



Interview with Rose Staples

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

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Ms. Higgins: Well, Rose, welcome to the project. We are very happy you agreed to share your memories with us this afternoon. Can you tell us a little bit about when you came to Howell Township?



Rose Staples, 1993

Ms. Staples: I was a year-and-a-half, so I can't remember what it was like then, but, I have memories as far back as when I was four years old. When we moved to Howell, we moved to a section of Howell called Freewood Acres. And I do believe it was a planned community at that time, and whether other plans came to fruition or not, I don't know. But I can remember it as being very small. The area next door to our house, was like a summer camp. It was where a mother and her children could come down for the summer from the city, and the father would come down the weekends to visit. There were a few of these type of camps in the area of Howell Township; I can remember a few not in Freewood Acres. That was the only one in Freewood Acres. But I do remember a lot of these types of camps in the surrounding area. There were people who owned private homes and the wife and children would come down for the summer, and the father would come down and visit. In the area Freewood Acres on Route 9, there was a small pond with a beach area.

Ms. Higgins: I was going to ask what they did all day.

Ms. Staples: And on that little pond was a pavilion. I can't recall too much about the pavilion, but I was told that there were activities there at night and so forth. I can't say it was a rural area, but it wasn't a farm area. But it had dirt roads,

gravel roads, no sidewalks. There were many general stores in the area with no supermarkets or anything like that where you could walk to. To get to a supermarket you had to actually go into the town of Freehold, which was eight miles away. And there they had a small Acme, I do believe.

Ms. Higgins: Did most of them have cars?

Ms. Staples: No. Very few mothers had cars. You had to wait until your spouse came home and had a day off on the weekend, that's when you went grocery shopping or went to market or you went to do different things. But most women at that time did not have a car. In order to go to school, I had to walk about a quarter of a mile on a shortcut through the woods to get to the bus stop -- where there was no shelter -- and stand there and wait - a real hardship. I went to the Howell School, which is the Ardena School right now. I believe that was built in 1939, and I started there in 1945.

Ms. Higgins: So it was pretty new then.

Ms. Staples: It was a new school and actually was a model school. It drew many people to come to look at it because it was a model school. It was a beautiful school. I remember starting kindergarten. It was in a large, large room which actually had a fireplace in it. Can you imagine that?

Ms. Higgins: Did they ever use it?

Ms. Staples: No. They never used the fireplace. But it gave a homey feeling. It was a self-contained kindergarten that had its own bathroom facilities and lunch was served in there.

Ms. Higgins: Why else was it a model school?

Ms. Staples: Because of the architecture. It was very pretty at that time. Previous to that school there were one-room schoolhouses, and that was the first township school that wasn't a one-room schoolhouses. And everybody went to that one central school. It was kindergarten through the eighth grade.

Ms. Higgins: I get the impression you were happy there.

Ms. Staples: Yes. For the most part it was different. In my neighborhood there weren't a lot of children to play with, so when you went to school, that was your whole social life. And I also recall that if you got sick in school, the nurse would call up your mother, and we were the only people on our street that had a phone. I'll get into that later. The nurse would call my mother, and of course my mother would say, "Well, I can't come pick her up. I have no car. And my husband is at work." Either the nurse would keep you in the office until she thought you felt better, or if she thought you were seriously ill, she would actually take you home.

More about the telephone. I remember we were the only people on our street who had a phone, and we had about four or five close neighbors. And people would think nothing of calling our house and saying, "I have a phone call for so and so, he lives down the street from you. Can you go get him?" And we would think nothing of going out of the house, getting these people, and bringing them back to our house so they could talk on the phone.

Ms. Higgins: Can you imagine, now everybody has three phones.

Ms. Staples: And at that time, it was party lines. I think there was something like sixteen people on a party line. So, if you picked up the phone you heard somebody speaking, you just hung it up. You didn't stand there and listen. I'm sure some people did. But, you know, you put it down and waited until the phone line was clear. And that was the normal procedure, I mean, you just didn't think anything of it.

Ms. Higgins: You mentioned your father's work. What did your father do?

