

AN INTERVIEW WITH
ANGELUS (BRUNO)WEISS



APRIL 1, 2011

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HAMMONTON

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Interviewed and Recorded by: Ann DeCicco

Transcribed by: Carol Effinger

Angelus Weiss
(speaking about her family and the Sweet Shoppe and the history of her life)
Interviewed by Anne DeCicco
For the Historical Society of Hammonton
On April 1, 2011

Q: What is your full name including your maiden name if married?

A: My full name is Angelus Marie Weiss. My maiden name was Angelus Bruno. I am 87 years old and I live at 104 North Liberty St. We moved here about 10 years ago.

Q: What was the date of birth?

A: My birth is October 23, 1924.

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Hammonton at home and that was at Bellevue Ave. at that time.

Q: Do you know who the doctor was?

A: Yes I do. Dr. MacIntyre, I think his name was, my mother said. It was so long ago.

Q: Did you grow up in this town?

A: Oh yes. My whole life has been in this town. I lived on Bellevue Ave. above the store. My grandparents owned a building there, called the Macrie building. Actually they bought it in the early 1920's, I guess, and my grandfather built three stores in front of it, kept the house. It was a huge house because they made three apartments there and, actually, when my mother and father were married and they had me we had one of those apartments and that is where I grew up.

Q: Do you remember who lived in the other apartments?

A: Yes. Actually it was all family, Aunt Anna and her husband Anthony Castone, Uncle Tony and his wife Elda and my Uncle Joseph and his wife Catherine. We all had apartments there so even though I was an only child, I did have a lot of playmates.

Q: Do you remember games that you played when you were little?

A: Yes. Actually at Christmas we used to play 7 and 1/2 with pennies. All the kids used to play that while the grown ups played their own games. Then what we used to do mostly, growing up we would play softball in the backyard. Charlie Jones had a funeral parlor there. It adjoined the backyard and I remember one time he had a funeral going on and we hit a ball and it went right through his window. We waited until after the funeral was over we went over and apologized and we paid for the window but he said that was alright. He was a pretty nice neighbor.

Q: Where did you go to school, Hammonton?

A: Hammonton.

Q: Do you remember any of your teachers?

A: I remember Mrs. Hurley was my kindergarten teacher and she used to wear these pretty chiffon dresses with flowers on it and at story time I remember wanting to sit next to her so that I could pull part of her dress over my lap because it was so pretty. I remember her and Mrs. MacDougal as I got older, I remember and Mrs. Fisher taught math, Mary Olivio was our music teacher. I guess if I really thought I would go back to all of them but those were the teachers that stand out.

Q: Who were your best friends in school?

A: Well my cousin Ann Russo lived across the street and her sister Catherine. We were very friendly. Then I remember a girl named Ruth Rehman. This is when I was in the lower grades. When I got into high school it was Ginger Baldi, Ann Bruno and me. They called us the three "B's".

Q: What kind of clothes did you wear when you were a teen ager? Do you remember it as a teen ager?

A: Mostly skirts, blouses, jumpers whatever was in style.

Q: What did you do for entertainment?

A: Well when I was little we used to make doll dresses. I had a china, white china doll. In fact we all did, a cupie doll. My cousin Eleanor, Catherine Cippo. Her mother had the hat shop.

Q: Who was Eleanor?

A: Eleanor Tomasello. She married an _____, her sister Sarah. It was all cousins and of course Catherine Cippo, as I said, she lived next door. Her mother had a hat shop there and I remember that. We used to go to Whapples Department Store and for just pennies we would buy a square of material.

Q: Was that in Hammonton?

A: Yeh. It was on the corner. I think it was like where Strietfield's is now. I vaguely remember that. It was so, so long ago. We would make little doll dresses and play with the dolls in the backyard. Then when I became a teen ager my mother had the Sweet Shoppe which was the popular place in town then. It was a candy store and an ice cream parlor, soda fountain and people used to come in there and she had an area, it was in my grandfather's building, one of the three stores. She had what she called the "poly nook". They were all little booths and they had a big poly in the entrance way and then later on she opened a dance floor. She built behind that, attached to my grandfather's building there and it was a dance floor and that's where all the teenagers used to come and dance after school and on holidays. It was quite the "in place". In

fact there were quite a few articles written about it. It told how she would buy a ten cent ticket to go to the Sweet Shoppe and then you could go to the back and dance all night with the juke box playing and a ten cent ticket you would get ten cents worth of ice cream, or soda or whatever you wanted like that. Usually the first ten girls got in free because if we had the girls come in naturally the boys would come. It was the "in place". Then what they would do after football or basketball games my mother would have this big cork board or chalk board mounted on the booth of the telephone there and they would all rush in to be the first one to put the score up on the board. It was a lot of fun growing up there. I think I had about the best childhood that anybody did.

