

AN INTERVIEW WITH
CATHERINE AMENDOLIA



PROVIDED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HAMMONTON

INTERVIEWED BY: MARION O'NEIL

TRANSCRIBED BY: ERMA WOODMAN

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JANUARY 10, 2007

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ORAL INTERVIEW WITH CATHERINE AMENDOLIA

Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Location:

**This Interview is Being Conducted for the Benefit of
The Historical Society of Hammonton, New Jersey**

Interviewed and Recorded By: Marian Amendolia O'Neill

Transcribed By: Erma Losse Woodman

Marian: Today is Wednesday January 10. I am interviewing my Aunt, Catherine Amendolia. Her husband, my Uncle Dominic and my Father, Mario Amendolia were brothers. They have both passed away. Uncle Dominic died Nov. 28, 2005. Today is a sunny day and I'm excited about doing this. Should we start with the children, your children?

Catherine: Ok. I have five children; the oldest is Mary, Volz now. She was born in 1952; she has one child Andrea, who is 21. Next is my daughter Loretta she was born in 1954 and she is married to Dave Ingemi. She has two children, David who is 31 and Renee who is 30.

Marian: David, what does he do?

Catherine: He works for Equi First, a mortgage company.

Marian: And he is doing real well up there.

Catherine: I just saw him last night and he is successful, he says he's doing ok.

Marian: And a handsome fellow at that.

Catherine: Then I have my.....

Marian: Renée, Renée.

Catherine: Oh, and Renée who is 30. They're both single, not married yet.

Marian: She's at what; she's at the diner, right?

Catherine: Well, she went to school for interior design, Philadelphia Art Institute.

Marian: That's OK, (Laugh) not around here.

Catherine: She just couldn't arrange interviews. Then I have a daughter, Donna Amendolia, she's single. She was born in 1960, so that makes her.. She'll be 46, no, 47 this January 20th. Then I have a son Dominic, he's married to Sheila Brady. They have 3 children, Katy who is 24. She is single.

Marian: She went to college, where did she go to college?

Catherine: She went to college in Scranton, PA, and she's into interior design. She works for a company in Scranton that does designing for businesses, mostly. They have a daughter.....

Marian: Erin.

Catherine: Erin, who is 21 she goes to Marymount College in Virginia. Then they have a son Dominic who is 13 years old, going to Hammonton, 8th grade. He'll graduate 8th grade this year.

Marian: That's hard to believe he'll be in high school next year.

Catherine: I know, isn't it something? Then we have Henry, a son Henry. He was born in 1963.

He is 44. He has a daughter Courtney who is 10 going to Hammonton grade school and a son Ryan, who is 2. And that's it with the children.

Marian: And Henry is doing real estate.

Catherine: Real estate.

Marian: Aunt Catherine, tell me now a little bit about yourself. 'Cause I know your mom and dad were both born in Italy, correct? And a little bit about how they came over. Did they meet here in this country? Had they already met? Something about how they got here.

Catherine: Well, they came here from Italy my father had worked in the mines prior to him meeting her. And he went back to Italy, for a visit, he met her and wanted to marry her. And as soon as they got married they came back to the States by boat. Those days, that was in 1926 so that was the only way they used to go back and forth by boat or ship. I can't remember the name of the ship but they came to Ellis Island. And they came to Camden, NJ because they knew other people that were from their hometown in Italy. And they had a reason to settle here. So, I was born a year later and we lived in Camden until I was 3 years old and then we moved to the farm because my father had a brother that lived on the farm and they built this home together. So, my uncle was a widower, not a widower, he never married. He was a bachelor and he wasn't doing too well with the farm so my father decided he'd help.

Marian: Aunt Catherine, from Camden your family moved to Landisville, that's where the farm was.

Catherine: Right, Landisville

Marian: Because I remember when I was a little girl, we used to call your mother "Grandmom Moo Cow", because they had a cow on the farm.

Catherine: Yea.

Marian: So I always knew your mother as Grandmom Moo Cow.

Catherine: I remember that.

Marian: Ok, Darling. Let's get started. Go ahead; tell us a little bit about the farm.

Catherine: Well, actually those days.....

Marian: Well, also, your brother, was he born yet?

