp.

**Question: They didn't want people going through there?**

They didn't like the idea. But we did. After all, it was part of the country now.

**Question: Did you know about the camps before you got there?**

I don't quite remember when we first learned about it. But yes, we knew it then. I remember talking to some of the people in Germany on the way in and some of them said, "I am one-third Jewish. I was probably next in line when you guys came because they want to get rid of all Jews at the time." But they were getting mostly Jews. Those that were just part Jews, they were in line. They're next.

**Question: There were Americans in the camp also? Did they put prisoners of war in there?**

I really don't remember if there were prisoners there or not. I don't think so. Because everywhere there were prison camp, they call them.

**Question: POW camps. Prisoner Of War Camp.**

Yes, there were a lot different, but several.

**Question: This may be a difficult question. Did you lose very many friends that got killed in the war? Guys that you were close to?**

Well, I would say our outfit, we lost about 29 people. A few of them were pretty close friends, yes. One of the guys who used to brag he was at school with Frank Sinatra, and he didn't make it back. We have quite a group from the New York area, our outfit. He was one of them that didn't make it. We were heavy artillery. There was one time we got a call. They said, "Everybody take off, hide,

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protection." We left our gun. When we come back, all our guns, the whole size was ruined.

**Question: They knew they were going to be shelling.**

We're really, really, really lucky. Really lucky.

**Question: I wonder how they detected that they were targeted right then.**

I have a little book of our trip, almost every day or where we were.

**Question: Make sure that never gets thrown away. Make sure it goes to one of your kids.**

Yes, we made a few copies. In fact, there might be one at the club.

**Question: I have seen a couple of diaries. But I didn't see a name.**

Oh, you might've seen that.

**Question: Is that the Canoe Club?**

No, no. Here at the park.

**Question: Hammonton Park?**

Yes, right here with the church there.

**Question: The Historical Society building?**

Right. Yes.

**Question: That's where we're from.**

I am pretty sure they have one. I have one here if you want to find it. There might be an original one on the right.

**Question: How many years did you serve then, George?**

I had three years.

**Question: Three years you were in. Do you remember where you were when the war ended?**

I was in a native town, we were in, but we were in Germany.

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**Question: Rancho Oran in North Africa. That's where you landed in Africa in Oran.**

It doesn't have anything about the gun that got blown up.

**Question: The copy of that that is probably at the museum at the Historical Society, is it just like that?**

I think it's just like that.

**Question: I know what to look for.**

I am pretty sure somebody gave or one of my children.

**Question: I will personally look for it. I would love to find it. I am sure it's there in that binder. I might not have seen it though.**

I got the original there too somewhere.

**Question: Landed at Bacoli [phonetic], Italy. And then, sometime in Piccoli [phonetic]. Were you injured at any point? Were you wounded?**

No.

**Question: Good for you.**

I was lucky. We had that one bomb, and we had a [inaudible 00:30:16]. A friend and I were coming back from dinner. We're crossing the street or something and he hits a wire. This bomb comes up and he died. It did go off.

**Question: Just by the grace of God you're here.**

What we found out too is that they use prisoners to make material when they needed help. A lot of the people that got into the shops did little things so it wouldn't work. We probably got saved may be by Jewish prisoners.

**Question: There is one little wire, don't connect it. That's pretty good.**

Usually, when they come up, they blow up nearby.

**Question: That was an amazing close call.**

The gun we had was 100-pound shell.

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**Question: Do you remember the millimeters or what it was?**

An 8-inch howitzer. I had an 8-mm exactly. Right now, I am forgetting it. It was 101 or something.

**Question: 8-inch tells me enough. That's a big one.**

Our guns had a range of 11 miles. It was a howitzer. Not a - I wouldn't call it a gun.

**Question: Not a canon?**

We should get fairly close maybe 3 miles upfront in fire. One of our jobs was to fire all night long into areas to keep them - like it'd be a bridge. Any type of bridge and they would tell you, "Go on and fire. You got 12 shots." By which you're doing one then five minutes later, then 10 minutes later, then two minutes later so they don't know when the next one was coming. You fire all night. I got some nice pictures of a neighbor's shed by the gun. The trouble is my eyes got bad. I just cannot really look around anymore.

