

**Oral History Interview**  
**Nicholas Venezia**  
**WH088**

(written transcript and digital audio)

On October 1, 2010, Nicholas Venezia was interviewed at his law office on 306 Main Street in Woodbridge by Brenda Velasco 11:00 A.M. His daughter, Daria Venezia, also was in attendance. Because of some technical difficulties, notes were relied on for questions 1 and 2.

**1. Identify individual-name, section, date of birth.**

*Nicholas Venezia:* I was born on October 10, 1921. I now live in Colonia.

**2. How long have you lived in Woodbridge?**

*Nicholas Venezia:* I moved to Woodbridge in 1955 or 1956. We moved from Staten Island but we only lived there for one year. Originally my wife and I came from Bayonne.

**3. Why did you or your family originally move to Woodbridge?**

*Daria Venezia:* Actually I know how they came here.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay Daria you chime in.

*Daria Venezia:* Grandpa, with dad's coaxing, decided to open a bowling alley and he knew nothing about bowling.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Daria Venezia:* And the bowling alley was at the corner of North Park Drive and Route #35.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, and there were how many alleys in there?

*Daria Venezia:* Eight alleys and when they came to renovate my grandmother used to take walks. She walked up Elmwood Avenue and saw a house for sale and that's how they wound up in Woodbridge.

*Brenda Velasco:* So that was the first location then for you to live, Elmwood Avenue, which was near the bowling alley then.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was about 1955 or 1956 you moved from Staten Island then.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, right.

*Brenda Velasco:* And you had the bowling alley on Amboy Avenue.

*Nicholas Venezia:* We moved over to Staten Island for one year, in March of '55, and came back in March of '56.

**4. What physical changes have occurred over the years in the area you lived?  
-houses, streets, services, stores, houses of worship, schools etc.**

*Brenda Velasco:* So you've seen a lot of the physical changes that have occurred in Woodbridge?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, in fact we were the only office on Main Street for a long time and then one by one offices started to move in.

*Brenda Velasco:* There are quite a few lawyers' offices.

*Nicholas Venezia:* All kinds of offices from here up Main Street to Green Street and right up to St. James Church.

*Brenda Velasco:* So when you had your first office here, this was the first law office. It was mostly residential?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Oh yes, mostly residential. In fact, you couldn't have any kind of office unless you had it in your house with a kitchen. So for years we had a kitchen upstairs. We had a stove and a kitchen so we could have an office here.

*Brenda Velasco:* And that's how you got around the ordinances then?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* Main Street is very, very busy now.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Why did you pick this location?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Because, one, it was available and secondly because of the kitchen. There was no other reason. There was nothing around, really, so this was available.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay and it's on Main Street.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Main Street, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* And it's right off Route #9 and Route #35.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, the location is fantastic.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Anybody has access to your office over here.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* You didn't live in this house though?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No.

*Brenda Velasco:* What about the services that the town gave in 1955? You lived on Elmwood Avenue so you had sanitation.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, garbage they picked up. Was it picked up by.....

*Daria Venezia:* Probably, yes.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Here we have private sanitation.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay at the office.

*Daria Venezia:* At the office, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* At the office and the bowling alley perhaps maybe?

*Nicholas Venezia:* There, yes. We had private garbage collection.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay. Living in Colonia, when I came which is probably after you did, we had well water and septic tanks. You were fully serviced over here.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, right.

*Brenda Velasco:* What about the stores?

*Daria Venezia:* Tell her about when you originally went to Colonia you built your house.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, we built a house in Colonia on Stokes Lane by Frank Battaglia and we had a problem there because the street wasn't complete. We had to, like for example, when it snowed. I took a couple of planks and put them in front of my car, tied them on the front of my car, and shoveled the snow out of the driveway

with these planks in front of my car which was crazy because I got stuck and couldn't get out.

*Daria Venezia:* Because the snow plows didn't go down to the house.

*Nicholas Venezia:* The reason they didn't go down is Dr. Zirpolo lived at the top of the hill and he had his own private plow come down because he had to keep his driveway opened in case he had to go to the hospital. When the plow came by our street they saw it done but it wasn't, it was only done to Dr. Zirpolo's house. From Zirpolo down we had snow and it was a long time before we could get in and out without any problems.

*Brenda Velasco:* This was Colonia.

*Nicholas Venezia:* This was Colonia.

