

“Having Our Say”

Voices from the Cape Verdean Community

Recruiting for a ship crew was not
a vigorous as one might think:



“Well, one of the qualifications was can you row? Can you row a boat? And my father knew how to row, because someone in his family had taught him, you know, took him out rowing on a boat, and fishing. What was interesting to me, and kind of scary when I think about it, my father didn’t know how to swim. ”

– Dorothy Lopes

Dorothy Lopes
November 11, 2010

Interview with Dorothy Lopes
Conducted November 11, 2010
By Ann Marie Lopes

Beginning of File

ANNE MARIE LOPES - The interviewer is Ann Marie Lopes, and it is Thursday, November 11th, 2010. And I am here interviewing...

DOROTHY LOPES - Dorothy Lopes.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - And I need your birthday, just to put into perspective.

DOROTHY LOPES - OK. July 11, 1934. Born in New Bedford.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - OK. Now, forget this is here. And I will put it over here...

DOROTHY LOPES - You can move those if that helps.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - (shuffling noises; inaudible) need your voice. So I just need to just make sure so everything's fine. So let's start with, I understand your father?
Grandfather.

DOROTHY LOPES - My father.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Your father was a whaler?

DOROTHY LOPES - He was a whaler.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - OK. Did he get into whaling in Cape Verde, or was it only here?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, he got into whaling when his ship, the William Graymer, I believe it was the name of the ship, stopped in Cape Verde to recruit some hearty young men to go on a whaling voyage. And my father was among some young men who were down at the shore when the boat came in, and that's how he got recruited. Well, one of the qualifications was can you row? Can you row a boat? And my father knew how to row, because someone in his family had taught him, you know, took him out rowing on a boat, and fishing. What was interesting to me, and kind of scary when I think about it, my father didn't know how to swim.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Oh, but he could row.

DOROTHY LOPES - He could row a boat, and he was able-bodied, and so that's how he got recruited on the ship. They went out sailing for whales, and six months later came to New Bedford. It was in 1921 that they arrived. But that was the end of the whaling era, you know, about, so that he never went out on a whaling trip after that. He was -- so on the whaling ship, he was an oarsman when the small boats went out to -- after they had been sighted, to sight the whales. And when I think of that story, of my father on this little boat going out in this great big ocean, they didn't have life vests. And he didn't know how to swim. That just sends a chill up my spine. Thinking of that. Really, really think of that. So it was...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did he tell you what it was like?

DOROTHY LOPES - It was scary, it was scary for him, absolutely scary. But it was a passage to America, the land of opportunity, and getting a job and all of that. So I think that was more important to him. But I always look back and thought how things could have so different had my father gone out there like many other men, and never returned to the whaling ship. Because they were lost at sea. And so, they certainly not having like I say, a life vest or an ability to swim, that just, wow. How things would have been -- that would have been -- there would have been no me. (laughter) At that point. So I think of the courage that that took, and the determination to have a better life that was really very important, I think, to him.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - When they asked him to row, did he know what they were talking about, or did he just...

DOROTHY LOPES - I don't know if he really had full comprehension of just what this entails. You know how sometimes you can get into something and once you're in the midst of it, you think, wow, I didn't realize I bargained for all of this, that may

have somewhat been the case. And of course, life on the whaling ship itself, the hardships of that, talking about how the captain ate well, but they had crackers and water. They didn't have sumptuous meals or anything. And then coming back with not a great deal of money, as we know, there was a real injustice to not just my father, but to many of the Cape Verdean whalers who came back owing the captain money from whaling ships, you know. But that was...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - What island was he from?

DOROTHY LOPES - My father was from the island of São Nicolau, a village called Juncalinho.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So how old was he when he started on his whaling adventures?

DOROTHY LOPES - He was about 20 years old.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Oh really? And did he have brothers and sisters?

DOROTHY LOPES - Not in whaling. He had another brother, two brothers, who also came to America. One became a merchant seaman. He settled in the Baltimore, Maryland area. He was in Boston for a while, but then when he went into the merchant -- as a merchant seaman, he lived more in Baltimore. He died in Baltimore, as a matter of fact. And another brother who lived in Connecticut. For a while. He had a sister, but she never came to America, so we never knew her.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - What was your father's name?

DOROTHY LOPES - Antonio Lorenzo Lopes.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did he ever go into detail about the boat? I can imagine being on this little boat, you're rowing, and then all of a sudden, this huge whale comes at you.

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, he used to talk about the impressiveness of the whale itself, you know. How huge it was, and how it pulled the boat, as they, you know, you hear about the Nantucket sleigh ride, and that was true. And he said actually, they were gone for what seemed like an eternity, and could no longer see the ship from which they had gone into the smaller rowboats, out in the middle of this great big ocean with a few other men, rowing this boat trying to catch this whale. And not ever knowing, really, if you were ever going to get back to the big boat, you know. And I can't imagine what a 20 year old, what that would have been like -- you're still pretty young. Well of course, young people are somewhat adventurous, and they did not think -- you just wonder, if you get into their heads, what exactly was going through your mind when you were out there and thinking, maybe I should have stayed in Cape Verde. (laughter) Or I could go out rowing a little bit, but I

could still see the land from where I was. You know.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Or maybe I should have learned how to swim.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah, absolutely. I mean, living on an island, I just wondered how many other men didn't know how to swim. Not because swimmers -- I don't know. That was kind of interesting to me.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Was he ever part of capturing a whale? Like they went after it, but did they ever actually harpoon one and bring them in?

DOROTHY LOPES - Oh, well, yeah, because one of his friends, who also came from São Nicolau, was the harpooner on the boat that he was on. Miguel Almeida was his name. Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Until -- he, he had an interesting job, harpooning and pulling in.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yes, yes, absolutely.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So once they got the whale on the ship, was your father involved in...

DOROTHY LOPES - In cutting it up?

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Yes.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yes. Doing that, and a lot of his job too was trying to keep the decks clean, too. Maintenance type of thing. But once he came back, like he said, that was his one and only trip. I think he was glad to get to land.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - I think I would be too. What did they do? Did he talk about what they did between whale sightings?

DOROTHY LOPES - Sometimes they would play cards, or somebody would sing, you know. Have some entertain -- I've seen stories, tell stories on board, yeah. There were no women on board, of course, just all men, so that was mostly what they -- he didn't talk a great deal about it. If you sat and asked him questions, he would, you know. But otherwise, that was something just way back in his memory.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did you get the feeling it was a good thing for him, or what did it -- it was just something...

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, I think, I think my father feels, always felt that he had -- he was

very thankful for the life he had here in America, so that was the opportunity. That was what provided him the opportunity to come here, and once he came here, he didn't go out whaling anymore. He got a job in Nantucket, and he worked in Bridgewater making -- at a brick place, they made bricks. And then later worked in the cordage factory. But he went to school, he went to night school, learned English. He loved going to school. He loved learning. Always -- he had a favorite teacher, Mr. King was his teacher, and even after, long after he had finished going to night school, he, whenever he saw Mr. King, you know, that was a big thing, "Oh, I saw Mr. King today." And he used to read a lot, and he knew things, you know. He knew the Constitution and the Amendments and all of these things. He knew dates of presidents. He had a great interest in American history. Always -- once he became naturalized, I think it was in -- he came here in 1921, and I think he finally became a citizen, I kinda -- was '42 or '43. That he became a citizen, and that was a very proud moment for him, becoming an American citizen. And once he had the opportunity to vote, he always voted. Primaries and generals, he didn't miss a beat. Even up until his later years, always went to vote. And he'd go early in the morning to the polls to vote. And then when he got older and he couldn't -- walking was difficult, I would drive him down, made sure he went to vote. He always would vote. You know. And talk about -- one of the things he always would talk about was one of the mayors of New Bedford, Mayor Harriman was his name, I believe. Was a mayor for many, many years in New Bedford. He was like, and of course, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was absolutely a hero to him. Always talked about him as the best president the United States ever had. I don't know what else you want me to say about that.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Well, let's talk about your mom. Where was your mom from, what island? Was she born here?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, my mom was born in America. My mom was born in Fall River, actually. Her family were from the Azores, from São Miguel, in the Azores.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - OK, and then they came over to -- into the port of Fall River.

