

AN INTERVIEW WITH
ROSE RITA (ERRERA) GUERERE



APRIL 8, 2013

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HAMMONTON

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Rose Rita Guerere
Interviewed by Ann Marie DeCicco
For Historical Society of Hammonton, New Jersey
April 8,2013

Q: What is your full name?

A: Rose Rita Guerere. My sister Ann Marie DeCicco is interviewing me today. I am so glad. We were both Erreras and now I am Guerere.

Q: What is your age?

A: I am seventy-four and in a couple of months I am going to be seventy-five.

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: I was born July 27, 1938.

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born right here in Hammonton. I am actually a real "Hammontonion" because I was born here.

Q: Where did you live?

A: The family lived on Second Rd.

Q: Where were you born, what hospital?

A: There was no hospital. I was born at home. I'm never quite sure if I was born in the nursing home because at that time they were very popular here, the Esposito Nursing Home, I may have been born there.

Q: Did you grow up in the town where you were born?

A: The family lived on First Rd. and the house where I lived is still there. It is right across the street from the cemetery. We went back to the I always was wondering where I lived at that time. We lived there for several years and then there was no such thing as going to the hospital to have a baby back then. I lived here all of my life. I was born here in Hammonton and lived here for seventy-four almost seventy-five years, went away to college and then came back, married somebody from Hammonton and have lived here all of my life. The only time we ever left is when we would go to Florida for the winter months and I would go to school there. Other than that I always lived in Hammonton and came back to live here.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: Where we first lived on First Rd. we moved to... when my brother was about five, no he was about eight because I was about three. He was five years older. My brother was already born. My brother Joe is five years older than me and he had Cerebral Palsy so the family was looking for some type of education for him, a program for him and they found a school in Philadelphia that took handicapped kids for the week and trained them. So at that time we lived in Philadelphia for five days a week and then came back to Hammonton. That was one of the first memories I have because we rented an apartment.. a little house on Somerbury Ave. and I remember a couple of things about Philadelphia where we lived... Cheltenham, I believe it was. They picked up Joe for school. I remember going to the school and I can remember a little wicker stroller that they had. I little wicker doll coach and I just loved that. Every time we would go I would just head right for that little wicker stroller and I can remember the neighbors and some of the things about Somerbury but I had to be about three years old. My mother said that one time when we were in Philadelphia I know I had a tricycle and there was another little girl that lived in the neighborhood and I guess I must have decided , I was always a ring leader, decided to take a little walk with her and when they came out and discovered that we were gone ... we had gone all the way down a couple blocks to the store. They were hysterical at the time. That was one of the first memories I have. But we moved back to Hammonton full time and we rented a house from the Penzas on the corner of Line and Lincoln and we lived in their home for about four years. At that point I started school kindergarten through third or fourth grade. We walked to school. It was about a mile to school but when I walked up to the corner there was a whole big gang -- the Line St. gang-- came down and they all walked together.

Q: Can you remember their names?

A: The Gazzaras, specially Supers. They all lived near First Rd. all the way down there and they would walk all the way down. There was no busing for those people at that point and everybody would walk together. So when I was nine my family built a home on Second St. so that was a big moment because not only did we move into the new house when I was nine but my sister, my baby sister Ann was born. I had asked for a little sister because my friend Mary had a sister. --Mary Brigandi. I was so happy that

they got me a baby sister I was just so pleased. It was a wonderful spot because it was the fourth block on South Second St. close to town and at that time there was no traffic. There were no cars speeding around or coming down that street. You walked every place you went. We walked to school which was four blocks, town was four blocks in one direction. We actually, later on when we played tennis in high school, we walked to the armory for practice after school. It was good because we were nice and thin at that time but I always loved school. I never wanted to miss it. I was... having a handicapped brother, it was just he and I so there was not a lot of outdoor playing together. I would entertain myself with, oh I would make tea for my brother. We had a little tea set and it was with water and I would go out and pick weeds in the grass, those little clover sour grass things and make tea and we would have sugar. We were allowed to have sugar so I'd make tea and make tea for Joe. I would get a doll for Christmas once a year and at time it was a porcelain head and a rubber bodies. Joe used to love punching my dolls. He would just punch them around and that was his major play thing. And that was it, we would go out , there were really no neighbors there where we lived on Lincoln St. We lived at the end of the street and I would entertain myself by walking through the woods over up to Eleventh St. at that time. I think the Tomasellos lived through that woods. It just looked so fascinating and it looked so far to me. When it rained the water would come down the street and go into the garage and it would flood the garage. Another fun thing I would have would be to go wading in the garage but, of course, I got injured because there was a piece of glass in there that I guess had come down and I cut my foot badly. That was one of the few times we had a doctor at the house. The doctor had to come to the house to check it. There was no running to any hospitals or .. of course there were no hospitals around at that time close by.

Q: Who were your friends in elementary school?

