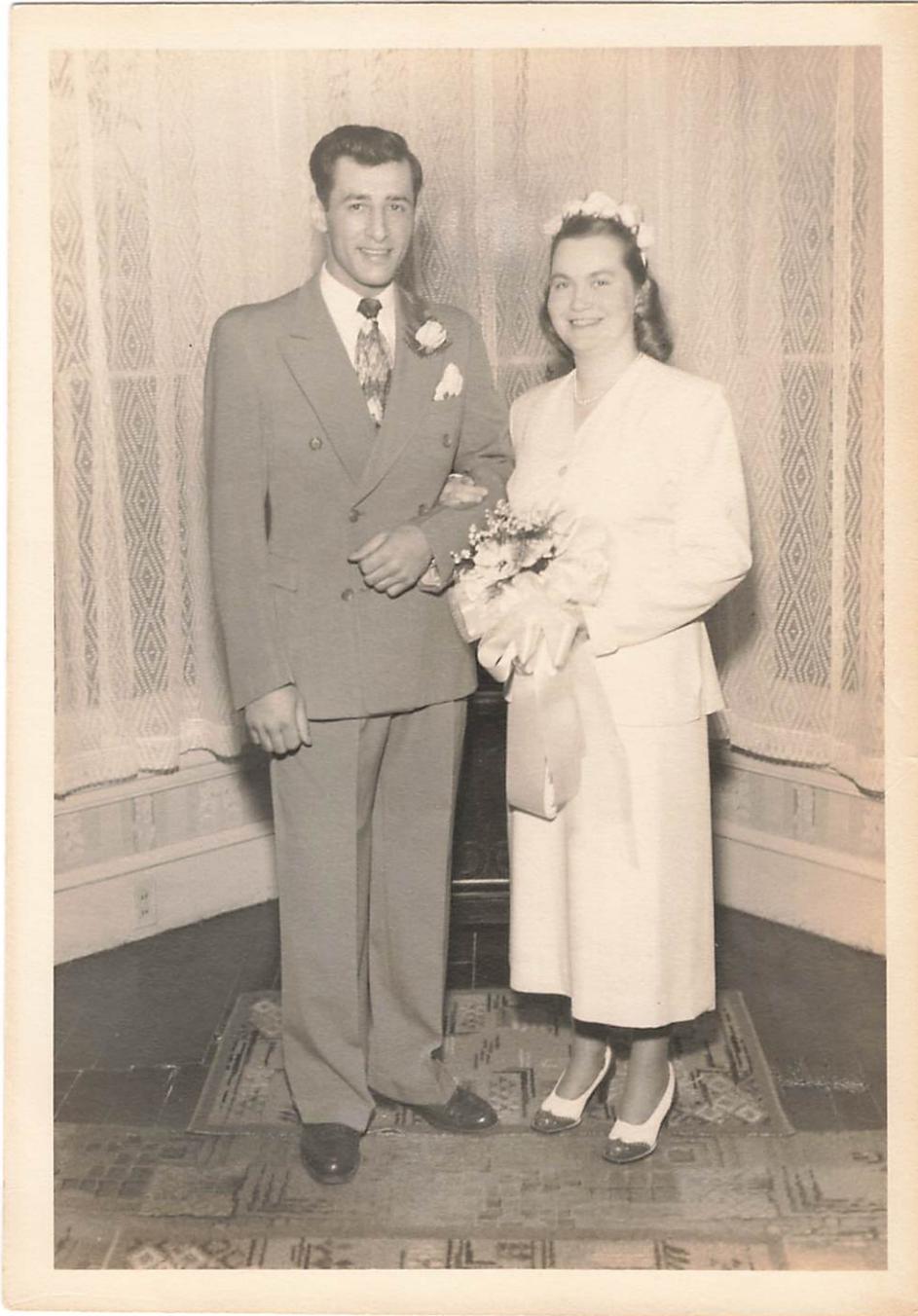


AN INTERVIEW WITH
VIRGINIA ELVINS MACRI



INTERVIEWED BY: PAT CARUSO
TRANSCRIBED BY: CAROL EFFINGER

THE FOLLOWING IS AN INTERVIEW WITH
VIRGINIA ELVINS MACRI

Recorded on February 26, 2008, for the benefit
Of the Historical Society of Hammonton

The interview was conducted by:

Pat Caruso

It was transcribed by:

Carol Effinger

Pat Caruso of the Historical Society of Hammonton interviewing
Virginia Elvins Macri on February 26, 2008

Q: What is your age Ginny?

A: I'm 83.

Q: Your date of birth?

A: July 19,1924

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Ocean City. I worked there for my uncle who had a trucking business and a furniture store in Ocean City for many years.

Q: Were you born in a hospital?

A: I don't believe so. It might have been in a small hospital that the doctor had in his home.

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

A: No. I grew up in Hammonton.

Q: Did you and your parents move to different houses?

A: Well we moved to Florida about two years after I was born. Then my grandfather Elvins was killed in accident going to a fire. My father left us down there in Florida ,my mother and I, and came home. He went back and forth a few trips and finally he sold our house in Florida and we moved back to help take over the responsibility of my grandfather's farm and Elvin's store.