DOROTHY LOPES - Into Fall River, they lived at Fall River. And then eventually, she had married and had three daughters. Then my father met her, and she was divorced from her husband, and in those days, many many years ago -- my father would talk about this, and I remember, there would be a piece in the paper, he saw a piece in the paper about a woman who was divorced from her husband with three children, and somehow he met her, because he stayed -- he lived at a boarding house, they used to have boarding houses in New Bedford, and some in this neighborhood, and there's one on Acushnet Avenue, just around the corner from School Street, building -- the home is no longer there. And when he first came to New Bedford, he was there. And somehow, he met my mother, and started a relationship, and then they got married.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - What's your mother's name?

DOROTHY LOPES - My mother name was Mary. Ambra was her -- A-M-B-R-A -- was her maiden name. Ambra. Mmhm. And then had my sister and -- you know, me and my sister. As their daughters. So we were raised with my mother's daughters from her previous marriage.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So where -- on Acushnet Avenue, were you...

DOROTHY LOPES - No, actually, I was born in a house on South Second Street, where Bay Village is today, down just around the corner from Howland Street in New Bedford. I was born in the house there. 259, I think, was the number. I don't -- I have an older sister who remembers numbers better than I do, but it was someplace around that, I was born there in the house on South Second Street. And we lived there probably 'til, I'd say, maybe, I was born in 1934. Maybe the early '40s? It was somewhere after the 1938 hurricane. We moved, and we lived on Purchase Street, at 470 Purchase Street, which is just around the corner from Russell Street. And we lived there probably 'til the early '50s. The house was owned by Dr. Margolis, it was a Jewish family who lived on the corner, and they owned the house next door, and we lived there on the second floor for several years. And then in the early '50s, there was an opportunity to purchase a home, and it was also on Purchase Street, at 564. And so, my parents bought the house at 564 Purchase Street in the '50s. Right across from where your family used to live years ago. Across from what is now the Vets Hall. Still there. It's still owned by the family. My sister, my younger sister lives there. It was a two-family house that we lived in. So I lived there. And I'd say probably, it had to be '53 or '54, somewhere around there. In the middle '50s, early '50s that that house was purchased. And lived there, and it's been a family home all these years.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Let's go back a little bit to talk about your parents. Now, they met. They -- do you know if they dated?

DOROTHY LOPES - Not really. Because I never remembered them talking about that. Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - OK. I've had people look at me like I'm insane when I ask that question, because there's no dating. You talked, and you had your parents were there, and it was that type of thing. So once they got married, what did they do for fun?

DOROTHY LOPES - Fun. I don't know. My mother used to like to go to the movies, yeah. And my father, maybe occasionally. But fun was probably more thing -- and sometimes, there were neighborhood dances that they would go to.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Like where?

DOROTHY LOPES - At, uh, oh gosh, I think it was called Monte Pio Hall? And at the Band Club, maybe. Verdean Hall -- my father wasn't much for dancing, though, because I

could remember -- I could even remember as a youngster, sometimes going to the dance with my mother, because she liked the music and everything. But my father wasn't much for dancing. He stayed home, yeah. But we would go, and almost every Saturday night, there was something like that going on in the neighborhood, and the music was a very big part of community life, so people would like to go there. I remember the women's club -- my mother wasn't a member of the women's club, Cape Verdean Women's Club? Social club? That they would always have this big formal dance once a year that the ladies would really get all decked out. And so I'd like, go and watch them, you know. All with their gowns and everything else, and have this big Cape Verdean dance once a year. I don't know if it was at New Year's. It may have been. But I'm not really sure, can't remember that. Exactly.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - What did your father do for fun?

DOROTHY LOPES - My father was kind of a serious person. He wasn't one -- he never drove a car. He wasn't a gambler. He never smoked. And a drinker, he wasn't one to go to clubs and drink. He would have brandy, once in a while he would have an occasional brandy, a little grog if his friends came over, and have a drink like that. But I don't remember him being engaged in a lot of social activity. The one thing he belonged to was -- oh, what did they call it -- the Cape Verdean Benefit Association? That was a big thing, where he went to these meetings at the Cape Verdean Benefit Association. He and some of his peers. And it was almost like kind of an insurance company that they had for people of Cape Verdean heritage, and going to the meeting -- he could come home from the meeting and tell you all the neighborhood news, because I don't know what kind of agenda they had at their meetings, but he would tell me more about -- tell us about this one, or that one, and what was going on in community circles, because that's what -- especially as he got older, and that's what -- that was a big social time, going to the -- for him, going to these Cape Verdean Benefit Association meetings or affairs -- and then of course, the Holy Name Society and the Church was another thing that he belonged to.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Was the Beneficent Society, was that all-male?

DOROTHY LOPES - There were -- because I remember Valentina Almeida had something to do with it, she was a secretary or something like that. So she was -- in the beginning, mostly it was men. But I know, I remembered at later dates that she was part of that organization, as was Joanna Andrade, was married to Louis Andrade, she also was part of that. Because sometimes it go to be that they would meet at Joanna's house, rather than going to the building where they used to have meetings. That was in later years, when membership was dwindling. There were just a handful of people at worst, trying to hold onto that organization.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - And you said it was like an insurance...

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah, it was something like unemployment benefits or something, if -

- I don't know too much about it, but it's, I can remember having conversations that, like, for example, if a person wasn't able to work, they might collect a very small stipend from this organization. But, it was -- don't get caught doing anything outside that you weren't supposed to be doing. You're supposed to be really sick and you can't work, you have this disability, you make sure that nobody sees you walking downtown or anything like that, because you can't be collecting this. And as I say, it was a very small stipend that -- so it was almost like they had, well, I saw Mr. So and so, and he's supposed to be collecting these benefits, but I saw him downtown. How sick is he? It was like, strange. It was really strange to me. But yeah, I think it finally went out of business, kind of. Just ended it somewhere along, because I said, many of the members, the older members died, and they didn't recruit younger people, because they were of the generation of my dad, and then he was one of the last ones to pass away from this, so I think it just died an apt death. (laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Now you said your mom went to the movies, or liked the movies? Did she go by herself?

DOROTHY LOPES - No, I used to go with her, to take me sometimes down to the State Theater, and in those days, movies were inexpensive. Well, probably expensive to them, but to me, it seems like nothing now, and you could go to the movies, and sometimes my younger sister would go. But I think I would go more than she, with my mother. There's just three years difference between us, but we would go and spend -- because you could see the movie all day long. If you walked in in the middle of the movie, you just waited until it came on again, because it could come - or you could go in and watch the movie once, and then it'd start again, you can stay and watch it twice, too. But we would do that.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - For like, 25 cents?

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah, yeah. And get candy or a drink for a nickel or something like that. But a lot of the things we did for fun though was listening to the radio, because we didn't have television when I was a young girl. And I remember this big radio, this great big piece of furniture, and my mother was set on her rocking chair, and she would be doing -- my mother used to do a lot of embroidery, and we'd listen to the radio. Things like "Life with Luigi", "The Shadow Knows", and things like that. We would play cards. I'm not a great card player today, but I remember as a kid playing cards...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Like Bisca?

DOROTHY LOPES - Bisca, and blackjack, blackjack we'd play. Or bingo. Pokeno, we'd sit around the table and play games like that. Type of things. And other than that, it was listening to records, because I had all of -- my older sisters, they had like a little jukebox thing, little -- for a record player, and play music and sing the songs. While my younger sister, she used to -- she liked to go to the movies too, but when she came home, her playtime -- she sometimes she'd just sit around the table when we

were playing, because she would be playing her own games. Her own game was acting out the whole movie. She would have all the parts in the movie. She'd be -- you know, crossing the -- because we would play in the kitchen, and she'd be going across the kitchen into the bathroom, into the next room and saying all these words, it's the dialogue for the movie. She'd play all the parts. And I can remember the bathroom, one time, she was in the bathroom -- it was a big bathroom, it was the size of a room, almost. And it used to have one of those, you hook the door to lock it, so if you pulled on it, there'd be a space and you could look into the bathroom. So my sister and I would go peek to see what she's doing in there. Or sometimes we needed to go to the bathroom, we wanted to open the door so we could go in there, because the bathroom became her theater. See. Because it was a big room. And she'd be in there talking to herself. And she had such an imagination, because I remember one time we were watching her and she was acting out this movie, I don't know the movie she was acting out. But someone was going away on a train, and she -- my mother had a hamper there. My sister had taken all the clothes out of the hamper, the dirty clothes and had them on the floor, and she climbs inside the hamper. And that was supposed to be the train. OK.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That was very clever.

