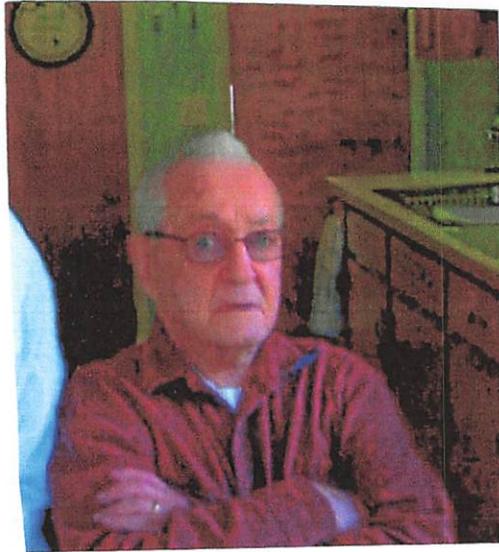


AN INTERVIEW WITH
RUSSELL BROWN



FEBRUARY 8, 2010

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HAMMONTON

RUSSELL BROWN

FEBRUARY 8, 2010

THIS INTERVIEW IS BEING CONDUCTED
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HAMMONTON

Interviewed and Recorded by:

Ginny Balita and Erma Woodman

Transcribed by: Carol Effinger, May 20, 2015

Russell Jessie Brown
Interviewed by Ginny Balita, Erma Woodman
For Historical Society of Hammonton
February 8, 2010

Today is February 8, 2010. We are at the house of Russell and Jean Brown. Today we are here to interview Russ Brown and about the story of his life and living and growing up in Hammonton. Welcome Russ.

Q: What is your full name?

A: Russell Jessie Brown.

Q: What is your age?

A: 86

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: 7-21-23

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Hammonton, New Jersey

Q: Where you born in a hospital? If so which one?

A: I don't know whether I was or not but if it was it would be the Esposito home.

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

A: All my life.

Q: Did you and your parents move to different houses, cities or states when you were young?

A: We moved in different houses but always the same state.

Q: Where did you live first?

A: I think, I am not sure but I think on Vine St. When you turn off of Egg Harbor Rd., the first street on the right, the double house. I think we lived in one of them, one of those sections.

Q: And you moved where after that? Do you remember?

A: Where did I go from there?

Q: Or any of the homes that you lived in.

A: Okay. Do we have a day or so?

Q: You lived in that many?

A: Maple Street., I lived in one. I think I lived there a week, 15 South Monroe Avenue., beautiful place. I know there was more.

Q: I know one place you lived.

A: Oh yeah, Egg Harbor Road. The house is not there now. Next door to where our interviewer lives, or lived.

Q: When you were a teenager where did everyone gather for entertainment?

A: Sweet shop. That is the only one I went to which was on Bellevue Avenue.

Q: How did the teenagers dress when you were a teenager? What would have been considered wild clothes or hair in those days?

A: Hair. I don't think the hair was too different. The clothes were different. The boys used to wear these stripes socks and colored shoes but otherwise I think they were normal, dress wise not mentally but normally.

Q: Are you married or have you been married?

A: Am I married mom? (yes)

Q: What was or is your spouse's name?

A: Jean Marie Glatzert.

Q: Where was she born?

A: Right next door to where we are sitting now. In that house next door.

Q: As a couple what kind of places did you go for social life?

A: Down to the shore. That's about it.

Q: Did you know each other a long time before you got married?

A: No. Not too long.

Q: How old were you?

A: Was I?, thirty-six?

Q: How old was she?

A: Twenty-five.

Q: What religion are you?

A: We both go to the Baptist church now.

Q: Have you always followed this religion?

A: No. I used to be a Methodist.

Q: Do you have any children?

A: Two boys.

Q: What are their names and birth dates?

A: Rusty is the oldest. He is fifty-two. Gary is going to be fifty on Valentine's Day.

Q: When and where was your mother born?

