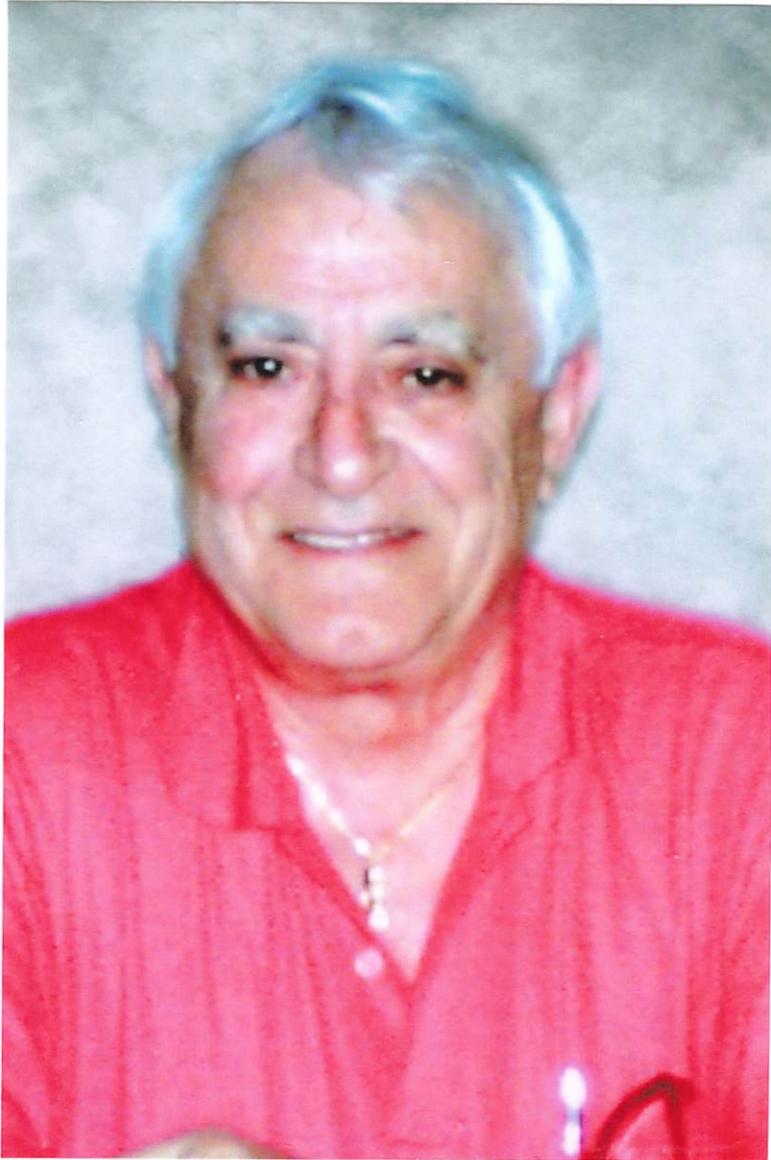


INTERVIEW WITH SAM CAPPUCCIO

Date: April 24, 2006

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



Interviewed and Recorded by: Pat Caruso

Transcribed by: Erma Losse Woodman

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I am Patricia Caruso, It is April 24, 2006 and I'm beginning an interview on Sam Cappuccio for the Hammonton Historical Society.

Q. What is your full name please?

A. My name is Sam J. Cappuccio.

Q. How old are you now Sam?

A. 83 years old.

Q. When were you born?

A. 03/25/22

Q. Where were you born?

A. I was born right here on Middle Road, in a two story house belonging to my father and my grandfather and previously to a Swift family.

Q. So obviously you grew up in that house?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you or your parents move to different houses or states when you were young?

A. No, born here, raised here and I'm still here.

Q. How were young men and women expected to behave when you were a teenager?

A. When we got a lecture from my mom and my dad but as usual I think it was too late because we had learned from the older people we went to school with first. Especially about the birds and the bees.

Q. How did you usually dress?

A. I was a little backward compared to the boys in town. In fact I wasn't allowed to wear long pants until I was in 8th grade. I wore knickers.

Q. Are you married?

A. Yes I am married and I have two beautiful children. My son is an attorney, lawyer. He is 57 years old and he has three Cappuccio's, sons. My daughter Bobbi is 44 years old. She was married twice. One boy is 23 years old and the second one came three and a half years ago. He's 3½ years old.

