

“Having Our Say”

Voices from the Cape Verdean Community

Bella recalls New Bedford’s Cape Verdean community being quite cohesive-



“I think the church itself, Our Lady of Assumption – everybody – almost all Cape Verdeans went to the same church. We went to the same grocery stores.”

– Bella Livramento

Isabella “Bella” Livramento
September 24, 2010

Interview with Isabella “Bella” Livramento
Conducted September 24, 2010
By Ann Marie Lopes

Beginning of File

ANN MARIE LOPES – Everybody that I have interviewed has said, oh, we don’t have any stories to tell and, like I said, two hours later -- Oh, so you’ve got it written out for me.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO – Well, I have written things.

ANN MARIE LOPES – OK. It is Friday, September 24th. And the interviewer is Ann Marie Lopes and I am interviewing --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO – Isabelle Livramento.

ANN MARIE LOPES – And you are --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO – I am 78 years old.

ANN MARIE LOPES – OK. Now as I said, just want to talk to you about -- It’s basically your story. Nobody else can tell the story you are about to tell me. That’s not painful. It’s not like I -- I’m going to anything bad. And anyway, so, who was the first of your family to come over from Cape Verde?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO – The first one in my family to come over from Cape Verde Island

was my great grandmother.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. And she came over because --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I'm sure because of the famine and the difficulties and the hardships of the Cape Verde Island. Because she came later, in the late 1800s. And she did come to New Bedford. And eventually, she sent for her children --

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. So she would --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- to come to America.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Was she married in the islands?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I do have records of her being married here in America.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And in the census or in the -- when I do genealogy, I found that she had -- she was a widow and she remarried but she remarried here in America. And I found two birth rec-- two -- excuse me -- two marriage records of her -- married in New Bedford.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, so she was like married three time, maybe.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Possibly.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Two records of the same marriage.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Have to be widowed. No, one was in 1884, to Josh Martino. And another one, after he died she married Josea Gamboa Pereira, in New Bedford. Yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And she -- she pro-- Her children -- how many children did she bring over?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Three daughters, which was my grandmother and her two sisters, my grandmother's two sisters.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now which side of the family is this? Is this your mother's?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - This is on my mother's side, the maternal side of my family.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You're OK?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - All right. Just relax. OK, so then your mother was born here, then.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother was the first born -- generation, 1900. She was born June 25, 1900.

ANN MARIE LOPES - 1900! That's a nice -- that's a nice even -- even year to be born.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes, yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - It makes it easy to tell your birthday. OK. And she was born in New Bedford. What island is her family from?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My grandparents were from the -- Brava -- islands of Brava.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. And when we talk about -- these are her -- your mother's parents.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother's parents, yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And their names?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My grandfather's name was John Andrade Monteiro. And he came to America, my grandfather.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. He was the first --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother's father came first one. He came at 18 years old. I believe was the year 1892, on the S.S. Valepene.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Say that again? S.S. --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - S.S. V-A-L-E-P-E-N-E.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. And that was -- Was that ship sailing out of New Bedford or

did it --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - It came from the Brava -- the Cape Verde Islands. And it entered United States of America May 5, 1892. And he was 18 years old, as I said.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. And this is your -- again, then -- OK.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And he met his wife here?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes, he met my grandmother here. And the thing is, my grandmother probably came in 1898. He met her in New Bedford. Because their marriage record shows they were married July 8, 1899. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, they got married.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And her name?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My grandmother's name was Maria DaSilva Monteiro, her married name.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. So what did they do when they came over here? Do you know?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes. My grandfather -- actually, my grandfather, he became a citizen in June 2, 1913. And he went into the Lighthouse Service -- United States Lighthouse Service, on October 1st, 1904. He was 29 years old. And retired April 30, 1940, at 65 years old.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And so he was in the Lighthouse Service all that time?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - He was a fa-- Yes, all that time. And in 1941, the Lighthouse Service became the United States Coast Guard.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. That's a good thing to know. Because people talk about that but they -- it never was clear. OK. Good. So he was in the Coast Guard for most of his life here.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Most of his life, my grandfather was a seaman, always out to sea.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, always connected to the water.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes, always, always.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And your grandmother?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My grandmother was at home. She stayed at home. She might have worked in the factory for a short time. Because most Cape Verdean women did domestic -- or they did baking. But the interesting thing, my great grandmother, she worked in what they call Cottage City, which I believe is Vineyard Haven -- they worked, and my grandmother's sisters too.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Cottage City.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That's now either -- It's c-- it's Martha's Vineyard. They called it Cottage City, at the time.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. Doing what?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Cooking, baking.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I interrupted you. You pulled out this folder. Is this about your grandfather?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, you -- all his papers --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- his seaman papers --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, wow.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- and the Service, when he entered the Service and when he retired. See?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And the different places he worked.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I love the handwriting before.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I know.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Would it be OK if I scanned some of these?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Certainly. Matter of fact, I could give you. Because I have copies.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, that would great --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- to have just a -- What does --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah. These were his papers, certificate to become a lightboatman --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- Certificate of Service to be an able seaman, and Certificate of Service for, "Other qualified-gender? department work." These are --

ANN MARIE LOPES - And this is -- this is his picture?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - This is the -- this is his picture, yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh! Where did you get these?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - His, all his records --

ANN MARIE LOPES - He kept them.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- he kept in a safe, everything.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's wonderful.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And, of course, I did genealogy, so --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, and his thumbprint!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - They're very, very -- they're legal --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. What --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- beautiful, almost like paper -- the -- money, made it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's what I -- that's what I thought when I saw it.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Exactly.

ANN MARIE LOPES - It looks like -- looks like money.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That's legal. Legal papers.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. So --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - If you want, you can have this. This is the original, I think.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What I will do is -- is, whatever you give me, I like to scan. And if I had more time, I'd scan them while I was here and give them --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Is that OK?