Q: You had mentioned that sometime they would go at lunchtime and they would have to get back to school....

A: Yeh. We didn't have, Well I don't remember whether they had a cafeteria or not but I know I always went home for lunch, whether they had a cafeteria. Do you remember if they had a cafeteria?

Anne: They did but I had to go home too because I lived close by. I only ate there a couple times. I lived on second street.

Angelus: I remember where you lived because you had the prettiest house in the neighborhood. It was all stone, right?

Anne: Yeh.

Angelus: I didn't know it was you. I knew it was the Errera's . Back then you knew everybody.

Anne: They said new baby, new house. That is what they used to say. They had me in that house.

Angelus: That is what they said. Mazzeo, when he built our home he said "yep", your going to have a baby" and sure enough we did. He said everybody I build a house for, they have a new baby.

Q: How did you meet your husband?

A: Oh! that. A lot of romances started in the Sweet Shoppe and mine did too. I met him there and we used to dance all the time. I always danced alot. Everybody did. Norman Tomasello and Thelma _____, Richard Grillo, Estelle DiFrancisco, Marie Berenato, Joan Perone. Yeh. A lot of romances started in the Sweet Shoppe.

Q: When did you get married?

A: I got married 1949, May 14th.

Q: You were married, where?

A: At St. Joseph's, old St. Joseph's, Church, yeh. It was a nice place. We had our reception at "The Lillian on The Lake". Back then you didn't have an elaborate reception like they do now. We had sandwiches and beer and cookies and coffee and stuff like that. It was really nice.

Q: As a couple what did you do for entertainment?

A: The Sweet Shoppe. Of course we had the movies next door too. In fact when my mother died Frank, Alvin, wrote to me and said that he always considered my mother part of his family because he was so close. Well all the kids used to call her Aunt Jennie.

Q: Did you ~~save~~ that letter?

A: You know I wanted to show you that too. I can show you the envelope but that is with the picture I wanted to show you. I can't imagine where it got to. It's bugging me, it really is.

Q: How many children do you have?

A: I have four children, Linda Marie is married to John Jackson. They live in Arlington, Pa., then Frank my oldest son married Deborah Morrison and they live in Sicklerville, then came Mimi, married Frank Novack and they live in Sickerville also. Then I have Eric Weiss. He married Adrian Donio and they live where we used to live on Greenwood Drive.

Q: Do you have any grandchildren?

A: Yes. I have nine grandchildren. Frank and Debbie have Becky and Erica. Linda and John have two, Emily is getting married to a very nice boy, Nick Caramonica and they live all the way up in Pennsylvania. Kaylyn, they also have a Kaylyn. Then there is Eric who has Nick, Emily, Emma and Joseph and Joseph was named after his grandfather. Amy's boys too. Then there is Marion who's nickname is Mimi who married Frank Novack and she has two boys, Carl Patrick and Brian and they also live in Cedar Brook there in the Arcadia Woods area. Oh, I then I have one great grandchild. Frank's daughter Becky married an Englishman and his name is Jamie Whitehouse and they just had a son called Patrick and he is just precious.

Q: What was your mother's name including her maiden name?

A: It was Jennie Lucille Macri and she married Frank Bruno.

Q: Did your mother have brothers or sisters?

Q: Your mom, where was she born?

A: She was born in Philadelphia April 28, 1898. I know that.

Q: How did she come to Hammonton?

A: I really don't know. My grandfather started a business here. He had a business on Germantown Ave. in Philadelphia and it was a fruit store and evidently he did very well with it but I know my grandmother Tomasello lived here in Hammonton so I assume that is why they came here. My grandmother's sister Antoinette Puleo lived on 12th street. Maybe she was instrumental in her coming here I don't know. But I do know that my great grandmother used to go around with a horse and buggy.

