



## Interview with Helen Marchetti

Under the Auspices of the  
Monmouth County Library Headquarters  
125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, N.J.  
Flora T. Higgins, Project Coordinator

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**Name of Interviewer: Ellen Williams**

**Premises of Interview: Ms. Marchetti's home, Atlantic Highlands, NJ**

**Birthdate of Subject: April 7, 1925**

**Ms. Marchetti:** Thank you very much, Ellen, I'm very happy to be able to give this interview with you today. I have a lot of good childhood memories here in Atlantic Highlands; in fact I was born and raised in Atlantic Highlands, and I still live in the house that I was born in. As far as my memories are concerned, at an early age, one of the things I do remember is the amusement park that we had over here on Bay Avenue. At one time it was just a big open lot from Avenue A all the way to Avenue D. We would look forward to that amusement park opening because they had a scenic railway or rollercoaster, and we would get free rides to shine up the rails that had become corroded from the snow and the bad weather over the wintertime. At the amusement park, the boats would also start to run. The boat that I can remember was the *Mandalay*, that came right into the park area. Then there would be little trains that ran out there to meet the boat and bring the people in from New York for the day. It was really something to see; there were all types of rides. They used to have marathon dancing over there, and the town really came alive. Atlantic Highlands is really only one square mile, and a lot of the homes that were here in Atlantic were just summer homes. At that time I don't think we had more than 1,000 people, even if that, in Atlantic Highlands. So it meant that in June, once schools closed in New York, everybody would come down and open up their summer homes. Right across the street from where I live we had this hotel which they called the Cresson Hotel, and there again, that was just for the summer. Armenian people would come down and open it up and all the kids in the neighborhood would have homemade ice cream. That was a time when people would make their own homemade ice cream. As I said, there's a lot, lot of memories that I have of the town. Years back you just didn't go to First Avenue all the time. Sunday was the best day to go to

First Avenue because you went out for a walk; you walked down to First Avenue with your friends and up through the hills on the other side of town. And there was another thing, too: when we were growing up, First Avenue was the dividing line between the west side of town and the east side of town. We were from the West side of town, and it was a treat to get down there on First Avenue on a Sunday, and then walk through the other side of town, because then people didn't have cars. Everywhere we went we would walk. We had nice beaches here at that time. At the end of Avenue A we had Leslie's Beach and Culcullen's Beach, and there again people from New York who came down by boat would go to those beaches for the day. There were bathhouses there; there was everything that you would really and truly want for your town.

**Ms. Williams:** Would you say that the community still had an identity, even though it was a summer residence? Were there enough people here throughout the year that you felt a sense of home, even though most homes were summer homes?

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, definitely! Oh, definitely! There's no place like home in Atlantic Highlands. Believe me when I say that.

**Ms. Williams:** What was the time period there, Helen?

**Ms. Marchetti:** That was back in the 1930s. That the park was there.

**Ms. Williams:** So you were born in the home that we're doing the interview?

**Ms. Marchetti:** That's right.

**Ms. Williams:** What year was that?

**Ms. Marchetti:** 1925. My childhood memories were in the thirties. Prior to that you stayed in your home or you were in your backyard - you just didn't go all over town. My father was a milkman for Sheffield Farms; he worked seven days a week. And it was just my brother, myself, and my mother. My father was a very hard working man. We rode on the milk truck many a time if we were off from school, or on weekends.

**Ms. Williams:** It must have been fascinating to deliver the milk.

**Ms. Marchetti:** It was. And my father was a great one for whistling and singing.

**Ms. Williams:** That's good, made the time pass.

**Ms. Marchetti:** So all the old songs my brother and I know until this day. Sometimes you'll be out someplace and they'll start singing these different songs, and I can chip right in.

**Ms. Williams:** Did he play an instrument?

**Ms. Marchetti:** No. No, he just sang.

**Ms. Williams:** And you just enjoyed being with him.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, definitely, definitely! My father was born in Atlantic Highlands, and my grandfather, his father, and my mother were born in Middletown.

**Ms. Williams:** There's a real family history here...

**Ms. Marchetti:** It was, really. Nobody strayed in those days, I mean you grew up and you stayed right in the town, you know, that you were born in.

