

## **Johns Market Paul Modugno Louis Ginefra-10-22-15-1 & Johns Market Paul Modugno Louis Ginefra-10-22-15-2**

The interview takes place at John's Market, 102 S. Essex Avenue, Orange, right at the corner of Freeway Drive East. The walls feature old photographs [of patrons? of the establishment? of local streets?], and, in addition to the two men interviewed by name, several additional longtime or former residents of the area are present. One gets the impression that they treat the Market, which serves food, as a sort of club, and some of those present come on most Thursdays to get together with old friends.

### **The main participants:**

#### **Paul Modugno, b. 4/23/1935**

Paul's life is intertwined with the life of John's Market: He was born there, on the third floor, grew up amid the customers and the stock, and now, at 80, is still the owner/proprietor, although he has not lived in the upstairs apartment for many many years. A cheerful, friendly person, he is content and happy to be healthy and able to "pay the bills," and is confident that friends would help him out if the money got short. He does feel that the younger generation may be a bit "snooty," wanting more luxury than really necessary for a satisfactory life.

Currently Paul lives in Scenic Hill, W. Orange [a condo complex adjacent to St. Barnabas Medical Center]; he moved there about fifteen years ago from Livingston, his longtime home, when his son became apprehensive about the activities — like ladder climbing — involved in home ownership.

Paul originally moved out of the Market around 1982, when he became a fireman, also marrying around this time. Not wanting to pay rent, he bought a house on Chapman Street, where he seems to have adopted a common strategy of buying a two-family house similar to the houses on Center Street that the Ferdas owned. [See the Debbie Gallo interview. Chapman is a short street running between S. Center and Hickory about four blocks south of John's Market and two blocks east, toward Oakwood.] By ~1970, because his two-bedroom apartment in that house had become too small for a man with four children, he left Orange for Stonewall Drive, Livingston. [Therefore this was while the freeway was still under construction.] He does not seem to have sold the Chapman Street place, perhaps being, like his father, a saver.

Paul's mother, Irma Linda "Millie" Modugno, an Italian-American, was born in NYC.

#### **Louis Ginefra, b. 6/24/1928 <Ginesee@gmail.com>**

[Louis appears in the 1940 census, living at 504 Monroe Street, in the following household, with notes in curly brackets added from the tape or elsewhere:

Nicholas Ginefra (52, Male); {Nicola Ginefra, d. ~1964}

Mickolina (sic) Ginefra (42, Female); {Michelina Claudio Ginefra, 1893-1984}

Mary Ginefra (17, Female); {later 'Moore']  
Salvator Ginefra {16, Male};  
Frances Ginefra (15, Male); {'Thomas' to his brother Louis}  
Louis Ginefra (11, Male);  
Samuel Ginefra (9, Male).

See also <<http://obits.nj.com/obituaries/starledger/obituary.aspx?pid=174479261>>]

Nicholas Genera Cerignola, the father, came from Cerignola, a town in the province of Foggia[a], Italy. He traveled to the US with a man named Arnold Spinelli. There were more people from Cerignola in Brooklyn, but Nicola came to Orange due to the location of his (required) sponsor. He did spend one year in Massachusetts, but Mickolina never left Orange. Nicola began his US employment as an apprentice to his future father-in-law, a "sculptor" [stoneworker], but did not like the work, and moved over to the Market. (Claudio senior was not happy with the match, but eventually, in 1938, became reconciled to it.)

All Louis' siblings are now deceased. The brothers were former Marines; Louis says Samuel (Sabino, Sam) "passed away as a result of being in Korea," [although this was in 2015. According to obit linked above, he was engaged in fundraising and publicity for Disabled American Veterans].

Louis was born two houses down from the Market at 104 S. Essex, but his family always rented and moved a lot: to the other side of Main street; to Hurlbut (pronounced 'Hulbert') St,\* to Lake (?); to Lakeside Avenue, to Monroe, possibly (? inaudible)Parrow.... The youngest brother was born in the hospital, Orange Memorial. His father worked variously selling or interpreting dream books and/or numbers, did construction work under the WPA, working on the Seton Hall gym, and may have been a stonecutter also, as his own father (Louis' grandfather) might have been: He (the latter) worked on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Rome.

[On an old map, Hurlbut runs between Centre (sic) St. and Essex, crossing through Cone, one block north of Henry Street in the First Ward. It hit Essex just south of Crane, right where the freeway is today.]

Although he seems to joke that he worked for the FBI, Louis later states that he had a print shop, Ginesee (sic) Press, on Washington Street, and worked as a salesman, selling a variety of things: insurance, equipment, etc., before and after having the shop. Then (afterwards) he drove a cab in Bloomfield for thirty years.