Q: What was your great-grandmother's name?

A: My great-grandmother's name was Santa Errera Tomasello and she told me that she used to have a horse and buggy when they were in Hammonton. Of course they had a farm too I believe. She would go around to all the farmers and she would sell things to them that they needed and she would keep track of it in this book. I don't think that she could read or write and so maybe her son did it with her but I know she would carry them all winter and then when the crops would come in in the summer they would pay her. My mother used to tell me things like that so I know about that.

Q: Do you remember stories that your mom told you about anything? Did she work outside the home?

A: No. My grandfather had this fruit store and my mother was the oldest of the family and she used to help out in the store. She went up to fifth grade. That is as far as she did. I think she did great for a woman who was widowed and to achieve all she did with the Sweet Shoppe and all.

Q: How old was she when she was widowed?

A: When she was widowed she must have been in her early thirties because my father died when I was nine in an automobile accident with my Uncle Paul Macri who was my mother's brother.

Q: Was your mother born here? Where was your grandmother born?

A: My mother was born here. My grandmother -- I don't know. I have a feeling she was born in Italy but I'm not sure.

Q: You don't know the town?

A: I know that my ancestors came from Gesso, Italy but I don't know if she was even married there or married here.

Q: How about your dad? What was his full name? Did he have a nickname?

A: Nunzio Bruno. No. He married Angelina, I don't remember what her maiden name was.

Anne: This is your dad.

Angelus: Yes, Frank

Q: Where was your father born?

A: He was born in America.

Q: He grew up in Hammonton?

A: As far as I know he grew up here, yes.

Q: What did your dad look like?

A: He was quite handsome. He had dark, curly brown hair and big brown eyes. He had a bicycle shop, I believe, and later on he became the manager of Abbott's Dairies here in town.

Q: Did your father have any brothers or sisters?

A: Yes. He had a brother Joseph, Anthony and a sister Stella. Also a sister Grace that died very young.

Q: Are you in touch with any of your cousins or aunts or uncles?

A: My aunts or uncles? I was. There aren't that many left now.

Q: Did your dad get to attend school?

A: Yes. He did.

Q: Did he go to Hammonton do you think?

A: I believe. I don't know that much about my dad because he died when I was quite young. Then my mother had her Sweet Shoppe and I spent a good growing up time in the Sweet Shoppe actually.

Q: Did your dad go into the military? Do you know?

A: No. He did not.

Q: Where do you think his ancestors come from? Do you think Gesso too?

A: I imagine. I don't know. I know they were related to the Celonas somehow. I think my grandmother might have been a Celona.

Q: Did your parents ever tell you how they met?

A: No. I never questioned anything like that.

Q: Do you know anything about your mom like what were her dislikes, hobbies or anything. Did she like to cook?

A: She liked her business store. Everything was the Sweet Shoppe.

Q: How many children did your mother have?

A: Just me.

Q: Did anybody ever say that you looked like anybody in your family?

Q: What kind of person was your grandmother?

A: A very generous person. She was always giving and a very loving person. With everybody living in that big house that they had having apartments. It was huge. You know I'd love to know whose it was. She used to talk about Judge Burns all the time. I don't know if it was Judge Burns' house or not. I really couldn't say.

Q: Your talking about your father's mother?

A: My mother's mother.

Q: What was her name? Your maternal grandmother.

A: Maria Tomasello Macrie.

Q: Was she sweet?

A: Oh yes of course.

Q: How many children did she have?

A: She had Anthony, she had let's see. Paul was the oldest then it was Anthony and Joseph. I think that's it. Then it was my mother and Sarah and Anna. Yep. That's it.

Q: What was your maternal grandfather's name?

A: He was Placido. They called him Pete.

Q: Do you remember him?

A: Oh. Very well.

Q: What was his last name?

A: Macrie. He used to have a fruit store when they first came here but I remember him when I was like in my early teens he had a cigar store, cigarette shop in one of his shops there.

Q: On Bellevue Ave?

A: Yeh. Right attached to the building. I have pictures of that building too. Right now it is that new bank that opened up where that is. It is right next to where the movies used to be. In fact my grandfather sold Mr. Frank the property for his movies I believe. I didn't know that until I read it in one of these clippings that I kept of my mothers.