A: Elementary school. I spent my time. That is when I developed a love of reading because most of my time was spent by myself and I loved to read. I read all the time. When my aunts would come, especially my Aunt Mary, she would say "your going to ruin your eyes, you're reading all the time". But I loved reading because that was a fun way for me to pass the time. There were no people my age living around where we lived. One of the other things I liked to do was ... the Cavutos Mr.Cavuto raised

chickens and they were behind our yard. Their backyard were the chicken coops and the chickens ran around was right behind where our house was and I would go over and watch Mr. Cavuto and I was fascinated by the way he killed chickens and now I read that that was one of the best ways, and if you could find someone that kills chickens in this day that that would be the healthiest way because he would hang them upside down and put the scissors in his gullet and cut and drip them out. Don't ask me at that age why I was so fascinated with that but I loved going over and spending the time with Mr. Cavuto. I do remember his daughter Jennie was married and she had her first baby ..she was married to Santora and her first baby was Lou Santora. I remember going over with mother and mom helped bathe the baby. I would walk over there because those kids were a little younger than me but I could walk over there and see them but they weren't playmates. I was pretty much by myself all the time. I remember grandpop coming and staying with us at one time and there was like a sand pile out front where the sand came ... it was pretty sandy there ... there was a field there and I think mom had a garden where she raised things. I remember filling bottles up with sand. My father had made bars for Joe to get some exercise on and I would play on those bars and do somersaults and I guess it was good exercise at that point but who knew it. That is the very few things because there was no place I would go. There was somebody ..Gelona, Mrs. Gelona who lived at the corner ... Lena Gelona. Sometimes I would walk down to there and I remember her telling my mother to be careful what they said in front of me because I would repeat everything to her. Her daughter Josephine actually married a Capoferri and her son is Capoferri with the .. One other thing that I remember clearly about the house on Lincoln St. was that mom had to shovel coal in the morning. Something about a damper or something and they would have to set it. Before we got up on those cold days she would go shovel the coal and I would stand on the central register to get dressed in the morning because that is where the heat would come up. When I was nine then we moved to Second St. and of course then by nine I had a lot more memories and I was very close to school and I would walk every day and two people would be coming down the street that I would walk with. One was Pat Onofri and Erma Losse. They would come down from Egg Harbor Rd. and come down my street and then we would walk to school together. I loved school and never

wanted to take any time off from school. Mom would say do you want to stay home with me today. I would say "no". I want to go to school because it was company for me. I loved learning and I loved the people and most of my teachers. I remember in kindergarten Miss Lobly, Miss Wood, first grade, Miss Cathcart, second grade, Miss Vasella. She was probably one of the best because I think she might have been the first person that encouraged me and I remember getting all "A's" that year. Really enthusiastic about learning. Miss Brush was the next year. I have some negative memories about that grade. Mrs. Parisi and then other memorable teachers were Mrs. McDougall, Mrs. Fithian. Mrs. McDougall was very good in teaching the Palmer method of writing and I know I am left handed. My father was left-handed. They made him learn to write right-handed. At least by the time I got to school that was over with but a person who is left-handed has a very difficult time with the Palmer method and we would have these little clear plastic frames that we would put over our letters to make sure that they were matching the right lines and the right circles. I had a difficult time with that but I always did very well in school. My high school teachers, when I went to high school, Miss Peoples and I was on the blue and white newspaper and she was the sweetest lady you ever want to meet. Mr. DeFiccio who was my Spanish teacher, Mr. Yeh/, Mr. Pastore. Probably the one who influenced me the most was Mrs. Packard. She was the sewing teacher and she was the reason I ended up going to college for fashion design. I went to Drexel and the only reason I knew about Drexel is that Mrs. Packard was taking courses there. She would come back and teach us all that she learned which actually was a help to me later. What a lovely, lovely person. One time dad got special tickets from somebody for a Phillies game. Mrs. Packard loved baseball. She had been a missionary. Her parents were missionaries and they lived in Africa or India and she lived a lot of her youth....

Q: What was her first name?

A: Helena, Helena Packard. She was just sweet. I guess I was the closest with her. She had a club called the Future Homemakers of America. I guess that is probably illegal by now. I actually became very active in the Hammonton group. We did a lot of fun things together. I actually became a state officer and went to state meetings with Mrs. Packard and state conventions. I was the state president at one time. I also

played tennis. I was on the tennis team. Not that I was very good. That was when Mary Brigandi and I... Mary was my best friend. She was within walking distance. Mary Brigandi, Rosalin Giacobbe, because they were places I could walk. Mary and I were on the tennis team and we would walk after school all the way down to the armory which is across from the lake to practice tennis. Then if we had to play a match we would walk down there for the match. Then if we played an away match Mr. Richie would drive us. Mr. Richie was the tennis coach.

Q: What was his first name?

A: Mr. I don't know. They lived on Monroe Ave. next to Aunt Frances. But can you imagine in this day and age driving your students to a match. How illegal that would be. The danger in that. When I graduated I got both the sewing award and the Spanish award.

Q: Who was your Spanish teacher?

A: Mr. DeFiccio was the Spanish teacher. Signor DeFiccio. He was an excellent, excellent teacher, very patient.

Q: Were you in the National Honor Society?

A: Yes. I was in the National Honor Society and I can remember going to a hop with Anthony Crescenzo. It must have been two hops? I know what happened. My junior year the prom was cancelled because the senior class had gone out on strike because one of the superintendents was leaving or the principal was leaving at that time and the kids went on strike to make a statement in support of him and they were punished by having the prom taken away. So there was no prom my junior year and then my senior year I went to the prom with Al Marazzi. Afterward I believe we went to the diner for something to eat and then came home. There was none of this staying out all night and going away for the weekend. I cannot imagine. In fact I am sure that I had a time that I had to be home. We were very much home bodies. Most of our time was spent at home and one of the biggest activities we had was walking to the library. Every Wednesday night Mary and I (I would meet Mary at the corner) we would walk to the library, get our books and walk home and sometimes we would sneak and walk through town but the stores in town on Friday night were very active. Friday night was a big

happening place in Hammonton. You would go to town and people would be walking back and forth up and down shopping.

Q: What were your favorite stores?