Louis moved out of Orange to Caldwell ~1969 after "the neighborhood changed" and he "didn't feel comfortable." At the present time, he comes back to the Market on Thursdays to be with his old friends.

### **The Market and the Old Neighborhood**

Paul's parents ran the market; the family (including Paul and one sister, Teresa) spent most of their time there, and always ate there, cooking in the kitchen at the back. The

upstairs apartment, where they pretty much only slept, had two bedrooms, one behind the other along a hallway, and one bath. The sister left to go to college, and he went into the service. The sister and her husband now own a fence company in Orange, Academy Fence, located on N. Day St., [near N. Essex, and north of the freeway]. They live in West Orange.

According to Paul, his father, John, b. 1906, d. ~1993, obtained the store in 1925, after working there for a couple of years, from a cousin of his, Fonz(?) Romano, who had it from 1917 on. Fonz may also have sponsored John when he first came to the US. There is an old story (possibly apocryphal, and Paul is uncomfortable about publishing it), that Modugno, Sr., won the store in a card game. [sbh: I do note that Louis' father (who seems to have managed the store for a while, perhaps in the thirties, seems to have engaged in gambling-related activities, so gambling may have been a common neighborhood activity. .]

Later, in a difficult-to-hear section in the middle of the tape that is nearly drowned out by a nearby discussion of Kick the Can and other former neighborhood pastimes, Louis Ginefra also talks about the early days of the store. [This part is under the 'uno' of Modugno on my screen.] In Louis' version, his own father was an early owner or manager, and had his name on the awning outside the Market: Nicola Ginefra Cerignola, with Cerignola, an Apulian town on the upper Achilles tendon of Italy, being his place of origin and nickname. Louis explains that the Italian custom was to put the nickname last. [sbh: This actually follows the ancient Roman naming custom: Publius (given name, too common to be useful) Cornelius (larger family, or clan name) Scipio (branch of family, often an ancestor's old nickname) Africanus (personal nickname: the one who did great stuff in Africa). One suspects Romano was the locality name of Fonz Romano. The Roman and Neapolitan accents are clearly distinguishable: Someone I once knew lived in Rome for a year when his father had an academic appointment there; when the young man later took a temporary job in a candy factory, the other workers called him 'Romano' because of his accent in Italian.]

The Market began as a fruit and vegetable operation, with some imported goods, and the Modugnos also peddled groceries, and made deliveries, from a banana truck. From the sixties on, the fruit and vegetable business began to suffer from supermarket competition, and around 1980 Paul changed the market over to the kind of corner deli or luncheonette it is now.

[Although Paul does not say so, the banana truck may have started its run as a horse-drawn vehicle, at least in the twenties, as e.g., milk trucks were powered this way into the late thirties and even beyond: <[http://articles.philly.com/1996-05-28/living/25624471\\_1\\_arabbers-horse-wagons](http://articles.philly.com/1996-05-28/living/25624471_1_arabbers-horse-wagons)>. Later in the tape, Louis mentions horse-drawn wagons. As for 'arabbers,' my Irish grandmother was always worried her unwashed grandchildren might look like "street A-rabs," which seems to have been her derogatory term for indigent immigrants with Mediterranean skin colors.]

In general conversation later in the interview, various men mention types of wagon that would come around: the iceman, the coal man, the ragman, etc. One, not wanting these

hard workers to be maligned, points out that, "my whole family were trashmen." The men specialized: one would collect bottles and redeem them, others would take newspapers, or rags, or scrap metal: copper, iron. People would get a nickel for a gallon jug, a two cent refund for a soda bottle. Some people would shine shoes, but Louis' mother never allowed her boys to do that [perhaps worrying that they might look like "street A-rabs?].

Other ways of earning money on the street: A couple of legless cripples, one of whom had been injured running across the train tracks, collected money in the street; one of them may have had a pony [for pony rides?]. There was also an organ grinder, a photographer.

The brewery started out as Winter's, then was Trommer's, and finally was enlarged by Rheingold.

"Football" weddings involved all the women cooking and serving food to order, often out of a bar.

Funerals: The body was brought home after embalming and laid out there, with a wreath on the door as a mark of mourning.

Modern time-saving products and other amenities had not yet taken over: Louis' mother had to do her washing in a sink shared among ten people.

### **Schools, neighborhood residents, and children's games**

Both Paul and Louis attended Lincoln Avenue School.