**Ms. Williams:** Right. And you have a real commitment to the town, your whole life, you've been involved in many civic areas.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, I have. One of my goals growing up was that I would do whatever I could for the betterment of the town.

**Ms. Williams:** Right.

**Ms. Marchetti:** I served on the school board for twenty years, at the Atlantic Highlands Elementary School. I've seen that school come to where it is today, which makes me very, very happy. It's fabulous; it's a very educational school, and it's k through six. Years ago there was a high school here in Atlantic Highlands, but then once people started to move in year round, they converted it into just a k through six; the seventh grade went to Henry Hudson Regional High School. I really and truly wish we could have kept the school in town. I am a firm believer in home rule. I don't care whether it's with the school system or in the town itself. As far as the borough is concerned, I served as a councilwoman in Atlantic Highlands. Even then sometimes they would start with this business of garbage collection, sending it out, or trying to sell our water plant. I fought that for all it was worth. And thank God I did. Anytime a district is a sending district, for whatever it might be, whether it's education, or borough, the sending district always pays, and you really and truly do, you pay right down the line on services, there's no two ways about it. So I'm very happy with the way the town's been run over the years.

**Ms. Williams:** Right. What were some of the issues, Helen, that you might recall with the school borough? What were some sources of discussion that came up a lot?

**Ms. Marchetti:** None, really. We were very, very fortunate down here in this school for the time that I've been there, and I'm still there now. I've been

President of the Board for almost nine years. We really do not have any problems, and some people may not believe it, but we really and truly don't. We have a very good group of teachers. A lot of the teachers are local, and a lot of them live in town, and they have the town at heart and they want to see everything good for the children. We have no problems with contracts or anything like that. So there's really never been any controversy.

**Ms. Williams:** As Boro Councilwoman, you mentioned the water plant. Were there other issues about Atlantic Highlands that were on the agenda quite a bit?

**Ms. Marchetti:** Well, you know, the Council oversees all the different departments like the Police Department and the Harbor, but there again, everyone on these boards lives in the town, so that no matter what the political end of the spectrum was, everybody worked together. Everybody has to run on a different ticket, but it's just the idea that once a person's elected, they forget politics and they go for whatever's best for the town. There's a lot of renovation on First Avenue. The new Borough Hall was built, and the bank was moved into a different location. It used to be the First National Bank, and everybody banked there. And then it went to Fidelity, and so forth, but it's still a very friendly, homey town. When you walk either down First Avenue or down your street you meet up with somebody that you know.

**Ms. Williams:** Well, that's a real advantage growing up here, knowing the school system, knowing the community. And then you became Mayor, you said, the first female Mayor in Atlantic Highlands.

**Ms. Marchetti:** I was the first female Mayor of Atlantic Highlands. That was in 1984, and some people have asked were there any problems or anything that really went on. I was the one woman on an all male council, and naturally everybody has discussions and differences of opinion and all that. But we always agreed, before we went to a council meeting, and before they went out of that room, I made sure that everybody was in agreement, because there's nothing worse than getting to the council meeting and sitting up there and arguing back and forth, because then people who came to the meeting wonder, "What is going on here?" A town never survives if you have all that friction. There's no advancement in a town. Just because we don't always agree, there's no reason for anyone to go and work against something. You have to sit and talk about it, and think about it, and then come to a conclusion on it.

**Ms. Williams:** And it's true, we'd give a bad image if everyone was bickering.

**Ms. Marchetti:** It certainly would - and you see it going on in a lot of towns. But as I said, there again, in Atlantic Highlands, even though we have some differences, in the end, we do what's best for the town.

**Ms. Williams:** Well, obviously the interest of the people is your priority, and has been your priority in terms of your service.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, it has been. I've been involved in a lot of functions in town: the Historical Society, for instance. I've been there now twelve years as President of that; and we've come a long way with our museum. We're very fortunate that the Monmouth County Historical Commission has helped us with our grants and everything. And each year they've given us a matching grant, and we've really come a long way with that building. The house, I should say, is about 105 years old, and The Historical Society has been in existence about twenty-six or twenty-eight years. It's at 22 Prospect Avenue, Atlantic Highlands. We encourage people to come: we're open every Sunday up there from one o'clock to four, and we give tours during the week for any organization that wants to come through. We have a lot of memorabilia up there. We have one room that's just dedicated to Atlantic Highlands. So I've been involved in that. I've been involved in Atlantic Highlands Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary. That comes by nature, because over the years my father was a fireman, starting in 1918, and then my brother became a fireman, and my husband became a fireman, so you can understand why I'm involved. You know, it's like anything else, especially with the Police Department. To me the Police Department is the mainstay of your town, it really and truly is. You can have all the council people, and all committees, but you have to have a good Police Department, and we've been very fortunate over the years to have an excellent Police Department. But there again, we don't go outside looking for people to come in and work in these different departments. We stay right in our own town and pull from our own. Those people have an interest, and they care for the town.