A: I remember going to Monastra's delicatessen and Press's, Rice Hardware store, Press's was clothing. The 5&10. Oh my goodness. You could get everything at the 5&10 and I could always ...If I had a quarter to spend once in awhile I would have a quarter. My mother would say and don't go buying one of those rings. But I couldn't resist. Every time I would go to the 5&10 and I would have a quarter I would have to buy a diamond ring. It was the same diamond ring. Across the street from the school was a penny store and I very seldom went into that but kids always had pennies and one of the things that you would buy would be one of those little wax bottles with sugar water in it or wax lips. I could never resist those if I had pennies. I didn't go there that often. When I went to high school there was the "Gem" where a lot of kids would go for sodas or drinks or go after games and I didn't go there much either because we were just expected to go home. We weren't hanging around town. If I went home and my mother needed something from the store that would be great for me because I could walk the four blocks to downtown and pick up something for her. I remember one time I bought something extra because it looked good on the shelf and she made me bring it back. It was a can of beans or something. I don't know what the heck I bought that looked interesting. She made me bring it back. She said I didn't tell you to buy that.

Q: Did you buy lunch or did you bring lunch?

A: I went home for lunch. In those days every once in awhile I would stay for lunch if there was a meeting or something and we would have to go down stairs to the basement. At that time there were three separate buildings. The third building had the cafeteria in the basement. For some reason there would always be a special day like a Friday when they would have either baked macaroni and coleslaw. They would always have cole slaw and I liked to eat with Mary Brigandi because she didn't like coleslaw and I would always get her coleslaw. She would let me eat her coleslaw.

Q: How was the food prepared at that time?

A: Oh. At that time the ladies cooked. There were a group of ladies that cooked there. My mother-in-law worked there for years. They cooked all the food in the whole school.

At that time in the high school there were fewer than 400 students because I know mine was one of the largest classes and there were about 89 kids that graduated from my class. It was a small school. Everybody knew everybody. You knew everybody from all the way up to the high school because we were all in the same.. the teachers were all together not separated in different parts of the school. They were in the same location. We went out to play on the playground. I can remember playing tag and playing dodge ball which was a game I always hated and now I understand that they have actually made it illegal on the playground which I am very happy about.

Q: How about jump rope?

A: Yes. We played jump rope somewhat. Then I don't know, we made up games. We made up word games, hop scotch. There was not a lot of organized play at that time. Today everybody belongs to some team and there is practicing all over. There were not teams. There were girl scouts and camp fire girls. I was a camp fire girl from an early age. My friend Josephine Esposito was our leader and Deleta G~~a~~ ⁱⁿari was her assistant and we had a meeting once a week at Josephine's house which was on north second street which was also in walking distance and some of the activities I did would have been with the scouts. I remember that once a year they would have a fair at the Tomasello's house on Bellevue Ave. I remember walking up there. I think that house is for sale now but they had a big back yard and it was used for... even a couple times over at the DeMarco's house on second and Pleasant St. They had a fair there a couple of times. They had a big lot there. When we lived on Second St. we could walk everywhere. My mother's friend was Emma Delker and they lived on Maple St. and I remember walking to her house. That was one place I could walk. She had two daughters Shirley and Barbara. They were both older than me but they always accepted me in their home. I would walk down Press~~e~~ey St. and take a short cut through some ladies yard right to their house and I remember staying there on couple of nights and I just remember the windows being open and the sound of the wind in the trees and maybe once in a while a car going by. It was very very peaceful. Second St. was that way where we lived. There was a big tree outside of my bedroom window and I could still to this day hear the sound of the wind rustling in the tree. One night I woke up and heard something banging against the screen and it kept banging. I am thinking

oh something is outside trying to get in and I got up and put the light on and it actually turned out to be a bat inside the room trying to get out headed for the window. So I oops! turned the lights on, went down screaming. I remember dad coming upstairs chasing the bat from the bedroom. I don't know how he got it down the steps and out the front door. We had a two story house with five bedrooms. It was a big house but I was up there at the time all by myself until later until my sister moved upstairs a little bit. She never really liked it upstairs though. It was creepy for her.

Q: So what happened after you graduated?

A: Well, I want to talk about my neighbors.

Ann: ok

A: On second street we had neighbors there for years. Next door was the baptist *parson age* and the Hesses. The Hesses lived there for years and they had six children. They were good friends of my sister's. I did baby sit for them a few times and I didn't baby sit a lot and I guess they didn't have a chance to get out much. The Pontifino's lived next door to them. They were like catty corner to our back yard. Next to us on the left were the Macri's, across the street were the Craig's to the left. Right across the street were the Wilson's. Miss Wilson was a nurse. Her nephew came and stayed with her sometimes. I remember him. Cresenzo's that owned the oil company lived around the corner. The Garafolo's (their son is now a judge). They lived on Cherry St. There were a lot of neighbors on Cherry St. Pitale's, Garafolo's, Frank and Marie Butkowski. That was the neighbors on Second St. All I remember them ... the girls that were there. They were just beautiful girls, the girls that lived in the neighborhood. They were all older than me and I looked up to them and admired them. When it would snow and freeze the streets were not cleaned and it would form ice on top of them and the kids would go ice skating out on the street and Rita Crescenzo gave me a pair of her ice skates because I didn't have any ice skates and I used the ice skates to skate on the street. That was very nice. I remember that about her.

Q: How about when you get hooked up behind a car?

A: Oh. Never, not me. Maybe for you but at that time that did not happen. At that time dad had long hours. They had started their business and he was working long hours at C&E back and forth day and night. In fact one of my jobs was, mom did everything in

the beginning but when I got bigger I, my job was to mow the lawn. Who knew anything about hay fever in those days. I would have to mow the lawn with a (it did have a motor on it) and I had to walk behind it and I had to get this big handkerchief with me and my nose would run the whole time while I was mowing the lawn. Forget about hay fever. So if anyone says oh you have hay fever, you can't have to mow the lawn-- I don't think so. That was my big job, mowing the lawn.