ANN MARIE LOPES - This is good.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Because I did writing. And I've got my own little writing there, though.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, that's great. Because what you wrote is like --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - See, the--

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- he retired and -- on this.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - See, this is the rea-- and it's so fragile.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, yeah. I would -- I don't --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That's why we --

ANN MARIE LOPES - I don't want original.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah. OK.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I don't want originals of anything, trust me.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah. And my grandfather worked on a lightships, the {Handrechik?}, the Ambrose, very interesting, on the light -- lightships -- they were called.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. How many children did your grandparents have?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Surprisingly, my grandmother and my grandfather had only one child, my mother.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And why do you say surprisingly?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Because generally, when you're married to a seaman and he goes off to sea, and each time he came home the woman became pregnant. Because, my grandmother's sisters, that's what happened to my grandmother's sisters -- had more children. So I always wonder about that. I'm always amazed that my mother was the only child. And my grandmother never had a miscarriage or a stillborn. I mean, it was just my mother who was born. It's just the --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did your mother go to school here?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes, my mother went to school. And the thing is, my mother was the first one born here, so that she was surrounded by her aunts and family members in the house, so she learned how to speak, naturally, Cape Verdean Creole fluently, because my grandparents really didn't speak English well. Eventually, my grandfather learned. But my grandmother always spoke Creole. My mother was always taught how to read and write Portuguese. Because whenever letters came from the Cape Verde islands, it was always written in Portuguese. And she would translate them. And the interesting thing is that my great grandmother and my great grandfather -- His job was working for the customs in New Bedford. Because he used to interpret. He used to be an interpreter from Creole to English.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And his name?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - His name was Josea Gamboa Pereira.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And this is your great grandfather.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah. This is my gra-- my great grandmother's second marriage.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. Now so he worked at the Custom House in downtown New Bedford.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - He used to work in the Custom House. And he -- his profession was proprietor. They always owned a store, grocery store. And they sold staples. They were always homeowners. They always owned a house. Plus, when my great grandfather was coming to America, he ended up in Australia. Somehow or another, he lived in Australia for many years before coming to New Bedford. So I believe it was there he might have learned English -- learn how to speak. (cell phone rings) But his job was as an interpreter.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Sorry about that. OK.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah, he was an interpreter.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And my mother was surrounded by a lot of different people. She learned a lot. My mother was very bright. Plus she did go to school. She spoke very fluent English. And she spoke Portuguese and Cape Verdean fluently.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now did she graduate from high school?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother did not graduate from high school, because she was sickly. She became sick young. She stayed home. But she was -- she was self-taught, and she read a lot. She read a lot.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What was -- what was wrong with her, in terms of being sickly?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother had a hip -- she had an injury on her hip. And because at the time the old folks didn't realize the severity of the injury, she became lame.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Ah!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And then she always had eye trouble. She had eye problems. And she had -- as she grew older, she had gall bladder. The thing is my mother was very sickly but she had a very strong heart. She didn't have high blood pressure. She survived a lot of major illness, because she was strong, number one, very strong -- very gifted. My mother was very gifted.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What do you --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - She learned a lot. Gifted by the old folks. Like the -- the women that stayed behind -- my mother's aunts taught her how to crochet, taught her how to sew, without patterns. She learned how to tat. She learned how to knit. She learned upholstery. She was multi-gifted. She was an excellent, excellent cook. Because her aunts -- my grandmother was not a very good cook but my grandmother's two sisters were excellent cooks, plus my great grandmother. So she learned how to bake. She learned how to cook. My mother was very -- she cooked very well, baked. She --

ANN MARIE LOPES - All the Cape Verdean dishes.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Cape Verdean dishes. And because she lived in America and she went to school for a while -- And at one time, she worked at Roosevelt Junior High School as a salad lady --

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- making salads. She learned how to do a lot of different things. So I always told people, "We have a very mixed culture, Cape Verdeans being in New Eng--" We have a New England culture. I have a Cape Verdean culture. Then I have a -- what you would call the American culture. So in our family we have strict, authentic Cape Verdean food plus American food.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. Was there --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - We --

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- a specialty?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - With my mother, everything was a specialty. And we always, always had homemade desserts. Every meal --

ANN MARIE LOPES - What --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- she made dessert. She was an excellent housekeeper.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Were her parents protective of her?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - In a way. Because normally, at that time, they were strict. They were kind. And I'd say, at that time, you know, children were very obedient to their parents. My mother -- I'll tell you, my mother, she had a little fear of my grandfather. My grandfather always used to ship out. And she always told me that she had to make sure she was home when he came from sea. But the thing is my -- my mother really didn't go too many places. Because everybody stayed around each other. The community was so united and s-- In New Bedford, the community of Cape Verdean people was so cohesive. It was tight-knit, supportive, loving, and intimate. So we had a solidarity that was strong, New Bedforders, community of Cape Verdeans. And the thing is we -- where we were always linked to the Cape Verdean archipelago. We American-born was linked to the archipelago, because our parents teaching us about the culture there and pass it on to us. You understand what I mean?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - You know what I mean?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That we were born in America, our Cape Verdeans, but we were

not one of the immigrant parents, because we -- our culture was mixed, being in America. I don't know if I'm saying this correctly.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah -- yeah, that you've obviously thought about this.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes! Because I've -- I've always said, well, as -- Then when I went to New York, I got a New York culture, which was totally different from New England culture. Because they recognized right away I was different. Who are you? What are you? What are you?

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And I knew what they were trying to get at. They'd never heard of Cape Verdean people. They thought I was Cuban. They thought I was Puerto Rican. They thought I was Indian. They thought I was Arab. And then I say Cape Verdean. "And what is that?"

