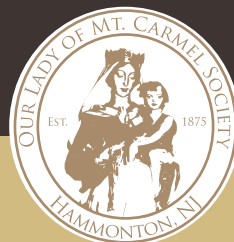


Celebrating 150 Years

The History of

The Our Lady of Mount Carmel Festival

1875 - 2025



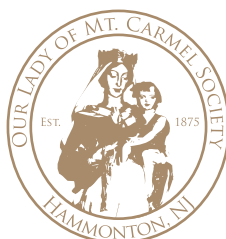
The Our Lady of Mount Carmel Festival of Hammonton began in 1875 as a small, private devotion by a group of NJ immigrants from Gesso, Sicily. It has since evolved into one of the largest and longest continuous Italian American religious celebrations in the United States.

The grand procession is the highlight. Devoted participants join forces to move the church's revered statues for 1.3 miles in the hot, July weather.

The Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society is responsible for preparing, sponsoring, and maintaining the traditions of the annual religious festival.

For a century and a half, there are thousands of testimonial accounts from patrons of how their faith and devotion to the Blessed Mother and the other saints have had remarkable healing, protection, and positive impacts on their lives and loved ones.

As the feast has grown over the years, much has been added to commemorate the history and add to the excitement of this traditional week-long celebration.



The Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society, along with the Preservation of the OLMC Festival, Inc., were created to assure that the feast and its religious significance to the Italian culture and the Town of Hammonton will never cease.





Our Lady of Mount Carmel



Depiction of the Prophet Elijah



St. Simon Stock



Fleeing of the Carmelites



The Chapel of Mount Carmel



The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel observed in Italy.

*"Dedication, Compassion, and Tradition has guided the Society
for 150 years and will continue to do so."*

ORIGINS

The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was originally celebrated on July 16th and became an official Catholic holiday in the 14th Century.

The devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary through the Feast of Mount Carmel is tied to the Carmelite Order to thank the Blessed Virgin Mary for her protection during its difficult first years.

A life of prayer and meditation inspired the formation of the Carmelite Order at Mount Carmel in Palestine by the Prophet Elijah. A group of men who were inspired by him lived as hermits in Mount Carmel's caves, according to the Book of Kings.

Carmelites see the perfect image of all they want and hope to be in the Virgin Mary.

After the era of Jesus Christ, the hermits' successors built a chapel on Mount Carmel, the first dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

In later years, due to invasion and the spread of vocations, the Order spread across Europe where they faced many hardships.

In approximately 1238, the Carmelites were forced to abandon their home on Mount Carmel due to incursions and persecutions by the Saracens. Most of the Carmelites went back to their country of origin in Europe to establish the Order there.

Getting closer to the relationship to the Feast as we know it today in Hammonton, St. Simon Stock joined the Order and became the head of the Order.

As seen on the scapular we wear to this day, St. Simon Stock was praying to Our Lady, the Patroness of the Order using the Prayers he invented that are used by the Carmelites to this day.

Suddenly Our Lady appeared to him in the company of angels and bearing the infant Jesus in her arms and holding the brown Scapular.

She gave it to him with a promise that anyone who died wearing it piously would not suffer eternal damnation.

This Apparition happened in July 1251.



"The Mount Carmel Society shares faith with our ancestors. We are one in faith."

The festival has been an annual fixture in the Town of Hammonton since its inception in 1875.

The Town of Hammonton was incorporated on March 5, 1866, and known for its agricultural production, especially blueberries.

Immigrants from southern Italy and Sicily began to arrive in Hammonton after the Civil War. Eventually, the population became predominantly Italian American.

One of the first groups of immigrants came from the village of Gesso, Sicily. Among them was Antonio Capelli.

In 1875, Antonio Capelli, along with other immigrants from Gesso, Luigi Vuotto, Cataldo Vuotto, Emanuel Persico, Pepino Persico, Don Joseph, Antonio Scapocchia, Pietro Luca, Santo D'Agostino, Matteo Campanella, Domenic Campanella, Anthony Lupo and Salvatore Calabrese, would initiate the celebration of the Feast of La Madonna del Carmine on July 16th.

The Festival originated on July 16, 1875 at 232 Pine Road. They knelt and prayed in front of a painting of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in the home of Antonio Capelli to celebrate for their safe journey to America, for a successful harvest, and for the blessings and good fortune found in their new home of Hammonton.

After praying, the immigrants formed a small procession in front of Antonio Capelli's home with the painting and processed through the fields.



Antonio Capelli



Luigi Vuotto



Emanuel Persico



Painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

Thus, the Feast, as we know it today, was born.

By 1886, the Festival was moved to the Hammonton Lake Park. During this time, the first Catholic Church was built in the Town of Hammonton, St. Joseph's Church, on North Third Street. The priests assigned to the church, requested that the observance to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel be moved to the church.

In 1887, the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel feast was observed at St. Joseph's Church and the religious procession was conducted through the streets of Hammonton.

However, the feast remained independent of the church or diocese.

On July 16, 1891, a life-sized statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel was presented to St. Joseph's Church by a congregation headed by Domenic DeFeo.



St. Joseph's Church



Home of Antonio Capelli

Early 1900s



In 1901, the Fathers of the Pious Society of Missions (later renamed the Society of the Catholic Apostolate in 1947 and affectionately known as “The Pallottines”), were assigned to administer to the parishioners of St. Joseph’s Church, which included many Italian-speaking immigrants.