Q: Going back to snow, do you recall how they used to tell you when you were not going to have school on a snow day? Did they ring a bell or blow a whistle?

A: I don't know. You know I don't remember having a snow day.

Ann: Well we were away most of the winter.

Rose Rita: Well that is true but even when I was younger and I -- those were big snows. I remember the snow being really high. Maybe they didn't even cancel snow because a large majority of the kids walked to school at that time. The town perimeter wasn't as large as it is now. Most kids walked to school. I can remember playing on the playground and I remember somebody throwing a snowball and hitting me in the eye with it, maybe an ice ball. I can't remember who it was. I guess there wasn't that much supervision. I know there was a lot of snow around us at school. Well we wore actually galoshes or boots to school in those days. Today kids get dropped off. Kids don't even know what a hat is or an umbrella or boots. We had boots and we used them. We walked in those days. I can't ever remember ... I do remember the couple times that I felt sick when I was in school and feverish and I would be sent to the nurse's office and there would be someone that would drive you home. The truant officer. Mom didn't drive when we were little and then of course she was tied down with Joe so she didn't get away from the house. We didn't have a big social life. There were people that came to the house. Mom always was cooking or feeding somebody but we didn't go out that much because I had a handicapped brother and it was difficult to get him out. When we would go out mostly was when we would go to Florida. In the winter then by the time I got to high school that is when we would go to Florida in the winter. I think when I was a senior is when they built the house in Florida. I guess it was good for dad to get away. When I was in fifth grade dad had a heart attack and was in bed on his back for about three months. They had brought him home from work and he was just in

a dark room laying quietly for months. I guess it was a very severe heart attack. But after that he did have to take it easy for a little bit. He would take his little nap in the afternoon and then we would go to Florida for the winter which was good for him to get away and good for Joe because then he could get out for the winter months. We worked around the house. We had jobs to do around the house. Mine was mostly in the yard which I loved because I liked to be outside and I would go to the store and do errands and one other job was cleaning the bathroom on Saturday. I could remember doing that. But I did have responsibilities. Friday nights we would go shopping in town. That would be Arlene's. It was a ladies store. One of the few ladies stores we had in town. We never went out to eat. Our mom cooked all of our meals. By the time I was in high school we spent the winters in Florida where I had a couple of really good friends, Sonny and Kit and I would really look forward to going down there and being with them because then I would actually get out more. We would walk wherever we had to go. The teenage center was open on Friday night. Sometimes they would have a dance at the school when I was in high school and sometimes they would have dance over the fire hall. The high school which now they sold to St. Joe's was our high school because we were all on one level. The biggest building where we went to 8th grade that is gone. That was torn down. The other small building where you had first and second grade -- that is still up. The high school would have a dance on Friday night maybe once a month. Then the teenage center run by the town, I guess was on the second floor of the fire hall on Bellevue which was in walking distance. I guess they were all pretty well supervised.

Q: Do you remember the sweet shop or was that gone?

A: The sweet shop was gone. The Gem was there. The sweet shop is a little older. It may have been there but I didn't have a lot of freedom to go to those places at that time. There was no roaming around only when we went to the library on Wednesday night. That would be the only thing.

Q: How did teenagers dress when you were a teenager?

A: We mostly wore skirts and blouses and sometimes it was those sweaters and blouses. Little short sleeve crew neck sweaters. The skirts were either straight or full that you wore with a crinoline, a lot of straight skirts. But the length of the skirt was to

top of your bobby socks. There was a time when we wore cinch belts they were called. Of our course our waists were all little tiny things at that point anyway. We wore this little cinch belt. It was like an elastic belt that you wore around the waistline of your skirt. But your bobbie socks had to come up to match the bottom of your skirt. Shoes -- I had penny loafers or saddle shoes were very popular at that time. The boys -- the popular hair cut was the DA which was combed back into the hind end of a duck. That was called the DA. Pegged pants. I can't imagine where that style came from but the bottom of their pants was actually tucked in. It was important to be tight but I don't know how they got their feet into those pants. You couldn't definitely do it with shoes on. In the summer I worked for C&E canners which was the company my father and his brother-in-law, Paul Cappuccio and Tony Errera formed the canning company and it started in the basement. I can't imagine-- we were on Lincoln St. or one of the places before we moved to second st. and they experimented and did some -- were very successful in selling canned goods to A&P and Acme and started the business. The first of the season was asparagus then they went to blueberries and then the big canning was the tomatoes,--catsup, whole tomatoes, puree. Every year through school and I started pretty early, I worked there. There was no question about it. I think looking back I might have made a dollar an hour but it was a big thing for me to stand in line with everybody who was collecting their pay checks at the end of the week and then I would hand it over to my father anyway but I just loved to pick it up. I would just hand it over to my father and I guess all those years he put it in the bank and I never even thought about keeping two dollars out of that envelope. I just handed it over without even looking at it. Because of Mrs. Packard then I became interested in attending Drexel. At that time, I graduated high school in 1956, not a lot of girls were going to college. At that point we had one guidance counselor who was new to the school. It was a new idea to have somebody in guidance there. Of course a lot of the attention was given to the boys. The top boys in the class were going to college, no question about that. I think you can count on one hand and a couple fingers on another hand, the girls that went to college at that time. A lot of girls were encouraged to go into secretarial work. The business department at the school was very big and that was very important for girls. They would work in a bank or-- I just couldn't see myself