**Ms. Williams:** Do you have volunteers who've lived here taking people on tours?

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh yes, yes. We have about 180 members in the Historical Society, and we meet on the third Wednesday of each month, when we have a speaker and we serve refreshments. We encourage people to come to those meetings, because we like to put things out to the membership to get their ideas and listen to what they want of the museum. We hope more people will join. We're starting more and more to get people to join.

**Ms. Williams:** Do you have the school trips coming? Do you have the students coming from schools during the week?

**Ms. Marchetti:** Not yet, but we're going to start, you know, to reach out. It's like everything else: we're strapped for money to a point, and we have to have complete coverage as far as insurance is concerned, God forbid if anybody was to be hurt there. A couple of meetings ago, at a Board of Directors meeting, we were talking about going to the schools and inviting students in. We couldn't do it prior to this, because we didn't have heat in the building. Now we have heat in the building. We worked very, very hard to get it installed, thanks to all the people

who sent donations and helped us to install the heat. Now we'll be able to bring the schools in during the winter months.

**Ms. Williams:** What other types of things do you have on display there? Do people bring their photos?

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh yes, there are photos. Each room is set up in historical times, one bedroom is set up with the old cradles and memorabilia. The living room has a real old piano that dates back to the 1800s, and there's a lot of really old items that people give on loan. It's really furnished very well with old, old memorabilia.

**Ms. Williams:** You mentioned that now you're working in the Atlantic Highlands Nursing Home. Do you find most of the people there are also residents of the community?

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes. The nursing home that I'm working in is actually in Middletown Township, but it's an Atlantic Highlands mailing address. The nursing home is on Middletown Avenue. It's been there about forty years or more. I've been there now thirty-two years. If there is one thing that gives you satisfaction is to work in the nursing home. A lot of people just don't understand it, but I've always enjoyed people; I love the children and I love the elderly. Both are always so happy and content with whatever you do for them. There's always a thank you. We have Medicaid and Medicare patients, and we have some private. They do come from all over the state. We're fully staffed, thank goodness for that. I work five days a week, but I'm on call twenty-four hours a day. My only one bad time in the nursing home is on Christmas Eve day when I have to leave there. I come home and they're all there. That's the only day that bothers me. But they're happy in their own little world, they really and truly are, and they're well taken care of.

**Ms. Williams:** Do you find that over the years there has been the same family support, or does it change?

**Ms. Marchetti:** When I first went there, very rarely did we have families come in. But I think once they started to orient people and explain things to the families such as the workings of a nursing home and so on, more and more families are now interested. That makes me very, very happy. It really and truly does. There are some people who have no one, really, but I try to interest people in coming up so the men have a buddy system. We have an adopt-a-grandmother-or-grandfather program at the Atlantic Highlands Elementary School. The children come up at different times, and they'll send posters, or they'll send birthday cards. That does help the people who have no one, because their children have moved away. You'd be surprised at the number of people we have there who have no families at all.

**Ms. Williams:** Right. So this link with the community, with the children, is important to give a sense of connection.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes, and we have volunteers that come in, we have church services. We're going to build a new nursing home. It's going to start probably in February, and it's going to be on the same property. Once it's completed, we'll move the patients from the old building to the new building, and then tear the old one down. The worst thing, in fact, you could do with a patient is to move him or her even to move them to another room. You know we try so hard not to do this.

**Ms. Williams:** It's unnerving.

**Ms. Marchetti:** It is, and it confuses them. It really and truly confuses them. I don't care what day it is you walk in, they're just so happy to see you, and that's the satisfaction I'm talking about.