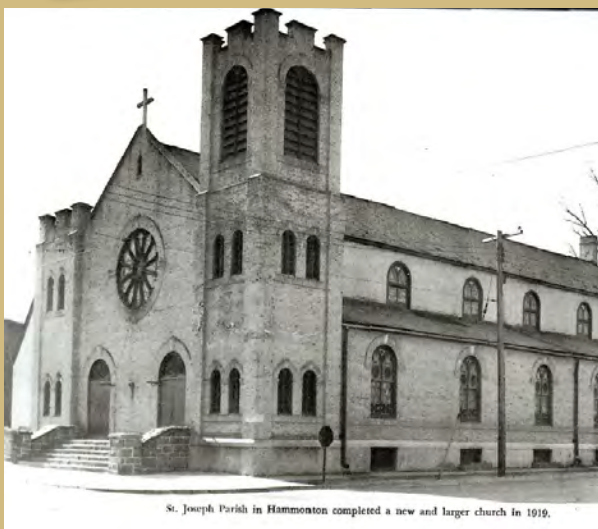
Also in 1901, per newspaper reports, there was an apparent confrontation between the Society and parishioners against the then pastor. The pastor for reasons unknown refused to allow the statues to be removed from the Church. Local officials restored order.

In 1905, the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society obtained its New Jersey State Charter.

In 1919, a new St. Joseph’s Church was constructed. The church was described as “early Romanesque.” The 1886 church was left standing and became known as the “Chapel of Blessed Vincent Pallotti.”

The procession of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel would now be referred to as the “Grande Procession of Saints.”

In the early days of the feast, the statues of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and the saints were placed on lifters and carried upon the shoulders of the men of the various societies.



St. Joseph Parish in Hammonton completed a new and larger church in 1919.



1920s

In the 1920s, thousands of pilgrims made their way to Hammonton to honor Our Lady. The Pennsylvania Railroad added special trains to transport many faithful into town. The crowds were reported to be approximately 20,000 people in the latter part of the decade.

St. Joseph's Elementary School opened in September of 1922. From its inception, students were educated by the Religious Teachers Filippini.

The 50th year Golden Anniversary of the feast was celebrated in 1925.

50th Anniversary Celebration of the Madonna del Carmine
HAMMONTON, NEW JERSEY

3 DAY CELEBRATION
PROGRAMMA

Saturday, July 15th
Morning: Masses at all hours with special devotion.
At 11 a. m. High Mass and Sermon.
Afternoon: Devotions.
8 p. m. Benediction with the Most Blessed Sacrament.
10 p. m. Special Devotions.
10 p. m. Splendid Display of Fireworks.

Sunday, July 16th
Morning: Masses at every hour from 6 a. m. to 10 p. m. with Sermons and Greetings.
Afternoon: Special Devotions.
Monday, July 17th
Masses at every hour. Confessions and Communion.
Afternoon: Special Services.

EXTRA FEATURES
A tempting Banquet and popular entertainment, musical program, Venetian dancing.
For children and religious articles apply to the Church door.
Day office and articles of discordant will be highly appreciated.

This celebration, as usual, will bring to Hammonton thousands of people from near and far, who want to forget their troubles, meet old friends, relax in the pure air of green gardens and breathe a refreshing atmosphere of faith.

May the Blessed Mother obtain from her Divine Son the choicest blessings for you and yours.

3 Giorni di Grandi Festività
PROGRAMMA

Sabbato, 15 di Luglio
Mattino: Santa Messa a tutte le ore con devoti atti speciali.
Alle 11 Messa Solenne con panegirico. Conferenti a disposizione a tutte le ore.
Pomeriggio: Devotioni speciali tutte le ore.
Alle 4 Processione tradizionale sulla Statua della Madonna.
Alle 8 Benedizione col SS. Sacramento.
Alle 9 Devotioni Speciali.
Alle 10 Fuochi artificiali.

Domenica, 16 di Luglio
Mattino: Messa tutte le ore con fervore.
Pomeriggio: Devotioni speciali.
Lunedì, 17 di Luglio
Mattino: Messa a tutte le ore, confessioni e Communioni.
Pomeriggio: Devotioni speciali.

Un attraente Banquet (fiera) brateni, venetiana, musica e illuminazione.
Giochi ed articoli religiosi sono estesi alla porta della Chiesa.
Accettiamo ben volentieri qualunque offerta, anche anonima e per posta.

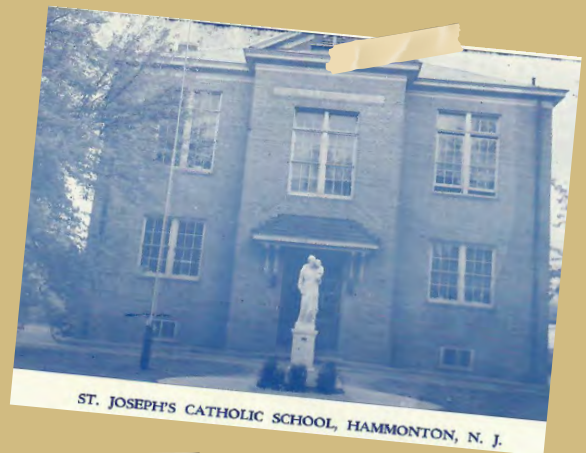
Questa festa portera a Hammonton migliaia di persone che vogliono dimenticare i guai della vita, visitare il santuario, riacquistare la salute del loro organismo, riacquistare la salute della loro anima.

Vuole la Madonna Santissima sempre dal suo Figlio Gesù le grazie e benedizioni necessarie per voi e i vostri cari.