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. But you had the background to be able to tell them.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But I know who I was.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. We had --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I always knew who I was as a Cape Verdean. (laughs) And I acknowledge that as being one of my strengths, because I was able to overcome a lot of things. Because our parents were overcomers. I mean, they were strong.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - There was a lot of difficulties and trials and things but they were strong. And they taught us how to be strong. They were very supportive, let me say, of one another. And I think one of the main reasons is because I think the church itself, Our Lady of Assumption -- everybody -- almost all Cape Verdeans went to the same church. We went to the same grocery stores. We did the same -- Everything was like --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now, are you talking your mother's generation or are you talking --
?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I'm talking about -- yeah, within my mother's gen-- in my generation really, actually. My generation is what -- But they already had been going to the OLOA. Because I know OLOA was -- well, 1905 is -- was when they started the church. And I remember, as a little kid, always going to church. It was the older folks that we were --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Where did you live when you were a kid?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - The same house that I was born. My grandfather bought this house in 1919, which is 219 Acushnet Avenue. Plus my grandfather also owned 215 Acushnet Avenue. But he lost it sometime during the Depression. But the 219 Acushnet Ave. is -- still in this house today, and 2010. My grandfather bought it in 1919.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You're saying it still exists.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - It still exists. My older sister lives there.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, still in the family.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And my great grandparents, they bought five houses. They owned five houses. There's one still in the family today.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Which one? Where is it?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - 482 and 484 Purchase Street.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How did they buy five houses?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, they began with one. You know, you start -- Because, number one, they were proprietors. They had a store. My grandfather -- my great grandfather also was a carpenter.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, that helped.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - He made the trunks and the chests for people when they wanted to go overseas, you know, to go back to the Old Country -- to put things in. And also what we would call like the Lane hope chest, for young girls, when they get married. When we grew up, we used to have a hope chest. Well, my grand-- We still have it in the family. My father-in-law told me that my grandfather -- my great grandfather, actually, made those chests for -- Everybody in New Bedford knew him. And he's the one that also told me that my great grandfather -- they knew everybody. Well, the reason why they knew everybody, everybody had to go to them for interpretation, for him interpret legal things, legal matters. They were very businesslike people. Always owned a home. Always owned a home. When I look in the census, every census has ownership, the O for ownership, you know, in the census. It's always -- never rental.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But it is because my grandmother worked. When she worked, she used to save her money, to buy a house. And my mother told me the story, when she had \$100 saved or something, she and her husband, they got together, they purchased the first house.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Huh.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But in doing genealogy -- I didn't realize it but my mother always told me that her grandparents owned three houses. She was very proud of that, always telling me. "They owned three houses." So when I started to do the genealogy, I went looking for -- and I found the three houses. Plus I found two more!

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did they do with these houses?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - They must have sold them. They have to have sold -- I don't ever remember them ever losing it. They must have sold it --

ANN MARIE LOPES - But --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- to buy another.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh. Did they rent them out?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I know one thing. The houses that they owned, I -- in the census, some members of the family were living in there. Because I would look and they -- I would see my mother's aunts or my grandmother's sisters, their children. My grandmother, my grandfather, they bought their own house but my grandmother's -- my grandmother's two sisters -- one of them, especially, she always lived with her mother, which would be my great grandmother. They always lived in her houses.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So they bought the houses. And did that encourage family members to come over from the islands? Is that what the -- why they bought them?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, most of -- most of them were already here, I believe.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I know, my great-grandmother, she sent for her three girls, and they came. And I don't know about anyone else, though. Because we were all -- they were all here in America. And she had children -- a boy but he died. He died here in America.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Hm. And what about your -- your father's family? Was --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I don't know too much about my father's family. I did mostly the history of my -- my mother's side. But my father's family, they still exist. They were Teixeiras. My father came to America in 1908. But he landed in the city of Providence -- the port of Providence. But all the rest of my great grandparents, they came to the port of New Bedford. So I found my father's papers saying he came in the S.S. Manulingue, which is Manuel. In Creole we say Manulingue, meaning Little Mannie. But when I was trying to do -- follow through on the genealogy, I found there were no records. Because in 1908, all the records were burned. I wrote the archives in Washington, D.C. All the records were burned that year.

ANN MARIE LOPES - There --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And Trudy --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- Trudy Coli, she and I were friends. And I was sure that Trudy was going to have the records. So one day I called Trudy to tell her to try and get some information about this S.S. Manulingue in 1908. And she kept telling me, "There's no such thing. There's no such thing," she doesn't have no records. Because she used to carry the -- Remember when the computer'd have those sheets and sheets of computer paper and all the --?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, the -- all -- all attached?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Trudy used to walk around with those big packages. She had -- she did tremendous Cape Verdean history. And she insisted there was no records. But I had proof, because I had my father's documents saying he landed. But then she realized those records were all burned. But I happened to have my father's U.S. entry. I've got it all in my genealogies.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now, they were burned. Where were they burned? In--in --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - In -- in archives, probably in Washington. All the records of everybody, in 19 -- that was burned in a fire. Matter of fact, I could find it. I have it in my records, that I keep my genealogy all together.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's kind of weird.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But all the records were burned.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, you're talking about the -- you're not talking about --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - 1908.

ANN MARIE LOPES - 1908. You're talking about in the City Hall?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No, not in here, not here in the City Hall, in --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, because there was a fire here.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No, it said all the records were burned.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Hm.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But, see, my father didn't come to New Bedford. It was Providence.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right. So it was probably a different fire.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But I think it's ironic that it was the same --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But the thing is, when I wrote to Washington, D.C., and I wanted to find out, they told me all the records were burned.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. That's a shame. So your --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Everything was lost.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So your father was the first one in his family to come over.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No. My father's brother. My father's brother was married, he came over. And it was he -- His name -- my father's brother was named Francisco Da Roza Teixeira. And he sent for my father to come over, when my father was 17, 18 years old.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you say your father's name?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My father's name was Fredrico Da Roza Teixeira.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. Spell the middle.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - D-A -- capital D-A capital R-O-Z-A --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Z as --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- rose.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, as opposed to S.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Later on it became Fred Rose. But his name is --

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- Fredrico Da Roza Teixeira.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's much -- that's much more attractive. That's much prettier.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That's why I use the -- I always use the authentic name.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Where's -- what island was he from?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My father actually was born in São Vicente, Saint Vincent, but he grew up and was raised on Brava.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. So he was 18 when he came here. His brother was already here waiting for him.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And so what did they do for work?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, they did -- they worked in factories, mostly. They worked all over, even in Fall River, wherever they found a job. But most of them was in factories, in the cotton mills. Because cotton industry was booming, I guess. But one time my father worked for WPA.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, yeah, during the Depression.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - During the Depression, the WPA. Remember those little things, vaguely, WPA.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did he do for the WPA? Did he do construction? Did he do --
?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Probably did -- yeah, probably was construction.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. What year were you born?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I was born in 1932.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. So you were a little kid during the hurricane.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But I remember the hurricane of 1938 very vividly.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, let's talk about that now. I was going to -- I was going to come back to it but let's talk about it now. What was that like? Were you living on Water Street? You were on Acushnet Avenue.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I was living on Acushnet Ave., very -- not from Water Street, South Water Street. And I remember when that hurricane come in, that waters. We have a three-family house. But I remember the waters coming all the way up to Cannon Street. The water was even starting to seep through the front door -- no, the landing. So we all ran up to the third floor. I remember that. But the thing is, I know it was dreadful but -- I was too small -- but I remember, the next day, all the trees up to 219. Because, matter of fact, I have a 1938 souvenir book of the hurricane. I have it -- was my father's -- and on Acushnet Avenue. But I remember the devastation. But actually, I wasn't afraid. I think I was too young. But we were a little fearful but, because of our parents -- They gave us some kind of security and support. But I could remember looking at the streets. It's the people on South Water Street --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, they got hit hard.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- that always got it. And it was the Reis family. I remember the Reis family was very close. They always lived down on Water Street. Those people always got -- had devastation, day of the hurricane. I remember many hurricanes. But the '38 I remember vividly, especially the trees being knocked down, huge trees, and the waters coming up, you know. Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you stayed on the third floor. And you were OK?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - We stayed -- We were OK. Because the water really didn't rise any higher. But it -- it did -- the water would rise all the way up to Cannon Street, near Montye Playground, right there on Acushnet Avenue, would rise up. (laughs)