**Question: It's all right. I am sure they're here somewhere.**

Oh, yes. I know.

**Question: I just want to make sure that they never get thrown away. That's all. Give them to George, Jr. or one of your other children to keep when you find them. You were in the service then until the war ended?**

Oh, yes. We were one of the early groups that got hit by airplanes. I don't know what you call them.

**Question: Bombers or missiles?**

It didn't have propellers. What do you call them? I cannot think of it right now.

**Question: Oh jets. The Messerschmitt.**

We were one of the first to get hit by jets.

**Question: The 262 Messerschmitt.**

I always remember, nobody knew what it was. "What was that?" That noon it came down, that was a German jet. They're started to use them right now when

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the war was ended or maybe two days before it ended. One of them landed behind us and they only had enough fuel for two minutes. Behind the line for two minutes and then they had to come back. Some of them didn't make it.

**Question: How did you find out the war actually ended?**

Well, it comes from news and the headquarters. At the time when it really ended, I would say 10, 12 days before that, it was about over. We were not in position anymore. That was it.

**Question: Did you celebrate? How did you celebrate? Maybe you waited until you got home to the States to celebrate?**

I play trumpet and then we talk about army. We did something. At nighttime, you get together. We were called chickenshit. A lot of crap. It made me a viewer. I was a viewer for about a month. I would take the horn out. That's what we did before the end of the war.

**Question: Did you smoke when you were in the army?**

Yes.

**Question: When did you quit?**

I started smoking because we were given cigarettes. Every meal, we got a pack of cigarettes. I learned how to smoke and got in the habit. When I came home I am a smoker. We got married. I was smoking. One day I was sitting in a chair in here or there. I don't remember. George comes running and jumped on my lap. I had a cigarette, and the cigarette broke. I yelled at him, "What the?" And I said, "What a stupid thing I am." My kid was running to sit on my lap, and I am smoking a cigarette. I never smoked another cigarette. I decided to quit. He was two maybe.

**Question: That was a lucky day actually.**

I started smoking three, four years.

**Question: Probably the best thing you could have done for your health.**

Yes. He couldn't remember. It was so bad. Why do I holler my son away? With a cigarette in my hand?

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**Question: Did you get together with your other company members after back to the States or not?**

I don't think I ever saw one. Well, there was one high school member. I was in a different company, and we did see him here at home. We had a greenhouse here for a while and he used to come and say hi. But the most of them, once you're gone, that was it.

**Question: How long did it take before you could come back home again? Troop ship again? Did you come back on a ship?**

Yes. We landed in Virginia.

**Question: Had much changed when you got home? Had much changed here in Hammonton when you got home? Was everything pretty much the same?**

When I got home? Oh, yes. There was not much change. Those days you get \$20 a week for a year if you didn't want to go back to work.

**Question: Was that aid from the government?**

Yes. Well, I went back to work because we wanted to get married.

**Question: Where did you go to work when you came back?**

I worked at the Aggressive Coat Company, it used to be. The building is not even here anymore now. There were lady coats. I used to make buttonholes, sew buttons. We got paid, I guess the best in town really. Our boss was a really nice guy.

**Question: Good living. What other places in Hammonton were your favorite places that used to be there that are no longer there? You've probably seen a lot of businesses come and go.**

Yes. We had a lot of businesses coming and going. Right now, I cannot remember anything. I really would like to have it back again.

**Question: Well, you saw the industry change.**

It disappeared. A lot of the changes appeared when they started getting overseas. They talk about when the country went overseas, Chinese making all our stuff.

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We lost a lot. But New York used to come down here for their factories because it was cheaper. In Hammonton, there were a lot of Italians and they all know how to sew. Once you learn, you know how to make your own clothes.

**Question: They were willing to do the work.**

They used to give good pay. I remember one job my sister had. She got \$29 a week and that was about \$10 more than anybody else because she could do anything. She could do the whole coat.

**Question: Most of the workers in the factory that you worked in, most of them were of Italian descent?**

Yes, I would say. At least pretty close to half. Well, at times, we were looked down on quite a bit at the beginning. They used to say, "They're only good for labor out of the farm." Well, if you look at Hammonton today, how many lawyers we got. How many doctors we got, and they were Italians.