**Ms. Williams:** Well, you feel a sense of family there.

**Ms. Marchetti:** You really feel like you're somebody when you walk in there.

**Ms. Williams:** They see your warmth and your caring, and they look forward to that.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Really and truly, yes.

**Ms. Williams:** It sounds like you've established more of a sense of community there. You know, it's not an institution, but gives a sense of family.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes, and not only that, I always stress to all the employees when they walk through the door to have a smile on their face, because those people don't need to see somebody walking around sad. I know everybody has family problems, but employees have to leave them behind at the door. If that doesn't work out, they just don't work there anymore.

**Ms. Williams:** Just come and do your best, be upbeat.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes. We don't really have a big turnover of help, and that's so good, because these people need continuity. They don't need to see different people constantly taking care of them.

**Ms. Williams:** Right. Because there's a trust factor that builds too, there. Sometimes by the time you get to trust somebody to care for you, they're gone. And that's very unnerving.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes. We try to keep our staff a year in a certain section. And sometimes even after that, we don't move them around. They know the other

patients, too. Right now we have 153 patients in the nursing home on the two floors, and the girls do move around when someone is out sick, or someone is on vacation. But they know the patients, just like we all do.

**Ms. Williams:** I can see your commitment to this. In everything you do, you really have a genuine caring for your work.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, I love it. I love every minute of it. Every minute of my work.

**Ms. Williams:** It's not even work in the sense of work - it seems it's your life.

**Ms. Marchetti:** It is, it is my life, it really is. It's been a long time. But that's the way I feel as far as Atlantic Highlands is concerned. Atlantic Highlands has given me a good life.

**Ms. Williams:** And you've given them a good life too.

**Ms. Marchetti:** I've tried, and I'll keep trying. I'll continue to do whatever I can.

**Ms. Williams:** Before you went to the nursing home, you were at the gas company. What was your experience there?

**Ms. Marchetti:** I worked there when I came out of school. I went to work because the gas company was right here in town. Those days you didn't travel that far. We had the gas company, the telephone company, and the electric company right here on First Avenue. My father knew one of the supervisors down there, and he mentioned that they were looking for somebody, so I went down for the interview, and they gave me the job.

**Ms. Williams:** What did you do there?

**Ms. Marchetti:** When I first went to work there, I answered telephones, and that's the best way for anybody to learn. In this day and age, everybody wants to come in at the top. But I came in at the bottom and I worked and I answered telephones, and then I became a cashier, then a bookkeeper, and then after that they closed the office of the gas company. I went into a smaller office, and then I became manager of that office. I was manager of that office for seven or eight years. Then they closed that office, and they offered me a position in the home service department, which was out on the road dealing with the different businesses in town - all over, actually. We sold gas appliances, and promoted gas while working with the builders that were coming in at that time in mass, all over the county. That was one thing that disturbed me; they were coming in overnight and there were no ordinances or anything in place as to what they had to do. They just came in and they leveled property, and it used to make me so sick. All the beautiful farm lands that were out on the outskirts of Atlantic Highlands were gone. All those beautiful farms I can remember as a child, they

just went in and leveled them. There was no control. I mean they knew somebody, and they just walked in, and that was it. In the beginning, they didn't even have to put in roads: they would just go in, level, and start to build homes. Later on, municipalities got hold of it, and they started requiring all the curbs and streets be installed first. But, I can remember many a time going into a new development and getting stuck in the mud because the gas company had us go in and check out the dryers that the gas company would give if people would put gas in. We had to make sure and just check to make sure that the dryers were installed properly. It was one of our duties besides, you know, working with the businesses that were promoting and selling gas appliances.

**Ms. Williams:** So there was originally no check on development, but now there is, obviously, much more control.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, now all is different. I'm just so glad that the planning boards and the zoning boards finally took hold. Because back in the forties, or the beginning of the fifties, when they started to build, local government should have thought back then about keeping open space. They're doing it now, but it's a little late - but at least they're trying to do what they can, you know, as far as open space.

**Ms. Williams:** And how did you go from there to the nursing home? Was it right from the gas company there that you began to work there?