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. That's a lot of water.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - A lot of water. Then and hurricane in 1954 --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Hurricane Carol.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- I remember seeing those boats and the cars floating on the waters. You know, they had --

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I was working in Taunton. It was always the fear, you know, of the waters coming up. But that I remember vividly, because all the debris from the water -- from waters coming up to Cannon Street, when the water recedes, all the junk that was around Cannon Street, around the playground, yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, I've talked to other people about that.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And the lantern. We used to -- we used to have kerosene lanterns. They used to light everything with the kerosene. I remember we didn't have electric light. We had kerosene. The light -- We were small but you remember these things. Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So what did your -- your grandparents and your parents do for fun?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My grandparents, for fun? I don't remember my grandparents doing too many things for fun. But I do remember, coming up later in life, when people would have dances. But I don't remember my parents -- But I do remember my mother always bought records, and my father. You're talking about my grandparents having fun. I don't remember them having fun. I was too small. And I know my grandmother was too quiet. She didn't speak English -- very quiet, stayed home like. And the only time I see they would have fun, sometimes when they got together to make root beer. I can remember the sisters getting together in one house, which was my great grandmother's house and they'd make chili out of the green tomatoes. Chowchow they'd call it. They'd make root beer soda. They'd make sarsaparilla sodas. You know, things like that. But I don't remember too much activities, dancing and all.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. They were too busy working and saving money --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Very hard.

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- supporting their families.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Working very hard. Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did your brother -- did your brother -- excuse me -- your father have any other siblings other than that brother?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My father had many siblings!

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs) How many?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Too many to mention! His father had a lot of other children on the outside.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK. Outside of marriage.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But one thing -- one thing, though, they all acknowledge each other. My father's -- my father's father acknowledged every one of his children. And all the children know one another. And it wasn't until I got older tha-- I couldn't understand why they had different names. But they were half-brothers, half-sisters. But they were very close to my father and to the family. But as I got older, I started to realize that it was the half-sisters, half-brothers.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So did he have one family in Cape Verde and one family here? Or this was all --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Mostly they were in the Cape Verde Islands.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, so he was -- And everybody knew about everybody else, that --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Everybody.

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- the -- the women too.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - They were -- It's from the Cape Verde Islands he had -- with children. He never came to America.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Hm!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My father's father never came to America.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But he was not Cape Verdean. My father's father was from Madeira --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- was Portuguese man, married to my father's mother. My

father's father was very white -- nice handsome. Beautiful pictures of him. But my father's mother was very dark. But he loved her. He had four boys -- four boys with her. But he had other children. But they all recognize each other. They were all visiting. They came to America, you know.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did he do in Cape Verde, just out of curiosity, to make a living?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - He must have been a businessman, because he was mighty busy. I don't know. (laughter) I never knew it. I never knew what he did.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But he had a lot of children.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How did your father meet your mother?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My father met my mother -- it probably was at his first cousin's. It's funny how my family is -- I'm related to many in my family by maternal and paternal side. And I always feel that, years ago, when Cape Verdeans used to gather together to meet, that's when they were introduced to people. They -- they were not blood-related when they got married. But cousins would visit cousins and they'd meet other cousins from the other side, be married. Because my father married my mother in 1900 and I'm sure he met my mother at his first cousin's house. His first cousin -- my father's first cousin, Augusto, was married to my mother's first cousin, Jenny. So that's how he met mother, through that -- visiting his cousin, you know -- he met my mother. Because he was married to my mother's cou -very confusing.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, that makes sense.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But it is. But -- because -- but they're not blood. They were married but they're not blood-related.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But makes -- makes my mother has cousins on both side -- or have cousins on both si-- and many -- In many instances, my family's like that. So I said, "It's because they introduce each other." Where do they go? They visit each other for entertainment.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, if they're -- Yeah. They were the group of people that came. Like someone else that I interviewed had talked about how people from a particular island stayed with each other --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- for a little bit.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And they c--

ANN MARIE LOPES - And they -- they wanted their -- If you were from Fogo, your parents wanted you to marry someone from Fogo.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Exactly.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So there was all of that.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That's always -- always like that. But the thing is -- I know. I says, it's because of that, because they were very close and very tight -- that they only had each other to visit, and visit around, you know, the community. And then the thing about it is, when we come up, me, as a young girl, and our age, we always listens to our parents' music. We were just listening to Cape Verdean music. But when the '50s came, we start-- the teenage came -- we were enlightened to other music, jazz and swing music. But we always loved our Cape Verdean music. That was number one. But most of our dances, as a teenager -- I didn't go to record hops. And I didn't go to the -- They used to have record hops. Our parents were a little strict with us. They were very kind. But we obeyed them. If they say we couldn't go, we just couldn't go. But I know, a lot of my friends, they did go to record hops. But we did go to the Cape Verdean dances. Because our parents would take us. As teenagers, when I grew up, my group, the '50s -- and '51, whether it was a boy or a girl, we all went to the same -- Verdean Hall, Roosevelt Paradise. Was mostly Verdean Hall, way down -- I think it was Howland Street, way down -- before the Vets came. That came later. We would all go to dances. Would be only Creole music. But we'd all dance. But we had to make sure we dance far apart!