Q. Whom did you marry the first time?

A. I married a girl by the name of Roberta Duple from Cedarbrook, New Jersey. They used to come to the Hammonton school and that's how I met her.

Q. What did you guys do together before you got married, movies?

A. Oh, I found every way of transportation, including a bicycle to go see her every opportunity I had. I even took the liberty of borrowing my father's car before I was of age and visited her several times. We went together for about eight years because we went to school first and then the War (WWII) came along and I was stuck here on the farm. I couldn't go into the service because I couldn't leave the farm. I graduated in 1941 and we were married, I guess about 1947.

Q. What did you look like then?

A. Me, I weighed 135 pounds soaking wet. Black, large eyes and willing to learn.

Q. How about your wife Roberta, what did she look like?

A. She was very beautiful, athletic. She came from a family of Duples from Cedarbrook. He used to manufacture cedar furniture for Sears and Roebuck and all the big manufacturers.

Q. Did you have a big wedding?

A. Yeah. On Route 73 there's an old Catholic Church, still there and we had our affair at the VFW hall. It cost, I guess at that time, the whole party was what two settings would be today.

Q. Have you always practiced the same religion, the Roman Catholic?

A. My wife was not Catholic when I married her. Her father was a Mason. But I've been a Catholic, born a Catholic and I'm still a Catholic. My wife followed the Catholic religion. I never did know whether she was happy with it but we stayed that way. Then her father and mother both being unfriendly when we were married became my best friends. They both died in our house.

Q. I know you've had a second marriage and that was to whom?

A. Her name was Betty, she comes from North Jersey. She went to, what is that school? It's a college now, Monmouth College. She put a year in there and as luck would have it my grandson later put four years in and graduated from there. He also played football. She was working in Hammonton and she is ready to retire now from Stockton College. Working in the ?????? Department.

Q. Do you remember what year you were married?

A. 1946 or 47.

Q. And to Betty?

A. We've been married nine years. We were first married in Arizona. She has a son who was living there, in the Air Corp. When we came home my wife had passed away and her husband had passed away and we were both married Catholic. We were married in St. Anthony's Catholic church.

Q. What was your mother's name?

A. My mother's name was Rose Pinto, she was one of, I think, 9 or 10 ten children. There were three boys and seven girls. We lived on Middle Road and she walked to work at Kessler's shop for several years. I think that's where my father saw her walking to work every morning. That's how he met her and they were married.

Q. Do you know what year your mother was born?

A. That would be 1909.

Q. Do you know where she was born?

A. Right here on Middle Road. Her mom was Theresa and her dad was James Pinto.

Q. Was her mother Theresa or Rachel?

A. Rachel. I'm sorry.

Q. Do you know where your Grandmother Rachel was born?

A. She was born in Italy in a little town called Casa Dillion.

Q. Any idea how to spell that?

A. Casa Dillion.

Q. Was that in Italy or Sicily?

A. It's 150 miles south of Rome.

Q. Do you know if you have any family Bible or any documents that list anything about your family or your mother's family?

A. I think it's disbursed to one of the other members of the family.

Q. Do you have anything I can photocopy?

A. Here's a picture of all the girls. I'd be glad to share with you what we have. Here are some old pictures my sister had and I had.

Q. Your mother's ancestors would have come from Casa Dillion?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know what your mother's father's name was? The older Mr. Pinto Did he come to the United States, too?

A. He came to the United States and settled in South Philadelphia, Christian Street. 17 Christian. And believe it or not my dad and his family settled in the same place within two or three years in South Philadelphia. Then they got the word there was a lot of work here on the farms and they were manufacturing bricks in Winslow. They came here looking for jobs and they bought farms here. Lot of them intermarried with the people who were already here and today we are quite a mixture.

Q. What was your father's name?

A. William.

Q. Did he have a nickname?

A. Bill.

Q. Where was your father born?

A. He was born at 7th and Christian, South Philadelphia. At 7 years old the family moved to Hammonton.

Q. I'd like to have your father's mother's maiden name if you know it.

A. Theresa, Theresa Cappuccio.

Q. What was her maiden name?

A. Spinelli. My grandmothers maiden name.

Q. Do you remember hearing stories about your ancestors when they were young? Either when they were in Italy or when they lived in Philadelphia?

A. I don't know any complete stories, they all came from around the same section. I took the liberty of going to it Italy six or seven years ago and I visited the cemeteries and the churches. I found all there names there, almost every one that lived here on Middle Road. So they migrated here quite a few years back.