Q: Where did you live then? When you moved back to Hammonton.

A: In a little house, it is still there on the corner of Pleasant and Horton Street in Hammonton. That was part of the French family property there. The big house right on the corner was my grandmother and grandfather French's house, my mother's parents.

Q: Did you move to any other places in Hammonton?

A: Not until my father had to move out to manage the farm. All that occurred about the time of the big depression. There was a lot of moving around. My grandmother and grandfather rented their house and they moved out to the farm so they could help my mother.

Q: What was the location of that house?

A: The farm house? Across from where the fire house is now on the White Horse Pike.

Q: You stayed in that house?

A: Yes. In fact my mother and father still lived there after I was married. Of course I moved into my own house.

Q: Do I remember correctly, that house was razed?

A: What was that?

Q: That house was burned down purposely? For what reason, development ?

A: Yes. My father sold that property where the old farm house was. He wasn't farming anymore. He became the town treasurer and tax collector in Hammonton and he had that job for many years. I lived in the George Parkhurst after I was married. First we had a small apartment on Bellevue Ave. Then my married life we lived out on the Parkhurst farm.

Q: What year were you married?

A: 1949 to Joseph A. Macri, Jr.

Q: Where was Joe born?

A: I think he was born in Hammonton.

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

A: Well, we belonged to a group of people we called the Happy Hour Campers. We took a lot of trips (camping trips). One family had a tag-a-long trailer, like a box on wheels. It opened up and made beds. We had a tent. I think for awhile we used somebody's van. We used that for sleeping quarters but we made alot of trips all up and down the eastern seaboard. My husband and I seemed like the only ones who continued that. He bought a trailer and we did that with our children for years after until he died.

Q: What year did he die?

A: 1999.

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

A: We went to the same school. He was a year ahead of me in Hammonton school. I really did not know him well until after the war. I had finished college and came home and worked as editor of the Hammonton News and Joe was operating a crop dusting business with a class mate of his.

Q: Maybe you could say something about when he was in the war. I know he was a flyer.

A: He was a pilot in a bomber and he flew his plane over to Africa with a stop in Puerto Rico and other islands near Africa. He was stationed in Africa for awhile and then he moved to Britain and they bombed Germany. He had more than thirty missions. I wrote to him then because we knew the same people in high school. I wrote to him when he was in the service, not as much as I should have probably.

Q: When he came home at the end of the war, you were working as an editor at the Hammonton News and you met somehow.

A: I don't know exactly how probably but we started double dating with my cousin Tom Elvins and one of the girls who worked with me at the Hammonton News. We started dating then. The first date we went on we borrowed his sister Jane's car. Jane and her husband were working at NAFAC then or one of those places down there. Jane was a practical nurse and Allen was a foreman in a kitchen. He mostly had something to do with serving food to other soldiers or airmen. When we went out to get in the car to come home from this place where we had stopped down near Egg Harbor the car wouldn't start. Joe steered the car while the three of us pushed it down the White Horse Pike. We got home alright.

Q: How old were you when you married?

A: About 25. Our son was born at the other end of 1949 and I was about 25. Joe was about one year older.

Q: Do you practice a religion?

A: No.

Q: Do you consider yourself anything, a Methodist or?

A: No.

Q: Do you have children?

A: Yes. Joe, Jr., he lives in Folsom now. He does all my errands and takes me to do errands and takes me to the doctor's. In fact he left his job and came home particularly to help Linda take care of me. I live with my daughter Linda and her husband, Jimmie Garrison in my father's old house.

Q: You had a son who passed away a couple years ago?

A: Yes. My youngest son Howard was a fireman and well known in Hammonton. He had four children and then two adopted children when he died. He had two severe heart attacks. He was a bus driver for Atlantic City Transit. He managed to get his bus back to the bus garage and from there he was transported by a rescue team to the hospital and then they moved him to another hospital and finally he was moved to New Brunswick Hospital and he died there.

Q: Do you remember by any chance the birth dates of your kids?

A: Young Joe's is December, 1949, Linda was about 1951, Howard

Q: What was your mother's maiden name?

A: French.

Q: When and where was she born?

A: I think she was born in Pleasantville. At that time her father, my grandfather Howard French, was working for one of the big hotels in Atlantic City. They lived in a house in Pleasantville and he commuted. I think it was the Brighton. He was in charge of maintenance of the hotel.

Q: When was your mother born?

A:

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

A: I imagine it was in Philadelphia. She was a member of the Maxwell family.

Q: How did she get to Hammonton?

A: Her father really didn't get along well with his father or the rest of the family. After they were married his father gave him a job as a station master at Blue Anchor. He moved there. He had four children, this is the son. He and his wife lived there.

Q: Do you remember any of the children's names?

A: Her sister was Roberta and then my aunt was named Roberta after her. She was my mother's only sibling. The two sons were Chat, exactly what his name was, I don't remember. The other one lived in Shamong Township. He married a girl there whose family had a big farm and they would come and visit us when I was young. He had an injury from a war, I suppose it was the first world war. He limped quite badly.

Q: Do you have a family bible that records any of these things?

A: No, not that generation.

Q: Your mother's mother maiden name. That would be before the Maxwell.