**Question: Yes, absolutely. Potential is there.**

Because we had four or five of them came here and bought land out near the side of the pike, and it was just a lot of fields out there. They had 150 acres. They got rich and they sent all their children to college. That was pretty good.

**Question: They were smart and did well for themselves. Can we ask you some questions about your family history? About your mother side of the family? What was your mother's name and her maiden name?**

Her name was Roselo.

**Question: Roselo was her maiden name?**

Josephine Roselo. I think her mother died when she was 17 or something, and she was left alone. I think her father had left her somewhere. I don't remember that whole lot.

**Question: Where was she born?**

Sicily. Main city. Gesso was my father, but right outside of it.

**Question: But your mother came from Sicily?**



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My grandparents, I never knew them.

**Question: Did they stay in Italy, the grandparents or had they just passed on before?**

Nobody came here except my mother and father. There were some cousins who came over and we met here. They were never really close.

**Question: How do you spell your mom's maiden name, George?**

Roselo? I think it's R-o-s-e-l-o, Roselo.

**Question: What was her first name?**

Josephine. Her name is Josephine.

**Question: Did she have brothers and sisters?**

No.

**Question: No family there came over from her side?**

No. I'd say we had some cousins. I think she had an uncle that came over. He was a macaroni maker.

**Question: She had 11 children, so I am assuming she was a homemaker. She didn't work outside the home? Or did she?**

She never even actually learned how to speak English. Because she's home all the time. I don't know if it's true or not. But she said, "Well, because your father used to make fun of me when I tried to speak English." I don't know.

**Question: It was enough of a deterrent apparently. Did your brothers and sisters mostly stay here in town, or did they go to other places to live?**

Well, we had both I guess. I'd say Joseph's in town. Rudolph was in town. Mary went to Atlantic City and John was in town. Most of them were in town. Lauren and Sarah were in town. But their children, mostly moved out of town.

**Question: The other Cappuccio's that are in town now, are you related to them or not so much?**

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Well, only my brother's children. But there were two other Cappuccio's. One of them was a cousin and the other one I don't remember exactly. The story I was telling, Naples is the city I was trying to remember. Walking down the street, I see the stores the Cappuccio's own. I go in there to tell him who I was, and the guy said, [Inaudible 0:48:35.0] and he walked away. We found out later that anybody from Sicily was not considered an Italian and when I started talking, they knew my dialect right away. He wanted nothing to do with that. That's something. Here's a guy who's coming here to save you. He couldn't even say thank you.

**Question: He couldn't get past discriminating against you because you were Sicilian. What were some of your favorite stores in town? Did you ever go to a soda fountain store or any place to get ice cream when you were a teenager?**

Yes. It seemed like we had two or three ice cream parlors in town. But we didn't have that much money to actually go out and get ice cream. Once in a while.

**Question: How about movies? Did you go to the movies?**

Not very often. We went, but not very often. It's funny, my sister, Mary, there was an ice cream coming to town and they sat on horses. They [inaudible 00:50:15]. The ice cream man and she married, and they lived in Atlantic City. He was a cook. They opened up a store there. Did really well until the '29 bust, and they lost everything. I remember they came down to live with us with my family for a while. One of his buy and sells I guess you call it, called him, and said there is a restaurant in West Virginia for sale, and he wanted to try it. He came down, they bought it, and he did really well there. His children all grew up there. But one of them came back. She was here about '67 and lived here with us for quite a few years. That's Diane's mother. We have family all over the country. I've no idea where they are, who they are.

**Question: Such a big family. Did you go to Atlantic City very often?**

Well, as a young boy, I used to go in the summertime. I'd go there and stay there for 8 or 10 days.

**Question: Where did you stay?**

With my sister. They have a store there.

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**Question: Did you take the train?**

No. He had a truck then. He'd come and get me.

**Question: Did you get to go on a train at all? Did you ever get to ride on the Blue Comet?**

Once in a while. I remember I rode the Blue Comet.

**Question: Back in the very late '20s, you would have been still a young child. Did you remember anything involving the Atlantic City Speedway that was built over here in the Amatol?**

It was before my time.

**Question: Yes. You would have been six or seven.**

Right. I remember it being there, but I don't remember ever going for any show. Well, I know that it was made of wood. I think before that, they used to make bombs.