Statua della Madonna del Carmine

J. PIZZI
Sec. G. L. M. C. C.

Rev. GUIDO STECCATI
Pastor



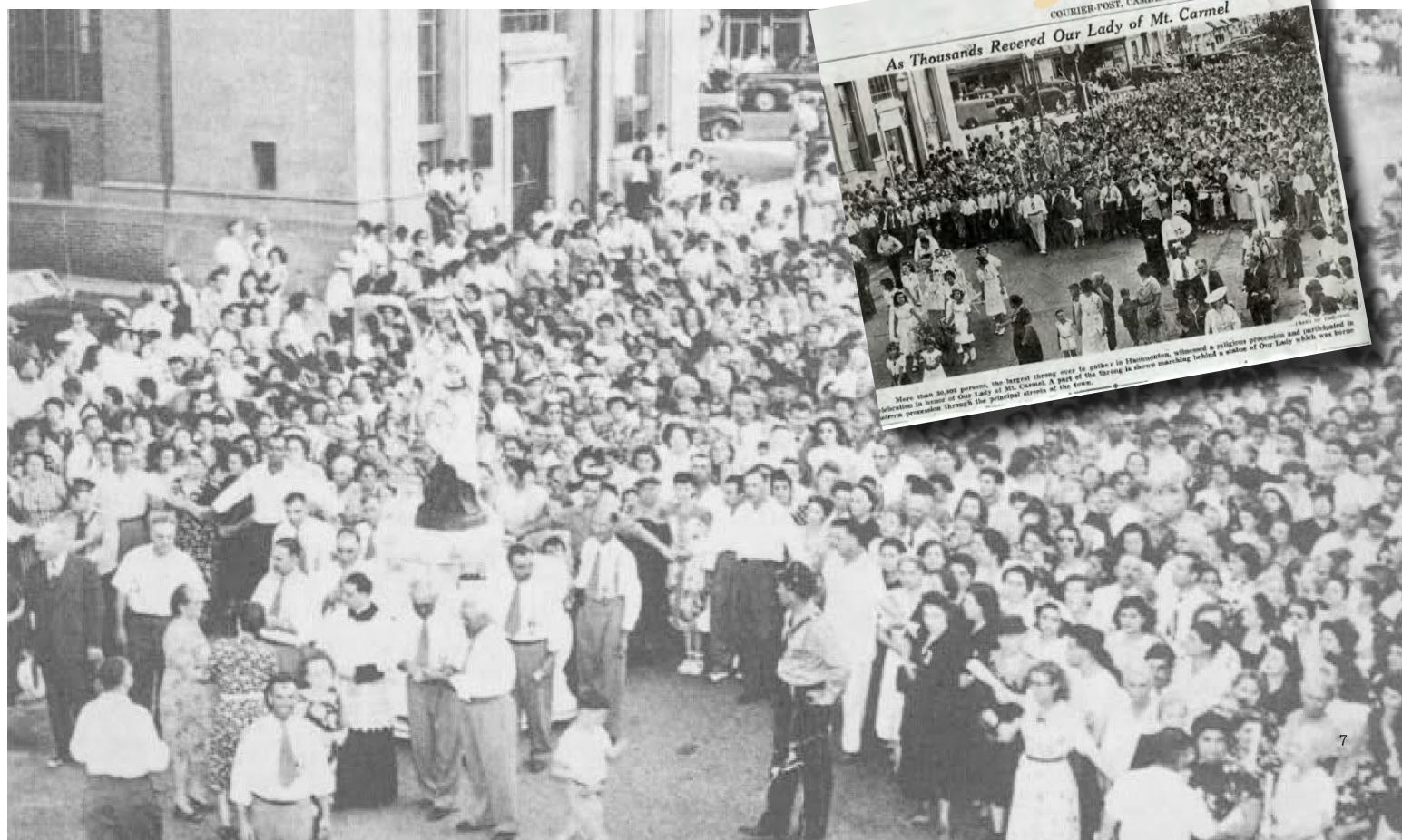
1930s

Gifted Italian craftsmen constructed ornate wooden carriages on wheels to transport the statues in the procession. Some of these carriages are still utilized today.

Notwithstanding the Great Depression, a crowd of pilgrims descended upon Hammonton to honor Our Lady in record numbers.

Despite gasoline rationing and other transportation difficulties, another 50,000 pilgrims ventured to Hammonton to implore Our Lady to end the war in Europe and protect the many servicemen and women fighting to protect the country.

Bus and railroad companies again added extra units to the schedule to meet the demands of the visitors.



1940s



With the war still raging in Europe and the Pacific, the faithful continued to make the pilgrimage to Hammonton to invoke Our Lady's help.

Between 1,000 to 6,000 people were reported to have marched in the procession.

During the war, the religious observance took center stage as the fireworks, carnival and holiday lighting were banned due to war time restrictions.

The badges worn by the sponsors of the festival transitioned during World War II from traditional Italian colors to the colors of the American flag in support of the troops.

In 1942, after the Pallottine Seminary moved to Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York, St. Joseph High School would now enroll students transitioning from the elementary school.

By the July 16, 1946, celebration, the World War was over. Pilgrims continued to make their way to Hammonton in record numbers to thank Our Lady for a successful end to the armed conflict and for the safe return home of relatives and friends in the armed forces.

During this decade, crowds varied between 35,000 to 70,000 people on Mt. Carmel day, coming by car, chartered buses by the hundreds, and train.



1950s

The decade began with the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the Feast of Our Lady.

During this decade, an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 people attended on the feast day.