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Our mothers and father would sit all along the chairs along the hall. They'd have chairs and they would sit down and watch us while we danced.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What was it like for your --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - (laughs) But we had fun.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What was it like for your parents, dating? Did they ever talk about that?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Never!

ANN MARIE LOPES - Never talked about it?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - They never dated.

ANN MARIE LOPES - They never dated?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Our parents --

ANN MARIE LOPES - They met each other and then got married?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I never even dated.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, you've got to tell me about that. Was it an arranged marriage?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No, it wasn't arranged marriage. They were so strict about boyfriend, girlfriend -- Because my father said -- One time my cousin came from Boston and asked my sis-- made a big mistake and asked me and Paulina who was our boyfriend. (laughs) And my father says, "We don't say that word in this house."

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, wow!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - It's funny, because we were very happy. Because we did what we wanted. We had a nice job. We dressed -- But I wasn't even thinking of dating and going out with anybody particular. I got married at 28. But I told even my daughter -- I said, "Your father and I, we didn't court each other." My husband was working in New York and I was in Taunton working. I met my husband by accident in New York, in a Palladium Ballroom, up near the Birdland. And I just went for a weekend. And I went to the dance hall. Because I used to go once a year. My cousin, who lived in the Bronx, used to invite us once a year. So I knew about the Palladium Ballroom. So we went there. And I told my girlfriend, "Do you see that saxophone player? He's Cape Verdean. His name is Joe Livramento and he's from New Bedford." Because my girlfriend was Irish, my best friend. And we had gone to New York together. And I stayed at her sister's house. So she -- but she knew about Cape Verdeans through me. And Joe recognized my face. But he didn't know my name. Bu--

ANN MARIE LOPES - Recognized your face as being Cape Verdean?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And being from New Bedford. Because our backyards were together.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, that's wild.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Because his house was on Purchase Street and mine was on Acushnet Avenue. But in between was backyards. He was 12 years older than me. So when I was growing up, I mean, I wasn't even thinking. I never went to dances. We -- But as I became older, my 20s, 24 and all, I would go to a lot of nice dances, you know, the big bands, jam sessions, everything. Was lots going on. But I met him in New York. And a year later we got married. It was -- He worked six days a week. He had only one day off, on Monday. He used to fly, take me out to dinner. Our courtship was telephone, writing, telegraphing. And I got married. And we were married 43 years.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, God bless you. That was -- 43 years. That's --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - (laughs) That was a miracle. Because our parents --

ANN MARIE LOPES - So that was a good early example of online dating.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Online dating? W--

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, 'cause people date on the computer.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I would never date on -- ever.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I'd have to see the person -- the p--

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yes.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - It's got to be the pers-- Never, never. I would never do that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yes. OK. Now you said your parents never --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No, they never dated. They probably just --

ANN MARIE LOPES - They saw each other, said, we like you, "Let's get married."

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I don't know. But I know one thing. People didn't date in those days. They had chaperones. I don't -- I have no idea how they ever got together. Sometimes I wonder how my grandmother, my grandfather ever got together. Things were so different. And they don't talk about things. They never talked about those things to us. They never mentioned it to us.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, your great -- and you said your great grandmother had two husbands.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Here --

ANN MARIE LOPES - She was a widow?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - She was a widow, then she remarried --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- in America.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So she -- and she didn't date. So she'd just sit and --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh, I don't know. My -- she got married in 1888. I wasn't even here! (laughter)

ANN MARIE LOPES - I know but I'm like --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I have no idea!

ANN MARIE LOPES - It's -- I do--

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I'm sure they didn't date. They didn't have such thing as da-- Dating came on in the -- maybe later in life, the American way. We -- years ago, they chaperoned each other, and everybody had to have an older person with them wherever they go.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, they could st-- that could still be a date.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I wouldn't call that a date.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, where would you -- where would they go with a chaperone? Would they --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Walk around the streets. Probably take a walk. Where would they go? Even where would we go, when we were coming up as teenagers?

ANN MARIE LOPES - You didn't go --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - When --

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- to the movies?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I never liked movies. But my sister, Pauline, she went -- she loved her movies.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - She would save her -- When we were in junior high school, my father always gave us lunch money. She would always save her lunch money to go to the movies. But I would eat my lunch money --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- because I didn't care -- Even today, I don't care for movies or television. I was never interested in that. I was interested in other things.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Like music.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Music, definitely. Always li-- appreciated music. I never played an instrument. I loved music and I appreciated music. But my sister Pauline loved movies! She would always -- went -- her and her friend -- well, because mutual friend we made. They used to every week go to the movies. And then we used to save our little money. Because you remember, when we came up we didn't have allowance. You've got to remember that. Even in the '50s, as teenagers, people began to give out allowances. But we would work. When we worked, we would give our parents our money. But our parents treated us well, though, with it. They clothed us, fed us, everything, gave us spending money. But then, if we -- once we started working, after a while we'd save our money for records. We used to go to the record shop, Melody Shop, at New Bedford. We'd buy the latest -- the latest records, in swing and in mambo, all the latest music, as it starts coming. We would buy those. We'd have phonograph player. At home, in our house, we'd have our friends. We'd have our little dance parties, in the house. We'd have a lot -- lot of fun listening to the music.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You lived on Acushnet Avenue. This is when you were a little kid. Do you remember Water Street at all, that neighborhood at all?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh, yeah. I used to go to church -- OLOA. I remember, Nho Fred's store. I remember all the people that used to live there. I remember some of the businesses, like Grossman lumber business and stuff. They had a lot of little businesses around there. I remember vaguely. I remember that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So tell me what it was like. Let's pretend you're back there now. Just tell me what it was like on one street. So, in other words, you're walking down the street. OLOA is here.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - The only thing I would go is go to OLOA, go to church. But we had -- right next to the OLOA, as we became teenagers, that -- Nho Fred's store became Our Lady of Fatima Youth Center. They made a youth center for teenagers. We were teenagers.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Why Our Lady of Fatima?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Because it was a -- it was a church -- Our Lady of Fatima was a patron saint, Portugal. You know, we'd always pray to the saints.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right, but they're -- right next to OLOA. It was two separate --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But it was called Our Lady of Fatima Youth Center, I remember --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Huh.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- unless I'm mistaken. I think it was called -- Because we used to pray the rosaries to Our Lady of Fatima, different saints and all. That was where we used to have a lot of fun. Because we could mingle with each other. Because we really didn't have too much to do, as teenagers.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you call it a canteen?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - It wasn't a canteen. It was a -- a youth center.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right. But someone, I know, said she used to call it a canteen.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, they used to have canteens. There were canteens before. But I think -- canteens, to me, were a little different. I remember, during the war, Second World War --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, that's older canteens. This is for -- this was for high school. They just were being clever, to call it a canteen. They -- It wasn't a real canteen. They didn't sell alcohol.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, as far as -- yeah -- OLOA, you -- that was a Catholic youth center -- youth center, which focused on religious beliefs and all. Bu-- plus they gave us freedom to have a little more fun. Because we didn't have too many things to do. But we were very happy, very happy! It was later in life, when you realize that -- I never considered we were poor. Because, first of all, we always lived in a