Q. What can you tell me about your parents? Did they ever tell you how they met and fell in love? You did mention he saw her walking to school.

A. I did mention that my dad spotted my mother. She walked to work every morning. He was sort of adopted by the Swift Family and when he was 18 years old he joined the National Guard. Then they transferred him to France where he served in the war.

Q. World War I?

A. World War I. Dr. Cunningham was instrumental in him joining. He was the Mayor of Hammonton so he was instrumental in my dad going in the service and joining the Guard. He went in the service, came back and married my mom. I was the first born, born in 1923.

Q. Did your mother ever work outside the house after she started a family?

A. Yes, she helped, it was more like a big family affair. When peaches were harvested, hauled, everybody worked the peach farm. My grandfather first and then my father had a small farm. Came here back then and they did the same thing trimming, pruning, fertilizing. They all helped one another in those days, the barter system. They didn't get paid they just put time in.

Q. They helped each other?

A. Yes.

Q. Were either of your parents married before?

A. No.

Q. Or after?

A. No. My dad was 97 when he died and my mother was 87.

Q. Can you describe your mother for me? What did she look like?

A. Well, naturally she was a beautiful woman. She had long auburn hair down to her buttocks. Very shapely and very shy. She was the oldest one in the family and they brought all their money home. The family came first.

Q. Can you describe your father to me? What did he look like?

A. My father was 6 foot, ah, 5 foot 10. He weighed 150. He served as a cook in the infantry in France and as luck would have it he found very close neighbors, a fellow by the name of John Amato across the street. Former mayor, John Machise.

Q. In the service at the same time?

A. Yes. And there was Esposito. They wound up in France and Esposito married a French girl and took her back with him. She is still here.

Q. Is that Dr. Esposito? No, that's not Dr. Esposito then?

A. No, No. One was a bus driver, one was a doctor, one was a dentist.

Q. Did your mother have any hobbies?

A. My mother was a housewife and she did a lot of knitting. Things were rough in the winter and they would make booties, and sweaters for babies. She would get paid so much per set.

Q. Was she artistic? I guess she was if she could do that? Musical?

A. They were sort of forced into ah, we had pigs, hogs, cows, horses on the farm and one name I can remember the Farina name they had. They had stuff in bags and they would take the bags and put them together and make sheets out of them, pillow cases and even some dresses.

Q. Was she a good cook?

A. Very good. She could make a great meal out of ?????? scraps. We baked our own bread three times a week in an outside kiln. When they baked, they baked for the whole family. Bread was like, they call it Banagosta, means hard bread. They used that for their basic breakfast. They dunked the hard bread in the coffee. We were fortunate, we had our own milk, our own cheese. We had a couple of hogs, so we had scrapple and bacon with it.

Q. Do you know what your parents favorite meal was?

A. Favorite? I presume when they started out children, we had three children.

Q. Did your father cook?

A. Yes. He cooked two different styles. He was living with English people and my grandmother was Italian so he had the gift of learning both ways of cooking. After ?????? I ...a few things myself in that.

Q. Would you explain why he was living with the people other than his parents?

A. Yes. It was just a something that you had to do. You realize they had 9 or 10 in the family also. And they were not making that great of a living so one less within a hundred yardshe helped both ways. It was a burden off of them

and earned a few extra dollars there to return it back home to his dad.

Q. When you were young and your brothers and sisters were young did your parents ever read to you?

A. No. We were really not together. My dad and I did a lot of reading, airplanes, cowboys, detective stories; the paperbacks. We discussed actors and something I thought about. When I was about 10 years old my mother and I both had an attack on our knees, elbows, all the joints and it seemed like it was what do you call that?

Q. Scarlet fever? Rheumatic fever??

A. Yes. Rheumatic fever. Just reminds me, I'm not sure but we would take Dr. Cunningham's, our physician, we would rub our joints with Ben Gay or Vicks and then wrap them with woolen socks. My father carried my mother and myself to bed at night. This went on for over a little year and then it sort of dissipated slowly.

Q. Was your father handy with tools?

A. No. He knew what had to be done but he loved to fish, have a drink or two. In fact he was a bartender for a couple of hotels here in Town. He also was a policeman for directing traffic.