Ms. Staples: My father worked for Freehold Lumber, which was a supplier of all the lumber in this part of the county, I believe. That's why we moved to Howell, because before that we lived in Hightstown, and he wanted to be closer to the relatives who lived in Toms River. So he took this job.

Ms. Higgins: He must have been pretty busy. They were doing so much building in the post-war years.

Ms. Staples: I imagine so, although I can't recall how busy he was. I do know he did work six days a week. But it was normal thing to work six days a week and to get one week's vacation a year. And for that week's vacation we always went to Atlantic City for about two or three days. And it was so quaint because you could ride all the way on Route 9 to Atlantic City without one traffic light.

Ms. Higgins: Oh, what a memory. You are a young woman and yet here you have seen this tremendous revolution in Atlantic City and telephones, among other things.

Ms. Staples: Lakewood, which is in Ocean County, was a very picturesque place. There were flowers and different things, and although Route 9 was a very busy highway, it wasn't overwhelming. So the other two children who lived in our neighborhood and I would walk to Route 9 and sit on the curb and and watch the traffic. In the summertime it would be heavy stop and go traffic. There were no crossways, or four lane highways. It was just a two-lane highway at that time, so it would be stop and go, and drivers would talk to us because we were sitting there.

Ms. Higgins: Can you tell us anything about the Russian Church in Howell?

Ms. Staples: I can't tell you too much about the Russian Church, but I do recall the Russians were called DPs for Displaced Persons, when they immigrated. And when they came over, it seemed like it was all at once. My father had a lot to do with them because my father spoke Russian and he translated for them a lot. And it seems so strange because, when these people came, and now even today, your front yard is lawn, and your back yard was where you put your flowers or whatever or you planted your garden. But these people came from a different economic society, and so every bit of land they had was devoted to their gardens. They didn't believe in a lawn. A lawn was a waste of property. They either planted their flowers or they used it for their vegetables.

Ms. Higgins: And they settled around Freewood Acres.

Ms. Staples: That's right, yes.

Ms. Higgins: How did your people get to Monmouth County? What part of the world did they come from?

Ms. Staples: My father and mother both came from what was then called White Russia and I believe it is part of Poland now. My father came, I believe, in 1905 and my mother came in 1913 or something like that. They both settled in New York, and then my father's family bought a farm in Toms River. They were introduced by different relatives. And they were married in 1921.

Ms. Higgins: Was Rova Restaurant there when you were growing up?

Ms. Staples: I believe it was there, although I wasn't familiar with it. It was like a distant thing. Probably in the war years things were rationed. You didn't have that much gas. You didn't ride all over. You only went where you had to go to. You only went to the store. Maybe once a week you would go see relatives, but it wasn't a thing that we went just riding, generally riding to different places.

Ms. Higgins: What public transportation was available?

Ms. Staples: Yes, because we only lived a block from Route 9. Twelve year olds could get on a bus and ride to Lakewood or Freehold by themselves just to go to the movies. My mother gave me a dollar. I got on the bus, paid the bus fare, got to Lakewood or Freehold, paid to get into the movies, came out, got a malt, and got a bus back home, and I still had change left over.

Ms. Higgins: Where did you get your malt?

Ms. Staples: Next door to the movie house in Lakewood there was a drug store. And at that time almost all drug stores had soda fountains.

Ms. Higgins: The root beer floats?

Ms. Staples: I really didn't know anything about root beer, but I would get either an ice cream soda or malted milkshake or something like that.

Ms. Higgins: In the silver things.

Ms. Staples: In the silver things, right.

Ms. Higgins: Where was the movie house in Freehold?

Ms. Staples: Back as far as I can remember, there were two, but both burned down. There was the Palace and there was the Strand. They burned down at different times.

Ms. Higgins: What were some of your favorite movies?

Ms. Staples: Anything with Esther Williams in it. I thought she was wonderful.

Ms. Higgins: Did you see cartoons with it?

Ms. Staples: We saw a cartoon, possibly a short of the news, I forget what they called that. There is a name for that, maybe the Movietone news. We saw that. And maybe a double feature, but I don't remember too many doubles.

Ms. Higgins: One dollar would get you the bus ride, the movie and the malted.