A: My mother? I believe my mother was born in Virginia because that is where she came from that I remember. I'm almost positive. Alexandria I think, comes to my mind.

Q: Did she have a southern accent?

A: No. When I knew her she had been here for a while.

Q: What was her name?

A: Alice Elliott.

Q: Do you know when and where your mother's mother was born?

A: No. No idea.

Q: Do you have a family bible that records this?

A: No.

Q: Do you know where your mother's ancestors came from?

A: No. I don't know that either.

Q: What country, state, county or city did they come from? You don't know that either?

A: I don't know that either.

Q: What was your mother's father's name?

A: Charles Elliott.

Q: Do you know when and where he was born?

A: No.

Q: Do you know where your mother's father's ancestors came from?

A: I guess probably Virginia I guess. I don't know truthfully.

Q: Do you know any stories about your mom's ancestors or your mom?

A: Not from down there.

Q: How about from here in Hammonton?

A: Well. Here in Hammonton she worked in a bakery shop, Simons. They had a bakery shop and that is where she worked and I guess that is where she met my dad.

Q: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

A: I have one brother.

Q: Who is your brother?

A: Is is dead now.

Q: Did he live in Hammonton?

A: Yes.

Q: What was his first name?

A: Claude. He was named after my father. I had a sister but she died. She was between me and my brother but she died before I came to town.

Q: Speaking of your father, did he have a nickname?

A: Yeah. "Crab" and it fit him right.

Q: Really!, really!. As a neighbor I don't remember him being crabby. Really !!
He always seemed very quiet to me.

A: Oh. yeah he was quiet but that was the trouble, he never spoke.

Q: Where and when was your father from?

A: Here in Hammonton.

Q: Do you know your father's mother's maiden name?

A: No., no.

Q: Do you have any idea where she was born or where her ancestors came from?

A: No.

Q: Do you remember any stories about any of your ancestors on your father's side?

A: Well he had three brothers and they all worked on the railroad at one time.

Q: Which would have been your uncles?

A: Yes. One was a dentist, Roy up on Bellevue Ave.

Q: " No. I just remember your dad very well and the dog, Spike"

Russell: Dinner. That is what the youngest one was called, dinner.

Q: Dinner?

A: Sadoc. That was his real name but they called him dinner. He never got married.

Q: How do you spell this ?

A: D i n n e r

Q: No. His real name.

A: Sadoc.

Q: Does that have a special meaning?

A: It is from the bible really. In the bible it is Zadoc. Z a d o c.

Q: What was your father's father's name? Do you know that?

A: John. I think it was John.

Q: Do you know where he was born?

A: I think here in Hammonton. He was buried here.

Q: Do you know where his ancestors came from?

A: No.

Q: Do you remember hearing any stories about why any of your ancestors came here to America?

A: No. I'm presuming they were all born here.

Q: Tell me about your parents. Did they ever tell you how they met and fell in love?

A: Well. Like I say, they worked in the bakery shop together and I guess that is where they got ready to hitch.

Q: Did you ever hear they talk about entertainment and social life before marriage?

A: No.

Q: Where did everybody go for entertainment and recreation?

A: Well. This a long time ago. After they were married. The only place I ever remember going as a family was The Delaware Water Gap in a model "A". Then we went as a family, I think mom went with us, when we were in school we played in the High School Band, both of us and the band went to Seaside Heights, you know all cars. It is the only place I remember them going.

Q: What instrument did you play in the band?

A: Drums.

Q: What instrument did Claude play?

A: The clarinet.

Q: Where did your mother grow up, basically here in Hammonton?

A: No. Down in Virginia. It had to be. When they left down there. Grandpop was working in the brick yard in Winslow. He was a foreman or something. He worked down there and was shipped up here to the brick yard. It was called the brick yard and that is when he moved up here.

Q: Where did your father grow up?

A: Hammonton.

Q: Do you remember any tales from their childhood?