Catherine: He was born on the farm, he was three years younger than me. He was born on the farm and we weren't born in hospitals, they had midwives then. We went to school for high school in Vineland, grammar school was in Landisville. We had to get two buses to go to high school because it was in Vineland. One bus would pick us up in the morning, take us to

Minotola School which is now Dr. Cleary School and then we'd get off, wait for another bus that came from Richland and we'd go down to Vineland from there. We'd pick up other children, along Wheat Road and we'd go to high school in Vineland. And I graduated from there. And I went for a short time...

Marian: What year did you graduate?

Catherine: 1946

Marian: And you were born what year?

Catherine: 1927.

Marian: What is your birth month?

Catherine: June, June 20th, 1927.

Marian: And then you graduated high school what year?

Catherine: 1946.

Marian: Did you like school?

Catherine: I loved school, I really did.

Marian: You were a good student.

Catherine: Not bad, I was more in the upper classes. Then I went to Pierce Business School for a year or so. Then I became ill, I was always getting colds, I guess I was just run down and I stopped. But, I did office work after I got better. I got jobs doing office.

Marian: Where? What were they like, the jobs?

Catherine: One was the canning factory in Landisville. It was called Francis H. Leggett & Co they had about 4 or 5 other places around the country. Their main office was in New York.

Marian: Ok, so it was a big company, corporation.

Catherine: Yea, then when they sold it, it was Scott Paper Company along the railroad in Landisville. I don't know what it is now.

Marian: What was your exact address, your home address in Landisville?

Catherine: A box number, I don't remember.

Marian: Your street, what street did you live on?

Catherine: Oh, Central Avenue in Landisville. And now the best way I could say is you could see our homestead from Padre Pio. It's called the Harding Highway but it is really Route 40.

Marian: I know, let's take a ride, maybe next week. We'll take a ride there, maybe take a picture, the house is still there?

Catherine: Un huh.

Marian: Oh, good.

Catherine: Oh, so then after I was 22, when I met Uncle Dom, your Uncle Dominic. I met him through a girl that worked in the office with me. She had a boyfriend from Hammonton, Bill Crescenzo from the oil company. So, she was in the Newcomb Hospital and one Sunday afternoon I'm there visiting her and here comes Bill and Dominic to visit her. And we got to be friends and eventually after a couple of years we were married in 1949.

Marian: You got married 1949. I remember coming to your wedding.

Catherine: I have a picture of you.

Marian: Yea, I have a picture, in fact for the archives. I will scan it and put it for the archives. What was Uncle Dominic... did you like him immediately?

Catherine: Well, he was a very happy person and energetic. He was always the one to say, "Oh, let's do this, let's do that." We'd go to the beach with Bill and Evelyn. I always remember, one time I made a blueberry pie.

Marian: Well, you picked out the right berries.

Catherine: Yea, so we went together a couple of years and then we got married. We moved to Hammonton.

Marian: Where, ah, now they lived on Twelfth Street, where the homestead is now?

Catherine: Yea.

Marian: And Grandmom Amendolia, how did you like Grandmom Amendolia at this time? Was she close, did you find her friendly?

Catherine: Well, it was hard to get to know her especially because I was quiet, I would say almost shy and she was very reserved. I was a little hesitant at first. But anyway, as the years went by we got close.

Marian: Ah, Your wedding, where did you get married? Where was the reception?

Catherine: Oh we got married in the oh.....

Marian: St. Joe's?

Catherine: No, Landisville. Our Lady of Victory's Church in Landisville.

Marian: Did you have a lot of people at your wedding?

Catherine: No, we had just immediate family. But, here's something funny you want to talk about something funny that happened. We had an elderly priest that had been in the World War I and when he talked they said he was gassed during the War. He'd get short of breath and every once in a while when he was talking he'd go, "OHHHHH, and when we were kids we'd be

afraid. We thought that he was having some kind of seizure, you know? So, he was waiting for us at the wrong church, he was waiting in Landisville, I mean in Minotola at St. Michael's Church. They had to send somebody to find him and bring him to the church.

Marian: How late was it, fairly late?

Catherine: No, maybe 10, 15 minutes cause Minotola is not that far. And then he's calling me Frances, which was the name of my maid of honor. And I got the giggles on the alter because my name is Catherine not Frances. That's about the funniest thing I can remember.

So, after I got married, I left my job in Landisville and I got a job at the, it was then Dan's Stationary store. I worked in the office there and we even had a Teletype machine then. People used to send telegrams from the paper store. And I would keep track of, he had boys delivering newspapers in town so I kept track of all the accounts, who paid, who didn't pay.