On July 16, 1956, the Mt. Carmel Society dedicated their new building and clubhouse, on Tilton Street (subsequently renamed Mt. Carmel Lane).

In 1958, the feast featured a celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady of Lourdes, as the final appearance to St. Bernadette occurred on July 16, 1858.



"Faith - Family - Mt. Carmel"



1960s

July 16, 1963, marked the last year that the religious feast would be celebrated in the 1919 St. Joseph's Church.

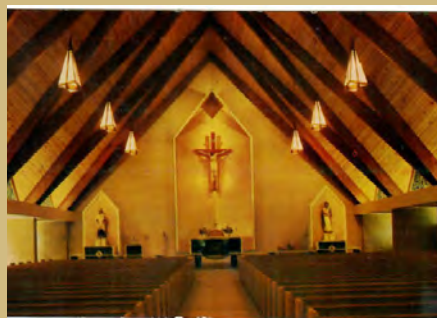
The church would be demolished and replaced with a new structure, scheduled to open in time for the 1964 Mt. Carmel Feast.

Saint Martin de Porres was built shortly after followed by a third parish, Saint Anthony of Padua.

By the end of the decade, the small Town of Hammonton would have three parishes.

On July 16, 1964, the feast was celebrated in the newly built St. Joseph's Church.

During this decade, crowds were estimated to be between 20,000 to 50,000 people on feast day with thousands following the procession.



Father Umberto Carta



1970s

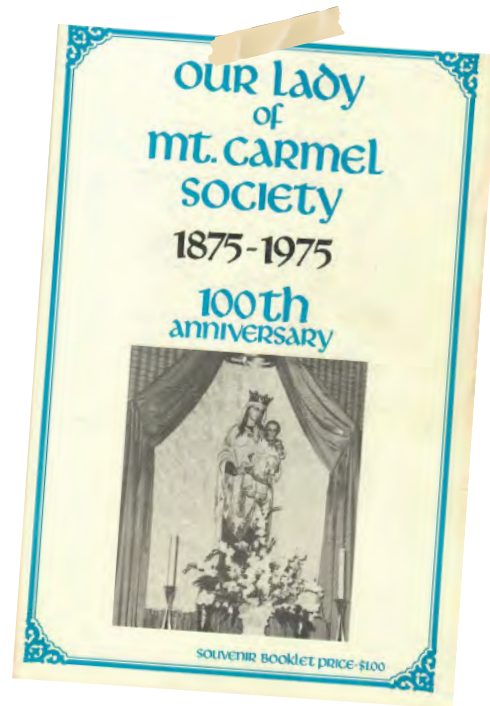
The beginning of this decade was marked by the Vietnam war and prayers were devoted to peace

July 16, 1975, marked the Centennial year. The Mt. Carmel Society published a 100th Anniversary Souvenir Booklet in commemoration.

The Centennial year began with the Mt. Carmel Society and approximately 300 followers parading to the original devotion site, the Pine Road home of Antonio Capelli. At the site, mass was celebrated followed by a band concert and Italian festivities.

From that point, the Society would conduct a similar ceremony every 10 years.

At the suggestion of member Lawrence Longo, Sr., the Society initiated its concession stand in 1976.



DEDICATION OF MONUMENT
1975

A monument was erected to honor Our Lady and the Society founders which was later dedicated on Sunday, July 11, 1976.

The six-foot-high monument is pictured on left. The inscription, in both English and Italian, reads: "On this site one hundred years ago our forefathers came to this country from Italy. They prayed and paid homage in grateful thanksgiving to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel."

During this decade, crowds were estimated to be between 20,000 to 50,000 people on Mt. Carmel day with thousands following the procession.



1975



1980s

At the July 16, 1984, celebration, NJ Governor Thomas Kean, made a surprise visit to Hammon-ton and walked the last part of the procession with local political leaders.

July 16, 1985, was notable for the founding and debut performance of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society Band.

The band was started by Mt. Carmel Society President Carmine Pantalone, to preserve the culture of the Italian American concert bands and to participate in the annual procession. Mr. Pantalone met with musicians, Herb Roselle, Anthony Guerere and Bob Hitman to form such a band.

A new tradition was born.

In 1985, Governor Kean made a return visit. He met the procession on Bellevue Avenue and walked the remaining route.

In 1987, future chaplain of the Mt. Carmel Society Joseph Capella, a Hammonton resident and member of the Mt. Carmel Society, was a Seminarian of the Pallottine Order.

During this decade, crowds were not as large as in years past but participation in the week-long celebration remained strong.

The last year of this decade recorded a significant rainstorm that wiped out the entire day except for the traditional procession.

In 1989, James Florio was running for Governor and attend the Feast. He was elected in 1990.



Father Joseph Capella



Former New Jersey Governor James Florio



Herb Roselle



Anthony Guerere



1990s



The 1990s were a time for the Society to re-group on its mission and devotion. The feast needed a resurgence to maintain its meaning and place in the community.

At that time, the Society's leadership began to initiate improvements and challenged its membership to strengthen its role in perpetuating the long-standing historical event. The Society made a concentrated effort to reunite the community with the religious and festive aspects of the week-long celebration.

The efforts included gaining greater media awareness, engaging participation from civic groups such as the Hammonton Chamber of Commerce, the Sons of Italy, the Knights of Columbus, and the Italian Sons and Daughters. Each group welcomed the invitation to support and become active in the continuation of the feast.

Additionally, the Town of Hammonton which has always been supportive of the celebration, intensified their involvement to help with the revitalization of the feast week. The downtown area also underwent a transformation during this period.