A: Well the only thing I could remember about my father when he was in school. He only went to the ninth grade. You know where the high school is --well St. Joe's now. In the back there used to be a big long empty space lot all the way to the other building, the old high school. In weather like this my father made a snowball, wet and he threw it one to the farm building--it is not there any more, across from the high school and he hit a guy right between the eyes.

Q: Was it fatal?

A: No.

Q: Did he get into trouble?

A: I suppose they did something to him. I don't know.

Q: Was your mother married before she married your father?

A: No.

Q: Was your father married before he married your mother?

A: No.

Q: What did your mom looked like?

A: (Looking at pictures)

Q: Describe your father to me.

A: Grouchy.

Q: What did he look like?

A: (Pictures - describing him)

Q: I remember him as tallish and thin.

Russell: Well not real tall. Taller than me.

Q: What were your mother's likes, dislikes, hobbies? Did she like to cook?

A: She was a saint. She suffered an awful lot before she died, an awful lot.

Q: From an illness.

A: Cancer. Here look at these pictures. Look at those legs. You can see this one is twice as big. She had cancer of some kind. I don't know what it was.

Q: What was her favorite meal? Did she have a secret recipe?

A: No secret recipe. What would I call itmacaroni and cream cheese. What would you call it?

Q: baked macaroni?

Russell: yes something like that.

Q: Was that your favorite or her favorite?

A: Hers.

Q: What was your favorite?

A: Food. I eat anything.

Q: What was your dad's favorite?

A: Macaroni, spaghetti, Italian spaghetti.

Q: Did he cook?

A: Well he had to after she died or else he would go out and eat.

Q: How old were you when she died?

A: I was still in the service, twenty, twenty-one.

Q: She didn't live to see you married then?

A: No. She never saw me in uniform either. She never saw me go, leave. I was in the service. She died three weeks after I went in the service.

Q: What year was that?

A: 1941, 1942 something like that.

Q: How did you get the news that she died?

A: My uncle got in touch with the proper authorities.

Q: Did they let you come home?

A: Oh. yes. They would better let me come home. I was coming home anyway.

Q: Were either of them active in the community?

A: My parents, no.

Q: Did they belong to any clubs or anything like that?

A: No.

Q: I assume neither one of them ever ran for office?

A: No.

Q: Can you tell me a story about your father, his likes, his dislikes, something he did?

A: Well. When he was, before he got married, mom lived in Winslow. You know when you go up the back road here to Winslow you go past Donio's and you go underneath the bridge and you turn down the road that was Winslow. Well he was up on the railroad track. He was coming home from courting her. Like it is over here...there is a curve and the railroad sits down in a little bed like that. It was about midnight and he was going to catch the last train so he must have gotten there early and he fell asleep and his left or right foot (I don't know which one) was on the railroad track and an express came along and cut his toes off.

Q: Did he play chess or cards?

A: He played pinochle. That's all.

Q: Did he raise a garden or animals?

A: No. Just dogs. He had a couple dogs.

Q: What skills or talents did you learn from your mother and father?

A: My father. I guess I had his disposition.

Q: So, you're crabby too?

A: She's got nerve.

Q: What was the most important thing you think that they taught you in life?

A: Be decent to people, I think. Be fair, honest.

Q: Did your mother and father have a good sense of humor?

A: Not really. Like I say, my father wasn't a joking guy. He was a good man.

Q: What was the saddest event you can remember?

A: When my mother died. My mother never saw me in uniform.

Q: Where was she buried?

A: Up on the hill over here, Greenmount. You go up to last row before where the mausoleums are, you go up the hill and you run right into it.

Q: Do you feel you inherited more traits from your mother or your father?

A: I think I got a part of both of them, I really do. I mean mom wasn't boisterous or anything. My father could get that way and he would let you know it.

Q: Which one do you resemble the most?

A: Looks? mom. Claude, my father.

Q: What religion was your mother raised in?