working in a bank or a 5&10. I had made up my mind that I wanted to go to college and my father was very supportive. It was good to have him --- he understood the importance of it at that time. My mother was very old fashioned. She really couldn't understand it. When I decided to go to Drexel one of her famous comments was "okay if you have to go to college do you have to go across the river?" It was so far away. Imagine crossing the river into Philadelphia. She was not one for traveling. She didn't have a good sense of direction. So it was very nervy of me to take on this task of going to Drexel college in a far away city of Philadelphia. I majored in fashion design. That was the only thing that I thought that I would ever be interested in. At that time I didn't want to teach. Some of the girls who went to college to be teachers, there was a couple who went for nursing. They wanted to teach. I didn't have that in my mind that I wanted to teach so I was a fashion design major but I took a lot of extra credits in other areas that would prepare me just in case,so I took a lot of extra education courses. I was very, very active in college. I was in a sorority _____. I became president my junior year and that was a very close family and all of our activities in the city revolved around belonging to a sorority, active in school activities and sports and extra circular through the sorority. I was very successful , got good grades. I was actually, in my senior year inducted into the National Honor Society there which was key and triangle and graduated with honors in 1960 and at that time there were not a lot of women in college and if you were, I was just about twenty-two, that was pretty old to get married. Most of my high school friends were already married so our wedding then was planned the week after graduation. Everybody who graduated at that time had weddings coming up pretty quickly. When I was in college I started going out with my husband, Anthony Guerrere. He also went to Hammonton High School. I knew him from school. He was a year ahead of me and,of course,he was in a different click so we were never personally friendly in high school. He went to Trenton State college which is now the college of New Jersey and his mother worked for my father at the canning factory so the summer after my freshman year at college she would always keep me informed about what Anthony was doing in college. He was teaching and playing in a band and teaching extra music classes. She invited me to her house for dinner. So Anthony invited me to go out with him after we had dinner and our first date he took me to the

Steel Pier in Atlantic City dancing. At that time they would have big bands and a big ball room for dancing. I am sure we must have stopped at a diner on the way home and had something to eat. I probably had to be home at midnight so I don't think I was out too late even through college when I asked my parents if I could go out they would still set a time when I had to be home. When I was in high school, Drexel had a co-op program. I took a job during the summer after my junior year at Camp _____ which is a girl scout camp which is a very unusual but at that time the summer before the national convention for the girl scouts was held in Philadelphia and some of the national leaders were staying at the dormitory and we were there for a summer course, my room mate and I were taking ---everybody had to go one summer because you took one summer as co-op. So one of the ladies that was there was actually from New Jersey and I got a letter from her asking if I would be interested in being a counselor at their camp the following summer. They were just opening this camp. It's in Medford Lakes and it was still a little primitive at that point but very very peaceful. It was very unusual for me. I took the job because I thought I didn't have student teaching and the other girls were getting jobs in department stores working in Macy's, Wanamaker's at that time or Lit Brothers or Gimbles and I thought maybe this would be good for me. It would give me good experience in teaching and working with students, kids, to see if I really liked it. I took her up on her invitation and worked at the girl scout camp that summer. It was -- I lived in a tent all summer and I learned to make camp fires and learned the flag raising ceremonies and folding, girl scout songs. Things that I would have never learned in my life time. So it was a lot of good experiences for me that I would never have had other than that.

Q: Tell me about your family.

A: We were married June 25, 1960 a week after I graduated from college as I mentioned. I was almost twenty two. I would have been twenty-two the next month. My husband was twenty-three. He was already out of college and had a job teaching at Hammonton High school. So he was a year ahead of me. We got married in 1960 and I had our son Anthony in 1961 and had our daughter Lynn in 1962 and our daughter Joann in 1964. By that time when Joann was born we had built a house on Wayne Ave. where we live to this day. In fact April 6th was her birthday. We had just moved in the

house so it is forty-nine years we are in the same house. We didn't have a big social life because there was nothing we could afford at that time. If we went to the movies once in a blue moon that was a big deal and if we had a baby sitter we would try to see two movies in one day. We didn't go out to eat and we didn't go out to any place to spend money. We saved a lot of money in those days. I did start substitute teaching and my mother-in-law was available to take care of the kids and I received a call from St. Joe's school asking if I had a couple of hours a day to teach there. They were looking for somebody to help their 8th grade principal in the afternoon and that was perfect for me because I could get the kids going in the morning. My mother in law would come over while the kids were taking their nap and I would teach at St. Joe's 7th and 8th grades in the afternoon where I met a lot of kids that I would not have met otherwise that are Hammontonions also. I had a lot of fun at that time. My second year there an opening happened at Hammonton High School. The sewing teacher and cooking teacher was leaving. I thought that would have been a great opportunity for me if I was going to take a job. So I applied for the job and she left in the middle of the year so I had to leave St. Joe and go over to Hammonton to teach sewing. I eventually taught sewing and cooking for thirty years before I retired. Of course I have been retired 15 years now.

I started teaching at Hammonton High School and I was very involved with my students. I taught for thirty years. After I started teaching I went back for my masters degree which was in psychology at Farleigh Dickinson and I was peer mediation supervisor and also peer support and that was a wonderful program where students handled conflicts that would happen in school and I had a wonderful team. We were trained by the county and the program was run by the county and people came in quite often to use our team as an example of proper way to handle things so we were vey successful with that program. I was also a local representative for the education association. I became involved in the state organization. I was a county officer and attended conventions all over the country with the NJEA . I enjoyed my thirty years of teaching and all of the students that I came in contact with and all the people I taught with and I could go on to mention Charlotte Cessato, Gordon Straculla, Heston, Tom Curley, my husband was

actually teaching there. Anthony was a band director for twenty-eight years, became a supervisor, and then became a principal of the elementary school before he retired. So we were able to have a real community affair with our kids who got to know all the kids in the band. They were in the band and we traveled with the band and with the kids when they grew up and got old enough to do that. We had many musicians and artists here at our house all the time so there was always a house full.