Ms. Staples: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: It was a different world.

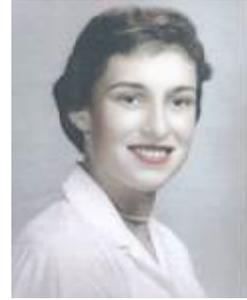
Ms. Staples: I felt very safe, didn't feel threatened at all. It was very pleasant. There were a lot of wooded areas around our little neighborhood, and with a couple of other children who lived in my neighborhood, I would go into the woods. We would build forts and pick berries. There were numerous wild blackberries, blueberries, and strawberries that we would pick. It was a very pleasant area. Very pleasant.

Ms. Higgins: What kind of games would you and your friends play?

Ms. Staples: Monopoly. We liked to play cards. Like I say, we would build our forts and make believe we had a house. And we had to use our imagination. Believe it or not, four children could play baseball. We didn't even need nine. Four of us could play together and have a baseball game.

Ms. Higgins: Tell us about your high school years.

Ms. Staples: High school opened a new world for me. One half of the township went to Lakewood High School. The other half of the township went to Freehold High School. So, some of your friends that you made in grammar school were split up. I went to Lakewood High School for one year, but it was my freshman year. Then the Freehold Regional was organized. Then all of Howell went to Freehold Regional High School system.



**Rose Staples,
1958**

Ms. Higgins: Which one?

Ms. Staples: The one in the Freehold Borough.

Ms. Higgins: That's the one that is supposed to be so good, right?

Ms. Staples: Yes. And that was the first regional high school. Then the area grew and became split up again. So we were back to what we had before. We were in grammar school, then we all went to different high schools. And then regional came along and brought us together again. And then the regional high school broke up, so we have Colts Neck and we have Marlboro and we have Howell. So what comes around goes around.

Ms. Higgins: Did you like being able to go to the high school with your friends from the grammar school?

Ms. Staples: Oh, yes.

Ms. Higgins: Please tell us a little bit about Howell High School.

Ms. Staples: I can't really because my children never attended there, and I never did. Howell High School never came into being until after I left. I can remember it is very close to Farmingdale. Farmingdale was another little community that was popular with my family. That's where our doctor was. That's where our drug store was. It was a quick ride to get there. There was no traffic. It was a pleasant ride because it was very, very rural. There were a lot of wooded areas.

Ms. Higgins: Farmingdale is still pretty rural, isn't it?

Ms. Staples: Yes, it's more rural than other places that have changed. It was also the place where we had our synagogue. It was actually in West Farms, which is in Howell.

Ms. Higgins: You said you went to the Ardena School. Is that the name of a section in Howell?

Ms. Staples: Yes, Ardena is a section of Howell. You have sections: Freewood

Acres, West Farms, Fort Plains, Jerseyville, Adelphia. All that was Howell. It is still the same, although it is not identified as such. There is also Ram Town. I am sure I am missing some places, some sections, but that is how it was divided.

Ms. Higgins: Was it all one governing body?

Ms. Staples: Yes, yes.

Ms. Higgins: Mayor and Council?

Ms. Staples: This particular type of township was all one.

Ms. Higgins: Do you remember your parents talking about how Howell Township was run?

Ms. Staples: Oh, yes. My father was a little active in politics, not greatly so. He had an interest in it, let me put it that way. He had a civic interest in Freewood Acres. Actually Freewood Acres as a planned community at one time had a civic organization, which was dissolved, I believe, around 1948 or 1949, something like that. Freewood Acres had three general stores, which if you think about it really was amazing, because Freewood Acres was small. But in the wintertime these general stores were very slow. When the summer people came down, and there were a lot of summer people that came down, these little stores were very busy. They sold ice cream and canned goods. And one or two had a soda fountain. And it was close. You knew everybody, winter and summer. When you got stuck in the wintertime, you could call on your neighbor to help come dig you out. Or you could hitch a ride somewhere. It was a very close community.

Ms. Higgins: Is Monmouth County like that now?

Ms. Staples: Certain sections. I'm sure you have closeness in some neighborhoods no matter where you are.