*Brenda Velasco:* And this was the early Colonia I remember, too. We were snowbound; we were the stepchild. Okay, which Dr. Zirpolo are you talking about who was the doctor?

*Nicholas Venezia:* His brother, what was his first name?

*Daria Venezia:* I just remember he lived in Sherwood Road.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, he lived on Sherwood Road. Alright, when you moved here you had the bowling alley over there. How old were you when you moved here?

*Nicholas Venezia:* '44 you think?

*Daria Venezia:* Well '55, you were born in '21, thirty-four.

*Brenda Velasco:* You were about thirty-four, okay, and were you a lawyer by that time?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, not yet. I became a lawyer around '52 I think. I graduated from Rutgers in '52 because you had to clerk. I couldn't clerk, so what I did was I went to work for **Engelhardt** and because of my politics I got to meet the governor and I asked him if **Engelhardt**..... I said **Prudential Insurance Company** has a clerk, why can't **Engelhardt** have one? He said you're absolutely right, Nick. He said take out your application and I'll hand it to the Supreme Court myself. I made an application and the governor gave the Supreme Court my application personally.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow! Okay, was that Governor Meyner? (1954-1962)

*Nicholas Venezia:* That was Governor Hughes. (1962-1970)

*Brenda Velasco:* Governor Hughes, okay.

*Daria Venezia:* Through Charlie Engelhardt, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, through Charlie Engelhardt, right.

*Daria Venezia:* You had to pass the bar and then you had to clerk too before you could practice. Not like today. You don't have to clerk, just pass the bar.

*Nicholas Venezia:* You can clerk afterwards. In fact, here's a picture of Charlie Engelhardt and me.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, now when you moved here you lived on Elmwood Avenue. How about the stores? What kind of stores did you have?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Nothing, they were all houses.

*Daria Venezia:* How about down Main Street, anything?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Down Main Street, of course.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay because this is upper Main Street, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Lower Main Street was as it is today stores all over the place.

*Brenda Velasco:* Were there any particular stores that you.....

*Nicholas Venezia:* Well we always went to the **Reo Diner** for breakfast and lunch a lot. There was a 5&10.

*Brenda Velasco:* And that was **Woolworth's**, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Daria Venezia:* They had the soda bar there; what do you call that?

*Brenda Velasco:* The counter.

*Daria Venezia:* The counter, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* You're young, that's why you remember that. How about houses of worship?

*Nicholas Venezia:* St. James. I think outside of Donna she was baptized in Jersey City, Bayonne, but the rest of my children went to St. James. They were all baptized there, confirmed there, communion there. From there the girls all went to Mount Saint Mary's Academy and my son went to St. Joe's. Three girls went to Mount Saint Mary's.

*Brenda Velasco:* I should say Donna (Venezia Toryak), your daughter, the oldest, is now working at Mount St. Mary.

*Nicholas Venezia:* In fact, she's being honored tomorrow.

*Brenda Velasco:* Terrific.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, she's getting honored tomorrow at Mount St. Mary's. She's been there a long time. She's the Director of Admissions.

*Daria Venezia:* What do you remember about St. James? Do you remember St. James back then, the church?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Who was the priest back then at St. James?

*Brenda Velasco:* Not McCorriston is it?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, although McCorriston I remember.

*Daria Venezia:* But what about the building though? Remember it wasn't the church it is today.

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, it was over where the school is.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you went to the old church then?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, the wooden church.

*Brenda Velasco:* And that's where the school parking lot is?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you've seen a lot of changes then?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* And the schools that your children went to? It was St. James elementary school and then Mount Saint Mary.

*Nicholas Venezia:* The girls.

*Brenda Velasco:* For the girls and then your son?

*Nicholas Venezia:* St. Joseph's.

**5. What public buildings/property were there?-post office, library, parks, firehouse, schools etc.**

*Brenda Velasco:* Where was the post office when you first moved to Woodbridge?

*Nicholas Venezia:* I don't know, was it up there on Main Street near the church there, across from the church?

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, it may have still been there then.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, I think so.

*Brenda Velasco:* How about the library?

*Daria Venezia:* Do you remember the Colonia post office though?

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, yes, where was the Colonia post office because you're between two sections of this township?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, Colonia post office that was there on Inman Avenue.

*Daria Venezia:* Not the old one.

*Brenda Velasco:* Where was the old one?