A: She was Emma Frances Highberger Evans. She came down here to live in a little tiny house by the railroad track out in Berlin. She was a great friend of Elsie Parkhurst's mother and I always called him Uncle Bill Parkhurst, that would be Bill Parkhurst's grandfather. He told me that the two old ladies would get together regularly, have a glass of wine and talk and talk and talk.

Q: Before this family lived in Philadelphia (the Maxwells and the Evans) do you have any idea where they came from, were they born in this country or overseas.

A: No. It was a French family. I have some idea but I really don't know. I am pretty sure that my grandmother's father, who was a Maxell was in railroading and I don't think his history as a businessman was very moral but it was very successful. I think he was one of the railroad barons.

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

A: Howard French.

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

A: No. I don't.

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

A: The French family were Quakers. Originally they came from England. They had to escape all kinds of persecution that the Quakers were suffering there and they lived with a community of Quakers near Burlington.

Q: Did your father have a nickname? Where and when was he born?

A: I think he and all of his siblings were born in Hammonton.

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

A: Lila Ruby

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

A: No. I don't.

Q: Do you know where her ancestors came from, what country? Were they Irish or English or Scotch?

A: Her father, the Ruby family evidently came from Spain because a friend of hers did some research on her family. She was an invalid and my grandmother Lily Ruby, when she was in high school was expected to rush home after school every night and take care of an invalid mother and a house. Which she did not do when the ice was on the Hammonton Lake because she loved to ice skate. Despite the fact that her father was very stern she managed to get ice skating before he got home from work.

Q: What is your father's father's name. It would be your grandfather Elvins.

A: Thomas.

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

A: In Hammonton, I believe.

Q: Do you know where his ancestors came from?

A: Yes. His grandfather came to this country from a little town in Cornwall, England near Wales. My father hated the English so much for their colonialism that he would never admit that he was English. One of his aunts said to me, "Well, he could think whatever he wants but he is English"

Q: Are there any other tales about your father that you can think of?

A: Well he had two brothers who grew up with him, two brothers who died earlier. The three who grew up together were pretty ornery. He seemed to be the peacemaker. He was the youngest of the three but he seemed to be the peacemaker and so on. They got involved in things like stealing all of the Thanksgiving pies and running off with them, going hunting instead of going to church and his father was a very, very religious man and he wanted his sons to become ministers but none of them did and he finally let them get their own education.

Q: Was your grandfather a minister?

A: No. None of them were ministers. They all worked at Elvin's store helping whoever was in charge at the time. Then of course, they started the farm and they had a big farm to manage too.

Q: What were your dad's brothers names?

A: Edward Hubbert was the oldest son, Thomas Clohsey was the next one, then my father.

Q: The two that passed away, do you remember them?

A: I remember them when I was a child.

Q: Is this Hubbert any relationship to the Parkhursts who were Hubberts?

A: No. I don't believe so. I know that his name came from the Ruby side of the family. I think that name came from that part of the family.

He was a Hammonton farmer for many years. He also managed that stand on the White Horse Pike which is where the present Fire Co. is. After his mother died because that was her stand.

He was Tommy Elvins father, Edward Hubbert.

Q: I understand that there is a connection with the Hidenburg crash. Can you tell us that story?

A: Well, when I was from 10-13-14 in that area my grandmother and grandfather French, Howard and Maybel we called them, had to rent their house because this was during the depression and things were really tough. They moved out to the farm. They helped my mother who had a huge family plus people who worked on the farm to feed. One of my father's uncles who lived just across the wooded area on the pike, he was

the son of William Elvins who was one of the first Elvins to come to Hammonton used to walk over for supper every night. My mother fed him early before the rest of the family. He was sort of a grumpy old individual but still we ran to meet him. All the kids in the family ran to meet him every night. We skipped along side of him chattering until they got to the kitchen door.

Q: Was he a bachelor?

A: Yes. He ran a delivery business in Hammonton. He had a horse and wagon that he used to deliver things that came in on the train and so on. He had one of the first rural post office delivery routes in Hammonton. I guess it was the first.

Q: Your Sunday afternoon rides?

A: Oh. Yes. My grandmother and grandfather were living there with us and I would not let them take a step out of the house without me. We would go down to visit the Turners every Sunday afternoon after we had our dinner.

Q: The Turners that lived at 404 Bellevue Ave.?

A: Yes. Ida was my grandfather's only sister. I believe she was the only one of the siblings in that family that still lived in Hammonton. They kept in touch. We visited every Sunday afternoon. Ida's husband had an automobile agency on Bellevue Ave. across from where Ranere's had an automobile agency. Then I married into that family. They were competitors, generations before. Her husband always had a brand new car to drive around in and everybody loved to drive. So my grandmother and grandfather and I and the Turners would go off on a ride most Sunday afternoons unless there was a baseball game at the Hammonton field that the men wanted to watch. We would all go out into the back yard which overlooked the fence onto the Hammonton High School athletic field and watch the game. We would ride all over. I remember going to see them harvest cranberries and blueberries, this farm and that farm, ~~whatever~~ places interested the men mostly. On one Sunday afternoon we drove to see the dirigible, Hindenberg land at Lakehurst. There were many people from Hammonton there that day. The big field where the dirigibles landed were just full of cars from all over.