DOROTHY LOPES - It was very clever. Yeah. Very, very clever. But she would do those kinds of things playing. Or we liked to play hide and seek, hide and go seek in the house. We weren't allowed to -- some rooms we couldn't go in. But mostly we played -- and I used to read a lot, go to the library and get books. I used to like fairy tales, I always liked fairy tales when I was growing up. So I'd go and get three or four books at the library and read them and go, couple of days go take it back and get more books to do. But as I say, television wasn't something we had, I think I was in high school when we finally got a television. It was, you know, not too many people in the neighborhood had them. If somebody had a television, lots of people would go to that person's house, but we never did that. So finally when we got a television, it was one of those that had doors on it, and we would get to watch it, but at a certain time, the television had to be off and we were supposed to go to bed. But my younger sister, she liked to watch television, so I remember one time we were -- everybody had gone to bed, but she was up watching television. But she was watching it so that she could close the doors on the television so the light wouldn't be projecting into my mother's room, so she couldn't see it. (laughter) And so she'd be watching it through like a narrow door, but one time, I remember my mother woke up and she could see this light, and then she listened, she could hear. And she yelled at my sister to -- and my sister said, "You really scared me," because it was a scary movie. Or a scary program. And just when my mother yelled at her, it was when something was going to happen in the thing. But she said it was time to go to bed, and not to stay up all night watching television.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - What did your father do for a living?

DOROTHY LOPES - Like I said, after he -- when I was growing up, he worked at the

cordage factory, the New Bedford cordage factory up in the West End.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - And what...

DOROTHY LOPES - Making rope. He made rope. And he did that for many years until the cordage company closed, and then he got a job, it was a seasonal job, he worked in the cranberry bogs in Hanson, Massachusetts, so he would generally go in the summertime, late spring, and he would live there in the shanty until harvesting was done. Because harvesting was done by hand then. Wasn't mechanically done like it is now. Probably 'til late October, he would stay there. So I would go out there, you know, every weekend or something, my mother would cook food and we would go out and take supplies and things to him. My father wasn't much of a cook. He would tell me some of the things he'd cook, but I don't think it was anything I would want to have. But also...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Like what?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, it would be rice, but it wouldn't be like rice that I would like to eat, because it would look like pappa, or you know. Johnny Pappa, who owned a store in the neighborhood, his father also was at the bogs. That's how my father had gotten the job, and he had his own shanty there. And he was a cook. And so, my father always had enough to eat between him and what we would bring him, things that he could cook up easily or just reheat, to have during the week. So he worked, he worked at the cranberry bogs...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - How did you get back and forth? Did somebody -- you said your father didn't have a car.

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, we had a car. We had a family car. But my sister, my older sister, was the driver. Because my mother never drove either. My sister learned how to drive, and then I learned how to drive after. But the car wasn't for us to take like, and go off with our buddies. When we were in the car, my mother was in the car, or someone was in the car, so we would drive out to Hanson there.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So your mother never worked in the cranberry bogs?

DOROTHY LOPES - No, no.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did she work outside the home?

DOROTHY LOPES - No. My mother was a homemaker. Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That's plenty of work.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah, absolutely. She always kept the house immaculate, and always cooked.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - What did she cook?

DOROTHY LOPES - She took -- well, she cooked, my mother knew how to make cachupa. She wasn't Portuguese, but she lived in a Cape Verdean community. She knew how to cook cachupa. We had beef stew. I can remember chuck roast, we used to have chuck roast a lot. I was like, Sunday dinner was either chuck roast or roast chicken. I can remember my mother made soup a lot. Lots of soup, different kinds of soup. I can remember my older sister, she did a lot of cooking. She had gone to Voke, and one of the things I remember, it was like Saturday was baked beans and -- almost every Saturday, it was like Saturday, we live in New England, we ate baked beans and hot dogs, and brown bread, and but -- the beans in the wintertime, the beans would be in the oven on all-night Friday, and you could smell the molasses and everything all during the night. You could smell that cooking in the stove. So we had homemade baked beans lots of times. And the brown bread I used to love. And my sister, going to Voke, she knew -- she used to bake a lot. Gingerbread, I can remember the smells of gingerbread baking. I remember My-T-Fine pudding. That was a thing, especially chocolate. I used to love the My-T-Fine chocolate pudding. The kind you cook, not the instant kind. Doing that. Fruit cocktail, Jello, those are like staples in the home for dessert. And of course, when summertime came, homemade biscuits for strawberry shortcake, you know. With real whipped cream that you had to beat up, and I said ooh, can I lick the beater? And I remember when, when cake mixes first came out, and of course, there was television then, and advertisements, and so my mother was interested in that, and we tried a few of them, and cake mixes have come a long way since the first ones that came out. They're so much better now. You eat them then, you had to eat them then. They didn't have great lasting quality.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Was there a difference in culture, because your mom's from the Azores and your father's from Cape Verde, did you notice any difference? There was just a natural blending, or...

DOROTHY LOPES - Not really. I think I grew up more with Cape Verdean culture than anything. As a matter of fact, even in my adult years, I would think sometimes, as I said my mother's family was from the Azores. I know little of, or nothing about Azorean culture.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Really?

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. And, because it was, we lived in a Cape Verdean community, Cape Verdean neighborhood, and we were, for all intents and purposes, Cape Verdean. You know. I can remember as an adult, there's a custom in with Azoreans, and then we have many Azoreans who live in New Bedford, and many of them are from São Miguel, which is where my mother's parents were from. See, my mother's parents though, I never knew, because they died before I was born. So I

didn't -- my older sister had remembered some of my maternal grandma, but I didn't know them, you know. And my mother did have siblings, she had one who lived in Fall River and one who lived in New Bedford. There wasn't a lot of, I don't remember a lot of connection there, and I, in my adult years, came to think of that as racism in my own family.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Really?

DOROTHY LOPES - Yes, absolutely. I feel that way.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So...

DOROTHY LOPES - Because I didn't really know them. I had an aunt, two uncles that I hardly knew.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So you think they kind of disowned her.

DOROTHY LOPES - I think so. I mean, my mother did -- we'd go to Fall River occasionally to visit her brother there, and he did come down, his wife, and he had a daughter, one daughter, but rarely, you know, it wasn't -- I did not see a closeness there. And of course, my mother died over 40 years ago, and of course, after she died, that was like the end of that. But no. So I just felt like I missed out. Because as I started to talk about the Azoreans in New Bedford, there's a tradition they have in that community that they do during Lent, just before Easter, the Easter weekend, and they -- a lot of them come from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, and they process through the streets of New Bedford, and they go from church to church. And they're dressed in their native garb, the men and the women, and they -- I remember a couple of years ago, they started to come to Our Lady of the Assumption parish as one of the churches they'd stop at. And I remember being there one morning, it's on a Saturday that they come. They come singing through the streets and praying, and they would come into the church and do some prayers in Portuguese and some songs, and then they would leave. And I can remember very clearly feeling very sad, because I said that is part of who I am, but I know nothing about it.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Oh, I can understand that.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. Yeah. So it was like, I felt, I've missed something of who I am in not knowing about Azorean culture. But I felt that, in my own family, that they have missed something of who I am by not getting to know me and my siblings, too. Yeah. And even today, I'm sure they're out there somewhere, but I have no idea. There would be maybe second, third cousins or something out there, but I have no idea, you know. Really. That was a missing part. So, and I have differences with some of my siblings in terms of when I say I'm Cape Verdean, she always reminds me, "Well you're Portuguese, too." She has that thing. And even of the whole thing of equating Cape Verdeans with being black, you know, some

of my siblings have a problem because I always say, well I'm black, and they say, "Well you're white too." And you know, so they have a problem when I say that, and they know how I feel about this whole issue of what it means when you say, if I say I'm black, I don't say it like (whispered) I'm black. You know. I say it proud, I'm black. Proudly. And it's not -- and maybe I've gone through some things, say well, now -- that's why sometimes -- I know how hard your father worked to get Cape Verdeans on the census, but how to identify myself on the census now, you know. Because I'm not black, I'm not white, I'm biracial. Actually. But it's -- but I've always identified as Cape Verdean, and if I say it in front of my sister, she'll correct me quickly, "And you're Portuguese, too."

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Hmm, that's interesting. Does she identify herself exclusively as Portuguese?