Q: Did you play an instrument?

A: We both took piano lessons from the same teacher, Professor Bovie when we were kids but of course it took a little differently with my husband. He is a fantastic piano player.

Q: But you also?

A: I play the piano also but certainly not on that level but I do play the piano. I used to play it for the kids and my grandkids because they enjoy it. I did mention the children. They all went on to college and training. Our daughter Joann is married to PJ Pullia. She worked for Prudential so she works for the insurance company. She works for him. Lynn is married to Rusty Lucca and they have Lucca's cold storage in Vineland. Our son Anthony runs Canal's Liquor Store in Hammonton. Seven grandchildren. The two oldest ones... One has already graduated from college and she is working for Urban Outfitters in Philadelphia, the second one is at the University of Miami and it looks like the next one is going to be going to Wharton, University of Pennsylvania. They all live in the neighborhood so we still have the Sunday spaghetti dinner and get together for all family activities and birthdays etc.

Q: Do you remember one major news event of your life?

A: What was important that I wouldn't want not to talk about was World War II. I was very little and when we were living on Lincoln St. in the rental from Penza's when there were the "black outs" in Hammonton. I remember Gabriel Heater who would talk on the radio and it was frightening and we would have these black outs, close the curtains and no light could show out of the curtains and it was a frightening time. There were people out searching for any planes that might be going by at night or during the day. That was a very critical time other than that it was probably one of the best times to grow up in the United States because people were starting to have a little money, they were starting to

have... and in Hammonton everybody always took care of their yards and took care of ... they were all family people so that the kids that came to school were supervised, their families were interested and we have a fantastic education system here in this town and we never had to worry about sending our kids anywhere else and they got a wonderful education.

I also remember some of the stores in town. I was just in town and I was looking around and remembering Chester's Hardware Store, Rubba's Furniture store, Lou Lamanna , the shoe maker and Sears that was on the corner, the barber, Mr. Costa. Actually we never went to any hairdresser. My mother brought me and my brother and we both got out hair cut by Mr. Costa, K&H Auto Supplies, Dr. Striefeld, Kern's Drug Store and Varga's Drug Store which is still there but some of the stores which were just accepted in town, you just thought they would last forever.

Q: Let's talk about your mother. Could you give me her maiden name and what you know about her.

A: My mother's father came to this country in 1907. Her maiden name was Benvenuto. He came here to get a job to make some money to send for his family. He was married and had four children in Italy but things were not good there. They needed to leave the country and find work and of course everybody heard the United States... the streets were paved with gold so they wanted to come here to work but he was here maybe three years before he was finally able to send for her --his wife and the four children. Finally, I think, the comadres and the compadres all got together and said hey--- I don't think he ever moved too fast --- they said you have got to get your wife over here ... that's enough now. She was living with her mother and father and the four kids. He sent for her, he sent the money to bring her over here and I could only imagine because I have read stories about what it was like on the ships coming over. They were in the hold of the ships and there was no privacy. Imagine traveling by yourself to a strange land with four little kids and you had to bring your food, whatever you had with you. It was just unimaginable. But once they got here my mother was the first child to be born here in the United States so the kids all called her the American kid and after that there were four other --she was the fifth--there were four other children that were born here but she was born here in 1910. She was actually born in Bayonne then they moved

moved down and settled in Landisville and lived between the Buchellie's and the Delabona's on Harbor Ave. She was actually introduced to my father by a lady who owned a grocery store there, Mrs. Lacassi and she knew my father's family and I imagine they were all Sicilian because that is how they kept contact and introduced my father to my mother. My mother had to quit school at eighth grade and had to go to work at Model Blouse which was a clothing factory. They worked six days a week with very little time off. There was definitely no breaks and whatever she made, the couple of dollars that she made a week she had to bring home to her mother and father. She helped support the older kids were already out of the house by the time she was thirteen and on working and getting jobs and moving to the city. The money she made helped support the family. My father -- his mother and father as far as I know were single when they came over here-- as far as I know. That had to be in the early 1890's because my father was born in 1901.

Q: What was his full name?

A: His name was Anthony Joseph Errera.

Q: Did he have a nickname?

A: Tony. His brother-in-law who he went into business with called him "Mack".

I don't know where he got that. He was born in 1901. His father was Joseph and his mother was Rosa. In fact that is how I got to be named Rose Rita. My mother was very involved in St. Rita Society in Landisville. All the girls that lived in Landisville belonged to the St. Rita Society. She wanted to name me Rita but my grandmother Rosa insisted -- she was a very strong woman -- insisted that I be named after her so my mother said ok I will have the Rosa but I will add the Rita and wherever I went my mother would remind me to make sure they would call me Rose Rita. When I started school she would say "are they calling you Rose Rita?" When I would go anywhere she would say "are they calling you Rose Rita?" always insistent that they call me Rose Rita.