Ms. Higgins: Do you remember particularly any restaurants that your family used to go on a celebration?

Ms. Staples: There was one in Lakewood that was an Italian restaurant. I can't remember the name of it. My father loved Italian food. And once in a while we would go there. I think the whole meal cost about a dollar.

Ms. Higgins: Was the Cabin around when you were growing up?

Ms. Staples: It might have been, but I don't think it was called the Cabin. Previous to that it was a bar. It was called Art's Bar. And a man by the name of Art Andretta owned this particular place. Coincidentally, the owner and my husband's family were neighbors at one time. They had known each other almost

all their lives. Another bar, actually in Freewood Acres, was interesting: it was called Deer Head Inn. And out in front there was a little structure like a cage. And in that cage, there was a monkey, believe it or not.

Ms. Higgins: A real monkey?

Ms. Staples: Yes; it was an attraction. This was a vacation area -- not a vacation like you think today. But it was a vacation area, so you had to have attractions. Further down on Route 9, right on the Lakewood border, there was an attraction called Deer Park, where they had animals. It was almost like a zoo. I have a couple of pictures from there. Some of the deer were confined and some of them were actually walking around, and you could go up and touch them and pet them. They had other animals too, but it was mostly deer. And then on Route 33, there was another attraction. I guess it started in the 1950s. It was called Cowboy City. They used to put on shows where you felt like you were in a western atmosphere, and different things like that. You could go visit there and spend the day there. Also we would go to Asbury Park at least twice a year in the summer time for the rides, and for the candy, and things like that. Asbury Park was a big attraction for us. That was our thing - Asbury Park.

Ms. Higgins: Do you remember a place called Storyland?

Ms. Staples: It sounds familiar but I don't know. I possibly could have gone there, but I don't remember.

Ms. Higgins: It was of the same era as Cowboy City.

Ms. Staples: Cowboy City, yes. But I don't recall really going there. But it's, it's familiar. It rings a bell.

Ms. Higgins: When you left high school, what did you do?

Ms. Staples: When I left high school, I really didn't know what to do with myself, what direction I should take. I had a girlfriend who was going to beauty school. She said, "Why don't you come with me?" She had started, I think two months before me. It was in Newark. I went up and I looked and I liked it, and I thought I'd do it. I was a little creative and I thought I would enjoy it. My father didn't think I should drive to Newark. The easiest way to get there was to drive to Matawan and get on the train to Newark. I liked beauty school very much. It was my career for the next thirty years.

Ms. Higgins: Where did you practice?

Ms. Staples: My first job was in Lakewood and I worked there for about two years until I had my first child. And I dabbled in another place for another year or so until I had my second child. Then we moved to our house in Howell on

Vanderveer Road, which is actually between the Jerseyville section and the Ardena section of Howell. We built a house there, and my husband put a beauty parlor in for me to work while my children were growing up. I operated that for about eight years until we sold that house and then I worked at another beauty parlor for another ten or twelve years after that.

Ms. Higgins: How did you meet your husband?

Ms. Staples: There was a club, a place called Howell Lanes in Freehold, where I was on the bowling team. He happened to walk in and he was speaking to someone that I knew. And then we started speaking. And from there it developed.

Ms. Higgins: I remember Howell Lanes. It's still there.

Ms. Staples: Howell Lanes is still there. Yes.

Ms. Higgins: What did your husband do?

Ms. Staples: My husband at that time was a carpenter and was working for his uncle. We got married about a year and a half after we met. When we first married, we moved to the Borough of Freehold.

Ms. Higgins: You lived in the Borough?

Ms. Staples: On Bennett Street in Freehold in a little upstairs apartment. And we lived there for two years. And then we bought land in Howell on Vanderveer Road and built a house there.

Ms. Higgins: What was Freehold like then?

Ms. Staples: Actually, when I was in high school I worked in the drug store in Freehold called Fagan's Drug Store. It is on the corner of Main Street and Throckmorton Street. It was a small drug store; it didn't have a soda fountain. Maybe that is why they hired me. And I was a clerk there after school for about two years. We were very familiar with everyone in the town. This was such a small town. For instance, if someone came in with a prescription to be filled, and we didn't have that particular product in our store, I would be sent down the street to another drug store to get it and bring it back so our pharmacist could fill that prescription.