DOROTHY LOPES - No. No. But she doesn't -- certainly doesn't deny it. She does -- has this thing, she doesn't -- she has some -- I don't know what the word is, difficulty, maybe, with just talking about being black, and not saying anything about being white. I can see that even in the interracial marriages that have happened in my family, that -- well, the black part of you is just as important, or just as good as the white part of you. You know? The white part isn't any better than the black part. The black part isn't any better than the white part, and it's not to deny any of that of you. I don't care how light skinned you are, how straight your hair is, don't deny that there is someplace in your family background that makes you part of the black culture too. Whether you want to identify it as black or Cape Verdean, but if you say Cape Verdean, guess what. Black is in there, you need to know that.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That's true. Growing up, were there some Cape Verdean traditions that you always practiced in your family?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well I can remember, one big tradition in this Cape Verdean community was the New Year's, the *cantares*. And I can remember on New Year's, that was a big thing growing up, because there was a significant number of people who engaged in that, going house to house with the singing and the blessing and everything else. And so I can remember my mother, we got to set the table for the people who were going to be coming to our house for this *cantares*, with the food on the table, and the grog on the table. So I think sometimes they could have -- it might have been moonshine. (laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Where'd you get the grog?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, there was someone in the community who had access to someone else out of -- from out of the community, who had this stuff that they called moonshine. That's all I know about it. And you used to do something with it. Well one of my sis -- my older sister who went to Voke was very handy with the pots and pans and stuff, (laughter) and she...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - She made her own grog.

DOROTHY LOPES - She used to make this, and you could -- and it was so funny, because that was against the law, right, to do that? And so she would like, lock the door, and so like (laughter) that doesn't help, because you can smell it all over the place. (laughter) The locking the door doesn't do it if they come here, because you could smell it all over the place. And I wasn't one for drinking it, but I liked the smell of it, because she used to put things in it like tangerine, I could remember that was a flavor. See, I don't even know, you go to some drugstore and you get some kind of extract. Tangerine was one of it. And she -- the sugar, and cooking it and everything else. And they would put it in bottles, so you would have this moonshine.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did she ever sell it?

DOROTHY LOPES - No. No. They had to buy the -- all it looked like to me, it looked like the bottle of alcohol, because it was colorless. And then until you cooked it up and put this color in it, this flavoring in it, and it would give it like this kind of yellowish, yellowy-orange color to put it in these bottles. Now she didn't sell it, no. She just made it for home consumption. (laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - And she just -- how did she learn how to do this?

DOROTHY LOPES - I don't -- I have no idea. I have no idea. I can remember her in the kitchen with these big pots -- this was my sister making this stuff. And even after she got married and she moved, she lived in Wakefield, Massachusetts, and I can remember this man would -- she would -- could he get access to the person who supplied him with this moonshine, he used to get it for you, and he'd bring you a gallon, I guess it was, and then you would make it into this --

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Grog.

DOROTHY LOPES - -- grog stuff that people liked. Not me, I didn't drink it, but it sucked. I can remember smelling it -- it smelled good. (laughter) The flavors. But it is -- [could be kind?], because people would go get the moonshine with a baby carriage. (laughter) And put the -- cover it up with the blankets and wheel this carriage to come home. (laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So no one would know.

DOROTHY LOPES - No one would know you had a bottle of moonshine in there. Bootlegging, I guess they called it. (laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - And that never stopped, even through Prohibition. It just...

DOROTHY LOPES - I'm sure someplace today, probably some of these people still do that.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Making grog, making grog. That's neat. Any other traditions you can remember?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, there's, you know, things related to church certainly.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Well, talk about church.

DOROTHY LOPES - Processions. Well, church was very important. Growing up, church was located on Water Street, and that was the central -- that was like, the, you know, if you have the wheel and the axle? We revolved around the church, the church was the axle there. And activities in the church, processions, you know, feast days, holy days. If the street -- if there was a street fair or something like that, that was -- and going to church was never a question, because all the kids in the neighborhood went to church. And that was the thing about growing up in the neighborhood. You knew everybody in every house along the street, on all sides, on all four sides of the block, you knew everybody. You know, you knew all the families who lived in that house. All the way up the street. And living on Purchase Street, not every single household was occupied by Cape Verdean family. There were some white families in between. But we knew who they were too. You knew everybody, and they knew the children in the neighborhood. So if it was church, everybody was going to church. And especially on Sundays, people will be coming from different parts of the neighborhood immediately surrounding a few blocks north, west, and south of the church. Not so many east, because they're going toward the water there. Going to church. The church bell would ring. They would ring the church bell, and you'd see people walking across, going to church. I mean, we were living on Purchase Street at the time, so we would go to church and at that time, going -- if you went through Monte Park, you could enter the park on Acushnet Avenue, walk through the park, and then there were a set of stairs that walked down on the east side of the park to Second Street, and then go down the lane, walk into church. Except if we -- it was like in the spring, when we got new patent leather shoes, we didn't want to walk through that dusty playground, so then you'd go by the street, on the side, the north side of the park. Cannon Street. But, the other interesting thing was, Bay Village was built, and on the south side of Monte Park was like the line of demarcation for segregation in Bay Village. Because south of that, the south wall of the park, Bay Village from there south, was occupied by white families. There were no black families, no Cape Verdean families there. And so we didn't even like to -- and although there was a walk that you could walk on the south side of the park, there was a walkway just at the beginning of that section of Bay Village that you could walk through there to get to Second Street so that you could go down the lane to go to the church, but very few people would walk there. As a fact, my mother had a cousin who lived there. He lived maybe second or third door down from that south side of the park. I don't ever remember going there, you know?

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That was the demarcation.

DOROTHY LOPES - It was there. Segregated Bay Village, yup, right there. And you didn't even walk on that side. Until, as time went by, you might have seen one or two people who dare, dare to walk there, and then eventually people got more courage and said, well, we can walk through here too. You know, we're not going to anybody's house, but just walking across the sidewalk, the walkway there, to get to Second Street.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Was there a fear? Is that why people didn't do it, or you just didn't, just wasn't done.

DOROTHY LOPES - There could have been a fear there, or just a sense of not belonging. Not belonging, you know? I don't know if everybody felt that, but I certainly did. And I can remember my mother's cousin from there -- we never went over there to visit him. I remember him a few times coming up to our house on Purchase Street, but I don't remember offering like, "Well, come over and visit us sometime." You know.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So church was a family outing. Everybody went, your parents...

DOROTHY LOPES - My parents didn't go as much as my older sisters and I. Yeah. I can remem -- they might have gone sometimes, but not a lot. But -- not my parents, anyway. But always made sure that we went, you know, as children.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Were they Catholic?

DOROTHY LOPES - Yes.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - They were. Married in a Catholic church?

DOROTHY LOPES - No, my parents were married in Seamen's Bethel.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Really?

DOROTHY LOPES - Mmhmm.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Why?

DOROTHY LOPES - Probably because my mother was divorced from her first husband. Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Oh, yeah, they couldn't marry in the church.

DOROTHY LOPES - Mmhmm.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - OK. Who were their attendants, do you know?

DOROTHY LOPES - No. I really don't.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - I was just curious.

DOROTHY LOPES - No, I have no idea.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did they have a reception? Did they have a party afterwards?

DOROTHY LOPES - Probably a small house party, yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Were there lots of house parties when you were growing up?

DOROTHY LOPES - I can't remember a lot, except I said, you know, if it was somebody's birthday, you know, we'd have a birthday cake. But it was mostly just our family thing, you know. A little birthday cake that somebody made, and have ice cream and cake. I can remember as a little girl having a few birthday parties out in the yard, though the yard where we lived at, it was a big backyard, and I can remember I think having birthday parties with like my sister, and maybe -- the boy who lived downstairs was the -- he was -- they was -- it was a Jewish family, at one time, lived downstairs there, and his -- it was his uncle that was the doctor in the house next door. He came to the birthday party, and some kids who lived on Russell Street, just a few neighborhood kids, and we had a birthday party outside in the yard. That was always a big thing. Birthday cake and ice cream for us. Yeah. Doing that. I think one of the things growing up too was school. Because we went to the school, I went to the Thomas A. Green School, which was right at the other end of the block from where I lived. That was a big thing. And then the downtown area was thriving when I was growing up. And my mother liked to shop. So sometimes in the afternoon...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - After school.