*Daria Venezia:* Under the overpass, New Dover Road.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, New Dover Road. There was the underpass there because of the train tracks there.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, right.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you used that post office then for awhile.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* When did you move to Colonia? What year did you guys move to Colonia?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Well, we were in Woodbridge and then, what year did we move the Colonia? 1960.

*Daria Venezia:* You know I also remember too by that post office there was a staircase down to the train. Do you remember that?

*Brenda Velasco:* You're absolutely right.

*Daria Venezia:* I think there was a train stop there over by Merrill Park.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, there was a train stop there. Okay, so there was a staircase right on New Dover Road.

*Daria Venezia:* Yes, on the bridge. Was there a house there? No, I don't think so, was there?

*Brenda Velasco:* I don't recall.

*Daria Venezia:* But there was a stop.

*Brenda Velasco:* But I remember there was a stop there and I remember stairs there right on New Dover Road, going down to New Dover Road.

*Daria Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you had the train station in Woodbridge, then you had the train stop in Colonia and then there was also train stop in Iselin, too. Did they stop in Iselin too at that time?

*Daria Venezia:* Wasn't there an old building?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes and then eventually Metro Park came.

*Nicholas Venezia:* In Rahway it came down through Woodbridge. I remember the train wreck; do you remember the train wreck?

*Brenda Velasco:* Were you here for the train wreck? (1951)

*Nicholas Venezia:* I drove right up to it. I remember driving right up to the train wreck and the firemen had just gotten there and I saw them put the ladder up to the train to get people out of the train. I pulled right up there next to the fire truck with my car because I heard on the radio, I was coming from Bayonne, that there was a train wreck. So I took the road right down and I pulled right up and looked up and I said I'll go and call. The guy said do you have the ambulance and they said no call

the ambulance. So I went right to the office and came right here and I called up an ambulance for them.

*Daria Venezia:* And do you remember they asked to use the bowling alley.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, they wanted to use the bowling alley for any bodies and they said okay but they never used it.

*Daria Venezia:* Oh they didn't?

*Brenda Velasco:* They were using the church or Town Hall I think.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Daria Venezia:* A lot of people died?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* About eighty-five.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, we had a good wreck.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, where was the library for you when you lived here in Woodbridge.

*Nicholas Venezia:* I guess where it still is.

*Brenda Velasco:* Did you have the Barron Arts?

*Nicholas Venezia:* The Barron Arts, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, the Barron Arts Center was the library. How about when you moved to Colonia?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Was it still there I guess.

*Daria Venezia:* Where the Little League office is now.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, right.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, where the Merrill Park baseball....

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, right.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's where your library was in Colonia.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* Because that was the original center of Colonia.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was that area not Inman Avenue as it is now. Okay, and the firehouse was always there, the Woodbridge Firehouse?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, and the schools, you went to St. James School, your children did. And we had the public schools back then but they weren't involved with that.

## **6. What did you do for recreation?**

*Nicholas Venezia:* Bowling.

*Brenda Venezia:* How long did your parents have that bowling alley?

*Daria Venezia:* My mother's parents, the Hospidars.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, the Hospidars owned that bowling alley and they owned it before they moved over here.

*Brenda Velasco:* So they moved from Amboy Avenue to Main Street.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right and I ran the luncheonette on Main Street.

*Daria Venezia:* Tell her about the original pin setters?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, they went on strike.

*Daria Venezia:* But that there were no machines back then, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, there were no machines. You put your foot down and the pins came up and you put the pins over the pins and you took your feet off and this thing that went up for the pin came down. Then you had to put it right on and make sure you got then on right.

*Brenda Velasco:* So this was all manual then?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Oh, yes, and they sat up on the side and you had to be very careful because if you threw the ball a certain way the pin could hit you. Yes, they had to sit up on the side.

*Daria Venezia:* The alley boys, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, the alley boys.

*Brenda Velasco:* So that was one of the dangers of being a pin setter.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Daria Venezia:* They went on strike, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* And they went on strike and I went down there and said what do you mean strike? You want to make more money? And they said yes. So I said okay you, every other one I said get the hell out of here. The other guys double up and you'll make twice the amount. Boy they did. The other guy said no, no, no, no we'll stay, we'll stay.

*Brenda Velasco:* How much were they being paid as pin setters?

*Nicholas Venezia:* I don't recall. It was so much a game and they stayed when they said what the hell should they make double than us nothing so they stayed on. Boy that was a long time ago.

