

“Having Our Say”

Voices from the Cape Verdean Community



“They had a party for everything. And the musicians are always available, if you had some little whiskey for them or something, they’d come, they didn’t think about the money.”

– Deolinda “Deo” Rosa

Deolinda “Deo” Rosa
July 31, 2010

Interview with Deolinda “Deo” Rosa
Conducted July 31, 2010
By Ann Marie Lopes

Beginning of File

ANN MARIE LOPES - Ann Marie Lopes, and I am conducting an interview at 3:13 PM on July 31st, and I am interviewing...

DEOLINDA ROSA - Deonilda Rosa, Deonilda Santos Rosa.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Age 88, born June 8th, 1922.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, we are in her apartment at the Harborview...

DEOLINDA ROSA - This is Harborview Towers.

ANN MARIE LOPES - In New Bedford.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I’ve been here from day one.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - 30 -- I guess its 38 years now.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And the way that I do this is I just want to have a conversation with you.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Fine.

ANN MARIE LOPES - We want to get an idea of...

DEOLINDA ROSA - I love to talk.

ANN MARIE LOPES - {laughter} So do I. I like hearing the stories too. So we just want to get a sense of just your background, what New Bedford was like when you were growing up. Who was the first one to come -- first one in your family to come here?

DEOLINDA ROSA - From what I understand, my father, who ended up in California, and I don't know how. I don't know if he came into New Bedford or whatever. But my father was 20 years older than my mother. She -- my mother came, my father knew my mother in the old country when she was a kid. It was a chance meeting at -- in Providence. The Perry family, they were well known in Providence, Regina. And my mother went to visit her, and she met my father, who had come from California for eye surgery. And that's all I know in terms of -- I couldn't tell you how long he was in California, or how long he was in New Bedford, if he was ever in New Bedford at all.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you know what islands they were from?

DEOLINDA ROSA - My father was from the Saint -- Saint Antone, and my mother was from Saint Vincente.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. And your father's name was...

DEOLINDA ROSA - Francisco Luiz, L-U-I-Z, Dos Santos D-O-S S-A-N-T-O-S.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And your mom?

DEOLINDA ROSA - My mother was Maria Amelia Pereira Lacerta.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Sheesh.

DEOLINDA ROSA - And then she married my father and became Santos.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now how did your family end up in New Bedford then?

DEOLINDA ROSA - My mother's brother lived here, the Lacertas, Thomas Lacerta. In fact, it would be interesting, because he worked with the gas company for years, probably the only Cape Verdean at the time. And when she came, he lived in New Bedford, so she stayed with him.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What time are we talking about, what year are we talking about?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I have no idea. I was born in '22, I had sisters -- let me put it this way, my mother said when she came, they had to be concerned about the German submarines from World War I. So she probably came here, I'd say maybe in 1917 thereabouts.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Why were they concerned about the subs?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Because they were on the -- on the ship, and there are submarines lurking in the waters, and it was -- obviously, it must've been war time, I have no idea. But she said they had to turn off the candles or whatever on the ship, because of the submarines. You know, and these are stories you hear when you're growing up, and you don't attach much importance to them. But she said there were submarines in the water. So it had to be during World War I.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did she come over by herself?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yes, she did.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How...

DEOLINDA ROSA - There were a lot of other Cape Verdeans on the ship, but she was by herself.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How old was she when she came over?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I think she was 27 when she got married, so I have no idea, maybe 24, 25?

ANN MARIE LOPES - So mid 20s?

DEOLINDA ROSA - More or less.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mid 20s approximately. That was still kind of early to come across the ocean to a new country, and did she know anybody here? Well she had her -- you said her...

DEOLINDA ROSA - Just my brother, and my uncle, her brother. Beyond that, no one else.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Most of the time when they came, they only had one person here, and that's how the community grew.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Why did they come?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Hard times over there. Hard times.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right, so this was the land of opportunity?

DEOLINDA ROSA - It's interesting to me how they could do it, just leave their parents, their brothers and sisters, come to a country where they didn't know the language, no electricity. They had to come by ship, it took about, what's it, a month to get here?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yep.

DEOLINDA ROSA - How could they do it? I couldn't do it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's -- I've said that before.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I couldn't do it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - If it were up to me, then we'd all still be in Cape Verde.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, I'd stay right there. But times were hard.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yep.

DEOLINDA ROSA - And very hard. And they always were nostalgic about -- my mother went back, uh, I think she went back twice.

ANN MARIE LOPES - To visit? Obviously.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah. The second time she took my sister and myself. I was three and a half then. The first time she went, I don't recall what it was, but she went, but she never was able to go back again. My mother was adventurous, I know why she was a traveler, she wasn't scared.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did she do for a living?

DEOLINDA ROSA - In the old country, she worked for a tailor, there's a lot of them that worked with this tailor working on men's clothes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - But when she came here, of course, there were no job opportunities, so she, I don't know, she did odd jobs. And eventually, she did work for a tailor later. She was very good at that. The women of that era, all they could do was sew, crochet, particularly crochet, and embroider.

ANN MARIE LOPES - They did some beautiful work.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, beautiful.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yep.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Beautiful work.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you have any of her work at all?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No.

ANN MARIE LOPES - There was an exhibit at the Whaling Museum.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh really?

ANN MARIE LOPES - And they had some of the crochet work.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well, when you say that, remind you, my sister in law Penny, her mother did beautiful embroidery, and I think they have some pieces left, you might discuss that with her.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, that would be great.

DEOLINDA ROSA - She did beautiful embroidery.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That would be great to see.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I'm not sure, I think she taught them, I'm not sure. But she did...

ANN MARIE LOPES - So what did your father do?

DEOLINDA ROSA - My father became a grocer. In fact, he had a store in Providence. When he first got married I guess, but no, I'm not sure. Anyway, he moved to New Bedford. He had a store on Wickedon Street in Rhode Island, in Providence.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, east side.

DEOLINDA ROSA - But it was my uncle prevailed upon him to come to New Bedford because the Cape Verdean population was growing, and he thought it would be better for him here. But he had a good business there. My father was pretty well set financially when he got married.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Was this his first marriage?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did he open a store in New Bedford?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yes he did.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, where?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I don't know where the first one was, but the one that we had, that I remember, was 237 Acushnet Avenue, where I lived.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And you lived upstairs, and the store was downstairs?

DEOLINDA ROSA - He owned the house. He bought the property and then he built the store, but I think he had the store before that some place else. But I don't know what the location was. He had the store with my uncle for a while, and then he decided to go on his own. Again, I don't know the details.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What kind of store?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Grocery.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Ah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Just like he had in Rhode Island?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - But before that, he has worked in California as a stevedore or something, he worked the docks.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So why didn't he do that here, do you know?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I don't know.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Because New Bedford, with the strong tie to the water, and all of that stuff.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I don't know. I mean, I think they did what they had to do, but when he came here, the population of Cape Verdeans were growing. I could see Providence was a big -- we were old timers there. So maybe somebody prevailed upon him. He was -- he must've had the money and invested it. He was pretty well secure at that time. But then he opened the store with my uncle, I don't think they were partners per se, but anyway, they split up, and he -- I don't know the story about -- I was born on Acushnet Avenue, so I don't know anything beyond that, before that. And that store provided credit to all of the factory workers, of which there were thousands. And they survived by getting their groceries, and then at the end of the week, they would pay when they got their paycheck. But then when the factories closed, my father still gave credit for a while, and eventually he had to close up because of the depression, which was sad.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you know how many brothers and sisters your father had?