DOROTHY LOPES - After school, or she might go downtown, when I got a little bigger, if she was going downtown and school was, I think we got out of school around 3:30 in the afternoon, and the Star Store was about two blocks north from where the school was, so my mother would be at the Star Store. She said, you come to the Star Store, and I'll be there, and the Star Store had a soda fountain there, and that was always special, because I'd meet my mother at Star Store, we're going to get ice cream today, you know. Because we didn't have ice cream. Either that, or on Purchase Street, there was a coffee shop called Lorraine's Coffee Shop, and it was -- it sold us coffee and donuts, but they had other things too. All coffee milkshakes, things like that. But we could meet my mom there, and go in there and have a treat with her because she was downtown because we would -- you know, we were old enough, and it was safe in the neighborhood, that you could allow your kid to

walk down the street, up the street to do that. So that certainly has -- something that's changed. Because I don't ever remember as a child not feeling safe in the neighborhood, you know. We weren't allowed to wander too far either, I mean, we played in the yard or around the block. Now, Monte Park was right down the street, but we weren't often allowed to go down there either. It was mostly playing in the yard.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Why couldn't you go to the playground?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, because then you're out of sight, kind of, you know? Out of sight, not be able to hear when somebody calls. Well, we would play even, I can remember one of the things we played was like right across the street, and so if my mother looked out the window at the back of the house, she could see the house where we were. And we'd play there sometimes.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - This is on Acushnet Avenue?

DOROTHY LOPES - This is on Russell Street.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Russell Street, OK, that way.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. There was a friend of mine who lived there, Adeline, her sister Virginia, their brother Peter. Well Adeline -- Virginia was a little older, Adeline was closer to my age. And it was a little porch on the front. It was very small, right about four steps, but it was sheltered. You could even sit there on rainy days. And we played there sometimes just sitting, even if it was a hot day, out of the sun, you know, sitting there, because it was sheltered. And we would -- one of our favorite games was, it was -- (laughter) -- it was called, I don't know if it had a name, but we would say, "It was a long and dreary night. Three men on a horse. Tell us a story." And you'd use somebody's father's name, so mine was Anton. "Tell us a story, Anton." So I'd say, "Anton began." I'd say, "It was a long and dreary night. Three men on a horse. One said to the other, tell us a story, [Chubon?]." And if your father is [Chubon?], you go, "[Chubon?] began, it was a long --" And we played this for a long time. (laughter) This game. That was one thing we'd play. Or we'd play, when we had bottles, milk bottles you could sell, recycle, and go get a nickel for the bottle, and you could buy a Hoodsie cup for a nickel. And inside the Hoodsie cup, the cover of the Hoodsie cup, and you licked it, there was a picture of a movie star on it. So we would collect them, you know. We'd have piles -- we'd take them home, wash them, and we'd save them. And so we would play a guessing game. "I'm guessing of a movie star -- I'm thinking of a movie star, and her initials are B.D." And everybody shouts, "Oh, Bette Davis, Bette Davis!" (laughter) Or, "I'm thinking of a movie star, her name is R.H." "Oh, it's Rita Hayworth!" So we would play these guessing games with that, or we would play if -- other times, draw hopscotch on the sidewalk, or play marbles. We'd have these little bags with marbles in them, and we'd dig a little hole and shoot marbles, or trade marbles. Those are the kinds of games. There'd be jumprope, hide and seek, in the neighborhood around the corner or across the street or something like that.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - What would you consider the neighborhood?

DOROTHY LOPES - The neighborhood -- my neighborhood was Purchase Street bounded by Russell, Acushnet Avenue. It was small. We didn't wander too far away from there. But the people, the friends that I grew up with, they lived on like Purchase Street maybe two doors up from where I was. It was a family there, the Gonsalves and the dePinas. And then around the corner, backyard from my yard, were the Teixeiras, and there was Pauline and Bella there. And then on the Russell Street side, there was Peter Britto, he lived on the corner, his sister Evelyn was older, and then next door was Adeline and Virginia, and next door to them were the Grace family, and there were several kids there. And the Britto family, they lived in the same household upstairs. And then now on the corner of Acushnet Avenue and Russell, there was the Soares family, there were several children there. Most of them were younger than I, but they were always in the yard, I remember they were always in the yard. And then there was one boy who lived up -- he lived on Pleasant Street, but he'd come down to the Purchase Street area. So we weren't far, you know, far, far away, except when we went to school, then you'd have kids who went to school who maybe lived further north on Acushnet Avenue or on School Street, or down on Second Street. Maybe even Water Street that you went to school with. In the summertime now, we would go to the beach a lot, and it was just sometimes just a bunch of kids would go to the beach. If we were lucky, we had money, we could take the trolley. But very often, we walked. We walked all the way down to the beach, the municipal beach, and we'd bring lunch, we'd pack, you know, a sandwich or something to bring. If we were lucky, we had some money, because there were a store right across from the beach -- well, not a store, well a storefront, where they sold chow mein sandwiches, I think of those now and they repulse me. (laughter) But I used to like them when I was a kid.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - This is on your way to the beach?

DOROTHY LOPES - This is right across from the beach, directly across from the beach.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - The Hazelwood part of that...

DOROTHY LOPES - The Hazelwood beach, yup. There was a little storefront type thing, and they sold, you know, snack-type things, hot dogs and stuff like that. And that was the place had chow mein sandwiches. So if we had money, we could do that. But if we didn't have money, we'd bring peanut butter and jelly or peanut butter and marshmallow sandwiches and a piece of fruit, and Kool Aid. And spend -- and we went, the kids went -- we went alone. We didn't go with our parents. My mother sometimes, but my father'd be working, and then there was also a lady who lived, her name was Hilda, she's in the nursing home now. Hilda Lopes. And she, she lived in Connecticut, she worked in Connecticut, but she'd come home, she lived at 4 -- let's see, 470, I think 484 was her address. She would make egg salad sandwiches, a pack of sandwiches, and she would put kids in her car and take us to the beach.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Oh, nice.

DOROTHY LOPES - Lots of times, she would take us. Yeah. Take us down there when we were kids. She did that a lot, and we always liked to go there. She never had any children of her own, she wasn't married. But when she came to New Bedford, she would do that for us. Lots of times. Hilda. Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That's nice. You make --

DOROTHY LOPES - I -- oh, go ahead.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - No, you.

DOROTHY LOPES - OK. Another memory I have as a child, I had a friend, one of the -- she was related to this lady I just mentioned. Her name was Mabel. And she lived at 360 Kempton Street. That was a little distance from here. But again, it was -- I, you know, as a young child, not five or six, I might have been 10 or 11. But I can remember we could walk up to her house and be perfectly safe. Walking from here up to Kempton Street.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That was considered the West End.

DOROTHY LOPES - West End, yeah. And she had a big yard, and she used to make the best chocolate cake. And we'd be outside in the yard playing, and she would call us in, and we'd have this great chocolate cake. I often think of her cake, she would always make chocolate cake with seven minute frosting, and I keep saying, I ought to make that cake one of these days.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - What is seven minute...

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, it's a frosting that you cook. And you cook it for seven minutes to get it to the right consistency. And it was so good, and she used to make that, and it was so delicious. I can remember -- as a matter of fact, I was telling her daughter not too long ago, I saw her, and I said, you know, I have a memory, and it involves your mother and her chocolate cake with the seven minute frosting. That was a good childhood memory, because we'd be playing in the yard and you could come in and have this delicious cake that she would make for us.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did she have the recipe, by any chance? Had her mother handed down that recipe?

DOROTHY LOPES - I didn't ask her that, really. She might. Because I know she had some other recipes of her mom. But...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That would be nice.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah, yeah. Because one of my -- my sister, that I mentioned before, who liked to make the moonshine, she used to cook. But she used to make seven minute frosting too. Yeah. And I'm sure it's in one of my cookbooks that -- because I had done it a long time ago, I haven't made -- done it for a very long time. Because one of those things, you got to have the patience to do it, and do it just right. It's one of those things, if you cook it -- undercook it or overcook it, it's just not going to be right. It's got to be seven minute frosting.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - I can't imagine, seven minutes, seven minutes. You mentioned going uptown. Do you remember -- can you describe uptown to me? You talked about Star Store and Lorraine's?