Ms. Higgins: Very friendly.

Ms. Staples: Yes, it was a very friendly place. It was very nice. After work I took a bus home because I didn't have my own car. Well, I was only sixteen, so I couldn't drive anyway. The bus would drop me off at the corner and I would walk

home.

Ms. Higgins: Was Freehold having bad times then as compared to good times now, or about the same, or what?

Ms. Staples: I wouldn't say it was bad times, but it was different times. Freehold had little shops all up and down Main Street, and up and down Throckmorton Street. They were very busy because we didn't have the malls. The first mall, in our area was, I believe, Monmouth Mall in Eatontown, which started in 1959. So we used to have all these little shops and it was pleasant. You didn't have a large range, but there was a personalized atmosphere. When you went in, someone waited on you. They brought your clothes to the dressing room. It was a different type of shopping, definitely.

Ms. Higgins: Was Al's Bootery there then?

Ms. Staples: Al's Bootery was there as far back as I can remember. The drug stores: let's see, there was Dubois' Drug Store, there was another one on the corner of Main Street and South Street. And I'm sure there were two more, although I can't remember the names. All the banks were in town. There were no driveups. Nothing like that. They were all in the center of town. The post office was in the center of town. Federici's was there at that time, and I can remember that restaurant. There was another restaurant called George's, which was on the opposite side of the street. There was also a bakery there, and I can't remember the name of it, but it was an excellent bakery, excellent. There was also a little place called the Tilton's Sweet Shop. How this place survived, I don't know, because it was a high school hangout. After school everybody walked right straight there, sat down and had a coke. And you sat there for three hours with one coke. Nothing else.

Ms. Higgins: Was it maybe fifteen cents?

Ms. Staples: Maybe, yes, something like that. It was very interesting. We went to Tilton's Sweet Shop to sit and have a coke and hangout. Now teenagers go to the malls to hang out. That was our hangout.

Ms. Higgins: Did they have a jukebox?

Ms. Staples: No, I don't believe they had a jukebox. It is possible they did, but I don't recall it too much. I really don't. I didn't go there that much because what you had were people who came in from the outlying areas and then you had the townies. And the townies were the people who went to the Sweet Shop.

Ms. Higgins: Every small town seems to have cliques.

Ms. Staples: Yes, caste system, social order.

Ms. Higgins: Did you use the Freehold Public Library?

Ms. Staples: No, no, I never did.

Ms. Higgins: Is that because you were a teenager or because no one did, or don't you know?

Ms. Staples: Possibly some did. As a teenager, the only library I ever used was the school library. I was unaware of the County Library. It was not a thing that you were introduced to. It may have been there but I was unaware of it.

Ms. Higgins: What were your favorite areas of study, and do you remember any teachers who helped you?

Ms. Staples: My favorite subject was history, but I was a very poor student. I have to say this now. I was not a studious student. One of my favorite teachers was a Mr. Van Etten, who actually went to Freehold Regional too when I was in Lakewood High School as a freshman when Freehold Regional started. He changed, so it was like...gee....he's coming too. He was the history teacher and that was my favorite subject. Not because of him, but I did like history a lot. That was my favorite. When it came to math or anything like that, forget it. And I won't even speak of English Literature. I don't even want to think about it.

Ms. Higgins: What about your children? Where did they go to school and were you happy with the education they received?

Ms. Staples: I was satisfied with the education they received. When my children were in high school, we had moved to Freehold Township. We had sold our house in Howell Township and we moved to Freehold Township. And both my children went to Freehold Borough High School.

Ms. Higgins: Same one you did?

Ms. Staples: Yes. And my husband also went to Freehold Borough High School.

Ms. Higgins: So were your children prepared for college from that?

Ms. Staples: No. They didn't choose to go to college, which is a shame. But they are both very successful. So, it's a moot point.

Ms. Higgins: What do they do? And where?

Ms. Staples: Both of my children are brick masons.