Q: What this the maiden voyage? Why was it such a big affair?

A: I don't know that it was the maiden voyage but I think it was one of the first to carry passengers who paid to ride from Europe across the ocean and come to Lakehurst. We saw the dirigible approach and we even saw

the ground crew working with guidelines to pull into it's landing position and all of a sudden there was an explosion and the whole thing burst into fire. Now the newsletter of Bill's says that Ida Turner was the one who hid the kids with a coat but it was, I was the only child there, and it was my grandmother. She was afraid that I would see something terrible resulting from this fire. I was thirteen. I was so curious. I wanted to see everything that was going on but it didn't do any good. My grandmother was dominant. Anyway before the whole fire was out we had left and most of the spectators and people who were there in the field had left.

Q: That was a very horrific occurrence. Are there any other stories you can think about your mom or dad? What kind of a mom was your mom?

A: She was very interesting and caring. She was very active in PTA and started a mother's club on the PTA guidelines following their plans and instructions. We used to have a big picnic on the lawn at the farm every year for the mother's club. Mothers and all their children came and we had a grand time. My mother also started a theatre club for the Hammonton school children. She would arrange to have a children's theatre group come once a year and put on a performance in the Hammonton High School auditorium. They sold tickets. I know the fee was nominal. It wasn't very much. She worked very diligently at that. She was also a county representative of the PTA and went to a convention in New York City every year, in addition to taking care of a big farmhouse and all the people that lived in it. There was my father's brother, her sister, her mother and father. There was a farm hand who lived in a heated room out on the second floor of one of the barns. Then, of course, I think I mentioned Bill Elvins, my father's uncle, who came to get a dinner every day. So she had a job just feeding all those people.

(Pat-- and you and your sisters)

(Virginia) oh! yes. There were three of us and she and my father.

Q: Were you the oldest daughter?

A: Yes.

Q: And Jean and Robin (Roberta)? She didn't lose any children?

A: The story was that my father wanted nine boys for a baseball team. He decided that twelve children was just ridiculous so they stop having children. That is the story.

I am pretty sure that I could think of some stories. I mentioned the story about the pies at Thanksgiving time.

One Sunday, the three boys did not go to church. They went hunting instead and when they got back home their father lined them up across the bed and pulled off his strap and beat the three of them. My father said he looked back up at his father as this beating was going on and he said tears were just streaming down his father's face. Which makes us all believe that it was the grandfather and his strong religious persuasion that insisted that this take place.

Q: How did your parents meet and what did they do when they were married?

A: I am pretty sure that they met in high school because they were both in high school at the same time. My mother was one class ahead. She was a year older than my father.

(Pat- that was Gina French? and George Elvins is who we are talking about now?)

(Virginia -yes)

This was during World War I. My father worked at Amatol with a lot of the men from Hammonton. After the war was over and school started again he went to the principal and said "I missed an awful lot of school. What do I have to do to make up the work?" He said the principal just laughed at him and said "George. You have learned all we can teach you. You just come to school so you can graduate and we are going to let you skip a grade." So he skipped into my mother's class. After their senior year and their graduation they were in the same class.

One of the stories my mother told was she used to date my father. He would come to pick her up in a horse and buggy. Her father, Howard French, was a great tease. As soon as they heard the carriage coming he started laughing and carrying on "here comes cow" because the Elvins had cows on their farm and there is a distinct odor about cows. But anyway once during the snow dad had the buggy hooked up to a sleigh and they went off sleigh riding in the snow and all of a sudden the horse decided he had enough and he made a streak for the Elvins barn and there wasn't anything my father could do to stop him. Finally they got to the barn and the horse was satisfied and then he took him back so my mother could get home. I guess that is kind of typical of the way people lived back then because few people had cars back in that generation. This is the generation before me, before I was born.

Another Elvin's horse story was in the winter time the employees at Elvin's store and the men and family, would take a team of horses and a huge wagon out on Hammonton Lake, on the ice and they would saw and cut big chunks of ice, load the wagon and take it back to a very low, round dome shaped room that was attached to the horse barn and dug down into the ground. It was full of hay and straw. They packed the ice on the back of the wagon, repacked it when they got it into this barn and it lasted all summer and they were able to sell it at Elvin's store as well as supply their families for the summer.

Q: Did your mother work before she was married?

A: Yes. She had gone to Trenton school and after she graduated she came back and lived with her mother and father in Hammonton and she taught third grade in the Hammonton schools.

One of her stories about teaching in Hammonton was she taught a lot of boys say fifteen years old or older, almost as old as she was. Some of them were very hard to manage. The president of the school board then was Doctor Bert who was a very well known famous doctor in Hammonton and he said to her " Virginia, the law says you can't strike a child in school with your hand but there is nothing that says you can't hit them with a book".

Q: Were these fifteen year olds in the third grade?

A: Yes. Most of the kids never went to school. They worked on the farm.

Q: Can you tell me something about your mother's sister, Roberta? She had an interesting life didn't she?