*Brenda Velasco:* But those are good memories.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Now everything is automatic and the new machines they set the pins.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* The family still doesn't own.....

*Nicholas Venezia:* No.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Daria Venezia:* When my grandfather died they sold it. My grandfather retired. He really ran it, my grandfather. What a great story though. They knew nothing about bowling.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well they made a success of it.

*Daria Venezia:* Yes.

*Nicholas Venezia:* That's right.

*Daria Venezia:* Like the restaurant too.

*Nicholas Venezia:* What did they know about cooking? I said he's running the **Brass Bucket** what does he know about cooking.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, when you bought the **Brass Bucket**, because that was one of the big restaurants in Woodbridge, successful too.

*Nicholas Venezia:* I made it; I started at the **Brass Bucket**.

*Brenda Velasco:* Now Sal's your brother.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Did he also work the **Brass Bucket**?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, he worked for me and then I brought him in as a partner.

*Brenda Velasco:* And when did you buy the **Brass Bucket**?

*Nicholas Venezia:* '56 to '76.

*Brenda Velasco:* Because that was the place where everybody went to eat.

*Daria Venezia:* That was the only restaurant around then, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Daria Venezia:* Tell her how you started the idea.

*Nicholas Venezia:* I went to Florida and in Florida I saw this guy run a restaurant with a fireplace, cooking from the fireplace into the dining room. I said hey that's great for the **Brass Bucket**. So I got the chef that I had and opened up the fireplace, to block out the kitchen. Right next to it was a delicatessen case where all the steaks and meats were there. They would pick up a steak and he would cook right in the dining room and you could see the steak cooking as you sat there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, I just remember it was very popular and a lot of people went there. Since it's closed, nothing has been successful.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Would you believe I haven't had a piece of meat, red meat, since we sold that place.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well maybe it's healthier and that's why you're going to be eighty-nine.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* So maybe that's something that's good that happened to you.

Alright, you had the bowling, that was your grandfather, and then there was the **Brass Bucket**. What made you go to law school?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Good question.

*Daria Venezia:* That was really first. He went to law school in the '50s before all this started.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Daria Venezia:* Well you had the GI bill, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* I had the GI bill, right.....

*Daria Venezia:* Because he was in World War II.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Actually I signed up with John Marshall in Jersey City, a woman by the name of Ruth something. She said you should go to law school. So I signed up for one of these combinations. The first two years were academic and the next two years of law school. So I did seven years in five years, something like that. I combined a course and did my prelaw and then law.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, but you were on the GI bill?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, oh yes, yes. It didn't cost me a penny; it was all paid by the government.

*Brenda Velasco:* Fine, you were a World War II veteran.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* You deserved it. You originally came out of New York though, Staten Island?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, I only went over there because I had to take the New York Bar so I moved over there in March and moved back in March. The reason I took the New York Bar was because I didn't have to clerk. In New Jersey, you had to clerk so



I still was not admitted yet in New Jersey. Then they passed a law in New Jersey saying you could clerk after you took the Bar. So I took the Bar and then I clerked.

*Brenda Velasco:* Now today you don't have to clerk.

*Nicholas Venezia:* No.

**7. What was the focal point of your community at that time?**

*Nicholas Venezia:* What would you say was the focal point? I don't know, do you?

*Daria Venezia:* Well was it church? Did you center, do you know what I mean.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Church, family?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, well church St. James was always the focal point.

*Daria Venezia:* Family too because you lived with your in-laws.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, I lived on Elmwood Avenue.

*Daria Venezia:* And your children by then.

*Nicholas Venezia:* And we had children, yes, that's right.

*Daria Venezia:* And a lot of neighbors too. Remember how close you were to your neighbors? Dr. Zullo.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, he was up on the corner.

*Brenda Velasco:* So it was the neighborhood.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, the neighborhood.

*Daria Venezia:* The Leahey's.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Who?

*Daria Venezia:* All old Woodbridge names. The Leahey's, right, weren't they.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, that's Peggy Catalano's family, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* What about the guy that just died recently? Do you remember his name? He lived across the street on Elmwood Avenue.

*Daria Venezia:* The Riley's.

*Nicholas Venezia:* The Riley's were next door.

*Brenda Velasco:* Then you had your children on Elmwood Avenue too.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Then eventually you moved to Colonia.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, yes. Debbie was born at the house on Elmwood Avenue. I said to the doctor.....

