

## **Debbie Gallo 10-15-15.1 & Debbie Gallo 10-15-2, b. 1953.**

Debbie is a little concerned about privacy.

Going by the birth date, Debbie would have been around eleven when 280 was in the planning stages, and in school during the years of construction; she graduated from Mt. Carmel [Elementary] School in 1967. She says she does not recall the construction, but believes she was around 8 or 9 when the highway was finished, and her father told her that Freeway Drive East used to be Hurlbut Street\* and the residential neighborhood, the 3rd or 9th Ward, was all Italian. Her father believes that the highway led to the destruction of Orange by leading all the Italians to move out.

\*Debbie, like others, pronounces this more like "Holburt." See the note on Hurlbut in the Louis Ginefra interview.

She had a childhood that gives meaning to the word 'parochial:' Living a stone's throw from Mt. Carmel Church, she attended the parochial school there, where about 50-60% of the teachers were religious; She only had four secular teachers during her time there. She and her siblings considered the Mt. Carmel parking lot their playground (and called it that), especially for bike riding, and her family's social life was centered on the church. She and her sisters apparently had little or no social interaction with people from the close by Oakwood neighborhood, and may have been encouraged to avoid it: "You couldn't go down Parrow."

She especially recalls the grotto next to the church, and the open part of the St Mary's property next to the parking lot; this ran back to a huge chestnut tree. .

### **Family details -**

Both Debbie's parents were born and raised in Orange, and went to local schools, then Orange High School.

Her father ("Dad") Carmine Gallo, b. 1927, now 88, grew up at 112 S. Center Street, the last house eventually left standing next to Freeway Drive E., right across from Mt Carmel Church; it fell victim to urban blight after her grandfather's death. Three other churches in Orange are known to Debbie: the church in the Valley [Our Lady of the Valley], a little church on Center Street called [sounds like 'St. Cynthanthis' but may be Kim Saint Anthony's, a Korean Church] and St. Johns on Ridge Street, the only one without a cemetery, as it was a little church "tucked in" next to the orthopedic hospital around the corner from Orange Memorial (now closed) a couple of blocks down Henry Street.

The area north of Mt. Carmel, where 280 is now, and on the other side of 280, was all private homes, a mostly Italian-American area, making up the 3rd (or maybe the 9th) Ward, which was thus destroyed by the freeway. Her father might remember names, but the inhabitants moved out to West Orange, and "his feeling was, that was the beginning

of the end, of the town." [From a demographic, not a political, standpoint, although the demographic changes eventually, within the last twenty years, according to Debbie, brought blacks into the town government.]

Carmine graduated from OHS, joined the Marines ~1945, right at the tail end of the war; then went to Seton Hall, but could not get into a medical school afterward, so opened the Clothesbasket Laundromat in W. Orange, near St. John's church. In 1951 he married Ann(e) DeAngelis Freda, daughter of Nicholas and Urania DeAngelis. Because Anne was working for Prudential in Newark at that time, they moved briefly to a house there belonging to Carmine's father and his paternal aunt Elena, who together owned "at least five homes in Orange." Elena ("Lina") Freda lived upstairs at 112, which was apparently a two-family house, with another, married, sister. Elena worked in the city for Filippo Berio Olive Oil.

Although Carmine's laundromat was self-service, they did ironing for the customers, ironing sheets, medical uniforms, sports uniforms (including, for a short time, Giants uniforms), medical gowns, and so on. Elena also did some ironing there, and during her HS years Debbie did also.

James Freda (Debbie's grandfather): He and his wife Edna (a housewife) were both born in the US, she in Millburn. He owned a candy/grocery/soda fountain store on the corner of Parrow and S. Center, which, after his death in in the late 1960s, became a social club, the Key Club, where men would hang out and play cards, etc. Christmas Eve was always celebrated at his house while he lived.

Ann(e) De Angelis, Debbie's mother, had a sister and three brothers. She married Carmine in 1951 right after HS, when she was working for Prudential in Newark, a factor that apparently led to a temporary move to E. Orange. Her sister, Debbie's aunt, married a man who was relatively well off, and lived in Livingston.

Nicholas DeAngelis and Urania, Anne(e)'s parents, Debbie's maternal grandparents, were born in Italy, but, when Urania was 16 (as she claimed), she came to NY, then moved to Orange. Nicholas was a self-employed gardener/landscaper for private families and maybe the high school, etc. They had two girls and three boys. When Debbie was little, these grandparents lived down Center Street, and her mother would go down there on Sundays to pick up gravy to serve as a leftover on Thursday. (They had macaroni on Sundays.)