The Society realized it needed to be ever-evolving while maintaining the traditions of its forefathers. Plans were made to update the amusement experience by adding wristband nights and advance ticket sales, add entertainment for all ages, revamp the fireworks display, resurface the carnival grounds, and construct a permanent pavilion.

Notably, July 16, 1995, marked the 120th Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Feast with an estimated crowd of 15,000.







Participation in the Mt. Carmel Festival remained strong in the 2000s, but the crowds no longer compared to those from earlier decades.

A number of factors may have led to a decline in attendance at religious celebrations over the years, such as disinterest in maintaining traditions, families being dispersed, closing and merging of parishes, or less religious devotion.

In 2000, a 125th Anniversary Commemorative booklet was published and distributed to the public by the Society presenting the history of the Society and Feast.

In 2001, the Pallottine Priests celebrated their 100th year of service to the parishioners of St. Joseph's Parish in Hammonton, New Jersey.

In 2004, the celebration was challenged by a dispute between the then-pastor of St. Joseph. Historically the money pinned to the statues would be given to St. Joseph, but now that there were three parishes in Town, the Society believed it would be fair to distribute the church's portion to all three. Other than this dispute, the festivities went on as usual.

On October 4, 2004, the Pallottine Order of Priests ended its tenure at St. Joseph's Parish after 103 years of service.

Effective in November of that year, the priests of the Camden Diocese would now be administering to the parishioners of St. Joseph.

July 16, 2005, would be the 130th Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

At the July 16, 2006 celebration, the Saxula Brass Band from San Gregorio di Sassola, Italy, made a special appearance. Hammonton began a twin city relationship with this Italian city.





During this decade, the Diocese of Camden initiated a restructuring of the parishes in the town, reversing what they proclaimed in the early 1960s.

The three Catholic parishes in Hammonton would be consolidated into one parish, named St. Mary of Mt. Carmel, in honor of Hammonton Catholics' patroness. This change was not popular either.

Notwithstanding these changes, the tradition of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Feast was not impeded.

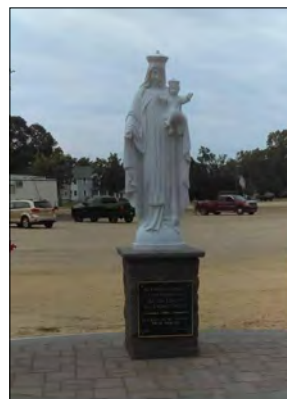
For the Feast of July 16, 2011, the Knights of Columbus, Pallotti Council #3471 members, refurbished the many carriages utilized to transport the statues in the July 16th procession. Some of these carriages dated back to the 1930s and were in disrepair.

In 2013, The Knights of Columbus, Pallotti Council #3471, opened James N. Rodio Hall. On July 16th each year, the KofC hosts visitors, the Society, and our band for some camaraderie during the Society's morning parade around town.

July 16, 2015, marked the 140th Anniversary of the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, billed as the "Longest Running Italian Festival in the United States."

On Saturday, July 8, 2017, after celebrating an outdoor mass at the Society Hall, the Society proceeded to a new monument for a dedication ceremony.

The monument is a four-foot marble statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and is located at the corner of North Third and French Streets on the Mt. Carmel Society carnival grounds, diagonally across from St. Joseph's Church.



The plaque at the base reads: "In perpetual honor to the brethren of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Pray for Us. Established 1875. Dedicated 2017."





*"When all of our personal commitments merge,
we are one strong group for Her, committed to
keeping the honor, glory and tradition alive."*



The 145th anniversary of the Mt Carmel Feast planned for 2020 faced an international pandemic known as the coronavirus (COVID-19), which essentially placed the entire United States at a standstill.



This crisis forced shutdowns of all public activities, especially festivals. “Social distancing” was the phrase of the year. The many mandates and restrictions associated with public gatherings placed the fate of the “longest continuous running Italian Festival in the United States” in serious peril.

There had been other monumental health crises that struck millions during the run of the feast’s history, such as the 1918-1919 worldwide “Spanish Influenza,” which did not stop the procession from occurring.

The devastation of World War I and World War II did not stop the feast. During these times, the focus remained on prayer rather than celebration.

When the pandemic intensified in the U.S. in April 2020, particularly in the northeast, the Society needed to decide if and how it could continue the long-standing historical event.

The Society’s main goal was to continue the procession and work within the stringent constraints to have a safe celebration. The longest-running Italian Festival in the United States would ultimately go on even in the midst of a pandemic.

The scale of the Feast week was extremely minimized. However, all the honored traditions were accomplished such as the morning visit to





the birthplace of the procession, the mass honoring the deceased members of the Society (celebrated under the Society's outdoor pavilion), and most importantly, the procession of saints along the historic route. The mass and procession were live-streamed for people at home.

The Mt. Carmel food stand and beer garden were open under social distancing guidelines and entertainment occurred only on the Feast Day.

The carnival grounds, usually buzzing with nightly action, resembled a quiet open park instead. It was the first time there were no amusements since the World War II era. Fireworks did occur on the Feast Day.

All other Italian American, Catholic religious feasts and festivals from May through July were canceled in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The 145th Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel was the only to take place.

The Mt. Carmel Feast had survived two world wars, one year of continuous rain, several years of brutally hot weather, one pandemic (1918-19), a parish partition (1962-63), a parish reorganization (2010), and the loss of the Pallottine Fathers (2004), and now the coronavirus pandemic. No obstacle would stand in the way of faith and tradition.

In 2021, the coronavirus pandemic was still a major concern. Although there remained restrictions on public gatherings, the festival began to return to its former glory. A full schedule of masses and amusements were reinstated.