*Daria Venezia:* Dr. Walters, that's an old Woodbridge name too.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, he couldn't come over so they said put your wife in the ambulance and we won't cut the cord until she gets to..... So she went in the ambulance to Rahway Hospital with the baby next to her and I followed the ambulance.

*Daria Venezia:* I remember my grandmother was there, the story they say, and Dr. Walters told her boil some water. So she goes downstairs and she's boiling water and, you know, the baby's born. Babo as we called her, came back and said, you know, well I got the water boiling what do you want me to do with it? He said nothing I was just trying to get you out of my hair and keep you busy.

*Nicholas Venezia:* That was cute.

*Daria Venezia:* Has he come up, Dr. Walters?

*Brenda Velasco:* Somebody else mentioned him way back because he was a very popular doctor.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Oh, he was great.

*Brenda Velasco:* Where was Dr. Walters' office? Do you remember?

*Nicholas Venezia:* By the corner.

*Daria Venezia:* Right where the PBA is now.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Daria Venezia:* The office before was his house. He and his wife lived there.

*Nicholas Venezia:* And Debbie would get to the back of the line.....

*Daria Venezia:* Flu shots every year.

*Nicholas Venezia:* And she hated those flu shots. Back of the line; she couldn't get back enough.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well, can you blame her?

*Daria Venezia:* Every year he had the same story, I saved a crooked rusty needle for you.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, now she's a presiding judge.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes she is.

*Daria Venezia:* But that was back in the day when a doctor did everything, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, everything.

*Daria Venezia:* Not no specialty, he did it all. He delivered babies, he was your flu shot doctor.....

*Brenda Velasco:* He was like family.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Made house calls.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, they just became a part of the family.

*Nicholas Venezia:* That's right.

#### **8. What did you like about living in your section of Woodbridge?**

*Brenda Velasco:* In Colonia because eventually you moved out of Woodbridge. You kept your office here but you moved to Colonia.

*Nicholas Venezia:* I don't know.

*Daria Venezia:* As compared to Bayonne, how is it different?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Well, it was close to my office here and.....

*Daria Venezia:* More space.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, more space. It was more suburban than urban and the little guys, I will always remember Jeffrey in that crib putting the light on. Was that Staten Island?

*Daria Venezia:* That was Staten Island.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Oh that was Staten Island.

*Daria Venezia:* More room for the kids right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay and you never moved out.

*Nicholas Venezia:* No.

*Brenda Velasco:* You moved to Colonia.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, we moved to Colonia, never out of Woodbridge.

*Brenda Velasco:* Never out of Woodbridge once you came.

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, we bought a place down in Florida and we sold that in November of last year, the Cove.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, but, this is it.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

**9. Did you experience any significant happenings in Woodbridge-construction, accidents, sports events, riots, discrimination, etc.**

*Nicholas Venezia:* Well the only one was that train accident that I said before. I drove right up to the train. There's nothing else that I can think of.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, how about construction because when you lived here, when you first came, did we have Woodbridge Center? That was just clay pits right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Woodbridge Center.

*Daria Venezia:* The clay pits.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Daria Venezia:* And the dairy, I remember that.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh yes, the Maple Hill Dairy?

*Daria Venezia:* The Maple Hill Dairy.

*Nicholas Venezia:* The Maple Hill Dairy, right. Wow, you've got a good memory.

*Daria Venezia:* I can't believe I remember all this stuff and I remember the truck. Do you remember the Maple Hill Dairy truck?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Daria Venezia:* Come and deliver milk?

*Brenda Velasco:* So you had home milk delivery.

*Daria Venezia:* Sure, in the glass bottles. In fact we all still have our milk boxes around. You have one here.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, I got a milk box here.

*Brenda Velasco:* And we didn't have Metro Park neither.

*Nicholas Venezia:* No.

*Brenda Velasco:* When you came it was just Woodbridge and then you flew off to Colonia.

*Nicholas Venezia:* The train from Newark would go Rahway and then into here and there would be trains that went right straight through to New Brunswick and Trenton.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, they would divide at Rahway.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* But if you came from Bayonne usually that train from.....

*Nicholas Venezia:* I never came here by train from Bayonne.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, you always drove.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Always drove, yes.

*Daria Venezia:* Where did you go grocery shopping?

*Nicholas Venezia:* When?

*Brenda Velasco:* When you moved here.

*Daria Venezia:* Way back, yes.