DEOLINDA ROSA - He had a -- oh, he had another brother who had a grocery store, which is interesting, on Acushnet Avenue, here. And he had a brother in California that I visited. That was my first adventure out of the community.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Your first adventure, and you went all the way to California.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I went to California to see my uncle that I'd heard about, but I'd never met him, he looked just like my father. My father left him there when he came east, and he never went back. So he maintained his own lifestyle, and he was also financially secure. I guess he must've retired from the docks, that's where he

worked. But he had another brother that had the grocery store on Acushnet Avenue.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Later died in Providence. That was it, then he had a brother in Saint Antone that we visited when my mother took us over.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - He was a big land owner, and he supposedly had 45 children, mostly illegitimate.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, that was my uncle in Saint Antone.

ANN MARIE LOPES - 45 children, wow.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I have another one in Saint Vincente that had that many kids. They were very productive men.

ANN MARIE LOPES - {laughter} In so many ways.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - In so many ways. And your mom?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well my mother married -- you know, when my mother married my father, he was 47. And she thought we'll, never have any children. Nine months to the day, she delivered a baby. He was ever ready. And then she had five after that, so and he was 47.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So where are you in the order?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I had one sister who died, Alice, and my sister Adeline, and then myself. And I...

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you're the middle? Middle child?

DEOLINDA ROSA - At that time, and then the boys came, and Stephanie came, so no, I wasn't in the middle. Yeah, I was.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you're the third oldest?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, it was the middle. But my sister died, I don't recall, I was just a baby at that time, so. I think she was a year old.

ANN MARIE LOPES - When she died?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Sad.

DEOLINDA ROSA - She had -- I think what she had was common to children at that time.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So what did your mom do for fun?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Ah, fun, good question. We always had fun at home, that's typical Cape Verdean. There was always friends that dropped by. We didn't have radio, we didn't have television, but there was always someone that came by with a guitar. My mother played the guitar. And we had an old phonograph -- phonograph, the old victrola. My mother liked music. It was a lot of social life with her friends, they socialized a lot.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Just house to house, or were there clubs?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Just in the neighborhood. It was always -- it was always a reason to celebrate. Yeah, a christening, a shower, they used to even have -- they christened dolls in those days just to have a party. When I was in the old country, they christened my teddy bear just to, you know, it was just an excuse to have a party. But they partied. But...

ANN MARIE LOPES - My mother told me about those.

DEOLINDA ROSA - That era, they were very social.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah. The first big function that I remember was Louise's wedding when they lived on Acushnet Avenue. Your mother's sister.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yep.

DEOLINDA ROSA - And it was a grandiose wedding. Very elegant.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Describe it to me.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, yeah. Describe it to you?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yes, please.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, I was so little, I was very little. But...

ANN MARIE LOPES - You just remember it being a big deal.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Big deal because my mother had a picture, I don't know what happened to it, it disappeared, of all the bridesmaids. They were elegantly dressed, like they came from Park Avenue, and it was a very selective group of brides maids. You know, they weren't just picked at random. I remember the Perry family, I remember the rest of them. Julia Morris was in it, as I recall. If I think hard enough, I'll remember. Rest her soul, Adeline would remember them all. But they were a nice group of people. Very classy attire. Yeah, the bridesmaids looked really sharp. And it was a big wedding, I don't know how old your aunt was then.

ANN MARIE LOPES - When she got married?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I don't know.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I have no idea.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I have that picture though.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, you have it? Oh, OK.

ANN MARIE LOPES - My brother actually made copies for all of us.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, OK, good because my mother had that picture, and I knew many of the faces on there, one of which was Mamies Perry, who was my aunt, not my aunt, my godmother, but I lost track of her. And there was Julia Morris, she was Julia Perry at that time. I'm trying to think -- there's a whole slew, a very select group of women.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now, did a lot of people get copies of the picture?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Mmhmm.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Really?

DEOLINDA ROSA - A lot of people.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, because...

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, did they at that time?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I have no idea.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Just seems like that they were...

DEOLINDA ROSA - I have no idea. Well, my recall is not because I was so young, but they were pretty affluent at that time, by the -- because the depression hadn't hit. The depression hit in '29, I don't remember when your aunt got married. But it had to be, I know I was pretty young. Your mother was the flower girl I think.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - So how old was she then? That's how...

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, if it was '29, and my mother was born in '24.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, see I knew she was about two years younger than me.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, she was very young, she was very cute.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I remember her in the picture. I can remember that picture if I saw it again.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, like see now, I'll look at it when I get home, because I need to...

DEOLINDA ROSA - But I can still see Louise with her bridal attire. He was handsome too -- her husband. That was it. But that's what I think of the first impressionable function I ever went to. I guess because of the aura of the bride and so forth... They lived, oh, just about four blocks down from us down on Acushnet Avenue. That I remember. So we -- we went to these functions, our parents always took us. But we weren't participating in the festivities. We went into the other room and played with the other kids, but we were well behaved. So we were now out there dancing. In fact, many times they'd shoo us away, was when they have the adult, whatever, entertainment. But I went too -- but that was the festivity, they had a

party for everything. And the musicians are always available, if you had some little whiskey for them or something, they'd come, they didn't think about the money. And it was always a -- people would drop by all the time. And it was so funny, we went into a depression, there was always food on the table. There was always food on the stove. It was just to get in this -- it was a nice area.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mmhmm. It sounds like it even though it was the depression.

DEOLINDA ROSA - It was, it was. All of our neighbors were our foster parents, because they looked out for us, sometimes a little bit too close.

ANN MARIE LOPES - {laughter}

DEOLINDA ROSA - But there was coziness about it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you lived Acushnet Avenue?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So where -- do you know what the boundaries were of the neighborhood? Were...

DEOLINDA ROSA - At that time?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I'd say South Street was about as far as you could go, in my mind, to meet Cape Verdeans, and up here, School Street. Purchase Street, wasn't that many. Now you do, but Acushnet Avenue, Second Street, First Street, Water Street, Grinnell Street.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Most Cape Verdeans stay in the neighborhood? There was obviously your grocery store with the other stores there, people do their shopping and all of their...

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, except for down -- we had downtown, which was beautiful, and that was the Friday and Saturday was an interesting day. You got dressed up to go downtown.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Really?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Which is just a couple of blocks away.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What was there?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Just stores, the department stores. There was no mall, so we had the department stores, and that's where they did their shopping. Even in the depression days, downtown was always busy. But there was an intimacy about downtown too. You know...

ANN MARIE LOPES - It's not there anymore?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I knew the Alpert's that had the furniture store, the public market, we had over here, everybody knew one another. It was a neighborhood.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So basically, that was a weekend thing.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, I'd say the week -- yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well, I can only tell you, I went to school during the week, so I can't tell you what -- I would say weekend, that's when they did their shopping.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I like the fact that you got all dressed up.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Dressed up?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, that was -- that was...

DEOLINDA ROSA - On the weekend?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Got all dressed up to go downtown.