DOROTHY LOPES - Yes, yes. Well, another store that was a big store was Cherry & Webb. And it had several floors. And I can remember going there with my mother oftentimes, to get a new dress. If it was going to be Easter, or it was going to be going back to school, or some special occasion, and you got to go upstairs, because the dresses were on -- children's dresses were upstairs, I think it was the second floor. And so you'd get to go in, and there was a salesperson there that my mother used to like. Her name -- I think her name was Frances, I think her name was Frances.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - You can still remember that.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. And you'd go in there, and we're looking for dresses. There were the dresses that had the bows they used to tie in the back, do that. Yeah. That was one thing. And then another store was the Morse shoe store. They sold just shoes, and I remember going in there and trying on shoes. Because there were lots of stores, there were lots of stores. I mean, every storefront -- starting with Star Store, which was on Spring Street, from Spring to Union, that was a really big store. And then starting from Union going north to William, there were stores on both sides of the street. Because another one was CF Wings, they sold clothes, but they sold household furnishings, things like that. Things for the home. I can remember going there with my mother a lot, because she liked that. And then they -- I think it was in the summertime, they used to have specials, Wednesday morning specials. Because a lot of the stores used to close Wednesday afternoon in the summertime, so they'd have special sales Wednesday morning early, you know. And my mother used to like these, my mother used to like to shop, maybe that's why I like to shop too. And just buy little things. There was a jewelry store, and I'm not going to remember the name of the jewelry store now. It wasn't LaFrance -- oh my gosh, it escapes me right now.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Kay's?

DOROTHY LOPES - No, it wasn't Kay's either. It was on the west side of the street, it was

a small store just south of William Street. And my mother had this relationship with the people in that store, when she could -- because later on, in later years, when she wasn't able to walk so well, she had arthritis, she would call the store, and say, "Do you have such and such a kind of jewelry?" And they would, you know, we could go up and get it, and bring it to my mother to look and see if she approved of it and take it back to the -- and then she would purchase it. Oh my gosh, I can't remember the store. It's not -- well LaFrance was a store, but it -- I was further south. And it wasn't Kay's either. It was a small jewelry store that she did business with for many, many years. Doing that. But they -- and even going north from William Street up to Elm Street, there was the Five and Ten. There was Kres -- uh, Woolworth's, and there was Kresge's, and there was another small store that sold ladies' things. Ladies' -- I guess accessory items, and then there was W.T. Grant that was there. I remember going to W.T. Grant, they used to have cookies, and there were these little cases that you would pick the cookies out and put so many in a bag, and weigh them. You know. Those are always treats going. And going -- and then Enterprise on the end. So there were all -- and then Sears was further north on the other side of the street. So there were a lot of stores that were available to people in those -- when I was growing up. And, you know, you look at downtown now, and it's very, very different. Very, very different from when I grew up, and all those stores were available for people to buy. I mean, the more -- and then on Pleasant Street, there were a few stores, but most of us, those were like the more expensive, exclusive stores. I didn't go to those until I was an adult, working with a job. And there was a candy store too, a candy store. Where you could buy chocolates, chocolates too. There was one on Pleasant Street and there was one on Purchase Street too.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - The peanut store?

DOROTHY LOPES - The -- not the -- there was a peanut store too, the Planters Peanut.

But there was another store that sold candy. It was further south from the peanut store. It was on the block between Spring and Union, next to what used to be the Brockton Public Market.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Is that where you did your grocery shopping?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, some of it. Most of my mother's grocery shopping was done in the neighborhood stores down on Holland Street. Manny Mello's store. Every Friday, Manny Mello's store, go with my mother, walk down to Manny Mello's store to get most of the week's supplies, you know. And then occasionally, go to Brockton Public Market to get some things. My mother used to like to go to the A&P though, but we didn't do that until -- there was another -- there was another store on Sixth Street that sometimes she would go to, and I can't remember the name of the store. It's just a -- it's not coming right now. But it was a small grocery store that you could go there. But mostly, her shopping was done at Mello's, and the thing about Mello's, when they had a telephone, you could call them up and tell them what you want, and they have a boy with a little wagon that would come and deliver it at first, and then later on they had a truck, they had a small pickup truck, and you could call for two or three things and come, and they would bring it

to you if you ran out of something they would get.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Nice.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. It's interesting, because I was down at the market in New Bedford on Rockdale the other day, Seabra I notice a big sign in the window that "We deliver." (laughter) So I guess they -- I don't know if you have to have a minimum order -- with Mello's, you didn't. But I noticed they had -- especially with senior citizens who can't get out, that Seabra will, if you call in your order, they will deliver it to your home now.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That's nice.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. Because a sign of going back, a sign of the old days, that's what people did. But I can remember the kid, a young boy with his wagon, you know, coming up from Howland Street to Purchase Street with whatever my mother had ordered that day.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Where was the A&P?

DOROTHY LOPES - There was one in Fairhaven, over the bridge.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. Mmhhh.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So she went over the bridge.

DOROTHY LOPES - My mother used to like their -- when we -- that's when we got a car. For their 8 O'Clock Coffee. She used to like the 8 O'Clock coffee.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - They still make that.

DOROTHY LOPES - They still make that, yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - They still make that.

DOROTHY LOPES - They still make that, yes.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So what did you do as a teenager?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, a teenager, let's see. We -- there was a lady who had a club for

teenagers, girls, and her name was Tanya. And there were a number of girls in the neighborhood who were part of her club. She tried to like, maybe teach you social graces and things like that.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Where?

DOROTHY LOPES - Sometimes she'd have -- in her home, or -- and sometimes they'd have dances, formal dances, you know, you had to wear a gown and have an escort to come. We'd do that occasionally. Do the dance.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did you do any church activities as a teenager? Well, growing -- did you do any church activities at all? I mean, I know you did First Communion and Confirmation...

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah, I went through all my sacraments there, and then one time I was a cheerleader for the OLOA basketball team, my girlfriend and I. We just -- we just -- we were just self-appointed cheer (laughter) self-appointed cheerleaders that would go to these games, my girlfriend and I. This was before they actually had a whole --

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Squad.

DOROTHY LOPES - -- squad of cheerleaders, it was just my girlfriend and I, we'd be the two cheerleaders. We'd go out and make these cheers up, Bella.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Bella.

DOROTHY LOPES - Make up these cheers, and get out there and cheer for the team. Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That sounds like fun.

DOROTHY LOPES - But you know, teenagers, like I say, I used to like to go to dances, because there was always a dance, and the Verdean Hall was one, and then the other one was the Roosevelt Paradise, and we liked the Roosevelt Paradise because they used to turn the lights off, and they had one of those balls with the lights, you know, that go around the ceiling.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Where was this?

DOROTHY LOPES - That was down on Blackmere Street, the corner of Blackmere and I guess they call it the YA Club today? Because it used to be called the Roosevelt Paradise.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Really? That's a small club.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. But they used to have dances there, and we'd go to the dances. If -- like if your older sister was going, because my sister, the older than I, she's like ten years older than I. So, you know, she was going. Then we could go with her, go with her. And sometimes we'd get to go, and sometimes we didn't get to go. They would have record hops too, sometimes, in the neighborhood. I don't remember going to those as much though. But -- because -- I guess my life was kind of sheltered. When my younger sister came along, she got a lot -- she seemed to have a lot more freedom and privileges than I. I said, I never did those things, my goodness. Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Like what?

DOROTHY LOPES - I mean she was always -- it seemed like she was always out partying.
(laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Well, you were home. You liked to be home though. For part of that at least.

DOROTHY LOPES - Absolutely. But it was, you know, there were some good memories, some fond memories of -- I can remember even like Monte Park, I could -- I lived at Purchase Street, so you could, in summertime, when the windows were open, you could hear, and I can remember, those guys are still out there. They'd be sitting on a park wall late at night singing. (laughter) Harmonizing. 'Til late at night. Go home. (laughter) But you could hear them singing on the wall. And so they didn't get involved in a lot of -- you know, you didn't hear about the kinds of things you hear going on in parts of the city today, you know, so it'd be 11 or 12 o'clock, they're sitting on the park wall singing songs, and that was disturbing the neighbors. You know. Go home. But not...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That's not for now.

DOROTHY LOPES - Not for now. Not for now. No.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That's not what they do.

DOROTHY LOPES - Unfortunately.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Now, did you work as a teenager?