**Question: It was a self-contained city of 10,000 people building ammunition. Did you continue working at the Aggressive?**

I went back to work after a week. I worked there over quite a few years and then Whitehall came into Hammonton. Whitehall Labs. I went there.

**Question: Did they pay better?**

Oh, yes. Good thing I got all my insurance all paid for even now through them. It would have stopped if I hadn't done that.

**Question: Who bought Whitehall? Who bought them out? What company?**

They closed out.

**Question: Did some pharmaceutical company buy them? Probably.**

Oh yes. Well, they're Pfizer now. I never worked for them actually.

**Question: How many years did you work for Whitehall then?**

25.

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**Question: You retired from them?**

I retired when I was 62.

**Question: Still young even at that point. What did you do at Pfizer?**

Make pills.

**Question: You were in production?**

Oh, yes. I quit just about the same time when they bought out the prednisone, was it? They stopped making the pills. They were actually made in England. The first one we put on sale here were actually made in England. They had built a whole new area here in town.

**Question: I think Whitehall made a lot of just aspirin, didn't they?**

Well, it was not aspirin, what they called Anacin. I made millions of Anacin. Anacin, Dristan and then the - I cannot think. It's popular even today. What do you call it?

**Question: For hemorrhoids?**

Hemorrhoids, yes.

**Question: Preparation H.**

Preparation H, yes.

**Question: Were there many other Whitehall manufacturing plants in the country at that time?**

Yes. There was one in Indiana. That was their main one. But they didn't have some small like in one of the cities in New York. We never knew for sure why they left Hammonton. There is always controversy over that. But they moved to some of the cities where they had smaller buildings. I am not sure if they're still running or not. I don't think so. I'd say Pfizer took over them and maybe four different companies really at that time.

**Question: Have you traveled much since you retired? You went to Germany after you retired, right?**

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We went to Canada. We went to California a couple of times. We went to Hawaii. Yes, we travelled quite a bit. New York. We got married and lived in New York, a nice place to go. We're walking streets in New York and this guy comes up with a camera. "I'll take a picture of you," he said. Give \$1 and I will picture you. I gave him \$1 and never saw him again. He probably never even snapped a picture. Dumbest thing I ever did in my life.

**Question: How many grandchildren do you have, George?**

Grandchildren? Six. George got two, Diane has two. Jeannie has two. Danny didn't have any children. He worked for the IRA. He took care of all the money.

**Question: He realized that children cost money. He is smart.**

Actually, he retired. It's a huge settlement. He said because it's quicker than what they got now.

**Question: Back to your first family, your dad. What was his full name? What was your father's first full name?**

Anthony.

**Question: Anthony Cappuccio. Did he have a nickname?**

Anthony G. Cappuccio. AG Cappuccio. Anthony Giuseppe. Sounds Italian, doesn't it?

**Question: Did he have a nickname? Did he go by Anthony? They did call him Tony.**

Yes. He had a nickname. One I cannot figure out. It was a religious name. What was it they called him? They said when he was a kid, he got a box or something and he used to go in a corner and preach. Like what he heard in church. But he never did that. In fact, he changed religion here. Well, he said, "One reason why they don't want us to learn how to read and write is because you find out how much of a liar they are."

**Question: What was your nickname? Do you have one? Everybody in Hammonton seems to have a nickname along the way we found out. Some of them are crazy.**

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**George Cappuccio**

They call me Cappy. Cappuccio.

**Question: Was it your father who was born in Gesso?**

He was born in Gesso, yes.

**Question: He was raised there?**

It was a little town outside of the main port. I cannot think of the name of the city anymore. It was right outside, and they said it was one of the most beautiful places. It was farm land high up and then you see water out there. Beautiful.

**Question: It sounds like a gorgeous place.**

Actually, we got quite a few Hammontonians who went there. Some of the churches have statues made from Hammonton.

**Question: Did you go with a couple of groups? Did you go with any of those?**

I never saw Sicily at all. My daughter loves it. She has been there six times.

**Question: Do you know why your mother and father left Italy? Was there a reason that they came here?**

Well, I guess the main reason was people said there is plenty of money here. But it wound up there really was not that much. But they made it.