A: I presume, Methodist.

Q: Do you know what church she attended?

A: Here? Well we were Methodist for awhile. That's when Anderson was there, Applegate was there, somebody else, I don't remember.

Dad .. he never went to church except when it was something special.

Q: What do you think was the greatest tragedy your mother or father suffered in their lives?

A: I presume when Mary died as a baby, I presume, I don't know.

Q: She was an infant?

A: Yes, at child birth. She was between the two of us.

Q: What do you think your mother and father would think about the teenagers of today?

A: I know but I won't say it, what he would say.

Q: Who is this?

A: That was Massie Greeg. What a wonderful woman. She used to play the organ in church and she could play and she could sing like a mocking bird. That sailor that you saw, that was her son. He was in the Navy and he was out on a call I think. He was speeding and he hit a tree.

Q: Do you know where your parents went to school?

A: Here.

Q: Both of them?

A: Yeah. I mean. Dad went here all the time. Mom I don't know if she went down in Virginia.

Q: Do you have any idea when she came up from Virginia?

A: No. I don't.

Q: Was you father in the military?

A: No.

Q: Have you ever heard of ancestors being killed in battle?

A: No.

Q: Was your father or his father physically strong?

A: My father was strong.

Q: How about your mother's father?

A: He was a little shorty. Well I guess when he was younger I imagine in the brick yard he had to be strong.

Q: Did any of them like working outdoors?

A: Well. My father worked outside all of his life, either in a garage or whatever.

Q: What jobs did your father have?

A: He worked in the railroad first, no. He worked in a bakery first. Then he worked in the railroad and then he lost that job when he -- when the railroad merged with the Pennsy when the Reading took over it went to the Penns. Then he went to for I I hearing. I think he worked there for one year when he lost his job on the railroad. Then after that I think he went to the gas company down here. He built that place. I mean the plant itself and he never knew anything about the gas. Never knew anything about it but he learned.

Q: What year frame? What age frame are we talking about?, forties, thirties?

A: He died when he was about eight-four.

Q: Do you know what year he died?

A: I could find out. I don't know.

Q: He lived after your mother though?

A: Yeah, oh yeah.

Q: so he died later than the war.

Russell: He built all of these natural gas companies, all of them. One here, one in Freehold, one in Robinsville, one in Exton, one in Montgomerville, one in Landheartsville. I think there is one more. -----He didn't know anything about it but before he died there were a lot of guys who came to him for information. He could fix anything I don't care what it was, a watch, typewriter, oven, anything and right.

Radios .. He had a beautiful cellar there. He had tables as long as this room covered with radios. He fixed them all.

Q: He must have had a lot of tools then?

A: Well he had a lot of testers. When I worked for Bruno's he had me go over there for parts for the cars and stuff. Then I worked at Bruno's a little bit. Frank and I used to talk and he would say boy Russ " your old man was a genius". But he had a disposition like a snake and that is no lie. Q: Sometimes very intelligent people are a little quirky.

Russell: That is all he knew all his life. Although I played the drums. My father taught me to play the drums. He couldn't read music but he taught me the drums. But his disposition was

That is the way he was. He was quite a man.

Q: Describe your surroundings when you were a child. Can you picture the kitchen?

A: There was a living room, a dining room, two bedrooms, a bath and a nice, very nice cellar. That house is still good.

Q: Did you have aunts and uncles? I think you mentioned uncles?

A: Oh many, many. My father had three brothers. Dr. Roy Brown. He was a dentist. He was the school doctor in Egg Harbor for years. My uncle Russ the one I am named after. He worked on the railroad. You remember Mary the daughter Mary Obrempt?

Q: Oh I know of her.

That was his daughter. Olive was his wife.

Q: Did your mother have siblings, brothers and sisters?

A: Let's see. My mother had a step-sister, half-sister -- what is it. The one from Pittsburgh -- Ella. My grandmother - Ella would be her daughter. Ella had one, two, three boys all about 6 ft., Mary. One of the girls was Miss Pennsylvania.