**Ms. Marchetti:** No, this is what happened: the gas company dissolved the home service department. There were thirteen girls in that department, and they called the thirteen of us in to the main office and told us that they were going to dissolve the department and they would find a place for us. So I said, "Thank you, but no thank you." I was home for maybe about three months when the medical director up at the nursing home who was our family doctor, Dr. Shapiro, came to me and said, "You know, I think you should see about this position up at the nursing home," and I thought, "No, no." But he insisted, and, you know, then I did what I was told. I went up and had my interview and everything. The office was in a house on the property, and I thought, "Well, that won't be too bad to stay in the office," but then one day the doctor who was the Administrator up there at that time sent me to the nursing home. Well, my legs shook from the office over to the nursing home. But then, once I got in there and I saw the people, I just couldn't help it, my heart just poured out to them.

**Ms. Williams:** So you were meant to be there.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes, that was it. All that time.

**Ms. Williams:** And Dr. Shapiro must have known that too, to encourage you to do that.

**Ms. Marchetti:** To stay all those years. Really, I loved every minute of it. I just like anything I do.

**Ms. Williams:** You care about people, you care about service.

**Ms. Marchetti:** I love people, that's the whole thing in a nutshell. So many people will say to me, "Oh, this house is so big, why are you here by yourself?" I lost my husband three years ago, and I couldn't leave this house, I have too many memories. I think as you get older, you do live with your memories to a point. Not that I'm not busy, but, you know, I just live with my memories, and I can't see going into a townhouse: you don't see anyone, everybody's in rush, they're going to work. Here I walk out in my yard, and there's always somebody going by. Or you sit in that chair, and everybody blows the horn, and I just wave; I don't even know who it is, half the time.

**Ms. Williams:** This is where your home and your history is; you wouldn't want to give that up.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, I wouldn't, no, no way. But as I said, my grandfather was the head caretaker up at the Rice Estate, which is Croydon Hall, and they lived where Hosford Avenue is now. There was no Hosford Avenue then. That was one big track of land, and they lived in the big farmhouse there, and he and my three uncles worked that farm for many, many years. It's amazing how things return back to you - the same thing with the day John F. Kennedy died. I think, not only myself, but everybody remembers where they were at that moment. I was working for the gas company, and I worked also in the schools because we put gas appliances in the schools in the Home Economics rooms, and I would have to go in there and demonstrate them. I was up in Keyport High School around noontime that day talking with the teacher when one of the children came running in and said, "The President's been shot!" and the two of us sat there, and she really got up in arms, and she said, "That's an awful thing to say," she said, "Is this a joke, or what?" cause you know how kids joke around with things like this. And I still to this day remember standing up there in Keyport High School that tragic day.

**Ms. Williams:** I think everybody in this country knew where they were when they heard that news. It was such a devastating shock.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh it was. Oh, the next three days were just unbelievable, unbelievable.

**Ms. Williams:** You've mentioned that Atlantic Highlands hasn't changed much except maybe First Avenue.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes, for a while there First Avenue was really going down, but all of a sudden now, it's starting to spring up. We have new businesses in town, and

the County has been very, very helpful, you know, and also the State with a lot of grants that have come in to town to help the businesses in town with low interest loans, and things like that.

**Ms. Williams:** You have the Playhouse there.

**Ms. Marchetti:** We have the Playhouse here. Now we have a movie house that has five theaters in it. We have a lot of restaurants, too, and the Marina. Of all things, I can't forget our Harbor. People call it the Marina, but I still refer to it as the Harbor. I remember the Harbor being built, it really has been such an asset to the town. It's a beautiful, beautiful Harbor. That was under my jurisdiction when I was Mayor. We have a Harbor Commission, but everything comes back to Mayor and Council, as far as the workings at the Harbor. Any monies or anything that was spent had to pass Mayor and Council. Have you been to the Harbor?

**Ms. Williams:** Yes, I have.

**Ms. Marchetti:** It's gorgeous. You know it's so good because the people in town go to the Harbor, they utilize the Harbor all summer long - and even into October, November, you see people there. More and more people are back, walking down First Avenue like we used to do when we were kids.

**Ms. Williams:** It must be good for you to see that.

**Ms. Marchetti:** It's such a good feeling to see the people in town.

**Ms. Williams:** It's that hometown feeling.

**Ms. Marchetti:** A few years back, about ten years back, there was never anybody walking in town. You'd go down First Avenue at night, and it was a deserted street. But now there's a lot of life, between the restaurants that we have now, the movie theater, the dinner theater, and now we're going to have that new Inn on First Avenue. They have already broken ground for that. There's more and more people moving in. There's a lot of homes being sold in Atlantic Highlands; a lot of people who are moving into town because there is the ferry now that takes only forty minutes to go from here to New York, and without the hassle of trains and buses.