**Question: What kind of work did your dad do when he came here? What kind of work did your father do after coming here?**

Well, he was only about 18 when he came over. But he worked on the farms. But there was a lot of stuff. I really don't know why they talked about property that the church took away from the Cappuccios. He used to tell a story. Because if you hear the word cappuccino, that was supposed to be my uncle who made the cappuccino.

**Question: Coffee?**

There was a Capuchin priesthood. He was definitely my father's relative. Some of our other churches got mixed up with the company. He said there was plenty of money there, but they all went to church.

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**Question: The church got the credit for inventing cappuccino?**

I don't know that much about it. All I know is that it was a Cappuccio who started the Capuchin priesthood and that's where the drink came from. The whole truth though, we never really know. They said the lords that were in Rome, they always come back empty-handed, nothing. Nothing there. But we know there was something there because they took them from us.

**Question: Did your father have brothers and sisters? And if so, did they come here?**

Yes. He had two sisters. I knew them.

**Question: What were their names?**

His uncle lived on the corner here at Pratt and Third. What was his name? Tony Passalaqua.

**Question: That's the lodge name, isn't it?**

He had Italian name, Passalaqua.

**Question: What does it mean? Pass water?**

Passalaqua, pass water. Yes. He was my first cousin. He had a couple of children.

**Question: Did any of your father's brothers and sisters come over?**

No. The two sisters and then, I had another cousin, his sister's child.

**Question: You never met your aunt?**

Yes. Actually, I guess if we really went back and then studied the history, geography thing, almost all related. People who lived in Sicily, and they were born there, year after year.

**Question: They'd end up getting married.**

I could probably say, Joe Tuno [phonetic] was my uncle. I don't know. It's true because we all came here.

**Question: Did your father talk much about his childhood and what things were like over in Gesso?**

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### George Cappuccio

No. I don't remember much about it. The only thing he said that he didn't have to go to school. He didn't. He went to fourth grade. He started going at night. He used to walk, and he had to cross very dangerous crossing. There was a cliff there. You go into town then you can go to school. That's where he learned to read and write and started asking questions about religion.

**Question: What religion was he then?**

Presbyterian. I'd say maybe two or three blocks from here, there was a building. It was a Presbyterian Church - Italian church. That's the only Italian church that was right here that was not Catholic. He was in town, so he went to Presbyterian Church. I was brought up Presbyterian.

**Question: He was Catholic first thought, right? That's when he changed.**

Oh, yes. They all came here Catholic.

**Question: How old did he live to be? Where do you get your genes from?**

My father was 88, I think. He did pretty well.

**Question: Was he buried in town? What cemetery was he buried in?**

Hammonton, the main cemetery on Cross Street.

**Question: It would be Greenmount. Is your mother buried over there as well?**

Yes, they're both buried there.

**Question: How old was she when she passed?**

I am not too sure. Do you remember who old mom was? 81 or something. 82.

**Question: Did your parents talk about how they met and fell in love?**

Well, he didn't say how they met. Somebody said there was war.

**Question: They were sent over and arranged. You have some pictures. One of them is the carnival here in town?**

Yes. One of our friends is a photographer in town. What he did with these is he flew a plane, and he must have taken 1000 pictures. He gave us a couple of them.



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**Question: What period of time did he take aerial shots? What period of time did he take aerial shots? What years did he take?**

Well, it was pretty recent actually. Maybe the last 10 years.

**Question: Most of these are recent then?**

Yes. I also had a picture of the whole outfit.

**Question: That's a great shot.**

These are just pictures of the army and the old days.

**Question: That might be you playing - it looks more to me like a clarinet or something.**

I cannot play anymore. My teeth are missing.

**Question: You mentioned your dad was a member of the Presbyterian Church. Did he get involved in the community in any other ways? Did he belong to any other clubs or organizations?**

He was one of the first presidents of the Hammonton Farm Society. I remember him marching.

**Question: Did he have any hobbies?**

No. He didn't believe in playing baseball, things like that. You are wasting time. A brother who was playing baseball out on the field out here where the car was, he got hit in the knee and he never said anything.

**Question: He just didn't want to let your dad know.**

He lost his leg because he was afraid to tell my father.