DOROTHY LOPES - I had a job at LaLa's store after school, and they sold ice cream, candy. Kids coming in, trying to make up their mind about penny candy, drive you crazy. (laughter) Lot of the kids from Bay Village coming in with five pennies, they want to buy this, that, and the other thing. And they had a fountain there, so they sold

ice cream, linguica sandwiches. As a matter of fact, the other day I was downtown, and I ran into one of the young -- well, young men, he's an older man now, but when he was a kid, he used to go there, I saw him -- when I met him the other day, he said, "She used to work in Lala's store, she used to make the best linguica sandwiches." I said, oh my gosh, I don't even -- do I remember that? Hot dogs, I knew there were hot dogs. Hot dogs, linguica sandwiches, ice cream, soda, and I'd work there after school sometimes and in the summertime. Then I worked at -- I had a job at Cherry & Webb as a salesperson, I worked there for a little while. When I was -- I guess I must have been in high school then. Then I worked summers there. Oh, I know I had a park, the job -- the job at Monte Park, I worked at Monte Park for the summer program, you know, the park program? And, of course at that time, there were no -- there wasn't one tree -- well, there aren't trees there now. But there were no trees, and that lot was just dust. It was a dust bowl to me. And hot, hot. I remember one day I was walking home, and somebody calls, "Is that you, Dorothy? Boy, you're black!" (laughter) It was the sun, you know? But I can remember, we used to have to take the swings down and the seesaws every night, and we used to keep them across from the park. The man who had the store, Lala's, he had like a little farm there, and it was gated. So -- but he would let us put the equipment from the park on his property, so we would have to take those swings down, because you couldn't leave them up at night. Take the swings down, drag those metal swings across the street to the park -- to his property, and the seesaws, take the, you know, part that you sit on, take them across the street every night -- every afternoon, and in the morning, go get them and bring them back. And sometimes, a person who worked with me, it was a guy, I don't even remember his name, but he got to work late, and I'd be dragging these swings by myself over to get them hooked up, you know, in the park. I did that for I think maybe two summers, and I made \$28 a week. (laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Oh. You worked hard for that money.

DOROTHY LOPES - I certainly did.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - You worked very hard.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. \$28 a week. Wow. That was a big paycheck. Well, it was big money in those days, because that'd be back in the '50s. Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Now, I know you were a little girl during the hurricane of '38. Did they ever talk to you about that, tell you stories about that? Do you...

DOROTHY LOPES - I don't remember a great deal about that, except just this vision in my head of people just leaving that area, you know. Going off, and my sister, I remember, she always did say, my mother had a basket, like packed some food in, and we were leaving, coming to higher ground, so to speak. And my sister wanted to know if we were going to have any more food when the basket'd get empty.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Where you living at the time?

DOROTHY LOPES - We were living on Second Street.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So you were closer to where it would have been.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah, on Second Street.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - And where did you stay?

DOROTHY LOPES - We came up to this friend of my mother's, the house that I told you when my father -- it was like a boarding house up on Acushnet Avenue, it was higher up from there, yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Do you know who ran that boarding house?

DOROTHY LOPES - I think the lady's name -- I think her name was Nha Zappa, but that's...

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Zappa?

DOROTHY LOPES - Nha Zappa.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Whoa.

DOROTHY LOPES - I think that was her name. I don't remember what her real name was. I don't know if there's anybody living now who would.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - That name does not come up.

DOROTHY LOPES - No, it's like -- because that's like -- I think that's where she went and stayed, or where we went and stayed, I should say. I don't have a great memory about that. I was about four years old.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Yeah, you were little.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - You were little. And then right after that, Bay Village opened.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - So that was a natural transition. At least people saw it as a

natural transition. You know. So do you remember the Water Street area at all? Because it sounds like you didn't really spend a lot of time there.

DOROTHY LOPES - Well, the Water Street area -- the church, but I can remember there were some stores down there, you know. The Jew -- mostly Jewish-owned. Like the -- interesting, because my mother went to Mello's store, I said, on Holland Street. Down further south on I want to say Grinnell, I want to say Grinnell, the corner of Grinnell and -- I'm not sure if it was First Street or not, but there was Pildis Market. Pildis was a Jewish-owned store, and many families in the Cape Verdean community shopped there, did their grocery shopping there. And there were even some Cape Verdean youngsters who worked in the store. I can remember one who worked there. It was Joe Gomes' brother. I think his name was August. I think his name was August. I think he's still living. I think he worked there. In the store. But my mother didn't shop there, my mother shopped at Mello's. But, what was the question, I was talking?

ANNE MARIE LOPES - If you remember the Water Street area.

DOROTHY LOPES - Oh Water Street, OK. So there, I can remember going to -- there was a Jewish bakery where you could buy fresh bread, Jewish bread there. And then the other store that was down there was Silverstein's, which you could buy household goods there, and you could buy clothes there. Especially, many Cape Verdean people bought clothes for First Communion at Silverstein's. Because Silverstein's, when they were on Water Street, did a lot of business in the Cape Verdean community. They were shoppers there, yeah. And some of them probably established friendships. I know some established friendships with the Pildis family. And may -- some of the people in the neighborhood, the younger -- probably a little older than I, had jobs working for some Jewish families that they maybe got to know through the Pildis family. They would go after school and clean their houses, or on Saturdays, and do work in Jewish families.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Right. You never did that?

DOROTHY LOPES - I never did that, no, no. One of my friends was telling me the other day, she remembers going to the Jewish family and working, you know, after school and doing housework. Things like that. And cleaning house for them, yeah.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Now you know the area where the Park is now. Basically what they call the historic district.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yes.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Did you have any interaction up there, any reason to go there?

DOROTHY LOPES - No, not really.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - OK. Now you said that -- this is going back, way back in our conversation. But you said that your father did the whaling, and you also had an uncle in the merchant marines?

DOROTHY LOPES - Mmhmm.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Would you say that there's a tie, your family has a tie to the water?

DOROTHY LOPES - Oh definitely. I mean, because that -- I mean, as I say, my father's passage here and then his brother spent many years as a merchant seaman. I didn't get to know him very well. Saw him very few times in my lifetime. And that was interesting to me, because as I said, my father had a sister also, who never came here, so I never knew her. And my mother's siblings, I don't recall having much connection with them growing up. So I always felt like kind of I missed out, because I didn't have grandparents. I never had a grandparent growing up, because my father's mother died when he was fairly young, and anyway, they never came here. And my mother's parents, I didn't know, because they were deceased when I was born. So I grew up never having grandparents, and I always felt when other kids had a grandma, or a vovó, then I never had one. And as far as aunts and uncles are concerned, and cousins, I never had a close relationship with any of them growing up. So I always felt shortchanged. And so, when I became an aunt, especially in my adult years -- I became an aunt as a child, because my older sister, her and her son, we had only a couple years of difference with us. But as an adult, being an aunt became important to me, to my -- those people in my fam -- especially now, I have a really close relationship with some of my great-nieces and nephews, and my great-great-nieces and nephews that I never had. And it became important to me to have that relationship, because I never had an aunt, uncle relationship growing up, you know, that I -- and I see other people who have, you really close and strong relationships with those relatives and their family that I never had. You know, so I tell kids today, when they complain about their grandma or such, I say, you should be very happy that you have a grandma. I never had a grandmother. I never had a grandfather. And you're so lucky to have one, because that's a really special relationship, you know. And you should be thankful for it.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - I agree. I agree. Now, you obviously have a sense of your identity as a Cape Verdean.

DOROTHY LOPES - Absolutely.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Do you think that's being passed down to other generations?

DOROTHY LOPES - In my own family, it's kind of yes and no, I think. Because, like my nephew Raymond definitely had a strong Cape Verdean identity that he has passed on to his children, his daughter and his son, course he's deceased now, but they

know about their Cape Verdean heritage. They spent time living in Cape Verde on school vacations, when my nephew lived there. I think it's being watered down in the family because I have several like, great-nieces and nephews who are not married to Cape Verdeans. They know -- I mean, they know they're Cape Verdean - - and the other thing is, they didn't grow up in a Cape Verdean community. They lived in communities where it's largely white families, and they may know something of their culture, because of their connection with coming to New Bedford growing up, but it's not -- I don't know if it's as important to them as (pause) it was to my generation, and so the culture gets watered down, I think, in terms of that. I know one of my nieces, well her son, he's my great-nephew, his wife is -- I think she's French. And so, his kids had to do some kind of an assignment at school about their heritage. So, but they -- it's just -- it's very superficial, you know what I'm saying? They're not really roots, strong roots in the Cape Verdean community there, and they simply talk about it as, well, we're biracial. But what does that mean to understanding the culture from which you are -- because it's easy -- deluded with the father, because the father grew up in a white community, and even though he knows he's Cape Verdean, he doesn't have a strong, I don't think, a connection to what it means to be Cape Verdean, you know what I am saying? Yeah, I think that's -- and I think that's probably true in many cases, where -- and I don't think it's anything peculiar just to Cape Verdeans, I think, when you begin to intermarry with different cultures, different things like that, that something gives. But if you go into it with a strong sense of who you are and what that community means and what that culture means, then it's only then that you can pass it on. But I think as the generations go through it, it gets more and more deluded.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - More and more Americanized?