**Ms. Williams:** It's the best way to go, better than bus, or driving.

**Ms. Marchetti:** But one thing that bothered me also, is that they stopped the trains. That hurt Atlantic Highlands. Because of stopping the trains here, they stopped the boats, too. So there was nothing to draw people to Atlantic Highlands.

**Ms. Williams:** Why did they stop the trains? What was the reason for that?

**Ms. Marchetti:** Well, the trains of Central Railroad of New Jersey were just starting to break down. They closed stations in Keansburg, Belford, and Leonardo. I think money played a big factor in that. At the train station there was a Western Union office.

**Ms. Williams:** But it was losing money to come down this area?

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes, that's the whole thing. When you were kid, when you heard that train whistle, you knew it was time to go home. Just like in town here, the gas company had a whistle that blew at seven o'clock, at twelve noon, and at five o'clock at night. That was from when they used to make gas down there. When you heard the five o'clock whistle, you knew you'd better head home.

**Ms. Williams:** That was your alarm!

**Ms. Marchetti:** That's right, that and the train!

**Ms. Williams:** So you had no excuse for being late coming home.

**Ms. Marchetti:** No, none at all.

**Ms. Williams:** There's certainly a lot of civic pride in you, and you can see the community is also flourishing and growing, and that must give you a lot of satisfaction.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, it does. It really and truly does. Mayor and Council, no matter what party is in. Call and talk to me about different things. They really and truly do. It's a shame that you have to run a political line in a small little community like this, but that's the way. I always stress to all council members, once you get in there you work for the good of the town.

**Ms. Williams:** It's good that they tap your history and your knowledge because you can give them background that's very important to their decision-making.

**Ms. Marchetti:** One thing I always say to them, "Keep home rule, so you don't have to answer to anyone else. As long as you do that, you can control what you're doing in your own town." So many towns have lost that now. As I said before, when you're a sending district, whether it's the school, or what it might be, what service it is, you're going to pay. And I've seen that happen. I've seen it happen.

**Ms. Williams:** Do you think the identity of the town is affected then, too? Do people just feel submerged within other communities and don't feel the same independence?

**Ms. Marchetti:** No, I don't think that's the idea. I think it pays sometimes to give up some home rule, because the more you have to pay for local services, the more your taxes go up. And I think that is what they are thinking about. I'd like to keep control in town.

**Ms. Williams:** I notice the church is right here next to your house. That's a new church, you said, not the original.

**Ms. Marchetti:** No, the original was on South Avenue.

**Ms. Williams:** So that was another change you saw, your church building moving.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes, it really hurt, I always wished they'd kept the old St. Agnes church, because that was a real small town church. It had a lot of warmth to it. But back then they just didn't seem to value things like that. First thing you knew, that was torn down, I go to St. Agnes church, I'm a member of the church, in fact I'm one of the trustees of the church. But I still feel that the old church had the warmth to it. I don't know, I don't know how to say this, but I just felt closer to God in that little old church. Most of these newer buildings are so cold, whether it be a church, a town hall. There was a lot of warmth to the old town hall and the old police station, and everything in town.

**Ms. Williams:** Sometimes change isn't always for the best interest of a town.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Sometimes changes move too fast. Instead of thinking things out, they get out there in left field and they don't know how to get back in. And that was one thing my father always taught me - think first, don't get out there in left field and then not know how to come back in. I've always lived with that advice. I'm a planner and an organizer - I have to be that way.

**Ms. Williams:** Well, you'd have to be that way with the positions you've had - you've been in managerial and administrative roles, both where you work and in the town - so organization is a skill that you obviously have. Tell us about your brother.