DEOLINDA ROSA - You didn't wear curlers in your hair and things like that, yeah, as they do today. But then, you remember, we didn't have slacks, or shorts, or that sort of thing, we dressed.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did your family have any ties to the water? Ties being did anyone work on the -- in the water?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - We spent a lot of time going -- that was a pass time going to see the Nantucket boat go out, that was fun. It was interesting at that time, people came in on a train, got off at the train station, I guess they took a bus, and then they walked -- I remember them walking down to the waterfront, down on School Street. These were a lot of celebrities or whatever that would come in town.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh really, lots of celebrities?

DEOLINDA ROSA - To take the boat, which at that time I think stopped in Martha's Vineyard and went to Nantucket, yeah. And for wherever they went. There were a lot of celebrities. James Cagney was one.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you ever see any of these people?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No. I know Burl Ives was here every year, but he had his own little boat in New Bedford. But I never saw him. I wasn't celebrity oriented then. I wasn't that smart. {laughter} I was just living with my little community.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, but that's probably more important, right?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So let's talk about you.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, what about me?

ANN MARIE LOPES - What's your first memory of New Bedford? Or just your first memory would be great.

DEOLINDA ROSA - My first memory of New Bedford?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Your first memory.

DEOLINDA ROSA - If you asked me about my childhood, I think I'd remember kindergarten, going to kindergarten.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Where did you go to kindergarten?

DEOLINDA ROSA - And as a matter of fact -- at the Acushnet Avenue School.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Ah, OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - If you talk to Eddie Livramento he'll tell you how I gave him a bleeding nose in kindergarten. I was a fighter at that age, I guess. But I remember kindergarten.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Why did you give him a bloody nose?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Who knows. I never was that -- in my mind, that aggressive, but he tells everybody about it. She gave me a bloody nose in the fifth grade, which upset the parents. I mean, in the first grade. I don't know, he maybe said something to me and I whacked him one night, I don't know. I wasn't violent.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well you stood up -- you stood up for yourself though, he probably -- he probably insulted you. The Acushnet Avenue School?

DEOLINDA ROSA - But that was my first recall -- yeah, in New Bedford.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's good, so you went to Acuhnet...

DEOLINDA ROSA - Kindergarten.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You went to the Acushnet Avenue School...

DEOLINDA ROSA - I had come back from the old country.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So when did you go to the old country, when you were...

DEOLINDA ROSA - I was three and a half years of age.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you stay there?

DEOLINDA ROSA - For a year.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK. What was that like?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I have no recall. {laughter} I have none what -- my sister Adeline knew, I don't remember it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And why were you there? Why did your mother take you back?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well, my mother really contemplated going back there to live, whatever reason she had she never told us. And my grandmother said sure, Mary, you can come back here and live, but these kids are Americans, so they go back. So

-- and my father had the grocery store, and he was pretty well established then, so he could afford to take care of us in the old country, but my grandmother thought it wasn't advisable, and she was right, because the hard times really came to Cape Verdeans after that. But then, what she didn't know, when we came home, the depression was setting in here. So then my father lost his store and whatever, but that's another story.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did he do during the depression when he lost it? What did you do after he lost his store?

DEOLINDA ROSA - When he lost his store?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - He struggled for a while, and then he ended up on the WPA, \$13 a week to support a family of seven. They did it, and people used to say my father, considering his age, was just amazing because he worked just as hard as the young fellows, sometimes better.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Could you explain to me how that worked, the WPA worked? Did they give your father a job?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No, you had to apply for it I guess.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - For the WPA. I don't know what the regulations were so far as getting into it. I don't know if there's a limit on how much you have in your family. But I know that everybody got \$13 a week, whether you had seven kids, or four kids, or whatever.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But he worked for the 17 -- the \$13.

DEOLINDA ROSA - WPA.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Construction worker. In fact, I think he worked on the Cape Cod Canal. And he must've been in his 50s, late 50s at that time, I'm sure he was. Oh, he picked cranberries at some point too. A couple of seasons he picked cranberries, which was not an easy task for his age. It was called survival.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And your mom?

DEOLINDA ROSA - It was a struggle.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Your mom still did odd jobs...

DEOLINDA ROSA - My mother, she worked for the tailor for a while, but she did some domestic work as well, she worked for some -- it was Dr. Brown's doctor, she'd talk about the family that she worked for him. It was, again, that was all you could do. There weren't that many job opportunities available to US, as you know.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did your parents ever take in boarders?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No, I think my father's brother lived with us for a while, but then he went off to Providence. We had a tenement upstairs that used to be rented from time to time.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So let me just make sure I understand here, that the third floor was the tenement?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Second floor.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Second floor.

DEOLINDA ROSA - We were on the first floor.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You were on the first floor. And then the store?

DEOLINDA ROSA - The store was outside, it was separate, it was a separate structure.

LOPES: OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - He had it built right at the front, I'll tell you where it was, where, you know, that little playground is on Acushnet Avenue now?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yes.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Half of that property was my father's property.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So it's diagonally across from Monte's playground?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Not, no...

ANN MARIE LOPES - Down below?

DEOLINDA ROSA - It was across from Bay Village.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right, down a block.

DEOLINDA ROSA - After you -- on the block from T.A. Green School...

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right, so it's one block away from Madison.

DEOLINDA ROSA - One block from Madison, at the middle of the block.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right. Did you know of a place -- you might be too young, Madison Square Garden, did you know about Madison Square Garden?

DEOLINDA ROSA - There was a Madison Square Garden up on Purchase Street, or are you talking about the Cape Verdean club that they had?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Cape Verdean club where they had boxing?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, I think that one was...

ANN MARIE LOPES - I thought it was on Madison Street.

DEOLINDA ROSA - There was a club on Madison Street that they used to use for social functions, and they used to call it Madison Square Garden. But that's not where the boxing was, there was a boxing arena on Acushnet Avenue. Not on Acushnet Avenue, Purchase, further up on Purchase, past Elm Street, but I never was in there. That was strictly for men.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Ah, OK. Who'd they dance with then?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Hmm?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Who did the men dance with?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh no, over here? No, the club over here, well no, that was different, but...

ANN MARIE LOPES - The boxing was strictly men?

DEOLINDA ROSA - The boxing arena was strictly for men.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I got you, I was getting confused.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you went to school.

DEOLINDA ROSA - T.A. Green -- I went to kindergarten at the T.A. Green School, Allen F. Wood School. Roosevelt Junior High School, then New Bedford High.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What'd you do after school?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Hmm, when I was 13, I was working. In order to supplement myself, some domestic jobs.

ANN MARIE LOPES - To help the family, or to give you spending money?

DEOLINDA ROSA - It was in order to maintain my own self. I made all of my own clothes, if I wanted to buy material things like that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So what did you do?

DEOLINDA ROSA - You know, the money wasn't that much. You know, you, New Bedford, it was terrible. There's no conception of what it was like. If the kids today had to survive on what we did, they would -- they would starve to death.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you think it was worse then than it is now with the economy the way it is?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, yeah it was worse then. The only difference is prices are so high now, and the money is better, but the prices are so high, and I guess it's all relative. But I mean, you could get a cone of ice cream for five cents when I was a kid. A loaf of bread for five cents, can't do that today.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Can't even get a slice of bread for five cents.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, really, thank you. It was a totally different time. It's hard -- it's hard to make the young people understand what it was like. We were also very innocent, because we didn't have exposure to this monster, the television, to tell you what was happening in the rest of the world. And so...