Ms. Higgins: I see a trend of home building here with your father in the lumber

business, and your husband being in carpentry, and your children brick masons.

Ms. Staples: Yes. And it is still hard for me to turn off one of these home improvement shows. I like it. I enjoy it.

Ms. Higgins: What were some of the musical pieces that you recall from your teenage years?

Ms. Staples: Rock'n'roll came into being when I was in high school.

Ms. Higgins: Elvis?

Ms. Staples: Not Elvis. Elvis was not the first. Bill Haley and the Comets were the first. I think Elvis Presley came around 1956 and, of course, I liked him. I was like every other teenage girl. I liked him very much and I remember my girlfriend and I getting on the bus and going to Lakewood to the movies to see his first picture, *Love Me Tender*.

Ms. Higgins: How about the Beatles?

Ms. Staples: The Beatles, well, by then I was a married lady, and I wasn't interested. I thought they were, oh my goodness! That long hair! You know. How inappropriate and all that stuff. But, I really didn't appreciate them at that time. But in my later years I did appreciate them very much, yes.

Ms. Higgins: Rose, could you describe for me some of the fads in the field of beauty that came and went when you were a beautician?

Ms. Staples: Yes. Now that's a story in itself because you have to understand that I went to hairdressing school in Newark. We were trained to do haircuts on females only, mind you, because that's how you got your license. Cut hair, give permanents, nails, and facials. And you did all of this under that category of women. It is strange today, because now it's unisex, whereas then it was separate. Either you had a barber's license or you had a hairdresser's license. Either one or the other. You didn't have both. Women were not allowed to do men's hair unless you had a barber's license and vice versa.

Ms. Higgins: When did this change, and how did you feel about it?

Ms. Staples: I feel good about it. Everything used to be segregated, even as far as race. African-Americans had their own hair salons, also. You just didn't do it. You weren't trained to do it. It was entirely separate. But then, when everything changed, I think it was a big improvement.

Ms. Higgins: I understand from previous interviews that there was a lot of racial discrimination in Freehold and Howell.

Ms. Staples: In Howell I can't say there was. But maybe that was because of my father. My father was a very tolerant man. I have a better word for it. It's not tolerant, it's more than that. My father was civic minded and very broad-minded. When I was young, I recall, when African Americans came in your house, other people looked at you very strangely. But my father thought nothing of it. Or of going to their houses. Or going to their churches for their church dinners. He didn't think anything of that. My father was a broadminded individual, and I got that from him. But I knew there was tension. I didn't think of it as a racial tension. I knew we were different. It was different, as far as racial hatred, I wasn't aware of that, actual hatred. That wasn't something I was familiar with.

Ms. Higgins: Where did your mother's people come from? You said Russia originally, but then she came to New York and met her husband. And she was a homemaker?

Ms. Staples: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: She didn't have a career?

Ms. Staples: No, no.

Ms. Higgins: Did you have siblings?

Ms. Staples: Actually I had one sister and she was quite a bit older than me. So, it wasn't a close relationship. When I was six years old, she left home to go to California, which was a very big undertaking in 1946. So even though I had a sibling, I was raised as an only child. And so was she.

Ms. Higgins: Who were some of the people you idolized or who were heroes to you? Who were your twentieth century heroes?

Ms. Staples: Well, I idolized Roosevelt. I can remember Truman. My father absolutely adored Truman. My mother adored Roosevelt. I can still remember the day John Kennedy was shot. I can remember plainly. I knew exactly where I was and what I was doing. I had the television on because it was this soap opera I watched every day. Then this interruption came on. And there's Walter Cronkite announcing this terrible thing. And you knew exactly where you were. I can understand people knowing exactly where they were when Roosevelt died and the announcement came. We lived in a rural area; if you had to go to the hospital, you didn't think so quickly to call an ambulance, although there were ambulances. There was a first aid, exactly where in Howell Township, I don't know, but there was a first aid. And if you needed an ambulance, you could call one. But most of the time if you were sick they took you to the hospital. And the only hospital in the area was either in Lakewood, which was Kimball, where I was born, or Fitkin Hospital, which is now Jersey Shore Medical Center. So we had a

ways to go to a hospital, or even a doctor. Nothing was around the corner. You had to think of this when someone got sick. And, of course at that time, if you were ill and called a doctor.