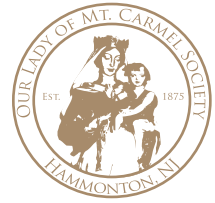
The Society established an internal committee and began planning for the 150th Celebration. The Preservation of the OLMC Festival, Inc. was established as an ancillary organization to educate and raise funds to ensure this tradition and devotion will continue well into the future.



"This long-standing tradition presents a sense of pride, honor and camaraderie that is unmatched."

THE OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL SOCIETY

The Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society was established in 1875. Today, there are more than 40 members who are comprised mostly of descendants of the original founding fathers of the traditional feast and celebration. All are dedicated to its preservation.



Officers



Louis J. Pantalone
President



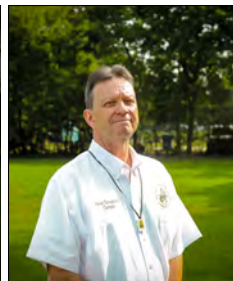
Frank Italiano
Vice President



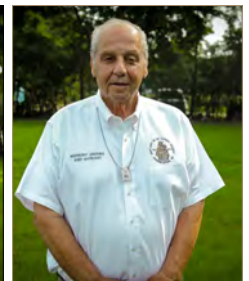
David DeStefano
Treasurer



David Pantalone
Secretary



Kevin Tomasello
Censor



Anthony Jacobs
Assistant Secretary

Directors



Joseph Brigandi



John Leahey



David Longo



William Monzo
Director



Louis Pantalone Sr.



Ronald R. Virgilio

"This Feast is a celebration of thanks for everything Our Lady and Our Lord do us every day. Not many organizations, with the great the leadership we have..."

Chaplain

Members



Father Thomas Donio



Horace Angelow



Kris Austin



Franco Catania



Eric Chamberlain



Jerry Daunoras



Joseph DeVuono



Matthew Doelling



William Eppler



Rocco B. Fichetola



Rocco Fucetola Sr.



Rocco Fucetola Jr.



Rocco Fucetola III



Anthony Giacobbe



Jim Haines



Mark P. Krason



John Ervin



Lawrence Longo Jr.



Guy Midure



Eric Monzo

...can work so well together to do the necessary work to support the feast and not lose sight of the main goal, which is the tradition we uphold on every 16th of July."



Matt Mull



Randy Ordille



Joseph Pantalone



Louis Pantalone Jr.



Michael Parker



Anthony Ritz



Brian Ritz



Scott Rivera



Ray Sammartino



John E. Smith



Kenneth Tomasello



Victor Walters



John Zucconi Jr.

Deceased Members

Every member is like a brother. We have learned the values that are necessary to perpetuate the Feast from the members before us. Their memories will always live on in our heart.

D. Tanzola, B. Pizzi, S. De Feo, F. DiGiacomo, J. Pizzi, G. Amuto, A. Dracalello, A. Vassallo, Q. Sana, B. Crescenzo, F. Squillace, C. Vuotto, G. Ruberton, P. Carno, G. Ovale, C. Tomasco, F. Campanella, B. Fogletto, M. Apalucci, S. Calabrese, D. Campanella, C. Cataldo, A. Capelli, J. Clementi, M. Campanella, G. Calasurdo, A. Calasurdo, N. Cashan, D. Caruso, J. Dani, M. DiFrancesco, S. Donio, S. D'Agostino, S. DeStefano, D. Fanelli, D. Giordano, T. Grasso, D. Joseph, J. Jacobs, P. Jacobs, N. Juliano, L. Juliano, A. Lupo, P. Luca, J. Lucca, J. Landolino, D. Longo, G. Moscarelli, J. Ordille, P. Persico, E. Persico, G. Pinto, L. Pantalone, F. Ruggero, G. Ruggero, F. Rescigno, A. Scapocchia, S. Santelli, L. Vuotto, H. Virgilio, S. Virgilio, F. Jacobs, J. Tomasello, F. Piscetelli, J. Berenato, F. Fiore, L. Tomasello, J. Gelona, J. Cavuto, A. Jacobs, D. DeFrancisco, F. Fogletto, V. Pizzi, A. Ingemi, F. Italiano, P. Gregori Jr., L. Longo, R. Fucetola, C. Pantalone, R. Fichetola, P. C. DeStefano, P. Codone, D. Cavuto, E. Osciak, J. Zucconi, J. Owens, A. Tomasello, M. Simonetti, S. Mascioli, James Muccie, George Campanella, Alex DeSilvio, Anthony Capella Sr., Ron Virgilio, Anthony Tomasello, Joe Monzo, Fr. Joseph Capella, David J. Longo, Jr.

Reflections from a Member

My Journey with the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society: A Story of Family, Faith, and Dedication by Rocco B. Fichetola



Rocco A. Fichetola and Rocco B. Fichetola

Being a member of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society is more than just a tradition for me; it is a profound honor rooted in my family, faith, belief, and dedication to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

FAMILY: THE HEART OF COMMUNITY

The love of family, whether through blood ties or the bonds of friendship, has always been the foundation of my life. In the Society, we celebrate the joy of each other's lives, respecting one another and working together in unity. The support we give and receive from one another is a testament to the strength of community.

FAITH: STRENGTH THROUGH CHALLENGES

Faith is what helps us face life's challenges, no matter how big or small. It is our faith that drives us to push forward and overcome difficulties, knowing that Christ is always with us. Within the Society, this faith is strengthened through shared prayers, Masses, and the spiritual tradition of honoring Mary.