ANN MARIE LOPES - One of the things that I've heard before is that people didn't know that they were poor until they went to school and some of the kids told them they were poor, and partly because they didn't have television to tell them they were poor.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Ah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You know, to tell them what they didn't have.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I think people were just so proud, they didn't talk about being poor, because we knew we were poor.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - We knew we were poor. What you had, as you have in the society today, you have the welfare system. You had these people that come to your house to check out the family, and what you need. My mother wouldn't tolerate that, my father wouldn't either, but the pride they had. Then they had -- you could go to City Hall and get sugar, things like that. We -- I don't know how we did it, we survived, but this is how -- I don't know -- the city fathers weren't that interested, because everybody was going through it. I thought we were the only ones going through it, it was going on in the north, and the south, and wherever, but nobody talked about it.

M1: It was going through the depression.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, it was bad. But how we survived, we looked out for each other.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And shared what you had?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah. The fellows, if they were down at the docks, and they got some fish, they'd immediately share it with you, even if they had a family themselves. Cranberries, oh God, I hate cranberries to day. Oh, please. Cranberry -- I tell me niece about cranberry sandwiches, she laughs. I said it's not funny, I can't stand the idea of cranberries.

ANN MARIE LOPES - {laughter}

DEOLINDA ROSA - You had to have a sandwich to go to school, you make cranberry jelly, and you had a sandwich. It doesn't sound like -- my niece, and I said, Auntie, it sounds like a delicacy, don't tell me any delicacy, I can't stand cranberries. Well, that's what we did.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I'll never think of cranberries the same again.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well, as a matter of fact, the only time I eat cranberries is Thanksgiving time. And that's one slice. It was cranberry. See, my cousin used to go cranberrying with his family, and he'd bring us bags of cranberries, and we'd put

it on the stove, cook it up, put the sugar in, I guess sugar wasn't that expensive. We had cranberries.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Let's talk about food for a second.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Food?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Food, that your -- who cooked in your house?

DEOLINDA ROSA - My mother, my sister did too. I never cooked.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You didn't like it or...

DEOLINDA ROSA - I don't like it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I do it -- he says I do it well, but I never liked being near that stove. Housework, yeah, I was terrific. My sister didn't like housework, but she liked cooking. But I never got near the stove.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So what was the specialty of the house? Was there one dish that everybody liked, or that was a...

DEOLINDA ROSA - There was always a pot on the stove, because we had the old iron stoves, that the fire was always on. There was always a pot on the stove, and I would say, eat a lot of cachupa, jag, a lot of stews, fish, which I don't like, we had a lot of fish. My mother was a good cook. They baked a lot too because again, with that stove, you could bake pies and whatever. And uh, it's funny, I don't ever remember being hungry, ever. I often wonder if our parents deprived themselves of food to feed us, but I don't remember. And every night, we all sat at that table, we had to. It was, no matter where we were, we would come home and sit at that table, family style, and we all ate, always. Wherever we were, if we were playing, we had to get home to sit at that table.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So something you carried on in your own family?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Was it carried on with the families later?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well I don't think that -- you don't have that anymore now because the kids are watching television while they're having a frozen meal, or the parents

aren't home yet. We don't have that anymore, you have the latch key kids now. But my mother was always down there when we got home from school, as all mothers were. Like I said, I wanted to make sure we got home safe. There was always -- when you got home, there was always a sandwich, or a cracker, or something, that was tradition. Then it was, dinnertime, we were all at the table, that was it. And there was no watching television. I didn't even have a radio 'til -- . Gosh, oh God, I don't remember. And then I spent -- OK, I remember. President Roosevelt was in office then, because he was in office for a long time. I used to listen to his speeches, and I'd practice my shorthand. So I was in high school before we had a radio. And that was our entertainment. Otherwise, we entertained each other. Friendship was a good thing too in those days. Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't see the young people today with the closeness of relationships that we had from the neighbors.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How did you entertain yourselves?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh please, we danced -- we danced. Verdean -- Verdean Hall, Paradise, Sylvia's Hall used to be, where was Sylvia's Hall? I'm trying to think, Sylvia's Hall was on -- this is the one that's now the Cape Verdean Club.

ANN MARIE LOPES - The Bisca Club.

DEOLINDA ROSA - The Bisca Club, yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That used to be owned by Daddy Grace too at one point.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, see I don't recall that. But we had plenty of dances to go to.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now, were these playing Cape Verdean music?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, absolutely. A [Crioul] as we used to call it. The violin, had a lot of violin music in those days. It was almost like country music.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you still listen to that type of music?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh sure.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you -- do you dance?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I'm not able to do it these days, but yeah. That's what I miss most of all, not being able to dance. Yeah, no there's always Cape Verdean music around us, yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now these clubs, mostly Cape Verdeans in them, or was everybody there?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Cape Verdeans.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yep. Stayed pretty much with Cape Verdeans?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Being realistic. Well I don't know if we isolated ourselves, or people isolated us, we were isolated. I've had -- I know very little about the North End, never went up there until I started working up there for a while. The South End I knew because I went to school down there. But when the weekend came, our life was in the neighborhood. And in those days, most Cape Verdeans were situated here in the New Bedford environment, some would spread out, but not that far. I never thought about it, this was my life.

ANN MARIE LOPES - The music, live music?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh yes. And what did it cost us, maybe a dollar to go? Maybe sometimes less, oh sure. And not only one dance, there'd be a dance, Verdean Vets used to start tempo, there'd be a dance there, there'd be a dance at the Paradise, there'd be a dance at the Verdean hall, and our question was where are our friends going to be? So we'd play these little games, we'd go to the Eastern Star Temple and say I've got to go look for somebody upstairs, and then we'd look, no way, my friend's there, and we'd take off and go where our friends were. It was only 75 cents, a dollar. Then we had midnight dances too. We danced. We had the midnight dances on the holiday weekends. And our parents never stopped us from going to the dances.

ANN MARIE LOPES - No curfew?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, socially, I had a 10 o'clock curfew if it wasn't the weekend, you know? For dances, that was not a problem because we travelled in groups, and we always came back together. Had a 10 o'clock curfew. Imagine a kid with a 10 o'clock curfew now. One minute before 10, OK. One minute after 10, not OK. Where were you? 10 o'clock curfew. And my mother said she'd give us the key to the house when we got to be 18, we never got the key, she was in charge.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Were your brothers protective of you even though they were younger?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No they were -- no.

ANN MARIE LOPES - No?

DEOLINDA ROSA - There's a wide bridge between my brothers and myself, rest their soul. My brother Frank was five years difference, and Louie was six years. So we were more their protectors when they were growing up. By the time they were growing up, I was in Boston. Stephanie, of course being the youngest, she could relate to that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You protected her?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah. I think they were protective of her, but not me.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you left New Bedford, you got out of town.

DEOLINDA ROSA - At 19.

ANN MARIE LOPES - At 19. Why?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No jobs, no jobs. It was interesting because I decided I was going to Boston, and how was I going to tell my mother. I'll never forget it, because I was leaving on Sunday, and I was telling her on Saturday. And I sat there waiting for a volcanic eruption, and she said no, your father and I have taught you all that we can, it's time now for you to go out into the world. Just remember, when you look in the mirror, you reflect yourself. I never forgot that. I say, sometimes I'd look, I'd see my mother in the mirror, but she says when I look in the mirror, you reflect yourself. In other words, go with God and respect, and I never for got it. But there was no, well, she knew, and my father too, always had ambition for us. There was no future here, nothing. It wasn't that accessible in Boston, as I led a protective life in New Bedford. When you go to Boston, the big city, but I loved the city. Boston was very conservative, not like it is today. Well, you went to school in Boston, right? At that time, it was still conservative in comparison.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I went to Wellesley.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Huh?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Wellesley had -- people who hadn't moved forward.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, OK, they're more liberal.