Debbie and her six siblings grew up at 132 S. Center Street, using both floors of the house. 132 is across from St. Mary's Hospital, now a nursing home, Alaris Health at St. Mary's. Debbie remembers the nursing school graduations there, but Debbie thinks the building was once a single family home, like the White House Nursing home in Seven Oaks, the part of Orange where doctors and dentists, "people who were very very rich" lived. 132, on the other hand, was a two-family house, like 112, and belonged to her grandfather. When several siblings had moved out to college (or jobs), the maternal grandparents moved in downstairs, but later, after their deaths, the family took over that floor again. Debbie herself lived elsewhere ~1976-1978, and then on Reynolds Terrace

for a while, but left Orange for Brooklyn in the early 1980s.

As for cousins, Debbie recalls a second cousin, a year younger, who lived on the East Orange end of town, but attended OHS with her, and now lives in Summit,. Her first cousins on her mother's side went to Livingston schools, and her maternal uncles did not live in Orange either. The children of the oldest brother are "not here [in Orange]." The middle brother (deceased) was a fireman. His kids grew up on the Park Avenue side of Orange and went to public school; one of them, probably in his fifties, is a fire chief in Orange: Frank "Chip" DeAngelis. Although he now lives in W. Orange, he must know a lot about Orange, and could probably talk about demographic changes in the fire department over the years. The third brother moved to Florida early on and his children are much younger than Debbie is.

Aside from Christmas Eve, when they would walk down to her grandfather's house, due to the size of the family, all holidays were celebrated at home.

### **Siblings -**

- Debbie, b. 1953, in Memorial Hospital, is now in Wall Township with a Manasquan mailing address, near several of her siblings. Her husband was a policeman in NY, but after being laid off took a job in Orange where they met. In October, 1979, he was called back to Brooklyn, and Debbie moved with him. Her daughter was born in 1990 or 1991 [both years mentioned].
- Patricia (Patty) Pietrobon (b. ~1955?), is now in Allentown, PA, with a PhD in Physiological Chemistry from Lehigh; she is a VP with the Sanofi vaccine group.
- Jimmy Freda, after G-Pa (b. ~1957?), left the household to go to Rutgers, working summers "down the shore," now lives in Brick/Manasquan.
- Carmine Freda (after Dad and b. ~18 months after Jimmy), did not finish college, left Orange in the early 1980s, lives in Bricktown.
- Anne Marie Freda, b. ~1962 (nine years younger), lived in Orange ~a decade after college graduation, but is now in Long Branch.
- Edna Cullen, b. 1966, liven in Orange until ~1994, now lives in Bricktown.

### **Schools -** All the siblings attended Catholic schools:

- Elementary grades at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School (now closed and rented by the town). The school was practically across the street, convenient for lunch with a homemaker mother, who later helped out in the laundromat;
- The girls (Debbie, Patty, Anne Marie) attended East Orange Catholic, which closed ~1980 just as Anne Marie graduated.
- The boys attended Essex Catholic in Newark, also now closed.
- Edna attended Marylawn of the Oranges, on the Orange, S. Orange border, also now defunct. She did not attend college, but worked for Pugliese Pools, "a big pool company." She lived in their parents' house for a while after marrying and having a child but left in 1991 and moved down to Brick with a different job.

Dad drove the girls to their HS on Glenwood Road, but they walked home, going via Main and Center, or on Park Avenue or to the laundromat, near St. John's off Main

Street on White Street. The boys took the bus. It is not clear how Edna commuted.

**Daily life** centered on the church, a magnificent building that challenges some of the churches in Rome, which Debbie has visited. The July feast day of Mt. Carmel was a big event, as was a celebration for Father Joseph Mezzanotte's long service: The boys were dressed like Vatican guards, and Debbie wore an angel costume. Her father was an usher, and washed the liturgical linens gratis; her Mom was in the Rosary Society and other parish groups. Her brothers were altar boys, took turns cleaning the Rectory, while the girls cleaned the convent, etc.

There were no sports at the elementary school. The Freda kids rode bikes in the church parking lot or "playground," as they called it, or gather chestnuts from the open space there and use them for games or necklaces. They could also play in their own large back yard, or the three garages off the back gate behind their corner house. They did not go to movies except occasionally at a Livingston drive in, a town where her mother's more affluent older sister lived. They also trick-or-treated in Livingston: Their local world was a two-block neighborhood in a westerly direction, and they or their parents apparently considered the Oakwood neighborhood to the east too dangerous for them: "You couldn't go down Parrow."