Q: These are your cousins?

A: Yes. My cousins.

Q: Did you have a favorite cousin?

A: No. Of course Russ, I had my brother, Roger -- what is her name -- Sandy.

Q: Are you in touch with any of your family.

A: No. Well Roger has cancer. He lives up in . It is outside of Philly somewheres.

Q: What was the major news event of your life?

A: I guess going to war.

Q: What political party did your parents or grandparents belong to?

A: I don't know. I believe they were Republican. I am not sure which.

Q: Did either of your parents speak a foreign language?

A: No. Cussed like the devil, my father.

Q: Where did you go to school and do you remember the names of some of your teachers?

A: Oh yeah! I think I could go from kindergarten all the way through.

Q: Okay. Where did you go to school, Hammonton?

A: In kindergarten Miss Lobly, Miss _____, first grade was Miss Hurley, second grade was Mrs. Adams, third grade Mrs. Jones (she was nice) she was deaf pretty hard of hearing. So one afternoon at noontime I went over to a friend's house and when we got done eating we started playing pool. All of a sudden I heard the bell ring and this was on second St. and I left and I took off. I ran over to the school. I got in there, I was actually late but she let me go and marked me _____. Then I was so tired of running I laid down and fell asleep for the whole afternoon. Fourth grade (Jack Dempsey- that's a lady. They call her Jack Dempsey -- she was a tough lady.), fifth grade Miss Whitmeyer, sixth grade Miss Hatch, seventh grade Mrs. Fisher, eighth grade Miss Volmer ugh!! High school, home room Miss Poll for two years she was a good teacher, then I had Fry but he was alright with me, eleventh grade, Guliotta, *twelfth* grade Walser. The guy was disabled, he was crippled. He was a smart man, very smart. English he would teach. He was a good guy, nice guy. He was crippled, he dragged one foot -- remember?

Q: How did you get to school?

A: Walk.

Q: Who were your best friends when you were in school?

A: I guess Buddy Salers. Buddy was one in my class. Elizabeth Coia was in my class. She was and still is a wonderful person, just as straight and honest as could possibly be -- Lizzy Coia. I had this guy down here across the street from you his brother, the lawyer, Clarence senior. Boy he was a tough bird.

Q: Did you know him before he had his arm...?

A: Yes. He played a violin before he lost that arm. He could play a violin as good as anybody. I don't mean junk I mean classical, real classical stuff.

Q: Well his granddaughter plays the violin now.

A: I don't know about that but then he learned to play the trumpet.

Q: Your're speaking of Clarence Mattoli, Sr.?

A: Yes. The lawyer.

Q: What was one of your favorite places in Hammonton that is no longer there?

A: I guess the Sweet Shoppe. There was nothing else around. There was not even a skating rink. We had to go to Mays Landing or Watsontown.

Q: Did you do a lot of skating?

A: I liked to skate, yeah.

Q: As far back as you could remember tell us about the church.

A: Well of course I went to another church then I went to this one. That is still there. It is across the street (the Hammonton Baptist Church). Now I go back, as far as the preachers are concerned.

Q: On what date did they celebrate 1859.

A: They just celebrated their 150 anniversary this past year.

Q: How many people are in your congregation, many?

A: No. Very small church.

Q: Do you fund raise?

A: No. Tithing by the members.

Q: Is is enough to keep the church going?

A: Yep.

Q: Where does the minister live?

A: Second and Grape.

Q: Is it owned by the church, the house?

A: The parsonage, yeah.

A: Names of ministers: Hess, Sminky, Gustinhoven, Jameisson, DeNick. DeNick (he is the present minister)

Q: Where is he from?

A: He comes from South Philadelphia originally.

Q: Are you a...you don't belong to any conference or anything like that, do you?

A: No

Q: So you are an entity within yourself?

A: Basically.