Q: How about your paternal grandmother? Your father's mother?

A: Yeh. I don't know too much about her. She was very nice too.

Q: Do you know what her name was?

A: Angelina.

Q: Angelina --- what was her last name?

A: I'm not sure. I don't know whether it was D'Agostino --wait a minute Celona I think. I'm not sure. I know the Celonas come in there somewhere. I think that is what it was. After my father died I didn't really get to see them that much because my mother had the store and I was with her all the time and she certainly didn't visit anybody. She was in the store the whole time.

Q: What was her husband's, your paternal?

A: Nunzio.

Q: Do you know anything about your great-grandparents?

A: Paola was his name, Paul.

Q: What was his last name?

A: Paola Macri

Q: Did Paul Tomasello have any brothers or sisters do you know?

A: You mean my grandfather?

Anne: Your great grandparents. Paul Tomasello?

Angelus: I don't know. I know my grandmother used to talk about Antonio.

Q: Tomasello?

A: No. She was a Tomasello. She married a Puleo. That's who it was.

Q: So your great

A: My great grandmother's sister was Antoinette Puleo.

Q: Is that on your mother's side?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to talk about? About anything more about the Sweet Shoppe? What do you miss most about Hammonton? The way it was.

A: The way it was? What I miss most I think about is the closeness of the people. You knew everybody and everybody knew you, your mother, your grandmother.

Hammonton was just like one big family way back then. Now you go out, I don't know anybody. It is nice you know you can't stop progress either. I'm very happy to see the First Federal The main street looks nice but it was nice to know everybody and feel close to them.

Q: Do you miss the Sweet Shoppe?

A: That. I don't miss its because I have moved on. I have children and grandchildren but it is nice to know that it is still remembered by a lot of the people that even tell my children," oh I remember your grandmother. I remember your mother." It is nice that way.

Anne: Thank you very much.

Angelus: You're welcome. I enjoy talking about it.

*****This picture is of the Easter baskets they used to sell. Back then you have to remember that it was the depression. They would spend a lot of money on these big baskets like that. In fact one young man I remember he came in. We used to put names on the easter egg too. We had them from 10 cents up to like \$2.50, \$3.00. We had the hollow eggs. The top would come off and you would fill them with Hershey kisses. Well this young man came in and had my mother put his engagement ring in one. It was nice. I remember Mr. Costa. He was married. He used to come in and buy the biggest one for his wife all the time. Then there was a Mr. Bud that worked for the railroad and every pay day, Friday, he would come in and he would buy a \$.50 box of chocolates for his wife. I think they might have been newlyweds but every week he would buy her a box of chocolates. That was before the dance floor opened and I was quite young but I remember those things.

Anne: That made a big impression on you huh?

Angelus: Well you do. I mean you meet some people and they do things that you just remember. I remember Mrs._____. Evidently her husband was very important in the beginning of Hammonton. They used to live in the Esposito home which you don't remember but it was the house that is now on 12th street. There was garage in front of it and it is an apartment. Well that used to be a huge beautiful home. In fact I used to go to young Bobby's birthday parties there. But my mother remembered coming in from Philadelphia and the Esposito home was there and it was all lawn from the Esposito

home clear to the railroad. She said it was a beautiful estate. That is where Mr. _____ lived. Well in later years when my mother had the Sweet Shoppe she used to live above where the Gazzette, the newspaper is now. She had an apartment up there and I guess she was bedridden or something because she used to call up whenever she would get her check and order vanilla butter creams and I would have to deliver them to her. But when I would go up, I guess she thought I was her maid because she would tell me "do you mind doing those dishes over there, would you do this for me." I would do it and I thought this poor lady still thinks she is rich and she is ordering me around. I remember that. Do I miss things?, yeh.

Q: Do you remember when they had horse and buggy in town or was that mostly gone when you were.....?

A: No. I don't remember the horse and buggy at all. I know my grandparents had a barn and they had a horse's stall in there so there must have been a horse there at one time but no I don't remember.

Q: This is grandmom Macri?

A: Yeh. On Bellevue.

Q: Where there a lot of people living on Bellevue at the time, a lot of homes?