ANN MARIE LOPES - No, there was still a little bit of bias in the town. The college was great.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Boston, but you came later because when I went it was a very conservative city, but I loved it, it taught me a lot.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did you do? Did you move in with someone, or did you just go and find a place?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No, when I went, I went as a domestic in Brooklyn -- Brookline. Very nice people, they treated me like family, it was a Jewish family.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you live there?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, I live, live in.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - But that didn't last long because I was a very, what's the word I'm trying to think of -- I wasn't aggressive, but I was never satisfied with status quo. So after that, I don't want to take all of the credit, the war broke out. This was in 1940, and the war broke out, what was it, '41?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - And then jobs became available, out of desperation, they were hiring women, so I filed an application for the Navy yard, and I worked there as a so-called mechanic learner. We had to wear coveralls to differentiate us from the Civil Service employees. They didn't want us to be, but nonetheless, I got a job working in what they called a tool shed, which was supplying the destroyer escorts. As it turned out, because I helped set up the tool shed, they put me in charge of the tool shed, which was a pretty nice job. I had three girls that worked with me, and I would delegate responsibility. But then they started taking people and putting them in these nice jobs in the Navy yard, and I thought well, I've got a high school education, why aren't they taking me? And I was told that because I did such a great job, I had responsibility, and blah, blah, blah. I said no, so they decide OK, you're such a smarty, you want to go up in the office, we'll give you an office job. So they sent me -- it's this big Navy yard, way to the far end of the Navy yard, it's the best thing they could've done, to a smaller tool shed, where I would supply the destroyers right there. And I walked around with a piece of paper throughout that period of time getting supplies, and I'd walk around that entire Navy yard, and I got to know a lot of people, you know, it worked out well for me. The thing was, where I was, was so isolated, that I didn't have to -- I chose not to wear the coveralls, which were hideous. So I started wearing street clothes, somebody stopped me and told me you're going to have to adhere to the rules. I said -- so I used to take this sheet of paper to deliver this invoice that I have to, and I'd start to see all the commissionings of the ships, I saw some great ships being commissioned. And I just sort of roamed free.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you ever come back to New Bedford for visits at that time?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I came back for a while. Because what happened, I'm at the Navy yard, and I have a nice job. But I decided, when I join the WACS which I did, but I didn't take my oath of office, because they told me I had to have a release from the Navy yard, this is a defense lawyer. In the mean time, my father was not in favor of it, and there were other members of the family that didn't think it was going to be a good idea, because we're all going to be fallen women. We went into the -- lights. So I came back home -- I came back home and worked for the Firestone. I've had all kinds of jobs, as a spooler tender at the Firestone.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What is, what's that? Spooler tender? On the machines?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Kind of hard to -- yeah, the machines.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - And there again...

ANN MARIE LOPES - Is it like -- my uncles evidently were bobbin boys?

DEOLINDA ROSA - The bobbin boys gave us the spools, yeah. Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK. All right.

DEOLINDA ROSA - But I worked -- I'm trying -- I want to make sure I connect this right, because I came home, my father wasn't ill then, I think. But I went to work at the Firestone, and when I started working there, as usual, they were training me on this machine, and I said how long before I go on pece work to make some money. Oh, well it'll take too long for you to learn this machine, you know? I mean, you're going to have to do X amount, whatever. I said really? So I went ahead and ripped out my shortcuts, and within a short time, I think it was two weeks, they had to put me on what they called the big frames. It was a dumb job. It was a dumb job. You put a spool in here, and you knot it up with this mechanism to the big spool, and there was like 100 and whatever on the whole machine. And by the time you got down there, these spools were empty. So it was ever constant throwing back and forth. And then you had these trucks, this was the bobbin boys would come in with the trucks, they'd help you with that. These trucks that we'd fill with the spools, and when you used them all up, you had to refill the trucks, where the bobbin boys would maybe call out to them and bring the truck. And that would continue for eight hours. So it was a very interesting experience. I like to talk about this experience because now, I'm working at the Firestone with a Polish woman on that side who had been there for umptynine years, and there was a Portuguese girl on this side who had been there for umptynine years. And I'm knocking my brains off to do the quota, that's all I wanted to do was to do that. So finally I said, to my Portuguese friend with whom I became very close, let's get this act together, I'll help you. You finish before me, you help me, and we'll do one quota period. So that's what we did, and then the floor manager would come by and say don't you

know there's a war on? You're standing here. I said find me somebody who's done the quota that we've done at this point, and then give me an argument. So I had it -- when I think about my personality in later years, I was a little bit obnoxious because I didn't like anybody too lord over me with a sense of authority.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Hmm?

DEOLINDA ROSA - So I did what I was supposed to do, and they couldn't complain about that, I was doing more than my quota. But then I'm trying to think why, ah, I remember, OK. Go back and forth in my story. I don't know if this is -- you want all of this information.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yes, actually yes.

DEOLINDA ROSA - OK, so I'm working at the Firestone, getting up at 5:30 in the morning to go to work, which was dumb. And I'm working, and they had a fire. Well, they had put me on a day shift, on a day shift that's right. They had a fire, and I get to work, there's no work. And there's some women standing there at these machines with myself, and I said, we can't be getting up at 5:30 in the morning to come here and do nothing. We're just getting paid 50 cents an hour, it's not worth it. So they said you're right. I said well, when he comes along, the floorwalker, I'll talk to him. He comes along, and lesson number one. I think his name was Buddy. Buddy. What's the matter? The girls and I are complaining because we don't have any work -- and we're -- we're only getting 50 cents an hour, it's not worth it. So he said well, I don't see why you're complaining and nobody else is complaining. I said, excuse me? And I looked over to the machine, the girls were working. There was no work, they were faking it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Because they were afraid of losing their jobs. So he then said to me, if you don't change your attitude, I'm going to put you on the afternoon shift again. I said you're not going to put me on anything. He said why? I says I'll quit. He said there's a war on, you can't quit a job without permission. So I went to the superintendent of the plant, and I talked to him. And I told him that I had a high school education. In those days, that was important. And I didn't feel I wanted to stay in the factory. He said you have a high school education, he gave me my release, and I went up back to Boston again. That was the story. But a lot of people gave me credit sometimes for having accomplished a lot of things, but it was not that easy. You have to fight your way. And I think you only -- nowadays, I think in many instances, people are not fighting back, they're taking them for granted, but I think you still have that fight like me -- me, people like myself. But none the worse for wear. So I went back to Boston, and that's when I started working for the attorney and whatever. That was an accident too. But there again, I was working for him for five years, and making no progress. I learned a lot. And one morning, I got on the bus with a girl who had been on her job for 20 years. And for some reason, in that conversation, I felt a sense of hopelessness

about myself. I'm riding the same bus everyday to -- and then when I got to my corner, when I was working on Tremont Street in Boston, the fellow who sells the newspapers just automatically handed my newspaper. And I got on the elevator, and the elevator operator, which we had in those days, made the usual chatter. And for some reason, I just had had it. And so I walked into my boss's office and I says I'm quitting.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Just like that?