Q: What is the average, if there is one, of the number of years a pastor stays with your church?

A: This is the longest one.

Q: How long has he been here?

A: Twenty seven years. Hess was here for thirteen, Gustinhoven was here for fourteen. So they don't change pastors too often. It is not like some other congregations that the conference moves them on.

Q: Do you have young people going to your church?

A: At this moment this is very, very few young people. It comes and it goes. Sometimes we had a very active youth group. Then it drops off and builds up. Right now we are in the drop off period.

Q: Do you have a class for your Sunday school children ?

A: There is a class if anybody comes. Right now we have very few.

Q: Do you have services every Sunday?

A: Yep.

Q: What time is your service? Do you have two or just one?

A: Two, morning and evening.

Q: You still have an evening one. What time is the evening service?

A: Seven, no six to seven.

Q: Are they both the same services, like the one in the morning and the one in the evening?

A: No.

Q: Which one do you go to?

A: Both. They have Sunday school first for the adults (We have Sunday school first for the adults and there is eleven o'clock service is more of a formal for adults. Then at night it is very informal at six o'clock. Then they have prayer meeting on Wednesday.

Q: So six o'clock when you go is it like a -- do you follow a formal service or an informal service?

A: No very informal. Singing and testimony time and regular lesson, bible study lesson. It takes about an hour. He is an excellent preacher. He really is. He knows.

Q: Do you eat there at any time between these services? You eat in the church?

§

A: Oh. yeah. Oh. no. Not unless we have some luncheon for someone.

Q: You go home then and then you go back.

A: The morning ends at twelve o'clock, eleven to twelve. Then we go home.

Q: Do you have a hundred in your congregation or one hundred and fifty?

A: This is what we got for our one hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

Q: Who puts, who fixes the sign outside of your church?

A: The preacher.

Q: He does that himself?

A: Cindy does most of it. Well they go out there together. She has some good ones there.

Q: Did you go to any foreign countries in the war?

A: Yeah.

Q: Where did you go?

A: Africa, Italy, France.

Q: What was your rank in the service?

A: Sargent.

Q: In the army?

A: Yeah.

Q: Which of the countries, it was a terrible time to be visiting or touring, any country that you liked or disliked?

A: France was nice.

Q: Where were you when the war was over?

A: Home.

Q: You were back home, you were finished?

A: Yeah.

Q: You sang in the choir?

A: Yeah. I directed it too.

This concludes our session.

Interviewed by Ginny Balita, Erma Woodman 2/8/2010

Transcribed by Carol Effinger 5/2015

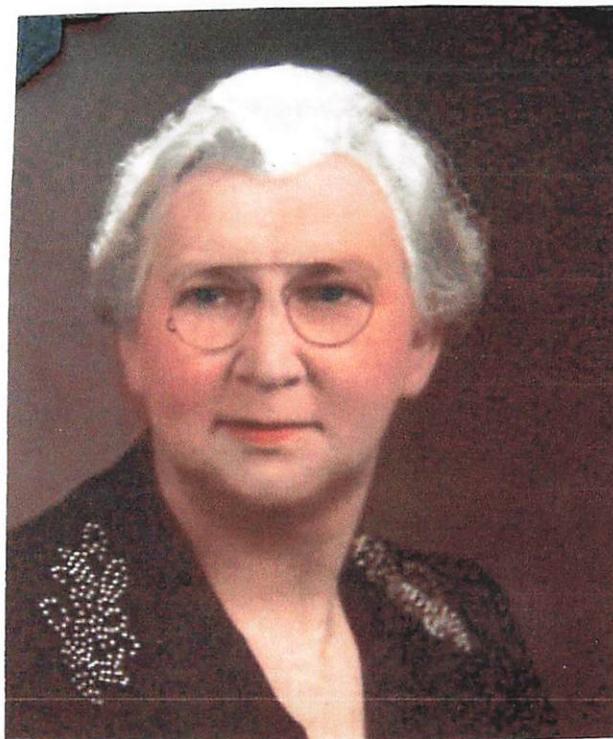
RUSSELL BROWN IN UNIFORM



Mom and Dad with their Favorite Pet



An unidentified good friend of the family



Helen & Herbert Glatzert
Holding their first Grandchild
Rusty Brown, Five Weeks Old
Photo taken in 1957