Paul: At Lincoln Avenue, Mr. Burke was the principal, Mrs. Benke(?), Mrs. Van Riper, Mrs. Brown, and Mrs. Rappacano/Rappaciano(?), were teachers, and he got along with all of them because he was such a cheerful person. After Lincoln Avenue, He attended OHS.

Louis a attended vocational school after Lincoln, (?)Orange Vocational (not clear).

Paul states that Lincoln Avenue was a mostly white school because Orange was divided into four main parts: the Irish Valley section to the west, the Italian section around the market, the St. John's parish area, which was "mixed " [and lies north of 280], and the black Oakwood Avenue section to the east. "But we were friendly with all of them." [sbh: The order in which Paul presents the sections of town suggests that by "mixed," he probably means that St. John's was mixed Italian and Irish, although I know Jews in their 70s and 80s who grew up there during this period. In the Oakwood Avenue interview, Walter characterizes all the churches, calling both Our Lady of the Valley and St. John's Irish, and states that Mt. Carmel, which the freeway carefully avoided, was the only Italian one. Walter's parish was Holy Spirit, but Paul does not name that one. Also, see Debbie Gallo's comment that 280 divided a political ward or wards, and that many Italians lived in the residential neighborhoods to the north of the freeway cut.]

At one point, during a period of general conversation, one man shares a story about a policeman who would not believe a boy in a group of local boys who identified himself by a non-Italian name.

[Pointing to a photograph?] Paul also states that his "first camp," Camp Arrowhead, apparently a "Y" camp, was entirely white. The neighborhood kids spent a lot of time at that "Y," which was right across the street, and all the same neighborhood kids attended CYO [Catholic Youth Organization] social functions too: dances, soda parties, etc. in the big meeting hall below Mt. Carmel Church.

Neighborhood games included Hide-and-go-seek, doctor, Ringaleary [a Duck Duck goose game], Kick the Can, and (?)Scat della Bord, or Jump on My Back. [sbh: This last seems to be a two-team Buck Buck variation without the finger guessing: See <<http://www.medigan.net/2007/05/buck-buck.html>>. When I was a child, my nursery rhyme book showed ancient Roman boys playing a similar game where one boy would jump up on another boy's back, hold up a few fingers, and shout "Bucca, bucca, quot sunt hic?" This challenge does appear in Latin literature.] The kids also had wagons and scooters (which they would ride across a board), and played marbles.

Hide-and-seek often led the neighborhood boys to the cellar of Paul's house, where the family kept barrels for winemaking. During winemaking, the kids would stomp the grapes in the barrels and the wine would be shared with family and friends.

There is some animated general conversation about bocce. Their fathers played bocce, and participated in bocce clubs and bocce leagues. One tavern owner, whose tavern, on the border of W. Orange, abutted a bocce court, let the older kids play there when the adults had left, and also let them buy wine and cigarettes through the window, which was not visible from the street. Another man recalls playing bocce in a junkyard. (By contrast, another man, later on, perhaps forgetting about bocce, asserts that in those days there was nothing to life but work and making babies, while the women all stayed home.)

### **Effects of 280 and its construction on the neighborhood**

Louis recalls that, "When they were blasting the mountain to bring the road in, they laid tracks; they had a train to bring the rock down. When the project was complete, they lifted the tracks up." The highway "tore Orange apart....Since then I think the town has changed....And, it looks like they ran through the Italian and black neighborhoods, just cut it right in half."

Louis also states that the construction destroyed the Hurlbut [pronounced 'Hobart'] Street branch of the YMCA where kids used to go after school. It was a large wooden building with different spaces for activities. Kids also went to parks or playgrounds, Central Playground, another one down in the direction of the Valley, perhaps in W. Orange, Ropes(?) playground.

Former local establishments destroyed by the highway, according to Louis:  
Stanziale's Butcher shop "up the street here" on the NE corner of South St. and Hurlbut.  
At Christmas it displayed a dressed pig, and there was sawdust on the floor. [The exterior of this shop is shown on a Tony Monica video.]

The highway destroyed the home of Louis' friend [indistinct] on Hurlbut, and "Babe" Romano's grocery store on the north side of Hurlbut.

Other possible sources mentioned by Louis and others:

Joe Fire, the [former] mayor(?), is/was "a sharp pencil" and a ladies man.

Joe Cassini(?), a lawyer, lived up on Highland Avenue. (Another lawyer lost an election for mayor because, considering himself an Italian-American, said he was not Italian; his more savvy Italian-speaking opponent, a politically sharp white haired fellow, won out.)

Dr. Romano on Central Avenue, \$5 a visit.

Dentist: Cecere

Clubs would get organized around dialects and places of origin in Italy:

Pimco(?) on George(?) St.

Mechanic Avellina Club