A: No. Charlie Jones who was next to my grandfathers. Well it was my grandfather's building and then there was another Macri who had another building there too on Third St. They were not related to us but they had, the building was smaller. Their's was a new building. It wasn't added on like my grandparents was a house. That house must have been a gorgeous home when he bought it though. _____.

Charlie Jones funeral parlor was just a house when I was young. In fact I remember him building the front of it. It is still a funeral parlor but Charlie Jones built it the way it is now. I remember that being built and where the Gazette office is now there was a house built behind that. I remember Snooky, I forget his last name. He lived there. It used to be the Acme at one time there when I was growing up, a grocery store. Then it became a _____ room because when they would have their meetings every month they would call down at the Sweet Shoppe when their meeting was over and I would have to deliver with the tray, I would go and serve them chocolate sundaes they would order for after their meetings.

Q: This was down the street from the Sweet Shoppe?

A: Yeh. In the same block as the Sweet Shoppe was.

When I was growing up I remember roller skating around that whole block. We would play "train". They would start like where the Sweet Shoppe was and go around the Rivoli and different kids would be at each stop and as the first kid would go by they would latch on to them and the second and then it would be a whole train until you came back. We had a lot of fun.

Q: Do you remember your first car? Did you have a car?

A: My father had a car, yeh. I don't remember it though. I know every Friday he would go down to Hackney's and have a crab plate dinner. I can remember that in Atlantic City. It is now longer there either.

Q: Was that when you were a teenager?

A: No. That was when I was in Mrs. Jones' room. He used to deliver milk to the school. They used to have the little bottles of milk that they would serve.

Anne: Little glass?

Angelus: Yeh and the cardboard ones. He would come in and she would excuse me so that I could leave a little early so that we could go out for dinner. I felt real special that way.

Q: What grade?

A: Oh. It must have been around, well I was in fourth grade when my dad died so it had to be second grade maybe.

Q: Can you name anybody else that you were friendly with in school?

A: Monastra, Rosemary Monastra. They used to have a grocery store down near the railroad there. Yeh, I was friendly with her.

Q: I guess you walked home from school. Did you walk alone or did you walk with friends?

A: No. I was only a block from school. It is not there anymore. That green house. I also, in fact they are still down in the house. When they dismantled the school there they sold the seats, the desks for \$.25 or \$.50. Well I bought two of them because I had little kids then and they used to play school down in the basement. I think Eric said they are still there.

Q: Do you remember the old middle school? The one that had the thing you could go through. There was like a passageway. There was the high school then there was the little red building that there was the other building.

A: That was the middle school, like the grammar school. That used to have a distinct smell about it and I can only say it smelled like the first day of school. I remember that.

Interviewed by Anne DeCicco 4-1-2011

Transcribed by Carol Effinger 7-18-2013

Easter Baskets being sold in the "Sweet Shop"
which was owned by the Bruno Family





Grand Opening of the Sweet Shop, June 6, 1939

A hall was built for dances.

Waitress - Sarah (Tomasello) DePalma

Checked Shirt - Vera Porter

White Slacks - Nick Cashan

Right of Dancer - Joe Ranere

Big Smile - Malandra

2nd from right - Anna (Caporale) Tomasino

1st on right - Marie (Berenato) Perone

**WEISS, ANGELUS MARIE
(nee BRUNO) 87**

of Hammonton passed away peacefully at home on February 19, 2012, surrounded by her loved ones.

Angelus was the founder of the Hammonton High School PTA and served as an officer for many years. She was a Boy Scout and Girl Scout leader in Hammonton and was very



involved in town and church activities. Older Hammontonians will remember her mother's, Sweetshop where every

Friday and Saturday town teenagers jitterbugged and many met their future spouses.

Angelus is survived by her spouse of 63 years, Francis J. Weiss and their children; Linda (and Jonathan) Jackson, Frank (and Deborah) Weiss, Marian "Mimi" (and Frank) Nowak and Eric (and Adrienne) Weiss. She is also survived by nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Relatives and friends are invited to a visitation on Thursday 9:30am to 10:30am at St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Parish at St. Joseph's Church, 220 Third St., Hammonton. A Memorial Service will follow at 10:30am at the church.

Interment will immediately follow at Greenmount Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Parish