house. We never rented. My family always lived in a house, always, same house. Sometimes me, I think it's boring. You live in the same house all your life. I thought it would be exciting to move from house to house.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Because a lot of my friends -- My husband says he thinks his family lived in every house in New Bedford, (laughter) until they bought their own. But I says how to us it was boring. We always stayed in the same house, the same house always, 219. 215 -- I was born in 215, actually, but I was raised in 219. The houses were connected.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now you said your -- your mother did the crocheting and the sewing.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother di-- homemaker. She was an excellent homemaker.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did she ever sell that?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother used to take in sewing. My mother was a dressmaker for the -- certain ladies, women. These are the women -- women that really dress nice. When I was a teenager, I said, "Ma --" Then these girls might have been 30, 31. To me, you know, they were fashionable. My mother did take in sewing. But it was only private, for these people. They would pay her privately, not like she had a -- umm a dr-- But people who knew my mother, they'd go. And one lady told me recently that my mother was so excellent -- which I know -- She was really blessed. She told me that, almost every christening, the mother would ask my mother to make the baby's christening outfit.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, nice!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I never knew that until recently. And the one that told me this was Marilyn Lopes' mother. How could I forget her name? Marilyn Lopes' mother. She's 92 or 93. Oh, my goodness. Because everybody -- My mother was so beautifully -- She made all my -- when I went to high school, my mother made my banquet dress. She made my gowns. Matter of fact, my mother made all my outfits when I went dancing every week to Roseland.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. Do you have any of that?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh, no! Gosh.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, that's too bad.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I was so tiny. I was probably, even, then --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, yeah, but to have any of --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I was --

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- have any of your mother's crocheting --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother made the mo-- Every ti-- and whenever I saw a dress I liked in Cherry's or the stores, I'd take my mother. My mother come, would make that dress. I remember one ti-- I had a new outfi-- every dance I went, I had a new outfit. Because she sewed so good. And all my friends used to want my mother to make them things. And when I'd go on a class trip from high school or junior high school -- We'd go to Boston. It was always Boston -- for a whole day, for the -- you know, the historical trip. My mother always made me a beautiful -- My mother made our coats, our suits. She knit our gloves, hats, sweaters, beautiful. My two sisters sew beautifully. But I don't.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That wasn't your thing.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But they -- Mary knits beautifully, like my mother, beautiful, still. Pauline sews beautifully. She could do like my mother. She doesn't need a pattern. And then my mother always used Vogue pattern. My mother was -- I always say, my mother was like a couturiere. She always made us things ahead of time. But I didn't like that particularly, because I didn't like to look different. And my mother, she would al-- "I don't want this!" She made me a blouse one time with -- The keyhole neck was popular, like a keyhole. Nobody was wearing -- She ma-- I did not like it. A year or two later, it became popular. Then when she knit me a sweater -- then, the first time she knit me a sweater -- She always made our sweaters long-sleeve. We always had the hat to match, with the pompoms.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But this time she made me a sweater with a short sleeve. I did not want to wear that knit sweater. "I'm going to look different!" She made it. And, you know, it became po-- You know when you -- when you introduce -- a style comes in, it catches on gradual. Even living in New York I found that out. A style doesn't come in, sometimes. A style gradually creeps in, maybe. One, two, three years before everybody catches on and everybody's on it, begin to see. When the style is long -- hardly anybody wore long dresses. And my daughter used to wear them. I thought they were horrible! But then, gradually, gradually, everybody's wear -- And I found myself liking nothing but long dresses. (laughs) Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's a talent, though, to be able to just --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That was a talent.

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- do it without a pattern.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - She knit all my daughters -- You know, when they were babies, the bassinet. She knit the hat. And then the thing about my mother, my mother used to line them. She'd make the baby hat but she'd line it with this fi-- I even know name of fabrics because my mother -- batiste, fine, fine, soft for baby. She would always line the hats for their head.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Maybe --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - She made the booties. Beautiful.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Made in New Bedford, that material?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, I'll te-- I'm going to tell you one thing. All my dresses and clothes my mother made, as a young girl coming up, going to dances, was from the Wamsutta Mill. Because that material --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- was made in the Wamsutta factory. And my father worked -- one of the factories he worked was in the Wamsutta Mill. Then during the war he worked at the Firestone -- during the war, making war stuff, Firestone.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did he serve in the -- the war?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No, my father never served in the war. No. But when you say that, my mother used to make me this beautiful cotton stuff. I know, a super percale -- perc-- It was all Wamsutta fabric.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. Because percale was started here in New Bedford.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And super percale! It's fine like silk! My mother used to tell me these things, you know, and that's how I know. But beautiful material! And it irons so nice, no wrinkle. Even today there's super percale. You told me something I never knew. Percale was made in New Bedford?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - See that?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - It was a textile industry, anyway.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, that's what New Bedford was known for, one of the things, during the textile.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother used to go to -- Wamsutta Mills had a store where you bought fabrics. And I remember my fa-- my mother used to make our sheets, our shams, and pillowcases. She'd go to the Wamsutta Mill and they'd sell the fabric by the sheet. But you had to finish the border. And I remember when she started to make pastel sheets. We thought it was awful, because nobody had pastel sheets.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And then she made candy-stripe. One time she made us a yellow and white candy-striped sheets. She'd always -- would match it nicely. "We don't want those!" (laughter) Because everything was plain white. Every-- It was funny.