**Ms. Marchetti:** He stayed in town for quite a while - he worked for the gas company. Then they transferred him to Lakewood for the gas company and then in the Toms River area. It was so funny because he got involved in politics down there, and he was the Republican Mayor of Toms River, and I was the Democratic Mayor of Atlantic Highlands. Very open minded people - very broad-minded people. But we used to have more fun with that. My father, who, as I told you before, was the milkman, had a lot of funny sayings. Once we got into school and into this studying history, I came home one day and I said to my father, "Gee, Daddy, what are you - a Democrat or a Republican?" and he said, "I'm a Baptist." And I let it go at that! But he always said, "If you depend upon your

livelihood in the town in which you live, you don't get mixed in politics." And I know they came after him a couple of times to run for council but he would never, ever, and he never did get involved. He was very involved in the Fire Department, the First Aid. I guess my brother and I just followed in his footsteps.

**Ms. Williams:** Was your mother also interested in town affairs?

**Ms. Marchetti:** No, God love her, she was a homebody. And that was one of the wonderful things about her, because we always had her to go home to all the time. My father had to go to bed early, because he'd have to be up at three o'clock in the morning to leave here to go down to Long Branch to pick up his milk. He had his own milk truck - he sold Sheffield Farms milk - but then he would come back here and deliver it, and he did the same thing day in and day out, seven days a week.

**Ms. Williams:** And that really gives you values to emulate.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Definitely. He was a hard working man. My father was well respected in town. I think he delivered milk to everybody in town.

**Ms. Williams:** You mean you'd learn about everybody's problems.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Yes, it was funny too, because it was like that, that no matter who had trouble they'd always talk to my father about it.

**Ms. Williams:** Right, and then you ended taking care of everybody when you ran for office. That's a great story, the influence that passes down. Is there anything else you'd like to add? You've said so much here that's really rich, and told so many wonderful stories.

**Ms. Marchetti:** I've just been running on and on and on. I think I've been jumping from one thing to another.

**Ms. Williams:** It gives the picture of you and of Atlantic Highlands in the whole of what you've given here. It's not so much chronological as emotional and spiritual here. We don't really have to go in order. I don't know if there's anything else that you might want to add, again knowing that this is going to be in a transcript, but could be picked up five, ten years from now by anyone going into the library. Is there a message, or a life message, or theme, or something that you want to leave with the reader or the person who listens to this tape? Can you tie it all together in some way?

**Ms. Marchetti:** The only one thing that I would like to say is that when you live in your town, take an interest in where you live, and do everything or anything you can do for the betterment of your town. It's not only for yourself, but it's for everyone else in the town. This teaches the children in the town, and that's what I

like to do with the Historical Society and the Board of Education. We teach these children to respect their town and to respect the people who live in the town, because they're going to grow up and realize the same way we did what our town really means to us. There'll never be another town like Atlantic Highlands.

**Ms. Williams:** That seems to be a great ending line for our tape, I think.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Thank you.

**Ms. Williams:** Well I've certainly learned an awful lot from talking to you and I think you've really been a wonderful community servant. You work with the older adults in the nursing home and with youth through the Board of Ed and the Historical Society. You're really reaching out to so many people.

**Ms. Marchetti:** I appreciate your talking to me today - to listening to me.

**Ms. Williams:** It was a pleasure to hear all your stories and to learn about all you've done.

**Ms. Marchetti:** I certainly hope it helps.

**Ms. Williams:** I know the county will benefit from this.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Thank you.

**Ms. Williams:** Thank you, Helen.

**Ms. Marchetti:** And thank you to the County too, because I've worked with the county on different programs. And they've always been so good to us, they really and truly have.

**Ms. Williams:** Well this whole project is being supported by the Freeholders and the County.

**Ms. Marchetti:** That's what I'm saying, the Freeholders are so good, they really and truly are. The Monmouth County Historical Society and Commission is, too. They are always so willing to help.

**Ms. Williams:** This project has received a lot of support; in fact it's going to be continued next year. There are many people waiting to be interviewed.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh that's wonderful, I hope they keep it up. Because it's something that should go on year to year. It really and truly should. It shouldn't be dropped just because this year is the Millennium, it shouldn't be.

**Ms. Williams:** No.

**Ms. Marchetti:** There are other people here in town who you can really interview. Later I'll give you some names.

**Ms. Williams:** Flora Higgins has a list - she's requested to continue the program for next year because so many people have recommended other people.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Oh, she's fabulous. And towns change, people change, so it's better off that you keep up with the changes.

**Ms. Williams:** That's right. So I think they'll be more interviews next year, and we'll all be better for it. Thank you, again, Helen.

**Ms. Marchetti:** Thank you so much, really.