Q. As well as a farmer?

A. Yes.

Q. Did he play chess or did he play cards?

A. Played some poker. He didn't know how to play chess.

Q. Any hobbies?

A. He gunned a little when he was younger. Deer and rabbit.

Q. Can you think of any important lessons that either of your parents taught you?

A. Well to start with my Dad did not have a car until 1936 and he did not have his license. I taught him to drive when I was seventeen. I got my license when I was sixteen of course we all drove a little bit ahead of time. Dad finally learned how to drive at that age. But he always got by because there was always somebody around who had a license and no car.

Q. Tell me about your mother's temper, did she ever lose her temper and do you remember why?

A. She, I'll tell you a little occasion. In her later years, my dad and my mom both, my dad had a broken hip and my mom had arthritis. They both had a walker. We even bought them the little horns. We put them on the walkers so they'd keep out of each other's way. But my mom had reddish auburn hair and my dad used to love to tease her. It didn't take much to get her going. She baked a pie, she had to double check before Bill seen it. She didn't want him to know. And he walked in on her one day while she was baking and she didn't like that. She wanted to see the pie was okay before he saw it. And she told him "get out of her kitchen." He wouldn't move so she threw her walker at him. I walked in and said, "What's going on in here?" He said, "Son, you better learn now, redheaded women have a very bad temper."

Q. Can you remember if your mother or father ever cried and why they cried?

A. Well, they were very close to all the families and we lost a few of them. In fact, they lost some of them when they had that bad infestation of flu. A couple of close members of the family.

Q. Was that flu in Hammonton?

A. Yes.

Q. Really, in 1919, that flu?

A. Yes.

Q. Really, I didn't know that ever came to Hammonton.

A. I don't think it was in a big way. We were fortunate, not like it did in the cities and other places. Plus we had a little of that red wine to help.

Q. Do you think you inherited your mother or father's emotional qualities?

A. Yes, both. I got a bad temper also. I learned to control it.

Q. How about your mother and father's health in general?

A. Very good. My father went to age 65 before he had is first operation. Before that he had pneumonia. His first operation was prostate. Then after that he had a broken intestine, when he was 75 or 80. Then he broke his hip twice when he was 80. Then he still lived to be 97 and he had all his marbles.

Q. How about your mom?

A. Mom, she was the same way. She had arthritis very bad but she had a couple of operations. She had one on her gall bladder, they were big enough that she had to go to the hospital, mostly in Philadelphia.

- Q. What do you think is the greatest tragedy your mother and father ever suffered in their lives?**
- A. I guess my mother lost her family she loved, her younger sisters and my father the same way. He lost a couple of grandsons, or nephews, rather. Of course, he lost his father and mother. Both men on either side of the family the, Cappuccios and the Pintos, died very young. The women lived to be 85 or 90. The men died 48 to 55.**
- Q. Are your parents buried together?**
- A. Yes.**
- Q. What cemetery are they in?**
- A. Oak Grove.**
- Q. What did your mother die from?**
- A. Combination of things, she had so many problems. I think what finally took her, I'm not sure whether it was her lungs collapsed or she had a heart attack.**
- Q. Do you have any idea how long they went to school?**
- A. My father went to 4th grade.**
- Q. How about your mom?**
- A. I think my mother went to 6th.**
- Q. Can you remember if they ever talked about any experiences they had at school?**
- A. No, when they didn't want me to understand anything they would speak in Italian. I'm so mad because I lost the trait. I wish I had taken it up somehow, I missed out on all of that.**
- Q. How did they get to school?**
- A. Walked.**
- Q. Was it the Middle Road School?**
- A. Yes, so did I.**
- Q. Did your parents have any dreams of the future?**
- A. I imagine they did. I can't say exactly. I went a little to fast for them. He gave**

me the authority to keep going. He let me sign his checks, he had \$5000 in the bank and he maneuvered that \$5000 so many times it almost wore out. That's a fact!

Q. Your parents went through WWI, WWII, Korean and Vietnam wars as well?

A. Yes, it's 20 years ago my mom and dad passed. About 28 years ago????

Q. Do you know if your dad fought in a battle in WWI?

A. I'm sure he did because some of the neighbors did. He was in the infantry as a cook and John Amato, a neighbor, was a mule skinner. We called him "Joe the mules that pulled cannons"???? ??

Q. Were any of these people ever wounded in battle, or killed?

A. I really, I don't know. I heard talk about it but never knew.

Q. Is there anything about your father that stands out very clearly in your mind?

A. He had a terrific reputation in Hammonton. But for some reason or other he preferred to dress a little more, instead of just farm clothes. He got such a mixture of earning a living that people thought he was worth a lot more money than he had. Like I said, he was a policeman, a bartender, manager of the farm here. He bought and sold produce, cranberries, peaches. He had a cranberry bog, that's why cranberries, he raised peaches and blueberries.