*Nicholas Venezia:* I don't know about grocery shopping. Your mother took care of that.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was your mother. This is very traditional.

*Daria Venezia:* **A&P** maybe, right?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Daria Venezia:* No, I was just trying to think myself because there was no.....

*Brenda Velasco:* No Wegmans

*Daria Venezia:* No Wegmans.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, was there an **A&P** on Main Street?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so that was one of the stores then. Alright, so we have the train accident and we mentioned that before.

**10. What do you like about Woodbridge today?**

*Nicholas Venezia:* Well, I think it's a nice friendly town. As I said before there were no offices along here but then offices came in.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was good for business.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* It's still good for business because you still have a very important name, the Venezia name.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right and it was always respected, you know. I remember when Jimmy Nolan died they had a nice funeral for him.

*Brenda Velasco:* He was your partner.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* Did you both start off in the same year as partners?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* What year did you start your law practice again?

*Daria Venezia:* I think it was '64 wasn't it? Or did you move here in '64?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, I moved here in '64.

*Daria Venezia:* Tell her how you started. Didn't you start on Pearl Street or was Mr. Nolan down there by himself?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, he has a partner, he wasn't by himself.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you started off on Pearl Street then.

*Daria Venezia:* Somebody did.

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, I didn't.

*Daria Venezia:* No, he lived on Pearl Street.

*Nicholas Venezia:* He might have lived on Pearl Street.

*Daria Venezia:* Yes, close to the fire station.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Daria Venezia:* They had a great partnership. How many years, until he passed away? '64 to..... I forget what year he died.

*Nicholas Venezia:* His smoking killed him.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you've been here since 1964 on Main Street and you had another office somewhere else.

*Daria Venezia:* No, it was my mistake. Mr. Nolan lived there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay and you still like it here.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Oh yes.

**11. Do you have family members still living in Woodbridge?**

*Nicholas Venezia:* Daria, you live in.....

*Brenda Velasco:* You live in Woodbridge?  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Donna doesn't live in Woodbridge.  
*Brenda Velasco:* No, she lives in Scotch Plains  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Jeffrey he lives in New Brunswick.  
*Daria Venezia:* Piscataway.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Piscataway. Debbie lives in Woodbridge.  
*Brenda Velasco:* Right.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* And you.  
*Daria Venezia:* Yes.  
*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so you've got two of your four kids still living here.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.  
*Brenda Velasco:* And Daria you also practice law here?  
*Daria Venezia:* Yes.  
*Brenda Velasco:* So you trained your children well because Donna is still involved with St. James.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Donna is yes.  
*Brenda Velasco:* Because that's where I know Donna from. She's on the St. James School Advisory Committee.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.  
*Brenda Velasco:* So it's ingrained that she still goes back to the community here.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* What did we say about Donna, she's got something coming up?  
*Daria Venezia:* Yes, tomorrow she's going to get an award in the Mount.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* She's going to get an award in the Mount.  
*Daria Venezia:* Well, in the Hall of Fame they call it.  
*Brenda Velasco:* Good.  
*Daria Venezia:* Hall of Honor or something.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Isn't that nice.  
*Brenda Velasco:* That's terrific. She's a hard worker; she's good, she's great.  
*Daria Venezia:* Very dedicated.  
*Brenda Velasco:* Yes she is.

***12. Are there any other stories or events that you would like to discuss?***

*Brenda Velasco:* Because you were Democratic Chair.....  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, I was Democratic Chair.....  
*Brenda Velasco:* For the county.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.  
*Brenda Velasco:* And this is one of the best counties.  
*Daria Venezia:* The greatest county.  
*Brenda Velasco:* Well that's Dave Crabiel, the greatest county.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, right, Dave Crabiel, remember that?  
*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, I remember Dave Crabiel.  
*Daria Venezia:* They used to have many a meeting here, right, upstairs?  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, many a meeting.  
*Daria Venezia:* Because at one time, you know, there was no office and it kind of ran out of here.  
*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Nicholas Venezia:* What I liked about the dinners we would have at the Pines and Father Kruppi would say a prayer and tell about eighteen jokes and warm up the crowd for me. Joe Spicuzzo then became Chairman and this is funny: Mr. Venezia what are you doing down there, come on up here.

*Daria Venezia:* Up on the dais?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Your mother had to come up on the dais.

*Brenda Velasco:* And we still have the dinner at the Pines.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Daria Venezia:* Some things don't change.