DEOLINDA ROSA - He said what are you talking about, go back to your desk and sit down. My girlfriend is going to California, I'm going with her. He said what will you do when you get to California, he said what's the big deal? I said -- he said, well, jobs are not that easy to get. Everybody's always afraid. I said there's Campbell's Tomato Soup, that's the only thing I could think of in California. So I ventured to California, but I didn't have a problem when I got there. They said what was your last job, I worked for a lawyer, we don't have enough secretaries, and that was another phase. So things happen to me, I just happened to be at the right place, I guess, at the right time.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But you were also willing to take the step?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, oh yeah, absolutely.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I mean, I think that holds people back.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I'm not afraid. If you tell me the door is locked, I'm not supposed to go, I will respect that, but the door is open ajar, I don't see why I can't peak in to see what's over there. And what can happen, you tell me to go back to where I came from. And I try to instill this on the young people today, but they don't -- because even in New Bedford, it's still here. There's a feeling of the fear of the unknown. Well, you've been out, so you know what it's like. You get out there, and the people are people no matter where you go. But -- and I try to instill in young people, they don't understand. And right now, it's a crucial time, because I hear so many people say I can't quit my job, I hate it, but I can't quit it... [TAPE CUTS]

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you were saying -- they can't quit it, they hate their jobs.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, I know it's a tough time right now, but times have been tougher. A lot of aspects involved, if you have a family, or whatever, bills and whatever, but I think you have to take a chance. You can't, because otherwise you're stuck. And I'm sure a lot of companies are taking advantage of that situation.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mmhmm.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah. That's why you have all of these fringe benefits now, we didn't have fringe benefits. And they're traps. There's a lot of things, and you just get to decide, this is what I want.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Where do you think your way came from? Did it come from your...

DEOLINDA ROSA - Good question.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did it come from your parents, there's somebody else?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I wonder sometimes being that I was a middle child in the sense, you kind of get, not really ignored, but that one's getting in trouble, that one's getting in trouble, that's the favorite. You just kind of have to fend for yourself, I don't know. People tell me that -- people constantly say to me, I'm so brave because I traveled alone for years. What's to be brave? People are people. I lived in New York City, I mean, it was supposed to be all the worst people in the world, well it's not that way now, I think it's the best people. You know, I was safe, it's the way you go, how you conduct yourself, the friends you make, and your values. And I was never one to follow the leader. And there's a lot of following the leader now in the (inaudible).

ANN MARIE LOPES - Talk to me a little bit about your values that you got from your parents?

DEOLINDA ROSA - My values? My values come from my religious training, and my parents, and their strict upbringing. We had to go to church, it was a discipline, and we had to obey all the people in the church, and at that time, a lot of the adults were friends of the family. So when you were in church, you were with your family.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Which church?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Our Lady of Assumption, it's the only one I know, on Water Street.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you take part in any of the clubs that were there?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No, that's an interesting question. I'm not a club joiner, I never was. I don't know what accounts for that. I'll participate, I'll help, like when I was with recognition, I'll do my best, I'll give you my all, but I've never been one to join. Maybe it has something to do with my personality of being closed in, but I never was a joiner.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I'm just curious, do you work well on committees? Or would you prefer to do it yourself?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh yeah, I think so.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Would you prefer to do it yourself?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, I work well, and as a matter of fact, if you recall, we had the play and all, and I remember, rest his soul, Gus, Joli's brother saying to me, you know, you're a diplomat. I said, why do you say that? Well, you're dealing with -- we were dealing with the Cape Verdean language, and there was so many aspects of it, there was the ja Brava, ja Fogo, and we just put on the damn play, that's it. And it didn't matter what dialect you used, and it was dealing with a lot of personalities, but I didn't have any problems. No, I'm good on com -- yeah, I've served on a few committees as well, I'm fair minded, I think.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mmhmm.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I'm flexible. There are other aspects of my personality might be in question, but I'm not -- I'm a worker. In fact, the best thing was the recognition, I just enjoyed that, particularly your father.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did -- what about him did you like? We're talking about the Cape Verdean Recognition Committee.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I just feel it was a creative time in our lives, we did a lot of things. People don't notice it now, because it's all grandiose, but it was a lot of people getting together from different walks of life and just working towards one goal. But your father, rest his soul in peace, I always remember him. Quiet, very quiet, soft spoken. And I'd say to him, you know Manny such and such. He'd look at me and calmly say you'll have to work it out. He was very good at that. He never takes sides with personalities (inaudible). He knew the problems that were everywhere, it's entirely up to you. And he delegated the responsibility to you, and he'd expect you to carry it through. He was -- it was fantastic. I talk about him all the time. And soft spoken, never heard him raise his voice, but fair. He had a good, good group there.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you went from Boston, to California, to New York?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - In California, did you get involved with any Cape Verdeans, or Cape Verdean organizations, or any of that in California?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well, I went to see my uncle who was Cape Verdean to begin with, but when I got there. I remembered I had a friend who had moved to California from New York.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - So I asked about him, and they told me he lived in North Sacramento. Somebody gave me his telephone number and I called him. And when I called him, he was so happy to hear I was in town, he was coming to see me. What I didn't know was he had been married like six months, and his wife said, who is this girl calling you from the East Coast?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh.

DEOLINDA ROSA - And she came, we'd been friends, we just spoke to each other last week, we've been friends ever since. And they kind of introduced me to -- because she came from a family of 13. It's a large community in North Sacramento. So I stayed -- I was only going to stay a month, I stayed a year. So through them...

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you work at the Campbell's Soup factory?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No.

ANN MARIE LOPES - {laughter}

DEOLINDA ROSA - I went -- well, what happened, I was living with my uncle, and I decided I was going to stay awhile. My mother encouraged my staying, even though my father was dying. But she said if I need you, I'll call you. So I -- and such as I was, the discipline from back home, I lived in this house, I ate the food, I paid board. My money ran out. If I tell you the story of my trip to California, that's another story. I've got so many stories. So I went to work. When I went to the employment office, they said what was your last job in New York -- in Boston, and I said working for an attorney. They could care less as to what my accomplishments were, they just sent me on several interviews. And they said if these don't work out, come back. Because they were in dire, desperate need of secretaries. So I went to work for a short time with Prudential insurance company. I didn't like them too well. And then I went to work for the Bureau of Reclamation, helped to build a couple of dams in California. This was in Sacramento.

ANN MARIE LOPES - It sounds like, from what you're saying, that there was already a sense of community of Cape Verdeans in California.

DEOLINDA ROSA - In California, absolutely.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So...

DEOLINDA ROSA - In fact, I tell them, I tell my friend, the Gonsalves', you should really do something about it, because they really built up that area. North Sacramento is like Fairhaven, and a good part -- it's changed now, but a good part of it was their

land. And they were big families, couldn't ask for nicer people. They had never come east. I enjoyed them, and then I made other friends, and then the girl I went with was from Fairhaven, she's now since deceased. She got married while I was there, so I was at her wedding and all and we maintained the friendship until she passed away. Until I was -- I was never that far away from home, even though it was 3,000 miles. But I never regretted it. Because California opened the door for me, because when I got there I worked with the Bureau of Reclamation, and when I came home to be with my mother, they were looking for help at the Camp Edwards. So I decided what the heck, again, the door's open ajar, and I go in it. I said what the heck, all I can do is take a test, and I passed. So I worked there. I stayed there, I had a nice job, at camp headquarters.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you came back because your mother needed you?