**Question: Did you have any hobbies?**

Any hobbies? I played trumpet. I played with any German band. Skating was the main thing and we learned to dance together. We danced for years and years. Then, dancing got almost out of fashion anymore, we started line dancing. I learned how to line dance and I taught for 20 years. I started line dancing and teaching at '72. I had to quit at '92.

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**Question: You did pretty well for yourself, I have to say.**

We loved it. On Mondays, I have 20 students. Tuesdays, another 20 students.

**Question: Where did you teach at? Was there a hall?**

Mostly Italian club, senior clubs. Winslow Township has a nice building there that was there for 10 years at Atco. We did do it in Hammonton. I did for a while. We have these dances after one of the meetings. That was it. That was my favorite.

**Question: I think there is a picture here of the Eiffel Tower maybe. Did you see the Eiffel Tower?**

Well, I was there. I saw it.

**Question: Yes. You have a picture of it. These pictures are all during the war. You were a pretty handsome gentleman. I can see why your wife decided to dance with you. Skate. Your wife didn't know you at all before that night, right? You never met?**

I don't remember her. It's funny because she skated all the time and I skated all the time. I do not remember one skate before that time. I am sure we skated together. But I don't remember. I cannot remember.

**Question: That was when you noticed her.**

But we were lucky because I asked her to skate. She said, "All right. I am going to get my jacket off." After that, she came in with a friend of hers from the local area. I said bring her in. I had this friend and he got close to her friend. He said, "You are young, but I am going to bring her home tonight."

**Question: Is there anything that you recall or that you'd like to speak about and talk about?**

I cannot think about anything else right now. We did pretty well.

**Question: You didn't know your grandparents at all?**

No.

**Question: Did your parents tell stories about them? Are there any memories they passed on?**

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I don't know anything about them really.

**Question: I was curious. You said you're the youngest of 11. What are the names of your brothers and sisters?**

My oldest sister was born in 1896. She was born February 21st, same as me. The oldest and the youngest.

**Question: What are the odds of that happening?**

They started young.

**Question: What was her name?**

Her name was Tressa [phonetic].

**Question: Do you know the names of your other brothers and sisters?**

Well, yes. There was Tressa who's the oldest. Rudolph. I have a brother named Rudolph. There was Mary, and there is John. There is Daniel. Daniel was a cripple. When he was born he must've got some kind of disease. In those days, they didn't take you to the doctor. They realized as he was trying to walk he was all - he couldn't talk. Because the whole one side was crippled. He died when he was around 30, I guess. There was Sarah. There was Arnold and Emanuel who were twins. We had twins. Arnold had his [inaudible 01:23:40] shop in town years ago. That was my brother's. His wife's actually. There was Emanuel.

**Question: Emanuel or Manuel?**

Emanuel and Arnold. There is Sarah. There is Irma. There is Eleanor.

**Question: There is an Irma?**

And me. I came six years later, and they didn't believe it.

**Question: The spread there from 1898 to you were born in - 22 years separate.**

Not too many families can say that.

**Question: No. That is absolutely remarkable. George, we really appreciate you giving us your time and your memories. Sharing your memories. We'll get them written down, so they last forever.**

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**George Cappuccio**

Sorry, I couldn't do better.

**Question: You did very well. You are just wonderful.**

We got nice pictures around.

**Question: Yes. There are some very nice pictures right in here and with a lot of the artillery. Was that cloudburst one? Was that the one that got blown up?**

Cloudburst one, that one that got blown up. Yes, we were cloudburst two. They said it was called cloudburst because they use a certain fuse that blow up in the air instead of hitting the target. They said it had a peculiar hitting zone of 100 yards. This is the crush alone. The beat from every pore of your body.

**Question: Was that a special fuse that made it or was it sense elevation?**

It was a special fuse. We never used what we have now. Everything's so much different.

**Question: Precise too.**

Those days, you had to climb up the mountain and look down the other side.

**Question: Even your relative that was with NASA, you could put somebody on the moon with your phone right now, computer-wise.**

It doesn't seem like it changed that much, but it really, really did.

**Question: When you were in Germany and France, did you ever meet up with any other troops like Russian troops or British troops? Were there any times that you crossed paths?**

We actually backed up an Africa troop. We were with them for quite a few months in Italy because they would put us where we're needed.

**Question: I think we're all set here.**

**[End of Interview]**