ANN MARIE LOPES - She was a --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother --

ANN MARIE LOPES - She was a trendsetter.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother really was.

ANN MARIE LOPES - She was a trendsetter in --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - When I think ab-- My mother, boy, she was really --

ANN MARIE LOPES - (coughs) Excuse me.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- multi-gifted. She did everything.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, did your father do anything for fun?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My father was a home man. My father liked --

ANN MARIE LOPES - His friends didn't come over and --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No, he had a lot of friends, a lot of friends! But my father never

played cards. He never went to a bar. He never drank. His life was around the three of us -- he had three daughters -- three of us -- and around us. Now my father was like my mother. He did plumbing. He did carpentry. He was a Jack of all trades. There wasn't a -- He could even cook. He even had his own sewing machine. He used to sew those things -- his coveralls, when they needed to be patched. He was funny. But my father, there was nothing he couldn't do in the house. And he taught us a lo-- how to change a fuse, how to do -- Many things we learned was through my father. Because he was a, like they say, Jack of all trade, master of none. (laughs) But he did a lot of things in the house. They worked together. Like when they would upholstery furniture -- They'd strip a chair right down to the frame and build it up, from the wiring and all the binding they had to do. My mother would make the drapes in the house. They worked together very good.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. Now you said you had two sisters?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah, Paulina and Mary.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Where are you in the --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I'm the youngest.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You're the you-- You're the baby! You're the --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What -- they say?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Seventy-eight. Codere.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Codere. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I'm --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - The codere.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I'm the code-- I'm the codere too.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - (laughs) Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. So you were spoiled, huh?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, they say I was but I didn't think so.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Nah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Everybody says my grandmother spoiled me.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - She was so sweet.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My grand-- I could do nothing wrong. My grandmother was the sweetest thing.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Which grandmother are we talking about?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother's mother. Because I didn't know my father's mother. She had already died. But my grandmother was the sweetest little lady. Everybody loved her -- quiet. She was very lovey. She used to baby me, like, "Oh (Crioul). Leave her alone. Don't bother her." (laughter) She's --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you do things together?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My grandpar--? No. My grandmother's too quiet.

ANN MARIE LOPES - She would just do her work?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well -- Oh, the thing -- the only -- I remember -- I have good memories of her. Because my grandmother used to like to play numbers. But she didn't know the numbers. She didn't know how to --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Because she didn't speak English?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - She didn't know the numbers in English. But she did know the ones -- the ones that she liked. She used to like seven, 11. She'd go, "Sam, elam?"

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Certain numbers. But she would always have people play the numbers for her. But every time my grandmother would hit -- But, you know, they never played more than a dime. Because they didn't have too much money anyway. But she'd play a nickel or dime. But every once in a while she'd get her money. She always would buy us popsicles. Always we went to my grandmother's -

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- to have a nickel for a popsicle, go to Lala's store. She used to always buy us popsicles! That was her favorite thing too.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Lala's store, near Monte Playground.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Had a lot of fun. But we -- we weren't allowed to go across the street. Our parents -- We stayed right in the yard, behind the gate. And the -- as far as we could go from our house was near the fire hydrant just across the street from Lala's store. (laughs)

ANN MARIE LOPES - Up until what age?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Teenagers! We were --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Wow!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Especially teenagers, our parents didn't want to go, because the boys stand there. We were never allowed to sit on the Monte Playground wall. And it was right across from our house. But Lala's store -- After high school, maybe, we'd go there, have our little frappes, our hotdogs. I tell everybody the best hotdogs in the world, better than New York City's Nathan's, Hebrew National's, were Lala's hotdogs. (laughter) Because he would -- he would roast them. And he always toasted the bread. I hate a hotdog on a cold bun or a hot, steamed bun!

ANN MARIE LOPES - Toasted. That's the way to go.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Always toasted. And he would grill the -- grill the -- And he'd make fresh chopped onions, with relish. I love -- Even today, when I make my hotdogs for my children, I always go back to Lala's. I will toast those buns. I butter it and I do it on the grill. And when I went to New York, my husband told me he's going to -- he's going to give me -- where I want to taste the best hotdogs in the world. He took me to Coney Islands. That, to me, was the worst hotdog.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I get so angry when they say, "There's nothing like a Nathan's hotdog." I say, "You kidding? You have not been to Lala's store."

(laughter)

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, technically, there's nothing like it. But it's just not that great.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - It isn't great. Lala's was really good. I have some good memories in Lala's store, buying the candy. But actually, we really couldn't hang around. Because, you know, some parents were strict. Like we couldn't hang around with

the boys. They'd be there, all around. So we couldn't go across the street. Everybody knows -- even people today, that I'm 78, some of the boys my age -- We grew up together. They say, "Did your father ever let you out of the gate, Bella? (laughter) You still behind that gate?" Oh, my goodness. I didn't realize how many people knew that. But they were loving. They weren't strict. They weren't abusive. It was just like we just obeyed them. If they say, "Don't go there," we don't go. We were very obedient. Cape Verdean parents taught obedience. We did not even think to disobey our parents. Many might have done it. But we just did it. And sometimes you question why we -- Sometimes -- I missed out on a lot of things. Sometimes I think I missed out on a lot. But then I think about it. I said, "It didn't do me any harm."

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. Did you ever go to uptown, downtown New Bedford?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh, yeah, on Saturday. We used to love to go uptown shopping.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh, yeah, to Wing's and Cherry's and Star Store. My father used to buy us our clothes, Wing's, Star Store. There were other little stores. Oh, yeah, he'd always buy us our shoe-- Going uptown, it was fun when we'd go -- going uptown. There were so many stores, so much action up there! And the only thing was shopping. And then we'd go to Liggett's to get maybe a -- a lime rickey or something. You know, Liggett's drugstore we used to hang around. And mostly *brons* used to go there. We used to go after high school, have our little soft drinks. But you've got to remember, we didn't have too much spending money, allowance. But what we had was sufficient. But it wasn't like we could go all the time.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you get all dressed up to go?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Auh! We used to dress up to go everywhere.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh, my goodness! We used to dress up! Sometimes you'd change your clothes three times a day --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Three times a day?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- as a teenager, morning, noon, night. And where were you going? Nowhere.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO – Sometimes on Sunday they would let us walk. We'd walk up and down Acushnet Avenue. Tha-- Acushnet Avenue was booming. But that's during the Second World War. We were still maybe four-- It wasn't out of high school. Because the war ended. It was during the time that there was so much going on, so many restaurants, so many things on Acushnet Avenue, stores. Our favorite thing is walking up and down Acushnet Avenue, strutting our clothes.