A: Yes. She went to Temple and received a degree in physical education and after she graduated she came back to Hammonton. She was the physical education teacher at Hammonton High School and part of her duties was to visit each classroom in the system from kindergarten all the way through the twelfth grade at least once a month. So she had a big job there. She put on a big, sort of a "May Day" kind of a program in the year. She had a kind of a personality that just won everybody over and most of the people in town knew her. She was very athletic herself and played on the girl's town basketball team. They used to play in a little building down at the Hammonton Lake Park. There was a small gym there.

While I'm thinking of the park, that park was built by Hammonton men. My grandfather, Howard French, Roberta's father, was one of the men who helped build the park. Howard French and many men in Hammonton

would go to the park every Sunday and they would take along some food and water and some things that they thought they might absolutely have to have and they would work clearing the brush. I think they also built what we used to call the boat house. They would prepare the park so it could be used for bathing and picnics and different kinds of celebrations and very often the 4th of July celebration was held there and other organizations in town would hold summer picnics there. The men would work there for most of the day but late in the afternoon in different carriages all their wives would come with big picnic hampers and the men would break from their work and enjoy a picnic.

Q: Did Roberta have children?

A: No. She was not able to have children.

Q: Was she married?

A: She was married twice.

Q: Her first marriage was to?

A: Nate Atamo. She met him during the depression. My mother was seriously ill with scarlet fever and under quarantine and she wanted to continue teaching (this is Roberta) so she moved to the house that became the show house last year that was owned by the Turners. The Turners had moved out to the little house next door and were renting the big house to Mrs. Measley. I don't know which Mrs. Measley or what her husband's first name was or anything. They had a big farm on Middle Road or at the other end of town and they moved into that house, rented rooms, served meals, and Nate Atamo lived. Aunt Bobby moved in and that is how she met him.

Q: Obviously Wilson was still alive. Was Ida still alive at this time?

A: Yes.

Q: Were they the ones who took care of the boarding house?

A: No. Mrs. Measley took care of it.

Q: Then Roberta was married again after Nate died?

A: No. It wasn't after Nate died. After the war. They were both in the service. Nate was in the Navy. He had been in the Navy as a younger man and Bobby was in the WACs. She became a captain in the WACs. One of her jobs was a chauffeur for General Eisenhower. Of course she had a lot of different jobs in different parts of the world. She came back to Hammonton and one of the men she met overseas was her second husband, Lynn Barrett.

Q: Did Mr. Atamo pass away or were they divorced?

A: No. He got married again too. He lived in Vineland and his second wife was a school teacher in Vineland.

Q: Your mother had just Roberta for a sister?

A: Yes. Just the two of them.

Q: What did your mom look like?

A: She had a pretty sweet face, very dark hair, dark eyes, very lovely smile, very calm, sweet disposition and she was in many ways sort of the opposite of Roberta. Roberta had a winning personality and everybody just loved her. She was very outgoing where as my mother was more withdrawn. My mother very interested with everything we were doing. She helped us with our homework every night. She put hair in curlers for three daughters, then she went to the hairdressers herself. I mentioned before that all these people in the family. She actually started first thing in the morning planning the menu for the night's supper. Luncheon was always whatever happened to be left over. People sort of got their own breakfast. My father was up very very early every morning. He had that habit since he was a young boy. He would feed any of us who were up and going to school. Mother would be sure all of our clothes were out and so on and whichever one needed more help she would take care of them. Dad took care of the rest of them. He drove us to school. At noon time he would pick us up. Anybody who was in school. He drove us home for lunch. He would sit in a big chair near the radio. No TV then. He would doze off to sleep. A five or ten minute nap was all he needed while our mom put food on the table and then we would eat and go back to school. We only had a hour off so it was a quick trip. After school we would go to his office in city hall because he was the tax collector and treasurer and check in with him and tell him where we were going and what we were going to do. Very often it was down to one of the drug stores in town for a coke. We used to get a coke for a nickel. Even if it was a chocolate coke or a lemon coke, you know fancied up. Sometimes we would go home with one of the girls who lived near the school. He would come and pick us up then and take us home after school. If the weather was real good we would walk, it was a mile from the school out to the farm.

Q: What did your dad look like?

A: Dad was quite tall and he was a very handsome man, very particular about his clothes and the way he looked. He spoke very quietly just the way my mother did. He hardly ever raised his voice. He could get steamed up about some of the politics in Hammonton. Some of it just

didn't suit him at all. In addition to the job of tax collector and treasurer he was also custodian of school funds. He took care of the budget for the sewer department and the water department and their collections as well as their budgets. He was active in the farmer's market, the auction association. A couple of times when that organization sort of went out of existence he helped to rebuild it and get it started up again. He was the president of the organization for awhile. He was also on the board of directors of one of the savings and loan, Hammonton Savings and Loan. His father and his grandfather had been directors too of that organization and the workman's. So that went back pretty far. He never joined the fire company like his father and grandfather and his two brothers. He just, I don't know, the politics was just as bad in fire company but for some reason or other he felt that it was essential that he couldn't escape the politics and he did enjoy that. He would not let my mother have anything to do with politics at all. She couldn't go to meetings, she couldn't go to rallies or hear speeches or whatever. She let him rule in that department. He had to take a lot of courses at Rutgers University after he was elected treasurer and tax collector. He used to drive after work to New Brunswick to take these courses. One night on his way home he stopped at his brother Hub's stand across the White Horse Pike and picked up a basket of peaches. He put it on his shoulder and carried it back home. He obviously had left his car home. He went to the stand picked up the peaches, carried them on his shoulder down the driveway and he was never concerned at all about leaving my mother and the three of us alone in the house because we had a female German Shepherd who was a gem. She wasn't going to let anybody touch any of us. He walked into the door. The dog came to meet him, it was a different step. She did not know it was my father and she jumped on him and knocked him down and the peaches down because he changed the weight of his step. Then she was so embarrassed and ashamed that she had jumped on my father because he was her ideal.