BELIEF: TRUST IN CHRIST AND MARY'S PROTECTION

Central to our Catholic faith is the belief in Christ as the way to eternal life with God. Wearing the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is a personal commitment to this belief, honoring Mary as not only our protector but also as the first disciple of Christ. This devotion brings peace and strength, knowing that we are clothed in her spiritual protection.

DEDICATION: THE HARD WORK OF SERVICE

Each year, in preparation for our feast, countless hours are spent planning, organizing, and working together with members and their families. It is a type of dedication that requires sacrifice, but with the support of my fellow members, the work becomes easier to bear. I am deeply grateful for the collective efforts of everyone involved.

THE REWARD OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Our Society is not just about faith and devotion, but also about giving back. Through our work with various organizations within our town, we've earned the respect, admiration, and gratitude of many. It is truly a rewarding experience to know that our efforts positively impact the lives of others, and I am proud to be part of this mission.

LEGACY OF FAMILY

My connection to the Society runs deep, as I had the privilege of sharing this journey with my father, Rocco A. Fichetola, who was also a long-time member. Although he is now deceased, his memory lives on through the shared experiences and dedication to the Society. I also have many cousins who are part of this legacy, and it fills me with pride to continue this tradition.

AN HONORABLE RECOGNITION

In 2022, I was humbled to receive the George Campenella Member of the Year Award. It was an incredible honor, and it reaffirmed my commitment to the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society. I am grateful beyond words for the recognition and for the opportunity to serve alongside such an exceptional group of people.

CONCLUSION: A LIFELONG HONOR

You will not find a better group of individuals in life than the members of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society. Their dedication, hard work, and faith inspire me daily, and I am proud and honored to be a part of this organization. Through our combined efforts, we accomplish great things, always looking toward a bright and positive future.

In Memory of Father Joe Capella



Reverend Joseph Capella
1961-2022

Fr. Joe Capella became a member of the Society in 1980. His father and brothers were all members of the Society dating back to 1977.

Father entered the seminary in 1988 and was ordained in 1990. He was the epitome of kindness, gentleness and reverence. The sincerity of his words left his congregation with a sense of warmth and renewed devotion to their faith and fellow man.

Fr. Joe became the Chaplain of the Society in 1988 and guided the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Statue essentially every July 16th from the time he entered the seminary. The Society was honored to have him preside over the annual mass honoring our deceased members, occurring on the 16th at the morning mass.

Throughout his short life, Fr. Joe suffered in silence with chronic health issues and was taken from us way too soon in 2022. The Society will be forever indebted to this remarkable man for his faith, devotion, dedication, and spiritual leadership.



NOTABLE FACTS

OLMC PRESIDENTS

1946 - Tony Jacobs
1956 - David Longo
1957 - Tony Jacobs
1975 - Louis Tomasello
1982 - Anthony Ingemi
1985 - Carmine Pantalone
1986 - Anthony Jacobs
1987 - George Campanella
2011 - Louis J. Pantalone

ST. JOSEPH CHURCH PASTORS

1901 - Fr. John Rohleder, P.S.M.
1904 - Fr. Joseph Traserici, P.S.M.
1912 - Fr. Gaspare Dalia, P.S.M.,
1932 - Fr. Guido Steccati, P.S.M.
1938 - Fr. Lucien Abbate, P.S.M.
1944 - Fr. Marco Martorelli, S.A.C.
1954 - Fr. Nicholas Rinaldi, S.A.C
1960 - Fr. Pasquale Schimizzi, S.A.C
1967 - Fr. Joseph Mungari, S.A.C.
1978 - Fr. John Biermann, S.A.C.
1984 - Fr. Patsy Amabile, S.A.C.
1989 - Fr. Angelo Palermo, S.A.C.
1990 - Fr. Joseph Mungari, S.A.C.
1998 - Fr. Louis Micca, S.A.C
2004 - Fr. Robert Nolan, S.A.C.
2005 - Monsignor Dominic Bottino
2010 - Fr. Carmen Carlone
2011 - Fr. Thomas Donio
2016 - Fr. Peter Saporito
2019 - Fr. David Rivera



HISTORY OF AMUSEMENTS

1935 - West World Wonder Shows
1936 - Envoy Bros
1938 - Catlen and Wilson Shows
1939 - Zacchini Bros
1946 - Prell Shows
1960 - Amusements of America



RAIN EVENTS

Throughout 149 years, there have been very few recorded rain events on the 16th of July. The most memorable in terms of threatening the procession was in 1989 when it rained all day and all night. Nevertheless, the procession has been continuous since 1875.

1940 - Downpour
1950 - Intermittent
1967 - Rain morning only then clearing
1959 - Rain reported
1975 - Light rain
1978 - Light rain at the end of the procession
1989 - Rain all day
2000 - Brief rain during the procession
2023 - Steady rain during the procession

MARCHING BANDS



1895 - Columbia Military Band
1895 - Jefferson Concert Band
1900 - St. Cecelia, Philadelphia
1916 - Pizzi Marine Band of Mt Carmel
1950-1958 - John Raffa's American Legion Band, Lozzi Philadelphia Italian Band, San Antonio Abbate Society Band, St. Michael's Italian Band

1975- The Zoli Italian Band, Neglia Italian Band
1977-1980 - The Neglia Band, Verdi Italian Band
1984 - Anthony Neglia, leader of the Neglia Concert, which participated in the procession, advised the Press of Atlantic City, that he wrote a symphonic march titled, "Mt. Carmel," to perform in honor of Our Lady
1985 -Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Society Band
1995 -Mt. Carmel Society Band, Neglia Band, Mt. Carmel Band of Bridgeport, PA
2006 -Carmine Pantalone Mt. Carmel Society Band, Neglia Italian Band, Saxula Band
2010 - Carmine Pantalone Mt. Carmel Society Band, Hammonton High School Band, La Banda Verdi

TRADITIONS

Collections

In the early days of the celebration, the Society was largely dependent upon donations from the community to conduct the Feast. In advance of Feast week, Members would go door-to-door and solicit donations for the costs associated with the Festival, including advertising, the Feast day bands, and the fireworks.