DOROTHY LOPES - Mmhmm.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - People think of themselves as American?

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. Whatever that means. (laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - I don't know. You stayed in New Bedford.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yes.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Why?

DOROTHY LOPES - I'm very provincial, I guess. I remember when I first -- even when I was thinking about going to college, it was like, college? That wasn't something that was talked about in my generation, especially as -- for a girl. And I'm probably, in this community, of my generation, definitely a minority of people who went to college. And then I went to a college that was away from here, Framingham, that was far. (laughter) That was really far to go there. You know. Because that

wasn't something, oh, you're going to get -- go to college? But that was a waste of money, it was thought, really. It was a wasted investment, because you're going to go to college and you come home and get married and have kids, and then where's your education? Not realizing that that's something that you have forever, you know. That was the thinking at the time. So I feel like a trailblazer, because since then, many of the people in my family, especially the girls, have gone on to college. And have degrees. And now, hopefully their children will continue to do that.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - You were a schoolteacher.

DOROTHY LOPES - I was a schoolteacher, yeah. Absolutely. But I think it opened doors, opened a vision for people of going beyond there. But the idea of leaving home, I was very close to my mother. I was like, and then my mother developed arthritis, and she became very dependent on me. As I look back on it now, I think probably too dependent, and I was not independent enough to say no, I'm not staying, I'm leaving, I'm flying away. And so I stayed. But New Bedford, I had a, you know, I'm not sad that I didn't leave New Bedford and come back. I've had a good life in New Bedford. I remember one time when I was teaching in New Bedford -- and I didn't come to New Bedford and -- I didn't start teaching in New Bedford, I just came to New Bedford after I had taught 16 years in neighboring towns. And one of the young men, Cape Verdean, he was teaching with me, and he was going to California. And he said, oh, you know, you should come, you should, you know, leave here and go to California. And at that time then, I was still young, that was many years ago, but I thought no, I can't do that. I have to stay here in New Bedford. And you know, so I did. Stay here in New Bedford. And I don't -- you know one time I was off at a job, I will never forget it. It was a summer day, I was at home, my mother was -- my mother used to, because she didn't feel well lots of times, lay down and take a nap in the afternoon. And she was taking a nap, and I was ironing, because I remember it like it had just happened. And the phone rang, and I answered the phone, and it was a superintendent from Connecticut. I think it was Groton. He -- his secretary was calling me to offer me a job as an elementary supervisor.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Nice.

DOROTHY LOPES - And how I -- he knew of me because he had taught a course, I was working on my Master's degree at Bridgewater, and it must have been about 1960, '61, something like that. And he -- I was teaching in Marion. And he -- a paper I had written for him, I must have said something in the paper that attracted him, caught his eye, about supervision or something like that. Curriculum supervising. And so, he called and offered me a job. And I was flattered that I was offered the job, but I -- I said I could not possibly take this job, because I was my mother's caretaker, you know what I'm saying? And sometimes, I mean I don't dwell on it, but once in a while think, I wonder what would have happened if I had taken that job? I could have been a superintendent someplace. (laughter) I don't know if I would want to be a superintendent, but I was happy in the classroom, but yeah, that was an opportunity that, you know, I thanked him for thinking of me and offering me the job, but I would have to decline.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Oh, well, the road not traveled, is that what they say?

DOROTHY LOPES - Who knows where it would have led.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Well. Is there anything that you'd like to say that I haven't asked you about? Because I think you've -- it's been an interesting conversation. And I think we've covered a lot of time, if you think about it. But is there anything you'd like to add?

DOROTHY LOPES - I can't think of anything right now. Except, you know, I guess just to say to look back on it, one of the things I do now is I work with -- in fact, we just had a meeting last night. United Interfaith Action. And one of the things we've done, and Our Lady of the Assumption has been a member of this UIA for -- since its inception, which is about close to 15 years now, working to advocate for an improved quality of life for New Bedford residents. Right now, we're focusing on educational issues that afflict our schools. And I think of, you know, growing up in the neighborhood that I grew up in that was a safe neighborhood where people knew one another, where people looked out for one another, as opposed to a neighborhood now where you don't even know the people who live next door to you. You know? It's very, very different. And that even though a lot of kids in my generation didn't go to college and get a college degree, for the most part, they grew up -- they graduated from high school, they got a job in the city, and many of them stayed in the city and they -- they had good lives, you know, with their families. They married and raised families and their kids have gone on to do better. And that doesn't seem to be available right now for young people in New Bedford. And young people in New Bedford, when I speak to them now, it's like, they don't even -- they don't have a vision that New Bedford has a future. You know. We talk about the City that Lit the World, and we went on to do that again, but not in the same way with the cotton factories, because those are gone. It's a new era, a new time, but I don't speak to a lot of people that are in college -- there's one young man, he always talks about, he wants to come back to New Bedford when he finishes -- he's graduated, he's got his bachelor's degree, he's working on a Master's now, and I always remember what you said, because it's people like you coming back here with your knowledge, with your skills, with your education, and with your vision that will turn the city around. And it's not going to happen overnight, but it can have a future, and you can have a good life here. Unfortunately, too many of them haven't had that opportunity here and do go away. I always hope that some of them will, before they get too old, will come back, and whatever they're doing someplace else, try to establish that here and establish a life here. Because I think Cape Verdeans have roots in New Bedford, and I look at -- look at how long Cape Verdeans have been around the community of New Bedford, and I think we should -- it would be nice if we were -- had greater recognition of who we are and the contributions that have been made here. And see a future here, you know? So that families can stay connected. I mean, maybe it's a selfish reason to do that, but the families go far and wide, and yeah, I guess they have to go where there are opportunities for lucrative jobs, lucrative positions, but I always feel a tinge of, I hope -- sadness, because I want to see you go, and I want to see you grow, but I also want to see you somehow come back here, because we need young

people like you here, so that we become a people of young, uneducated people, or just old people, you know. But we have a future here.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Now, what do you mean by greater recognition of Cape Verdean contributions?

DOROTHY LOPES - Well I think, for example, we've been here for a long time. Where is the museum that speaks of Cape Verdean contributions to this city? East Providence has one. I think we've been around New Bedford for as long as, or if not longer than people in that particular community. And we don't have that here. I mean, I think Joli had started to try to do something on his own, but that didn't -- see, it just needs a real solid collaboration of the talents that are here to establish something like that. That is a perpetual monument to Cape Verdeans who came here at the turn of the previous century.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Like the whaling museum.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. Yeah. I mean, we're getting there slowly but gradually, but for a long time, you never knew the Cape Verdeans had anything to do with whaling if you went to the whaling museum, you know? So, all the cranberry bogs, and where that industry has come. It had humble beginnings but look where cranberries are now in the economy or in the marketplace, but it didn't start without a lot of hard labor from Cape Verdeans a long time ago. You know, so something's lost there. But yeah, I think it's overdue. So I see a lot of progress, even in terms of Cape Verdeans who live in communities like Brockton, or Boston, or Pawtucket area. It seems to me there are a lot more of them involved in professions than are here in New Bedford. You know what I'm saying? A lot more -- I read about, oh, these guys are all in college. How come we don't have those large numbers in college out of here? We have some, but they're not in the numbers that I think it needs to be at in this day and age. You know, more and more. We're not there yet, I think. And I don't know why, why or why not. We have some, but not enough. Not there.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - No simple solution.

DOROTHY LOPES - No. There isn't. And I was, even like your cousin Gerrell, you know, I was very happy to see Ger -- to hear -- I just got a letter from him a couple of weeks ago, a really nice three pages of all he's doing and how happy he is, and out on his own and all that, and I called him and spoke to him at length on the phone, and I'm so glad that you're doing well, and I'm proud of you for what you're becoming, but I'm so sad to see you leave New Bedford, you know. But you have to go where the opportunity is, I understand that.

ANNE MARIE LOPES - Right, and sometimes people do come back.

DOROTHY LOPES - Yeah. So I'm hoping that he's one of the ones who will come back.

You know, because I don't want to see young people just get to high school and graduate from high school and maybe go to college, and then to them, New Bedford's the last place I want to be. You know. Because it's not so bad.
(laughter)

ANNE MARIE LOPES - I agree with that. So let me say thank you for talking to me. Just shut this off...

End of File