Q: Your mom and dad had three children. Could you tell us something about your sister Jean?

A: Jean went to Rutgers Agriculture college. She followed me. I graduated the school of journalism and the next year she entered the agriculture college.

Q: You went to Rutgers also?

A: Yes. It was actually my dorm was at NJC then, New Jersey college for women which is part of Rutgers. Jean took courses at the men's college

just as I did for journalism. Then she came back home to help dad with our farm and she also got several state jobs. Jobs in the North Jersey area where she lived with our Aunt Roberta while she was working there. She married a fellow student in the agriculture school, Henry Bruno. He had a nursery business in Metchun. He was a native of Metchun. When their first child was born they lived with his mother. Then they bought a farm in Piscataway and they had a big nursery business and farm there. It is still operating. My sister has been trying and trying for years to get her husband to give it up.

Q: How many children do they have?

A: Four. They have two girls and two boys.

Q: They are all living in North Jersey?

A: No. They are scattered all over. The oldest child is one of the directors of Callaway Gardens down in Georgia. The other one is out in Seattle.

Q: In gardening by any chance?

A: Well, neither of them were going to have anything to do with the nursery business or farming but they both wound up in the nursery business. I don't know exactly what kind of work the second son is doing. The first son is Henry Jr., Hank. The second son is George Barrett, we call him Barry. The third child is a daughter who is a school teacher in the Piscataway school system. The last daughter and her husband are caretakers of a fresh air camp in the Catskill mountains and she is back in college again now taking courses to become a nurse. She always wanted to be a nurse. Each of them graduated from college. The youngest daughter graduated with a degree in animal husbandry and every time she would get near a bunch of cows out in a field somewhere her mother would have a fit because she was so afraid her youngest daughter was going to get hurt. Young Jean would always say and point to her boots "see these steel toed boots mom, no cow is going to come near those steel toed boots."

Q: Is that the fourth daughter?

A: Yes her name is Jean too.

Q: How about the other daughter. What was her name?

A: Virginia

Q: You did not change names a lot in your family. The Virginias, Robertas and the Jeans.

A: I didn't my after. I named Howard after my grandfather and of course Joe is named after his father.

Q: Your sister Roberta (Robin)?

A: Well, Robin was mentally ill from the time she was quite young. She was patient at Ancora for many years. There was times when she was not hospitalized and she lived with my mother and father.

Q: Was her illness a result of her failed marriage?

A: It might have caused it but it wasn't the cause of it. She was ill before then.

Q: Now she is deceased?

A: Yes. It is just a couple of years.

Q: What kind of people were your maternal and paternal grandparents?

A: Well, I think I could sum it all up for the French family, Howard and May French by telling you I have a photograph of the two of them sitting on top of an outhouse roof. Howard was a tease and a joker, always teasing. He had a filthy mouth. My grandmother would always tell us "don't you ever say any thing you hear your grandfather say". Of course she would never have said anything that was the slightest off color or out of the way and she was very active in community affairs but he wasn't. He mostly worked out of town but there was a period of time when he painted houses in Hammonton.

Q: Did he work with his brother?

A: No. He worked with Harry Thatchler in Hammonton. They painted houses.

My grandmother was one of the founders of the Hammonton PTA. This is May I am talking about, my mother's mother. She was very active in the PTA, in the needle work guild and there are all kinds of womens, the civic club. The women that she knew and socialized with were mostly the same, one or two of them drove cars but the rest of them didn't. The couple that drove cars would go around and pick up the others in the afternoon. It seemed that they did all their housework, of course they did it the hard way, they had washing machines that had wringers that they had to turn by hand and fill water with the hose and all that. But in the afternoon there was usually some kind of a club activity, social activity and many evenings they would get together with their husbands and another couple and play cards. Mostly it was bridge they played. Of course these different organizations that they belonged to had would have many different meetings and social activities in the evening too when the weather was good enough for them to get out.

Q: How about your husband's grandparents?

A: My father's mother and father.

His father and his grandfather belonged to just about every organization in Hammonton. They were both directors of the two savings and loans, directors of the bank, very active in church work. My great grandfather used to walk every Sunday from the store on the pike downtown to the Methodist Church at least three times on Sunday. He was director of the choir, director of the Sunday school and he taught the Sunday school. He was just about everything in the church and he contributed a great deal of money as well as his time and work. He would embarrass his grandsons, my father and his brothers every Sunday by sitting in the first pew yelling ,hollering "praise the lord" and other similar exertations. The boys just couldn't stand it. He is the one that wanted his sons and grandsons to be ministers yet he relented and let them choose what they wanted to be. The sons and (he only had two grandsons) this is the first George Elvins that I am talking about who ran the store and lived in Hammonton.