Q. Anything else about your mother? Her looks, her behavior, something that she did or didn't do?

A. Well, she packed. She was very good with her hands, she packed peaches. They always let her make the sample up for Parkhurst, people like that. She was an operator .

Q. How many children did your mother have?

A. Just three.

Q. What were their names?

A. I was the oldest. I was actually named Savato after my grandfather. They actually translated into Sam. My other grandfather was named James that's from ?????? ?? That's the custom of the old Italian people.

Q. Brother's name?

A. Brother's name was Bill, after my dad and there was a C in there. I think he was named after the doctor, Charles Cunningham.

Q. Your sister?

A. My sister was Emma. She was also named after Dr. Elliot's wife, Emma.

Q. Do you look like your brother and sister?

A. My brother is bigger than me. Bigger bone structure, he is a handsome man. He was always a little backward. He didn't like being in the limelight. He stayed behind all the time. And me, I wanted to learn more so I could push him.

Q. Did your mother or father ever have a favorite child?

A. Oh, I think my sister was definitely favorite.

Q. Because of her health?

A. Yes, she had open heart surgery when she was about eighteen or nineteen.

Q. What kind of person was your mother's mother?

A. Very congenial, she ran a bar for my grandfather. He had three or four bars which were also restaurants. He sold liquor wholesale at the same time. And each location had a store where he sold gasoline, groceries. And they carried the community in that area financially. People didn't have the money. But they had an open lunch every day when the weather was right. Then stopped ????

Q. And did your grandmother do the cooking for the restaurant?

A. They all pitched in. My grandmother was the key though.

Q. How about your father's mother?

A. Same way. After her husband passed away in this house here, then my dad took this house. He bought the house next store which happened to be one of the schools on Middle Road. She lived there until she passed away.

Q. Can you tell me about your aunts and uncles on your mother's side?

A. On my mother's side we had three boys, Thomas, James and Charles. James lived to be 90. He worked on the farm with my dad and then he moved to Philadelphia, he's ??? My Uncle Tommy, was under him, he moved to Philadelphia. He came every summer to live here. He enjoyed the season and he lived in one of our houses every summer. He went into the trucking business for Acme Markets in Philadelphia. Charlie was the caretaker of the school for several years.

Q. How about your father's brothers and sisters?

A. One was a highway engineer in Atlantic City for several years. That was Woody, Woodino. Tony or Anthony, on Central Avenue they sold a lot of all fresh green. Then they went into the meat business, also. Charles worked on a farm and then he worked for Highway Transportation, manual work on the farm all his life. Never ???? and I forgot that, and for ???? Uncle Phillip in Atlantic City, he was manager of the sign company on the highways. What do they call that?

Q. Billboard??

A. Yeah, but the name?

Q. Maxwell?

A. That's it.

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

A. Yeah, I was a spoiled brat and got my way in just about everything. But, the cat of nine tails was still in the corner. I chopped it up a couple of times but they still made some new ones. We had the old country stove, home comfort. ??? We converted it from wood to oil, kerosene. We used it for baking and also for heating. Also, heating the hot water in a side tank. I lived in that old house my dad wound up with from the Swift family, from my grandfather to him. That house was, I saw a lot of changes in that house. We had a piston pump down in the cellar hooked up to a well outside. And to get it to work you had to either put charcoal or firewood, heat the stove up and make steam and when it hit a certain pressure steam the piston would work back and forth to pump the water up to the third floor of the house. There was no plumbing in those days.

Q. No indoor plumbing?

A. No, but we had a tank on the third floor above my father's bedroom, a 2,000 gallon tank. The water was pumped up there so we could get the pressure to come down to the next floor where there was a bath tub. That tub was made of red lined wood. There was another pressure pump used to pump the thing upstairs. Then far as electricity, we had none. But we had coal oil for lights or lamps. But there was a fireplace in each room upstairs and down. So, I guess that would all be about 180 years old today. It's still here.