Ms. Higgins: You did not have television as a child. Do you remember the impact that television had when you got your first set?

Ms. Staples: I was enthralled. I was amazed. We had the first telephone on our street, but our neighbor had the first TV. And, naturally, anything they had was mine. And I can remember Kukla, Fran, and Ollie. I think the TV was only broadcast two or three hours a day. It started at 6:00 pm until maybe 9:00 o'clock at night. I was absolutely thrilled by it. I remember watching Kukla, Fran, and Ollie and, of course, I remember Howdy Doody. That was about 1947 or 1948. Then my father got our own television set. He would savor things, and we naturally had to watch his favorite things, which were Milton Berle and wrestling.

Ms. Higgins: Wrestling. Was that on then?

Ms. Staples: Wrestling was on. Antonio Rocco was his favorite wrestler and, of course, boxing came in further down the line, which was another thing he enjoyed immensely.

Ms. Higgins: How many channels did you have access to?

Ms. Staples: We had access to thirteen very snowy channels. Very snowy. Actually it was only twelve channels, because Channel 1 was not a channel that was there for anybody. We could only get New York stations: CBS was Channel 2, NBC was Channel 4, Channel 5 was Dumont, Channel 7 was ABC, and then there was Channel 13, which nobody knew about. I remember more about Freewood Acres. Near the pavilion, actually on the same piece of property, was this little pond, which was like a little swimming area. There was a World War II honor roll put up. I can remember a party there and everybody being happy at the end of the war. I remember people in uniform being there. Lakehurst was not too far from Lakewood, and whenever we went to Lakewood. Now when my father drove to Lakewood, he would encounter at least one serviceman hitch hiking, at least one, maybe two or three. And he would make three stops to pick these people up because that was the thing to do. You never passed a hitchhiking serviceman on the highway without stopping to pick him up. I can remember being in the car with two or three in the back seat of the car when we went somewhere.

Ms. Higgins: Rose, you now are working for the Monmouth County Library. How long have you worked for the library? And how did you happen to become employed here?

Ms. Staples: I have been working for the library for eleven years. Actually I got the job on a brainstorm. I had been working somewhere else, where I was happy, but I wanted full time work. I had stopped doing hairdressing. I just wanted to change my career, which put my husband in shock. I said, "No, I really want a change." So I worked in a couple of other places. I was happy, but I wanted my own benefits. I wanted hospitalization. I wanted a pension. I wanted things like that. That meant a full time job. I was in Freehold on day, and I said to myself, "I think I'll go over to Personnel in the Hall of Records and see what's available." The lady, Mrs. Brown, said to me, "Would you like to work at the library?" And I said, "Yes! Sounds great to me." And that's how I started. Actually prior to coming to the library, I read more than I do now only because of my eyes. My eyes get too tired and I can't read as much as I used to. But it seems a shame that I was more of a reader before I came here than I am now. The audio books are nice, but I like to see the written word. I'm more comfortable with that, although audio books are very interesting. I'm sure for people whose eyesight is really bad, and for people who travel, audio books are perfect.

Ms. Higgins: Rose, you've seen a lot of changes in Monmouth County. Can you comment on these changes?

Ms. Staples: Yes, I think I'm like every other person. I think, "Oh, back then it was so nice, it was so wonderful." Yes, it was nice, and it was wonderful, and it was a quieter time, and it was, I believe, a safer time. We felt safer anyway. And it was an easier time. We didn't have pressures. We didn't have two cars to every family. We didn't have a telephone in every room. We weren't under pressure to dress a certain way. I never felt peer pressure from other children or my classmates. You didn't have to do certain things. Towards high school, I think you do feel more peer pressure. I have to say then you did do things, but they weren't unreasonable things. But then you think back and remember it was hard to get things. We were ignorant then. We are more knowledgeable now, and more aware of things. My children are more aware of things, and hopefully my grandchildren are more aware of ways to be educated. I was ignorant of the fact of the world that was around me, which is sad, very sad. And, so in this way, change is good. We have more contact, we have more information. So, it's give and take, some things are worse and some things are better.