Q: The George Elvins that first ran the store was your father's father or grandfather?

A: Grandfather. His father was Tom. George was his grandfather. His great grandfather was Andrew who was the first Elvins to come to this country.

Q: Are all of these people buried in the same area?

A: No. The Elvins are buried at Oak Grove cemetery. A lot of George Elvins wife's family (because her mother and father came to live in Hammonton when they got old) The French family are at Greenmount cemetery. Robin is buried there.

Q: I know Ida is buried with the Turners. Do you recall the location of the French?

A: It is under Maxwell.

(Pat- that is not. far from my parents then)

It is on last driveway that goes back. On the left hand side. There is a large monument and then I think there are four head stones to the side and in front of the large monument. That is my grandmother's mother and father and my grandmother and Howard and grandchildren and Bobbie and my sister Robin are buried.

(Pat --Your sister and aunt)

Q: All the women in your family were educated apparently from what you said. How about the men? Your father or his father go to college or did any of the French's go to college?

A: My father was dead set against going to college himself and he was dead set against me going but after I graduated I got a job at the Hammonton News and he was so astounded at the amount of money I earned that I don't think he gave Jean any problem at all. His brother Hubbard had started at Rutgers but only stayed a short time because he knew more than the teachers and everybody was sure that he did. He had an instant total recall memory. He could look at a page turn it and he knew everything on the page. He and my father, I don't know whether my uncle Tom did the same thing or not but they ordered just about every state agriculture publication that every was printed. It was delivered in the mail to them and they read constantly both of them.

Q: Who was the postmaster in your family? Was there a post office at the general store that your family had?

A: It was at the store. Elvin's store was at the corner of the pike and Bellevue Ave. I can even remember as you walked in the front door there was a box hanging on the wall that had a little cubby hole in it. That was for mail for people who lived in that area. So whoever was delivering mail for the post office came and they put their mail in there. Back a little bit further there was an office like very small cubby hole is the only word I could think of that was enclosed in sort of iron railing all around it. I think that the store business records for their bookkeeping and so on was kept there but also some of the post office business was kept there.

Q: Was there a postmaster located there physically?

A: Sometimes yes and sometimes no. Sometimes even when it was one of the Elvins who was the postmaster they opened up another office down town so the people down town didn't have to go all the way out to the pike for the post office.

Q: What most has changed about Hammonton since you were a kid?

A: Well I am constantly astounded by the difference in living since I was a kid. It's eighty-three years, yes but things are just totally different.

Q: The standards of living you mean?

A: Yes. The way we live. The way our friends live. My father had to have every new thing that came along. Even though there were many things, there would be years before my mother would have a new dress but when the first electric stove came out we had one like maybe the first one in Hammonton but that is just the way he operated. When I graduated from college he didn't have anything to drive to New Brunswick in. I rode back

and forth on the train to New Brunswick and he must have mentioned something about he was concerned because he knew my mother wanted to go to my graduation and he did too. So Aunt Peggy said she would take her car, she would drive and she would take my family so that is how they settled that. Shortly after that he relented and he bought a fairly decent modern car which finally wound up belonging to his grandchildren and he got another car for himself. That is sort of the way we lived. My ^{father} would not hear of having a TV in the house but when there was a Joe Louis fight on TV they all came up to our little apartment on the second floor and watched it on the TV.

Q: So you and Joe started your married life there?

A: No. We started in an apartment on Bellevue Ave. where the Gazette offices are now. That belongs to Joe's mother's family, the Ranere family. they are cousins of Pete Ranere. Joe's mother's family is Ranere.

Q: Did that building on the corner belong to the Turner family?

A: I don't know. I don't think so.

Q: Where was the Turner auto works?

A: It was between that building and where the savings and loan is now up for sale. There was a grassy area there with a couple of residences when I was a kid and a few years ago. Now the funeral home is there. That area. That is where the Macri and the Ranere family lived.

Q: The Turner's were on the corner?

A: No. The Turners were there with them to. Uncle Will Turner and Joe's uncle ran that auto business together.

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

A: I can think of places that I really remember. When I was a kid there were three movies in Hammonton. The Rivioli, The Palace was down Bellevue Ave. further and there was the Eagle Theatre that they are rebuilding now.

Q: That was a movie theatre?

A: Well, for a while I think it was. I could remember going down cement steps because that building was dug out into the ground. I'm pretty sure that they had them. I don't know if they had them regularly or every night like the others did but mostly. Very often after supper when we lived in the farm house we sort of shoved the dishes out of the way she and Jean and Robin and I would walk to one of these movies in Hammonton. My father could not waste his time on movies besides he had meetings, meetings,

meetings galore. When the movie was over we would start to walk back home but very often we would stop at your mother and fathers, at Turner's house on Bellevue Ave. and sometimes we would go Aunt Bobbie's house which was further down Bellevue Ave.

Q: Do you remember that address. I don't remember that?

A: Do you remember where Dr. Janette's family lived on the corner. There was a house next door with a red roof on it? That is where Bobbie lived. We would wait there for my father's meeting to be over and than he would pick us up so we didn't have to walk all the way home.