DEOLINDA ROSA - My father was ill, he was dying.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. How old were you when you came back?

DEOLINDA ROSA - When I came back, I must've been 26, thereabouts, 26? Well, maybe more than that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And how old were you when he passed away?

DEOLINDA ROSA - That's why I'm saying it had to be more than that, maybe 27. Uh, I think I was 27 when he passed, I don't remember. I've lost track of my birthdays. But I worked at Camp Edwards, which was a nice job, I could've stayed there, but they were transferring us to Otis, I didn't want to stay here, I didn't want to stay in New Bedford.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Why?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I was never completely -- I don't want to say I wasn't happy here, I just felt I wanted to be elsewhere. I had a lot of complexes growing up, tall and [gangly?], but that's another story. That's for the psychiatrist.

ANN MARIE LOPES - {laughter}

DEOLINDA ROSA - But I don't know, when I came -- and I had good friends here, still have those that are left. But I think I -- I liked the big city, still do. But in this case, let me see, what was I saying, I went to Camp Edwards, yeah, and my father passed away, OK. To be perfectly honest, when my father passed away, there was a tendency, as happens in communities, you're so lucky you have your daughter at home, and I have to admit, whether it was nice or not so nice, I didn't want to put myself in that situation, because there were other children involved as well and they were here. I was single, I couldn't see, just staying. And there were no -- yeah,

I had a nice job at Camp Edwards, that part was good. But they went -- there wasn't an awful lot of opportunity here to do much of anything. So I decided, I lied, I told my mother Camp Edwards was closing and my job was being phased out, but it wasn't true, I was being transferred, so I told her I was going to move on to New York City where I had friends, and the beginning of another story.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Cape Verdean friends?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh yeah, oh sure. Well, let me put it this way, I was saying this the other day. Wherever I've gone, I've always had to find my Cape Verdean niche, be it Boston, Boston we used to hang out at the Ritz Plaza and whatever, and our little dances. California, New York, we had a little club in New York. I've always done that, I've always wanted to be close to my heritage, I never lost track of it. And there's a certain amount of comfort in that. My friends in New York in the office used to say God forbid, on a weekend, we should actually do something with ourselves. I said I'm sorry, that's my other world. But I, I never lost track of where I came from. And so I had no regrets.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Why do you suppose that is?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I don't know. I don't know, that's a good question,

ANN MARIE LOPES - It probably happens with other groups too, but I just know that Cape Verdeans always seek out the Cape Verdeans.

DEOLINDA ROSA - I don't know

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now it was just Cape Verdeans in general?

DEOLINDA ROSA - You know, I'm glad you asked me that, because I've never thought about it. But I've always been -- felt close to my heritage wherever I went. And I'll put it further, when I went to South America, I looked up Cape Verdeans in Argentina. And also in Brazil. Portugal, the same. Madeira I think was the only place I didn't meet a Cape Verdean only because I didn't know of any that were there, but there are some there. But I've always done that. I don't know whether that's a security blanket for me, but I just -- I gravitate towards that. So with all due respects, I've made friends all over the world, all kinds of people, but I still -- in fact, I have a problem in today's world, because I feel that Cape Verdeans are kind of -- it's my thinking, are losing their identity, and I think that's so important. And on the other side, you have people that's trying hard to find their identity. So go figure. But I don't know.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Why do you think Cape Verdeans are losing their identity? Is it through marrying?

DEOLINDA ROSA - You're asking me.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, they...

DEOLINDA ROSA - I don't know if I have all of the right -- I don't have the answers, but I'll give my opinion. Because the world has grown, it's bigger, people are spread out, it's just -- it's bigger, but it's a smaller world now, it's easy access. I talk about going to California on a Greyhound bus, and nowadays, you just get on a plane, you can come back tonight if you want to, you know. But I don't know, it bothers me because I think -- it's not that I think we're unique, I don't have that attitude, I think every nationality should think themselves in unique in their own identity, but I just think what we have is something special, and we should spread it about.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - It still prevails, but what I see is the newcomers that are coming, they've sort of isolated themselves staying with their own, and we are not coming together. Maybe it's because of the way we were raised, it was a small community then. I'm not -- I'm not the one to say. I think it's marvelous, there's more educational opportunities. Strangely enough though, that's leading to a lot of this. It's separating people from religious beliefs that go off to college and they just say, I don't want to be whatever, I want to be this. It opens up the avenue of thinking, which is great. But I'm still opposed, if that, does that make sense, am I making any sense?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - It bothers me. Because, I was talking to your brother the other day and I was saying, you know, we're pretty proud of who we are but the people that really deserve attention is the parents who ventured from a country, left their mother, and father, and sister, and brother, didn't know if they were ever going to go back, they could've been killed over here by wild Indians or whatever. And doggonit, I have to admire them, I couldn't do it. Maybe I could, but I don't know. But maybe there is some of that in me that made me adventurous, that I wasn't afraid, but I don't know if I could do that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But thinking about that, think about that, you did do that.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, I did in another way.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, but when I did it -- well, I should say -- when I went to New York, I had friends there. I don't know if I could go cold, not know anybody and start. And yet, I knew people that did.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But a lot of the people who came from Cape Verde, knew there were other Cape Verdeans here.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So they may not have known them.

DEOLINDA ROSA - And we gravitated towards one another, they didn't.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right, and there were a lot of places that took in -- a lot of families that took in a lot of other Cape Verdeans, so maybe...

DEOLINDA ROSA - It's interesting, one day I was talking to my mother. We were talking about the different dialects, and it's a funny story. When I was a kid, my mother used to say go get the comb and the brush on the "bura", so I go up, this Cape Verdean word, the "bura", which was in the bedroom. So I was at my girlfriend's house one day and her mother, who was from Brava, said to her daughter go get me the brush on the "cond". And I said, "cond"? He said yeah, that's what they call it. I said oh, that's funny, that's so far different from what we say. We say bewter, you say conda. So I went home and said to my mother, Ma, how come we, from San Vincente say "bura" and the people from Brava say "cond". My mother said, that's an English word. "Bura" is not Cape Verdean. I said Ma, all of these years, you've had me going... {laughter} And my mother said oh, well, obviously -- she used to call it... I told her Ma, it's not "bura", it's bureau. She said bureau. I said forget it, Ma, just stay with the "bura". To this day, I would say go to the "bura", I never say "cond". But the Brava's say conda, which is the correct Portuguese word. But my mother and I laughed about that. But it was interesting that -- so then my mother said, discussing it, she said most of these people here didn't know each other in the old country, because they were separated from the islands with the water, the rough seas. They only got to know each other here. And that would account for why they stayed in their own little niche, the Sao Nicolau, the Brava, San Vincente.

ANN MARIE LOPES - They did stay in the island?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, I would say so in that. Like, my mother's friends were all from San Vincente. My father's friends are all from Saint Antone. It makes sense, even if they didn't know in the old country, they could relate to their country here. Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But at some point they -- I mean, they have to mingle, because your father married your mother, so the islands came together.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah. But Samsant and Saint Anton, there was a great parallel. But she married him -- she met him at this woman's house who was from Saint Antone. Saint Antone and San Vincent were kind of close. I don't know, it's interesting

because you find sections where just the Brava stayed together and the San Nicolao stayed together. In New Bedford, it's more -- it was a smaller community I guess, I don't know. I don't know what the answer was, but we all got along. We didn't have dances according to the different islands. So it's the new generation.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you went to New York, you met your husband there?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, many years later. I told him he should've surfaced before that, no.