My father's family was very ambitious. My grandmother was a real business woman and they would always work to make money. When my father was a kid he would actually take the horse and buggy to Atlantic City to bring fruit from Hammonton to sell at the market in Atlantic City. He had a very weak stomach. They said he would get sick every morning going over the swamps and through that marshy area because it

wasn't paved like it is today. They would even go up to the cranberry bogs when it was time to harvest cranberries and they would camp there for a couple of days. Wherever they could get work they got the work and my grandmother --she managed to buy property and move on-- she managed to buy several houses and keep moving up and buying property and I'm sure that they made money wherever they could make it. Their family came from Gesso, Italy and that is one of the reasons I'm sure that they came to Hammonton because they were Sicilian and a lot of people here in Hammonton are from Gesso and I'm sure that they had other relatives.... When we go back and check everybody we find that half of Hammonton is related to us in some way. My dad, like his mother-- all the kids in the family-- his three sisters they were all very business like. They all hustled. My father as a young man got a job in the bank at Amato in Hammonton and I think one of the reasons was that he could speak Italian and he was able to translate for the people who came in and wanted to put money in the bank and he became very good friends with Mr. Miller who was the banker and who kind of took my father under his wing.

My mother's family was from Agrigento which is southern Sicily so there is Sicilian on both sides.

Q: How was your father's health?

A: When I was maybe in middle school my father had a heart attack. He was pretty healthy until that time except that when they first started the business he hurt his leg in one of the pieces of machinery and another time he fell off the ladder and broke his foot. But he had hurt his leg in this machinery. It seemed like every year he would get something related to this leg. It would act up and he would end up being in bed for a week. After the big scare of the heart attack he watched his health pretty much and lived to be eighty-two.

Q: What cemetery are your parents buried in?

A: They have a mausoleum in the new Catholic cemetery on First Rd. almost right across the street from the first house that we lived in.

Q: What were your parents like?

A: My father would get up every morning and sing and whistle and sing cheery songs and that is what I remember about him. He was very soft spoken. He believed that you

counted to ten before you answered any question. That annoyed some people because they thought he wasn't answering because there was always a hesitation but he always weighed his words. He was always careful about what he said. Mom was a little more emotional but she was a singer and a whistler. She had a beautiful voice. My sister takes after her unfortunately I guess I take after the other side of the family that doesn't sing. She was a home maker. She stayed at home and she loved it. She loved her house. She cooked every meal. She was very interested in reading even though she was denied an education she always read and she always read about nutrition and she made sure that the family had well balanced meals and vegetables and fruit and she never stopped learning.

Q: How many children did your mother have?

A: Three. My mother had three. The first one was Joseph born in 1933. It was a very difficult delivery and she was not in a hospital. She was in a nursing home and probably. Probably in this day and age she would have to have surgery but the lack of oxygen caused a problem in his development. He had cerebral palsy. He was diagnosed with cerebral palsy so he was never able to leave home or work. He was very bright and my father went to the school board and he was one of the first people who got at home tutoring. He had that passed. It was amazing back in those days. He had a lovely teacher, Miss Santora, Mamie Santora. She came to the house every week. She was very patient with him. It was wonderful. He learned to read. He could read newspapers, books, magazines and he had a wonderful personality. He was very very pleasant. He loved people. My cousin built him a.... they would be called an Irish mail. We called it a hand cart where he could pump and the gears would make the cart go. As he got bigger he made larger ones but he loved to go around the neighborhood and visit neighbors. They were very kind. He would go over to Austin Perrone's, the gas station. He would spend hours there. They were so patient with him and he just loved that. The sad thing about moving out of that neighborhood into the country where we are-- now it is all built up here -- but there was nothing here at that time. Then I was born in 1938 and nine years later my sister Ann was born. The lovely little child that I had asked for and she was a joy to us all, and she was Ann Marie. We all had double names.

Q: What kind of person was your mom's mother and your grandfather. What kind of person was he? Do you remember?

A: My mom's parents. They always looked old to me. Even when I look at the pictures of her when she was young back in Italy with the four young kids she looked old then and she must have been in her twenties. They always looked old and I guess my grandfather was eight years older than her and I remember him being very slow, quiet. I hardly ever remember him saying a word. All the pictures that we have of him and I think all the pictures of old people that you find anywhere, they are not smiling. I guess it was like that old thing they were afraid you were going to take their spirit with the camera. It was very serious to have your picture taken. Very, very quiet, of course they had nine kids and some of their kids went on to have nine kids. The ones that lived in Hammonton did not have that many kids. All the rest of them had many children.

Q:What kind of person was your father's mother and father?

A: I remember my father's father was Joseph. I remember, I was very little when he died but I do remember him. He was a tall, good looking man and always had something in his pocket for me when I was little. My grandmother died, she lived for years after him -- a very strong woman. As I mentioned she was a good businesswoman and but at that time none of them learned English. Most of the people they associated with only spoke Italian. That group spoke Italian and as far as learning English it wasn't important to them.

Q: What was her maiden name?

A: She was a Bruno. So we are related to the Bruno's on that side. My mother's mother was a Cimo.

Q: How long did your grandfather live? Errera.

A: He died when I was very little. I don't know the exact date that he died but very early on. She always lived with her daughter Jennie. Jennie was married to Jack Blumberg and they never had any children so grandmom lived with them and she lived to be ninety-seven, I believe and my Aunt Mary, my father's other sister lived to be one hundred and three so there is longevity on that side of the family. They were all very fashionable, that side of the family. They always considered themselves to be elite. You never saw them leave the house without having stockings, high heeled shoes. My

Aunt Jennie the one sister owned the store. She was in the fashion business. She actually went to fashion institution in New York. She opened a clothing store here in Hammonton. It eventually became the Vogue Shop. Aunt Mary's daughter Catherine and her husband had a soda bottle company. The other sister Francis married to Paul they went into business. Paul went into business with my father in the canning business. So they were all very industrious and had visions. Annie the other sister was married to Rocco Santomas. He was a barber. His son Joe, they called him radio Joe and Gene was a barber also on that side of the family.