By the time she was in her teens, Debbie's father joined a pool club up where St. Barnabas parking lot is now. They would spend their summer days there or at the Livingston Cliffside pool club. They had a cabana; her father would come in the evening after work with her grandfather, bringing food from his store; her mother would cook there. Her father would return to the laundromat later to supervise the closing and take the money to the bank. They learned to swim there, and became life guards and so on. Her dad loved swimming, would swim at the YMCA on Main Street, and still swims at his adult community.

The parks were too far away for walking, it wasn't safe to bike over there, and Center Street was a busy street, so after school they mostly just came home and did homework, or Debbie would help her mother, who had six children in fifteen years. "It wasn't the safest town." Her Freda grandfather, however, would take her brothers to Orange Park. He taught them how to fish, and her brother Jimmy, a HS physics teacher, now has a fishing business, Short Catch, involving taking people out fishing.

Sometimes they could go out for pizza with friends, driven by her mother, or her father would take them to a drive-in in Livingston. They did not go to films on their own.

According to Debbie, Parrow Street was "probably one of the most notorious for crime," which she ascribes to the existence of the Parrow Street projects near Oakwood. She doesn't want to stereotype anyone, but "Unfortunately there were groups of kids looking to start trouble." You didn't park your car on the street; As teenagers they would park in the driveway of the grandfather's house, call their mother, and she would watch them come out of the driveway and cross the street from 112 to 132, worried that they would not be safe. "Orange...it wasn't your local suburbia, even before 280, it just wasn't. It

was a mixed...[hesitating]...and we lived on a busy street, so..."

The Fredas also patronized little stores like Cannizio's in the neighborhood of Day and Essex Streets, to the west of Center, off Henry, and, to the south down Center Street, passing St. Mary's Hospital (when it was still open, the old one with the big beautiful porch and the nursing school) other little businesses like

- Serafina's homemade pasta (ravioli etc.) two blocks down on the right. Jerry [last name not recalled, something like Miele, but not that] was Serafina's husband; he stayed local but his brother went "commercial" and became Andrea's Ravioli;
- A beauty parlor;
- A pet fish store;
- A refrigeration store;
- "The" funeral parlor, Paul Ippolito's, now closed, was on Henry, at the corner. [sbh: Ippolito's continues in Summit, Caldwell, and Berkeley Heights, and Googlemaps still recalls the closed Henry Street location.] Ippolito's sister is still Debbie's mother's friend. There was another Italian funeral parlor, Spinelli's, on Park Avenue, on the W. Orange, Orange border.

They could also walk north along Center about five blocks, under the tracks (and under the freeway), to Main Street, a commercial street. When she was in high school, Debbie had a friend who lived there. The friend's mother worked at Loft's, a candy store, and they'd hang out at the store.

### **Daryl Walker protests**

Debbie does not recall the 1979 police shooting of teen Daryl ["Darry"] Walker\* by Richard Conte, whom they knew, as her husband was on the same police force, or the protests that followed. Her husband does remember it, although he left Orange about a month before the shooting and she moved with him.

\*For spelling, <[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=920207744674973&id=810054119023670](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=920207744674973&id=810054119023670)> has a photo of the grave monument.

Their friend Joseph Pagano, who retired as a Captain about 20 years ago, would remember more. By that time, six years after the 1973 opening of the freeway, many of the former Italian residents had left for W. Orange and elsewhere. Debbie does remember the killing of a black policewoman, Joyce Carmichael.

### **Other possible sources for general historical information about Orange:**

- Gene Uricoli <<http://obits.nj.com/obituaries/starledger/obituary.aspx?pid=153748241>> the Chief of Police in 1970, who had several sons, but they lived north of 280;
- Tony Monica (deceased), a Mt Carmel parishioner and TV repairman, has/had videos [presumably of events or neighborhoods in Orange]. His wife Rose is on the Facebook page of the project; [These videos, as you probably know, are on YouTube, e.g. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SSrQOfDBe0>>];

- Frank "Chip" DeAngelis (the Fire Chief, see above).
- Debbie will try to get in touch with undertaker Paul Ippolito's (?)sister, who is still alive and is a friend of her mother;
- She will also contact her mother to get contact information for a paternal aunt now living "down the shore," who lived in Orange until she was married, although this was fifty years ago, and give her a call;
- Her father's sister married an Ioniero, from a family that did and still does construction in Orange, in the Valley, although she is not sure how much the highway affected that part of town;
- She will look around for some family photos that portray the neighborhood.