Q. Would you spell the name of the people who lived there?

A. Swift, S w i f t.

Q. Can you tell me any good stories about your favorite cousin?

A. Which one?

Q. I don't know. Which one was your favorite?

A. Well, Sonny, Peter. Sonny was from the Caruso family which one of my aunts married into. Peter was the Penza family and also his brother Lew. They would come down every year. Sonny worked on his grandfathers farm and he also worked here. He wound up being a State Trooper. Then the two boys lived here every school year until they were 17 or 18 and then they joined the Service. They were like family because they were about the same age as my brother. He was younger than me. And all we did was work on the farm.

Q. They lived here every summer and lived in Philadelphia and went to school there in the winter?

A. Right.

Q. I hear that Ralph Wood was the favorite visiting place of your family?

A. Yeah, I had two uncles shared two buildings there on the Pinto side. Jim and his family, he had four or five children. Thomas Pinto, he had four or five children, also. All the families came to be on the farm. I was something different that being in Philadelphia, a lot of fresh fruit and vegetables. They all made a few dollars to bring home and it was all spent on clothing. But they did have a few holidays here like the 16th of July. They enjoyed that and of course we always had something going on. Cooking some fried fritters or beef sandwiches and maybe a case of beer.

Q. Now was Ralph Wood a farming area or was that.....?

A. That was a cranberry bog. We harvested them before they went back to school, usually harvested in September. We stored them down the cellar in trays dug into the ground. Packed them all winter in little ace boxes. Fresh cranberries.

Pat: Well thank you Sam, I really appreciate your help with this. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Sam: Well, I'd just want to add one thing. My dad started me out with him trusting me when I was 14 years old. He allowed me to sign his checks and from 14 I built the farm up to 700 acres, one of the biggest in South Jersey. I built an empire. That's another thing, I served on the Savings and Loan which was Empire, also, for thirty-two years. I had 10 or 12 tractors and trailers, so from a shy farm boy I did well. But, I forgot one thing, absentee management.

SAM J. CAPPuccio

CAPPuccio, SAM J. 87 - of Hammonton, passed away January 31, 2011 at the Health Center at Galloway. Born in Hammonton, he was a lifelong resident and a 1941 graduate of Hammonton High School. Sam was the owner/operator of C&C Farms Inc. Sam was a produce broker for John B. Ordille Inc. of Vineland. He was a member of St. Anthony of Padua Church, Hammonton Rescue Squad and Hammonton Vol. Fire Co. #1, a charter member and past captain of Hammonton Vol. Fire Co. #2. He was an original member of Hammonton Produce Auction, Landisville Produce Assn., and the Vineland Produce Auction as well as various other produce and trucking companies. Sam was named "Rutgers Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year". He was a member of NJ Motor Truck Assn., United Fresh Fruit and Produce Assn., Sweet Potato Council and various other produce organizations. Sam was a member of town council, Hammonton Board of Education and Kiwanis Club of Hammonton, Hammonton Investment Club with Super Bowl History, He was a member of the Board of Directors of Empire Saving and Loan. Sam sponsored Hammonton Little League teams and aided in the building of the previous town hall and was the tax assessor of Hammonton. Sam was also a member of McDonalds morning crew. Sam was a season ticket holder since 1954 and avid fan of the Philadelphia Eagles, he also enjoyed hunting and other sports. Sam is predeceased by his parents William C. and Rose Cappuccio, his former wife Roberta (nee Duple), brother William Cappuccio and brother in law Victor Parker. Sam is survived by his wife Betty (nee Parker), his children William S. Cappuccio, Esq. and his wife Bert of Hammonton. Roberta Morris and her husband Brian of Hammonton and John Mafodda and his wife Monica of Boardman, OH. Brother of Emma Caruso and brother in law of Joyce Cappuccio. Loving grandfather of Elliott (Amy), Sam (Marilee), Blair (Jason), Sherry (Dan), Steven Scipione, Brian Morris, Brandon Morris, Jason Morris, Anthony Mafodda, Anna Marie Mafodda. Loving great-grand father of Billy, Alyssa, Caleb, Ava and Lilly. Relatives and friends are invited to attend his viewing Thurs. eve 6-9pm at the Marinella Funeral Home 102 N. Third St. Hammonton. Mass of Christian Burial Friday 11:00am St. Anthony of Padua Church Rt#206 Hammonton. Burial in Oak Grove Cemetery, Hammonton. Donations may be made in Sam's memory to Hammonton Vol. Fire Co. #2 White Horse Pike Hammonton, NJ 08037or Hammonton Rescue Squad 300 S. Egg Harbor Rd. Hammonton. (www.marinellafuneralhome.com).

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