Marian: How long did you actually work there?

Catherine: I guess I worked there about, 'till I was expecting my first child. I worked there, I would say 2 years and I was 8 months pregnant when I left there.

Marian: And Uncle Dominic worked there too? Full time?

Catherine: Oh, yea, he worked there full time. He used to go there 5 o'clock in the morning to 9. He used to get the paperboys out with their newspapers. He worked 'till 9 then had off, 'till I think, 12, 1 o'clock and went back to work and worked nights, 'till 10.

Marian: Then from there you had your baby?

Catherine: Yea

Marian: I can remember Grandmom when the cousin from Italy came.

Catherine: Oh yea.

Marian: When did Uncle Dominic and Daddy decide to buy the Columbia? Do you remember about what year it was?

Catherine: Was it 1956, something tells me it was 1956. Let's see how old is ...

Marian: Uncle Dominic and Daddy...

Catherine: Paul and Frank, the father bought the business for Paul and Frank Pullia and they were young boys.

Marian: This is the Columbia on West End?

Catherine: Yea, which is now the West End Grill. The two boys bought it but they were young and they were getting very reckless, especially Frank. And the father was worried about them. I guess they were drinking and you know.

Marian: Yea, they were young.

Catherine: He was worried that they would go astray. So your father, Mario said, "Oh, that would be a good business to go into," and they went into it together. They were in it quite a while.

Marian: Yeah and then Daddy....

Catherine: He went over to Mark, I mean to Whitehall.

Marian: When did Uncle Dominic sell that, you worked, I mean you did a lot of cooking and all that.

Catherine: Oh, yeah, we, we were.

Marian: Tell us about some of the food. I remember the barrel and the snapping turtles down in the big barrels, they were going to make snapper soup.

Catherine: Oh, that was one of the customers. He was Irv Werner, he was married to Ann Macrie and he used to love, he made the most delicious snapper soup. He would panfry the snapper, some of it, like fried chicken and he diced peppers and onions and he put that over after it browned. I think he flowered it or breaded it a little bit and it was oh, so good! It was like eating fried chicken, it was so tasty. And they used to serve the roast beef, remember, with the red gravy, thin red gravy. A brother in-law of your father's and Dominic's stepmother, was a good cook. He used to make this red sauce to serve the roast beef sandwiches, to make the roast beef sandwiches. In the winter he'd cook them pescestocco, which everybody in Hammonton loved.

Marian: Right.

Catherine: Now that's a thing of the past.

Marian: Daddy used to make wonderful pescetocco. What things did you like? You did a lot of cooking too, in the Columbia, I remember.

Catherine: Little by little we got into catering. We started with a man from Folsom. Spangler, Joe Spangler, his daughter was getting married and he asked Uncle Dominick if he would cater it. In those days they just served sandwiches. But, they wanted potato salad and macaroni salad and George Worrell was helping us or was a customer of ours, maybe. But, he worked in a diner and he knew something about cooking. So, my husband got him to make the potato salad and the macaroni salad. Little by little we learned from him. So, we got into catering weddings which were only like 3.50 a head; \$3.50 a head in those days!!

Marian: Oh, my.

Catherine: Ah what else?

Marian: Any funny stories, anything that you can remember that happened? Anything special? I remember having, Easter time we had a, the whole family came there for Easter. Do you remember that?

Catherine: Oh

Marian: I'm sure, I know it was Easter because I remember taking Mary and Loretta down on Bellevue Avenue, walking down Bellevue Avenue.

Catherine: Yeah, well, your Grandmother Amendolia she did a lot. She used to make the best ravioli and all the meatballs and beef in the sauce that everybody was crazy about. Bracciole, oh her bracciole were good.

Marian: Catherine, tell how you make the bracciole.

Catherine: You have to get breadcrumb, semi dried breadcrumb, garlic and parsley, grated cheese. If you want you can put a little olive oil but you don't want it too wet. Put it in this, I guess it's round steak but they'll cut it like that at Bagliani's or Inferrera's, if you ask for meat for bracciole they know how to do that. You roll it up, you tie it, you brown it a little bit before or you could bake it then put it in your sauce.

Marian: Before Uncle Dominic sold the business, getting back to the Columbia. He sold the business then to his nephew Johnny, John Amendolia, right?

Catherine: Young John, right.