Morning Procession

The morning procession is a longstanding tradition of the Society. The purpose of the morning visit to local businesses was to raise funds for the Feast expenditures. The band would accompany the Society playing the Feast favorites in turn for any donation that was offered. Over the years, due to the Society's efforts to become financially self-sufficient (for example: proceeds from the carnival, food stand, beer garden, sponsorships, 50/50) soliciting donations has been discontinued in the traditional sense. The morning procession continues as a tradition to thank the various organizations that have demonstrated support for our history. Stops along this route have included: the Hammonton Gazette offices, Veteran's Park, Hammonton Town Hall, Sr. Citizens, K&H Auto Store, Archie Dobbs's, Celona's Tire Center, Mazza's Furniture, Knights of Columbus, and the Sons of Italy. An iconic stop which continues to this day is Mazza Furniture (now Mazza Antiques). For decades, the Mazza's have greeted the Society with fellowship and refreshments.



Mass for Deceased Members

On the day of the Feast at the 9:00 a.m. mass, the Society begins its religious observance honoring Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and the members that have gone before us.

Fireworks

Fireworks began as early as 1875 and continued except during WWI and WWII. They were suspended in the 90s due for safety reasons regarding their location but returned in 2008 and have been uninterrupted ever since.

Salutes

The loud bombs that are shot off the day of the Feast have origins back to 1915. They are shot every hour on the hour starting with the first Mass of the day and ending when the Blessed Mother returns to the church from the procession.





Visit to Pine Road

After meeting early on the day of the Feast at the Society Hall, the members travel to the original site of the procession of Our Lady on Pine Road where a monument was erected to mark the location. The monument was dedicated in 1975. The Society and its Chaplain assemble before the monument for a moment of prayer, reflection about the Feast's significance, as well as remembrance of the deceased members. The visit is concluded with the annual membership photo.

10-Year Mass at Pine Road

At the beginning of each decade the Society conducts a mass at the original location.

Blessing of the Food Stands

Prior to each Feast week, the presiding Pastor of Our Lady Mount Carmel Parish or his delegate will bless the food stand/ancillary kitchens of all those organizations associated with the Feast. This is to pray for a safe, profitable, and weather-friendly week.

Third Street Monument

In 2017, the Society erected a Statue of Our Lady on the edge of the carnival grounds diagonally across from the church. Before entering Mass on the day of the Feast, the Members stop at this location for prayer and reflection.

"Sweet Caroline"

Most nights on the big stage in the beer garden, current President, Lou "Diamond" Pantalone entertains the crowd with his famous rendition of Sweet Caroline. As he graciously thanks all for attending and for their support, the crowd euphorically joins in following his lead.

"Wipeout"

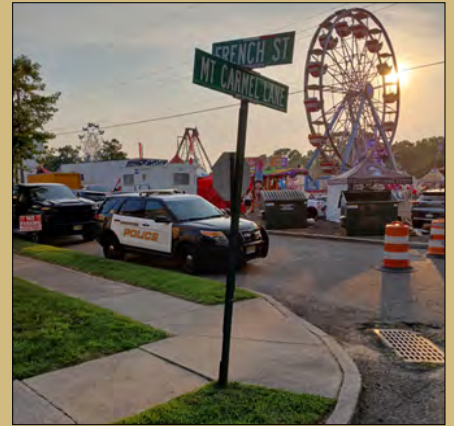
Not to be outmatched by his brother Lou, Joe Pantalone, along with his succession plan, Frank Italiano, Jr., perform, the now ever-popular rendition of Wipeout accompanied by the Carmine Pantalone Band each 16th of July at the Sons of Italy Hall where the morning procession concludes. This tradition was initiated at a morning visit to Archie Dobbs when Carmine Pantalone insisted his son accompany the band to play this tune.

Sandwich Race

Beginning in 2024, a group of Lou Pantalone's co-workers, who had visited the Feast in prior years, expressed a desire to do something novel for the celebration. They raised funds on their own and had sandwich costumes made in the form of sausage and peppers, roast pork/broccoli rabe, meatball and red roast beef. This will become an annual event taking the form of a sandwich race on Cottage Avenue and will occur the Sunday before Feast week following the Sons of Italy Spaghetti Dinner.







Prayer to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

Most blessed and immaculate Virgin, ornament and splendor of Mount Carmel, thou who regardest with particular goodness those who wear thy scapular, benignly look upon me also, and cover me with mantle of thy maternal protections. Fortify my weakness with thy strength, illuminate the darkness of my mind with thy wisdom, increase Faith, Hope and Charity within me, adorn my soul with such graces and virtues that it may be always precious to thee and thy divine Son: assist me in life, console me at the hour of death with thy most loving presence and present me to the most august Trinity as thy son and devout servant, to eternally praise and bless thee in heaven. Amen.



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*The Our Lady of
Mt. Carmel Society deeply
appreciates your contributions
to the 150th anniversary!*



THE OLMC SOCIETY

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