ANN MARIE LOPES - {laughter} One of you wasn't ready, right?

DEOLINDA ROSA - He was married before, his wife died.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK.

DEOLINDA ROSA - And I met him at a Cape Verdean dance.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - See? Everywhere I go. That was funny because Alex Pinto and I are very good friends, we've been friends since childhood. And she never visited me in New York but maybe twice. And Bana was going to play in New York, and she decided to come and visit me for the first time in a couple of years. And it was hot, you know hot it was last week, it was that hot in New York. And I said Alice, only you could get me out on a hot night like this to go to a dance. So I went to the dance. In fact, when I got there, I ended up -- I think Joli it was, offered me a drink at the bar. I just didn't even want to think about dancing it was so long. And I saw him, and then Alice says I flirted because we were going through a little entryway there, and he stepped aside in a very gallant manner. And she said, you flirted with him. I said, how come I never saw you before -- which is true. I've never seen him before. And then when I went back to the bar area, he was talking to a dear friend of mine, a very close friend of mine who introduced us, and that was the beginning. I wasn't thinking about getting married. I'm very satisfied with my single life at that point. And here I am.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How many years later?

DEOLINDA ROSA - 30 -- 38 years later that I have. I was in my late 40's, now that I'm thinking about it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's a long time for a Cape Verdean woman to be single, at that time, right?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah. You had no choice. I mean, today you have a choice. With the women today, with all due respects, but you know, if the relationships is long or something you're going to say hey, getting married or what, nowadays. But in those days, you waited for Prince Gallant to find you, and then sometimes when he found you, he wasn't Prince Gallant at all, but I had reached a point where I said hey, it's not happening, well you know, you have your romances in between, but hey, this is cool. And he came... and if you told me that I was coming back to New Bedford, I'd say no way, and here I am.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So tell me that story, how did you end up back in New Bedford?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well, I had changed my status, and was no longer this free person in New York that I could do whatever. And he had a daughter, and she was at that budding stage. I thought -- and then my whole family was here. At last, I could join in with them in the family relationships.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, because it's hard when you're single and everyone else is married.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah, you're kind of an oddball for a long time. People don't do it intentionally, but it's there. And then people say to you, you're so self-sufficient. I said well, you have no choice. There's nobody there to do it for you, so you do it. There's nobody -- you say move this chair, whatever, you just do it. I hate this house, you paint it, and I did all of those things. But when I came back I thought I'd fit in to the total picture. There's no such thing, I mean, you fit in to the family picture. But your life is your life, and your life is your life. So I'm not sorry, he loves it here, he loves it here.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And he wasn't raised here?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What does he like about it? Do you know?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Oh, the warmth and friendliness of people. He was raised in Philadelphia. And he has -- he found also relatives, he has a lot of relatives here in New Bedford, and just in this general area, he loves it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So when you came back, did you get involved with Cape Verdean activities? Back to the church?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Joined the recognition. No, I didn't go to church for quite a while. I didn't go to church for quite a while.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How long have you been back?

DEOLINDA ROSA - 38 years. 30 -- 38?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you regret coming back?

DEOLINDA ROSA - No, no, no. As a matter of fact, I was here, and shared important years with my mother, and of course you know my brother passed away, and we had a lot of good times together, and no, I don't. I just miss New York, I still do. And yet, if I were there, it wouldn't be applicable now because I don't have the energy, the health, or whatever. And my friends are all spread out, those that are left. We had a nucleus of a Cape Verdean community right there in Brooklyn. But they were all gone.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So what's the difference? New Bedford now and New Bedford when you were growing up?

DEOLINDA ROSA - I think it was a safer place when I was growing up. It's still -- I still see the beauty in it, it's a beautiful place. People don't know it, but it's really a beautiful place. The people that are here don't appreciate how beautiful it is. And I appreciate the warmth of the community, which doesn't exist any place else. Not because the other communities aren't friendly, but it's just too many people. And New York City, they're not really unfriendly, they just mind their business. And when I came here, I was a New Yorker. And I get on the bus, and the bus driver would talk to me, and I'd think please, let me read my paper. You know, wherever you went. And now I appreciate that I've gone back to that person. Everybody is friendly, people smile at you. In New York, somebody smiles at you, you say, what's he up to?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yep.

DEOLINDA ROSA - What does he want?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yep.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah. Even in Boston. Boston is not so bad, but I don't know about Boston now. But I don't, at this stage in time anyway, I don't regret it. I miss, I don't know, every time I see Letterman's show, I watch him every night, because he kind of tunes me in to my city, I see the skyscrapers and all, I kind of -- it was a different world, you'd have to live it to appreciate it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - The Cape Verdean community, you talked about it, and they had sort of boundaries before. Do you still see that?

DEOLINDA ROSA - In New Bedford?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - No, there's no boundaries now, they're all.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, Cape Verdeans are everywhere.

DEOLINDA ROSA - They're all into the entire community.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Is that good, bad?

DEOLINDA ROSA - Well see, I'm not the one to say, but I think that the kids coming up now will never know that warmth that existed when you had the neighborhood. This is applicable to all nationalities these days, there's no neighborhood, but there was a neighborhood before, whether it be French, Polish, Cape Verdean. But then there -- I'm leaving soon, you know, so I don't know what the world is going to be like. But sometimes, I think it's going to be so totally different, I guess it's progress. Well how do you feel about it, I don't know. You were raised in the Cape Verdean community, although you were on the fringe where you were -- yeah, but still you were a part of the whole thing.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - You come from a big family.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I miss the Cape Verdean stuff.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Huh?

ANN MARIE LOPES - I miss the Cape Verdean-ness, and it's hard to put a label on it.

DEOLINDA ROSA - A lot of it is lost now. It's still in the church. In fact, I haven't been going to church since I've been sick, and I miss it because there was something -- aside from worshipping God, but it was the warmth of being with people that you see every week, and you know them, even if you know them superficially, but you're part of the picture.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I missed that when I moved to Washington.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - When I moved to D.C., trying to find a church. It was interesting, and every time I came home, I went to OLOA, that was my church.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So there's a different -- there's a community feel.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Because in Brooklyn, I belonged to an Irish church. I didn't belong to it, we attended it. All of us would meet there at 12 o'clock at the church, but nobody ever knew we were there. I mean, we went, and nobody stopped us from going there, but it wasn't -- there was a little Spanish church that he and I attended that had that kind of warmth like OLOA, but it's not the same in the city. You're there, but nobody is interested. But here, you're there, and they know if -- there's so many -- just going to a wake in New Bedford, the people don't realize that they're still living by the old tradition. I don't know what your experience was when you were away from home and you went to a wake, and it was so strange to me, so cold. Whereas here, there's that warmth. And there's a lot of -- I'd be a gray one for promoting Cape Verdean-ness. And not because it's Cape Verdeans per se, but the people that I know, and I think there's so many wonderful things that they don't even know they possess, they don't know it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

DEOLINDA ROSA - Because they haven't been deprived of it. I was fortunate, as I said, I always gravitate towards Cape Verdeans wherever I went, so we had that warmth. But still, there's nothing like it. I don't know about Providence. Providence used to be the same thing too, Providence is old diehard Cape Verdeans, I don't know about now, I'm sure it's changed.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Let me say thank you.

End of File