Ms. Higgins I'm surprised, Rose, to hear that you didn't do well in English because I find you very articulate and well spoken. How did this come to be?

Ms. Staples: As I said before, I don't feel I was a good student. And I wasn't a good student because I didn't realize at the time that I didn't read well. I didn't read properly. It was only when I was about twenty-five that I got into reading. I started with magazine articles. Then it became novels. I could read because I saw a different way of reading, I don't know what the problem was, but I think I read in high school a word at a time, whereas, when I became older, I read a phrase at a time. And it made more sense to me.

Ms. Higgins Rose, could you please describe any stories that you recall that have been passed down from generation to generation in your family?

Ms. Staples: There are stories about why my father left White Russia, which was part of Russia at that time. I guess there were pogroms at that time, and this is the reason that they left. We were actually in very good standing with the community, but his older brother was drafted into the army. And it is not like being drafted into the army here. Once you were drafted into the army there, you disappeared and you went off for years and years and years. And hopefully you would come back. And instead of staying in the army, his older brother deserted. And once you did that, your whole family was persecuted. So basically that is why they left and came here because they couldn't take the persecution anymore. That is one of the stories my father told me. My mother didn't seem to relate any stories about her family. I really feel she had a troubled childhood. She was only allowed to go to the fourth grade. She had to go to work in the family business, a candy store in Brooklyn. And she never really went into details too much because I don't think she was very happy with the whole situation.

Ms. Higgins: Could you tell me also what you feel are the most important legacies that you leave personally to your family and to your friends and to the community at large?

Ms. Staples: I think the main thing is to care. And I don't think you can know what caring really means until you get somewhat older. To me it means not just thinking about other people or, having good thoughts, but actually doing. Just doing. I really don't feel I've done enough of this, and I hope in the years that I have remaining that I'm able to project to people that I really do care. I think you really have to care about other people and in my lifetime, I don't think I've really cared enough about people. But I think it's never too late to change and to understand what is expected of you. And that is what I think should be expected of people: to care. People have showed me how they have cared, and I understand how it feels to be at the other end. So I think you have to turn around and do it to other people. You need to give back.

Ms. Higgins: What insights you would like to share with people who might be reading this transcript in the years to come? What advice would you give to future generations?

Ms. Staples: Well, I feel you have to be proud and be happy that I lived in a community like this. I'm always very happy to say that I lived here all my life and I've been happy here. I like to try to relate little stories about my life as I'm doing right here, because if you don't tell people what happened, no one will ever know. If you are standing alone in the middle of the forest and laughing, if nobody hears you laugh, are you really making a sound? So basically it comes down to this: If you don't tell people you are happy here, don't tell people how nice it can be

here, and how happy you were, how will they know that it was nice, or it is nice?

Ms. Higgins: What are the major things you think we should work on preserving in Monmouth County? Obviously the quality of life here is pretty good. What would you suggest we work on preserving?

Ms. Staples: History. History. History. Because as I just said, if no one tells the history, no one will know.

Ms. Higgins: We've enjoyed the charming stories of the pavilion and the beach and the school. What were your occupations as a child? We talked about the summer, but what would you do in the winter?

Ms. Staples: In the wintertime, there were many things to do because, there were a lot of little ponds, natural ponds, swamps, and bogs. Now you think swamps and bogs, what could you possibly do there? But in the wintertime when the weather became very cold, the bogs and swamps were the first things to freeze. So you could go ice-skating and it was fairly safe because most of these areas, if you fell in, you only went up to your knees in the water. So, it was nice. And then there were the lakes that we would gather and go ice-skating. And it didn't matter whether you had a pair of ice skates or not. You could just get on the ice and slide around in your shoes. It was a really nice feeling. We were also able to go out to the road in the front of your house and sleigh ride all day long; maybe you would be out there three hours and maybe one car would come by. It was so safe to be able to do that.

Ms. Higgins: Thank you very much for sharing these memories and observations with us today.

Ms. Staples: I have enjoyed talking with you. Thank you, too.