Mom in driveway facing Losse Home



Russ & Mom in back of Home



Russ's Father on front step of home on S. Egg Harbor Road



Four Generations of Brown Men

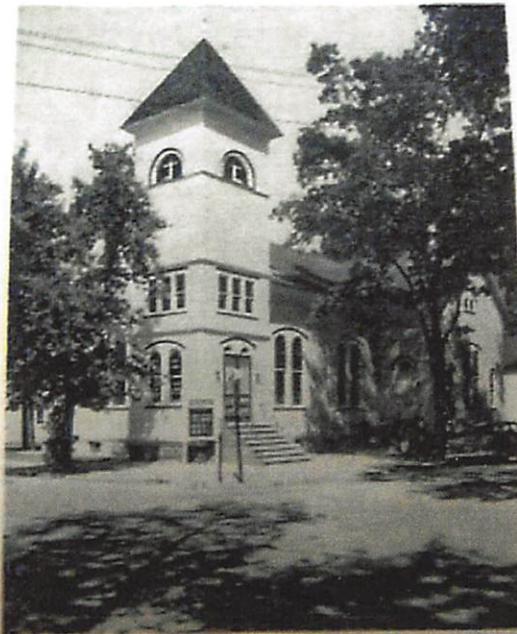


PHOTOS OF HAMMONTON BAPTIST CHURCH

100th Anniversary

1859

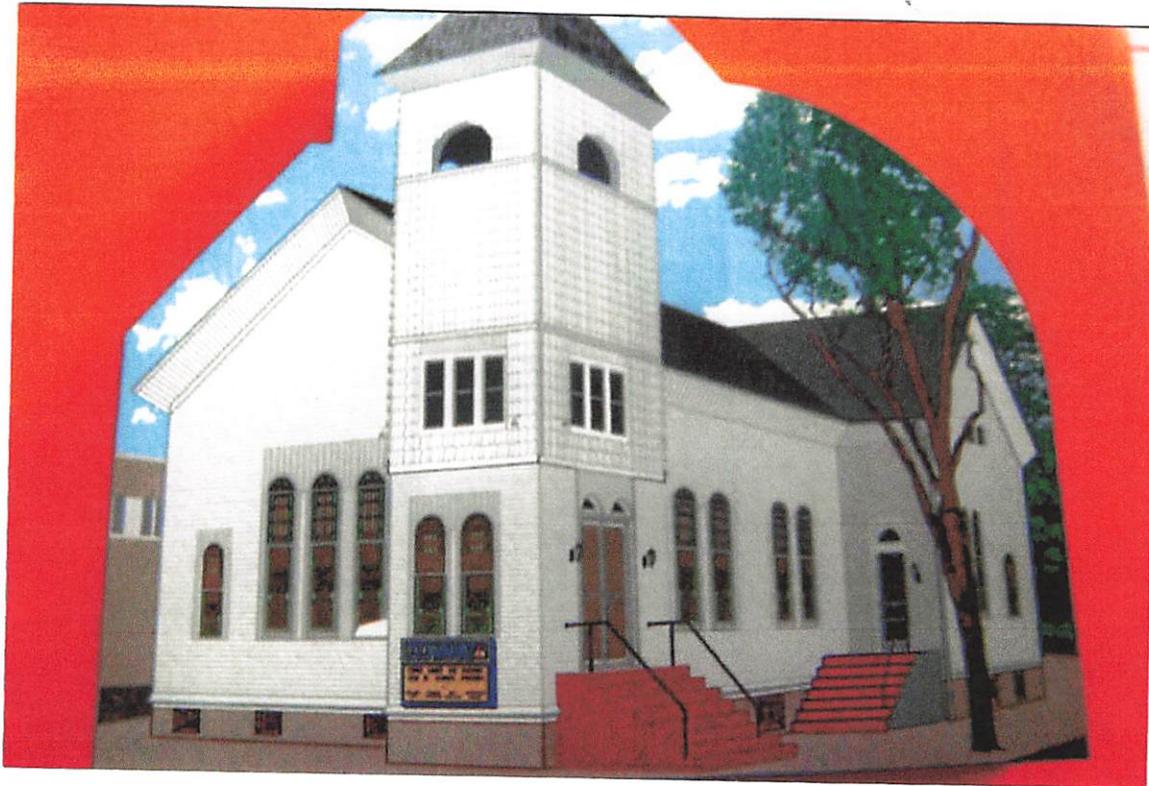
1959



HAMMONTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Third and Vine Streets
Hammonton, New Jersey

PHOTOS OF HAMMONTON BAPTIST CHURCH



HAMMONTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Ephesians 2: 20

Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.



Obituaries

RUSSELL J. BROWN
AGE: 90 • HAMMONTON

Russell J. Brown, 90, of Hammonton passed away on Saturday, February 1, 2014, at Inspira Medical Center in Vineland. Born in Hammonton, he was a lifelong resident. Mr. Brown was an U.S. Army Veteran of World War II. He served in North Africa, Southern France and Italy where he participated in the Battle of Anzio. While in the Army, he achieved the rank of Sergeant and was awarded three bronze stars. Mr. Brown worked for the Hammonton Post Office for 34 years. After retiring from the Post Office, he worked for Bruno's Auto Parts in Hammonton. He was a member of the American Legion Post No. 186 in Hammonton. He was a devoted member of the Hammonton Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, a trustee, church clerk, choir director and

Sunday school teacher. Mr. Brown enjoyed traveling, bus trips throughout the United States and Canada, yard work and watching stock car racing.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 57 years, Jean G. (Glatzert) Brown; and two sons, Russell B. Brown and Gary W. Brown, all of Hammonton.