Marian: Then he went out ...

Catherine: I think that was like in 1975, around that time.

Marian: Had he already bought Columbia II?

Catherine: No, John bought that after, a few years. After he bought the Columbia, he went to Kerri Brook.

Marian: Aunt Catherine, Uncle Dominic bought Columbia II before he sold Columbia I.

Catherine: Yes,

Marian: Tell me a little bit about what you and Uncle Dominic did together, entertainment wise, the things you enjoyed together.

Catherine: Well we did a lot of, in the wintertime at least once a month one of the counties, each county had a beverage association and they used to have really nice banquets. And sometimes we'd go to North Jersey other times around here. Nice banquets and once a year they used to have a National Convention for Tavern Owners. We did go to New Orleans one time. We took a side trip to Puerto Rico from there. Another time we went to Las Vegas. We went another time to New York State up in Concord, NY. It was a lot of fun because we'd be away 3 or 4, well, at least 4 days, maybe longer.

Marian: So, Uncle Dominic liked to travel, well he was very personable and made lots of friends.

Catherine: Yea, because he knew these people.

Marian: Well, they were tavern owners? They were all tavern owners?

Catherine: They could bring guests if they wanted to, but it would be a packaged deal, your plane and your hotel. One packaged deal when you signed up, everybody got on the same plane and in the same hotel.

Marian: So, you had a rip-roaring time. Did you and Uncle Dominic dance at all when you went to ...

Catherine: Well, he used to love to dance.

Marian: Oh, really? Daddy liked to dance.

Catherine: Yeah, he did. He was a good dancer.

Marian: Daddy liked to dance. Did Uncle Dominic jitterbug?

Catherine: Yeah, but I didn't.

Marian: (Laugh) Shame on you Aunt Catherine!

Catherine: But he would dance sometimes, there was always some woman that would love to jitterbug, maybe their husband didn't so they would.

Marian: And how about trips that you took beside the Tavern, I know you took a few trips.

Catherine: Oh, we went a couple of times to Italy. To visit, I have lots of relatives there. I don't have any here except I had a brother, which, he passed away a couple of years ago. And they would be so happy to go there, my brother; he just loved it there. He would have been so happy to go there, he would have lived there I think.

Marian: Now where is this in Italy?

Catherine: In the Northern part of Italy. A little town on this Lake Garda, it was called Malcesime. It's near Verona and couple of hours from Venice. It's in that area.

Marian: When was the last time you went back there?

Catherine: I think that it was in 2001 we were going the day of 911. We were supposed to get on the plane to go and we went the year after. What was that? 2002?

Marian: Uncle Dominic didn't go with you?

Catherine: Yeah, he was home, he was staying home, he couldn't walk.

Marian: But he did go to Italy, how many times did he go to Italy with you?

Catherine: He did go. I think he went twice.

Marian: And did you ever go, now, our family, the Amendolia family is from Sicily. Right, Messina?

Catherine: Yeah, we had gone on a bus trip, on a trip with a gang from

Catherine: Uh.huh, Oh, and there was Dr. Ingemi and his wife.

Marian: Jennie Ingemi?

Catherine: Yeah.

Marian: Well they're cousins to us.

Catherine: Uh huh.

Marian: Ingemi's? Right?

Catherine: Frank Mazza and his wife. We were 22 couples from Hammonton.

Marian: Well, sounded like a wonderful trip.

Catherine: Oh, Raffa, Paul Raffa and Bobby Raffa. Oh, they had such a wonderful time and everybody got along with each other. Nobody had any arguments. It was a 17-day trip. We started from Rome went up to Milan, then around to the other coast and down, down, down, 'till we got to Naples. Then we crossed over to Sicily and we stayed a few days there.

Marian: And how did you get to Sicily, by boat?

Catherine: A big Russian steam, big like a, I guess like a cruise ship. They said it was Russian. They put the bus on there and everything.

Marian: and how long did it take to get over there?

Catherine: We slept overnight on the ship. But, he didn't want to go and look up anybody.

Marian: Aunt Catherine, I want to thank you so much for doing this. I will cherish it; and I know all my cousins, your children, will enjoy hearing this. Thank you so much, I love you.

Catherine: I Love you, too.





Catherine (Saglia) + Domenic Pete Amendolia

Married 11-12-1949

our Lady of Victories - Landisville, NJ

Reception - Willen on the Lake (Mar-Doms)