(Pat - yes) Just past Packard and Bellevue on Bellevue. I remember that now that you say it.

The Turner's lived at 408 Bellevue.

We are going to talk a little bit about Ginny's grandmother who was from the Ruby family. Her name was Lila Ruby. Her maiden name was Elvins.

Ginny is going to tell us a story or two about her.

She was a very good student in the Hammonton school. One of the very few girls who really went through the system and graduated. When she graduated she had to take a test at the county office and passing the test she was allowed to teach school in Hammonton. So she was a school teacher for awhile in Hammonton and other schools in the county. I can remember when I was about kindergarten age my father driving her out to what we called the agriculture school beyond Elwood to substitute for one of her former principals. But more than that she was a nurse to many, many people in Hammonton because there just weren't any nurses and her brother-in-law was Dr. Pearl. Dr. Pearl, when he needed help would call her or he would take his buggy to her door and she always had a black woman who she would call my children's nanny. This woman lived with them or in a little house behind their house on Bellevue Ave. down near the end. The house is still there. As you go out towards the pike down Bellevue Ave. it is not the last house on the bend on the right but the house that is real close to it right next to it. That is where they used to live. I often wonder if that is the house the Hammonton historians when they say the George Evans' house. I don't know. But anyway my grandfather, Tom Elvins decided that he didn't want his boys hanging around the street corners of Hammonton so first they moved to that house, then they moved

to the farm. Of course on the farm the boys did not have a minute to call their own because they were busy every night. Anyway my grandmother, Lila Ruby would go wherever Dr. Pearl needed any help and sometimes she would be away from her family for days. Very often it would be because of a child birth and she would assist him in whatever he needed help with. The people in town called her and my grandfather Mr. & Mrs. Tom. Of course Tom Elvins as I said before belonged to all these community organizations but also ran the store and of course he had bought the farm after that and ran the farm. I don't think his father, the first George Elvins in Hammonton, I don't think he ever had anything to do with the farm. He just lived and worked at the store but they sure had a busy life. There are things and traits in the family that were handed down to us. One of them is the love of ice cream. My great grandfather George Elvins who was interested in the farm (Tom Elvins bought the farm -- his son) loved ice cream. Both of them had a study that were just full of book cases and law books. That was their recreation--to study law. After my grandfather Tom had been closeted in a room for a while while the rest of the family was doing homework or whatever in the next big room, which later became a dining room, but it was sort of a family room because he occupied the formal living room in the front of the house. He would open his door and come out and he would say "does anybody want some ice cream" and of course everybody did. He would walk from there over to the store on the corner, get the ice cream and would bring it back. He kept his own stash I think in the refrigerator at the store.

Again there was an interest that was carried on from the great grandfather, grandfather down to my father in agriculture and they were all very active in the farmer's organizations in Hammonton as well as the banking and financial organizations.

John T. French built and operated at least two different hotels in Hammonton. One I know was called the Royal Hotel, the other I am now sure about. The building that is now the VFW hall on Egg Harbor Road was once one of those hotels. Of course over the years it has been changed greatly and so on. He would also be involved with many community organizations and they would require him to be out late at night. Often he would walk into the house ...

Dict/Interviewed PC 2/26/08

Typed: cafe 1/28/12

MACRI, VIRGINIA E. (nee Elvins) - age 91 of Hammonton, passed away peacefully Friday November 6, 2015 at Manor Care in Washington Twp. Born in Ocean City, she was a lifelong resident of Hammonton and graduated from Hammonton High School in 1942. Virginia went on to earn her Bachelor's Degree from Douglas College in 1946 and her Master's Degree in Reading Education from Glassboro State Teachers College. She taught reading at Glassboro State College and retired from the Hammonton School system after 30 years as the Reading Consultant. She was also the former Editor of the Hammonton News. She is predeceased by her parents George and Virginia Elvins, sister Roberta Churchill, husband Joseph A. Macri Sr, granddaughter Bethany Macri, her son Howard Macri and son in law James Garrison. Surviving are her sister Jean Bruno of Piscataway, sister in law Anna Mae Carrelli of Hammonton, son Joseph A. Macri Jr. of Williamstown, daughter Melinda M. Garrison of Hammonton, daughter in law Teri Macri of Hammonton. Loving grandmother of Sean Macri (Donna), Melissa Camacho (Carlos), Ashley Macri (Christopher), Jason Macri (Robin), Emily, Kylee and Luca Macri. Great Grandmother of Alix, Aiden, Aubrie Macri, Ronald Carrelli, Ryan, Jacob Camacho, and many nieces and nephews. Family and friends are invited to attend her visitation Saturday Nov.14th 9:00am - 11:00am at the Marinella Funeral Home 102 N. 3rd St. Hammonton, NJ. Services will be held at 11:00am. Burial will follow at Oak Grove Cemetery 500 N. White Horse Pike Hammonton. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Hammonton Education Foundation, Inc. P.O. Box 552 Hammonton, NJ 08037 or Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge 800 Great Creek Rd. Absecon, NJ 08205. www.marinellafuneralhome.com

MACRI

To Virginia and Joseph Macri,
275 N. White Horse Pike, a boy,
Howard French, March 19, 1955,
Esposito Home, 6 lbs. 10 oz.