Private funeral services were held and burial was at Greenmount Cemetery in Hammonton. Memorial donations may be made to: Hammonton Baptist Church, 19 S. Third St., Hammonton, NJ 08037; or Alzheimer's Association, Delaware Valley Chapter, 399 Market St., Suite 102, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2117. Arrangements were by the Carnesale Funeral Home in Hammonton.

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**RUSSELL J. BROWN
AGE: 90 • HAMMONTON**

Russell J. Brown, 90, of Hammonton passed away on Saturday, February 1, 2014, at Inspira Medical Center in Vineland. Born in Hammonton, he was a lifelong resident. Mr. Brown was an U.S. Army Veteran of World War II. He served in North Africa, Southern France and Italy where he participated in the Battle of Anzio. While in the Army, he achieved the rank of Sergeant and was awarded three bronze stars. Mr. Brown worked for the Hammonton Post Office for 34 years. After retiring from the Post Office, he worked for Bruno's Auto Parts in Hammonton. He was a member of the American Legion Post No. 186 in Hammonton. He was a devoted member of the Hammonton Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, a trustee, church clerk, choir director and

Sunday school teacher. Mr. Brown enjoyed traveling, bus trips throughout the United States and Canada, yard work and watching stock car racing.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 57 years, Jean G. (Glatzert) Brown; and two sons, Russell B. Brown and Gary W. Brown, all of Hammonton.

Private funeral services were held and burial was at Greenmount Cemetery in Hammonton. Memorial donations may be made to: Hammonton Baptist Church, 19 S. Third St., Hammonton, NJ 08037; or Alzheimer's Association, Delaware Valley Chapter, 399 Market St., Suite 102, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2117. Arrangements were by the Carnesale Funeral Home in Hammonton.