Q: Is there anything you would like to add before we finish up?

A: Well. It has been very good for me. It has been very stimulating because it has given me a chance to put these things down and look at them and as I am doing it I was able to recall a lot of things that had actually slipped my mind and I am sure I could go on forever. I was always sorry I didn't keep a diary. It was a mistake and I recommend to anybody that they start out young and write things down because you don't remember things and there are so many important things that happen in your life. The best thing is that we stayed in Hammonton and raised our family in Hammonton and we have had the advantage of being in this type of community which is very close and very loving. Our families are here, the kids are here, my sister is here, my brother has since passed and we have had a wonderful life here.

Interviewed by Ann DeCicco April 8, 2013

Transcribed by Carol Effinger January, 2015

**FOLSOM HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1700 12TH STREET
FOLSOM, NJ 08037
APRIL 12, 2006**

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, Mayor Ballistreri, and members of Council.

Hear ye, hear ye; tonight the Folsom Historical Society is here to present Certificates of Merit and to honor posthumously, two men who were very important in contributing to the economic growth of Folsom.

This project was started in the year 2001, and we hope it will continue as an annual event.

Our first honoree, Paul Cappuccio, was born in 1898 in Folsom, New Jersey, on a farm that his parents owned on Mays Landing Road, to Paul and Anna (Dilazero). His sisters, Mary, Betty, and Rose, along with his brothers, Frank and Joe, all moved when he was 18. He chose to stay here with his brother, Sal. He worked in the construction business with Jimmy Ruberton, where he learned the business. He married Frances Errera and they had two sons, Joseph and Paul. His brother-in-law first talked him into starting their own construction business and then, reluctantly, into the canning business. They continued this relationship for many years. Eventually, Joe and Paul were brought into the business.

Our second honoree, Anthony J. Errera, was born on June 6, 1901, in Hammonton, New Jersey, to Joseph and Rosa (Bruno). At the time the family lived on 11th Street, and later moved to

Chew Road, where he grew up. He had 4 sisters, Mary (Giacobbe), Anna (Santomas), Jenny (Blumberg) and Frances (Cappuccio). His mother's business sense influenced him from an early age. He attended the Hammonton Schools. As a teenager he would haul fresh berries to Atlantic City markets with horse and wagon. After attending business school, he began a job at the Amato Arsenal as Payroll Director. He was then hired by Charles Miller to work at the Bank, where his bilingual skills were put to use working with the Italians, who were reluctant to put money in banks.

"Compares" from Landisville introduced him to a "nice, young Italian girl", Carmella Benvenuto, and they were married on December 26, 1931. They had three children: Joseph, Rose Rita (Guerere) and Anne Marie (De Cicco).

Sometime during the 30's, he started a construction company with his sister Frances' husband, Paul Cappuccio. They built a large portion of Oaklyn, New Jersey. When the depression hit, they took over the mortgages from the banks for people who could not pay. They eventually turned the homes over to these people, forgiving the debts. Over the years, only one person ever paid them back. They paid off all of their bills before closing the business for good.

In the early 30's, they decided to try a home canning machine in the basement of their home. He convinced his brother-in-law, Paul, to go into business with him. In 1934, they bought a parcel of land in Folsom, and started with a 40 foot pad, to which they added each year. Many Folsom and Winslow residents grew up working here in the summers.

The business contributed to the economy of the Borough, not only through wages and real estate taxes, but also through the

purchase of fruits and vegetables from local farmers. The cannery has given its support to the local churches. In 1946, C & E paid \$6,200.00 to purchase the first fire engine. They then contributed \$1700.00 to renovate the Borough Hall so that the fire engine could have proper storage. When railroad service stopped, C & E also bought the station and platform. They also bought the siren and loaned the Fire Company money to meet it's obligations. Anthony was a member of the Fire Company.

During World War 11, the U. S. Government proclaimed that all production must be sent to them, which lasted three years.

The DEP eventually hurt the business with its many rules about washing tomatoes and the aromas given off during production. Eventually, the Atlantic Sweeteners business evolved.

These men were participants in many philanthropic acts of kindness during the depression, and Folsom was very fortunate to have them here.

Accepting the award for the Paul Cappuccio family is Mr. Joe Cappuccio.

Accepting the award for the Anthony J. Errera family are Anne Marie De Cicco and Rose Rita Guerere.

This is the story of the
American Dream.

Paul Cappuccio was born in
1898 in Folsom, N.J. on a farm
which belonged to his parents Paul
and Anna. He had 5 sisters & 3 brothers.
They all moved but he chose to stay
with his brother Sal.

He worked in the construction
business with Jimmy Ruberton, where
he learned the business.

He married Frances Erera, my
father's sister.

Anthony J. Erera was born on
June 6, 1901 in Hammonton ^{11th Street?} to Joe Joseph
and Rosa (Bruno). He had four sisters,
Mary Diacobbe, Anna Santomas
Jenny Blumberg, and Frances Cappuccio.
He attended Hamm. schools.

as a
teen 1. Haul fresh berries to Atlantic City
markets with horse & buggy.

2. Went to business school

3. Amato Arsenal - Payroll director

4. Hired by Charles Miller.

5. 1930's Paul & Tony started a
construction company. Depression.
Took over the mortgages of the
people who couldn't pay, eventually
They also had 2 gas stations

In 1934 they decided to go into
the canning business because
they figured everyone still had to
eat

1929