*Brenda Velasco:* No. So how long were you County Chairman?

*Nicholas Venezia:* I think I was County Chairman about nineteen years.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow, and it's still a Democrat county.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right, somebody said to me the other day, well I said in those days we'd go into a meeting and there where people that disagreed with what you had to say but when we'd come out of that meeting everybody was with you. They didn't carry out there and argue after the meeting.

*Brenda Velasco:* They didn't argue publicly.

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, we were all together. We'd go out in unity. It made it much easier and it was, you know, you enjoyed it.

*Brenda Velasco:* Even when you first started your practice in '64, Woodbridge had Republican mayors and Independent mayors. So you laid the foundation for making it.....

*Nicholas Venezia:* Democratic.

*Brenda Velasco:* A Democrat town and a Democrat county and still the economy is very good compared to some of the other counties. We're one of the areas that is good even though we're in the great recession. So you've got quite a bit of achievement to be proud of as well as the rest of your family. Anything else you want to mention?

*Nicholas Venezia:* I don't know of anything else, do you?

*Daria Venezia:* How about a little history about the Country Club because you were in there a long time.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, I was counsel for the Country Club many years.

*Daria Venezia:* When you first started was it different?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, what happened is when you became eighty you got a free membership. That's the year they changed it.

*Daria Venezia:* So he's not a member anymore.

*Nicholas Venezia:* So I said the hell with you; you're my fourteenth tee, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, you can see it from your house though, right, the backyard?

*Daria Venezia:* When you first started did it look the same? It changed didn't it?

*Nicholas Venezia:* The Country Club?

*Daria Venezia:* Yes.

*Nicholas Venezia:* No it's the same.

*Daria Venezia:* Because they had a fire, right? But that was way long ago?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, the guy who picked it up and owned it wanted to make it a nine hole course.

*Brenda Velasco:* Who was this?

*Nicholas Venezia:* I forget his name, and make a shopping center on the other side. Yes, this guy wanted to do it but it never happened.

*Brenda Velasco:* Good. It's one of the nicest places in Colonia and this idea of open space like that, even if you're not a member, you look at it and it's beautiful. It's nice to ride by it and we hope it continues to stay open space.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Absolutely.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you're not a member anymore?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No, and as I said they used to let you come in free at eighty and that's the year they stopped it. And after all those years of being counsel for them! Well what are you going to do?

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, anything else you can think of Mr. Venezia?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No.

*Brenda Velasco:* Daria?

*Daria Venezia:* I don't think so. What was the bowling alley before?

*Brenda Velasco:* The bowling alley on Main Street?

*Daria Venezia:* Yes, was it just vacant land and then you built it or was it something else?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, the bowling alley was vacant and.....

*Nicholas Venezia:* Pop pop built it.

*Daria Venezia:* But what was the **Bucket** though, that was something different right?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, what was the **Brass Bucket** before you.....

*Nicholas Venezia:* It was a barn.

*Daria Venezia:* **Sarge's** something?

*Nicholas Venezia:* **Sarge's Old Coral.**

*Brenda Velasco:* And did it have live horses in it?

*Nicholas Venezia:* It had haylofts upstairs. We used to put hay up there for the horses.

*Daria Venezia:* How did you think to renovate it from a barn?

*Nicholas Venezia:* What's his name used to go to Pennsylvania should to bring home mozzarella. What was his name?

*Brenda Velasco:* And he would bring the mozzarella home from Pennsylvania?

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes, he would bring the mozzarella in jars and we would give it to everybody. And we had hay up there.

*Daria Venezia:* How did you ever renovate it?

*Nicholas Venezia:* It was a hayloft and we got rid of the hayloft.

*Daria Venezia:* That's amazing.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Then we had the fireplace. We opened up the fireplace.

*Brenda Velasco:* The fireplace was beautiful.

*Nicholas Venezia:* And we opened up the fireplace and the cook would cook the steaks.....

*Daria Venezia:* Now where was the Chinese restaurant? Wasn't there a Chinese restaurant?

No?

*Nicholas Venezia:* No.

*Brenda Velasco:* But that was a memorable restaurant.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was good and your brother worked for you there too.

*Nicholas Venezia:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, then I think we've got it. Thank you very, very, very much for finding the time.

.....

After the formal interview concluded, Daria recalled that after school every Friday, she would get French fries and coke at **Woolworth's** counter.