ANN MARIE LOPES – Mm-hmm. Describe it to me. Were there clubs there? Were there -
-? What kind of stores?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO – There were -- coming up as a young kid, there were -- well, there were restaurants. There was the Avenue Restaurant. There used to be Mello's store. Lot of little stores. Like Walnut Street -- and that part, I don't remember too well -- But they had little -- Now before, as a teenager, I don't remember The Bomb Shelter. It was after I got old, after I got married to Joe. I was twenty-s-- The Bomb Shelter was always there but we never went, naturally. We couldn't go, even when I was in my 20s. But (laughs) my mother --

ANN MARIE LOPES – Because you're still living at home.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO – Exa-- I left home when I was -- went to New York after I got married. That's when I told people I had freedom!

ANN MARIE LOPES – But you were married.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO – Because my hus-- Well, let me tell you something. I tell people I was married but that's when I got my freedom! Because Joe was very lenient. He wasn't jealous. My husband was a very personal person. We understood each other. We'd trust each other. I had more freedom with my husband! I said, "Oh, my goodness! I didn't realize that." But we used to go to the Band Club. But I might have been about in my late -- Yeah, working in Taunton State Hospital. I was twenty-something. Then we started to go to the Band Club. The Band Club was nice then. They had a lot of nice management. It was wonderful -- strict manners with the elder people, Al Rozario and all them. And the music was good -- always live music, especially on Sunday, live jazz. Jazz! There were so many places to go in New Bedford. You'd have five, six clubs to go, more than that. They were spread all over! One club to another, up to North End, down to Fairhaven. But in New Bedford itself, there were so many clubs. But what was nice, it was live music, live jam session, none of this pumped up music to-- never. Was live! All the big bands we saw, live band! Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Billy May -- Billy Mays, Perez [Powder?], they always came to New Bedford. Lincoln Park. We'd go to Roseland Ballroom -- Ballroom. But I never really came to Providence. Providence was swinging. But I never came to Providence.

ANN MARIE LOPES – Mr. Monteiro told me that Duke Ellington used to love to come to New Bedford.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And I say, yes, Duke Ellington loved to come to New Bedford. Because, first of all, he did like -- The women were pretty. They always said the women were beaut-- But I -- my take on that is -- I'll tell you what I always said. I don't know if you know but Paul Gonzalves and Joe were like brothers. They met each other at 16. They went to New York together to live, for Barboza. And they also played in Boston together. They played in -- all throughout the Cape Cod, through the summers, coming up. But then finally they went to New York. They lived in the same building. But Paul always wanted to play with Duke. My husband liked Latin -- Cuban, Latin jazz. He didn't stick with one -- Like Paul stayed with Duke until he died. Or Paul died first, then Duke died. But my husband worked with different musicians, and all over. But the thing is I always thought that, when Duke came to Roseland or Duke came to New Bedford, the place was jam-packed crowded. But my observations -- to me, I said, "They didn't come for Duke Ellington. They came to see Paul Gonzalves!" I firmly believe that. I said, yes, he was good. He was a good alto -- But I always says, "Oh, the -- the crowd was draw--" And as far as Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the crowd was drawn because of Paul, although, Duke, he was great. But they loved Paul. Everybody loved him.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Paul Gonzalves. Born here?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - He was born in Brockton, Mass.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. But he was Cape Verdean.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But he lived in Pawtucket. He lived -- grew up on Mineral Spring Avenue. Matter of fact, I still today -- I correspond to his stepdaughter, with Colsie. We e-mail each other. Because when Paul married his wife Joann -- Joe was the best man -- Joanne already had Colette. Colette was maybe five. So she knows Paul as her father. That's her stepfather. So we got in touch. Just about two years ago, I got in contact with her.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Talk about -- You have this extensive tie to music.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Like what do you mean?

ANN MARIE LOPES - You met your husband in New York.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - In New York. But I already liked music, already knew music. In high school I took music appreciation, to learn all kind of music. But growing up in New Bedford, growing up with Cape Verdeans, we are music minded. We're musical. We have lots of music, beautiful music. Especially Creole music's beautiful! But then I love Latino music just as much.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Cuban music.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Because Joe played Cuban --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- the Cuban stuff. Because they have the Puerto Rican, they have the Cuban, they have --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. I like Latin.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- the Venezuelan. My husband played all. But the main thing he played was with the Latin-Afro Cuban jazz, with Machito and Mario Bowser Band. Good article this week on Pu-- PBS, Cachao, who introduced the mambo. Joe knew him well. But the thing is I love -- Because I lived in New York City and all I heard was that good, good Latino music, (laughs) but also the Cape Verdean music. And I like a little bit of classical music. I like everything!

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you ever go to -- I guess it's the Zeiterion, but when the --the band was on top and would come down?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I don't remember that. No, I'm -- I don't remember.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Because Mr. Monteiro used to talk about how the band was up here and the -- there was the ballroom. And then but the band would be up high and then they would come down. That's incredible.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I couldn't -- Because you know why? That's what they do -- You've seen that at Radio City Music Hall.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And most of the places, the theaters and halls in New York are like that. I used to be amazed because, at Radio City Music Hall -- You see, I worked at Rockefeller Center, right across from RCA building. I worked right in Rockefeller Plaza. But the Rockefeller Center was right across. So sometimes I'd go to the shows there. But I didn't really like it. But Joe used to get all kind of free tickets to everything, all the Broadway plays, everything. But I wasn't that type of person. But once in a while I'd go. But amazing when I'd see the band come right from --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- the pi-- the pit. They called it the pit. They made good money, those orchestras. But very few black musicians could do those jobs. It was all white musicians.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And with the --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Very prejudiced with music in New York, probably still is. I was so shocked when I saw that big stage come up with all these bands! It's beautiful. But I don't ever remember that in Zeiterion.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, he -- he was talking about that. And he act-- he actually had a picture of it.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That's beautiful!

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, yeah. Up where, you know, the second floor is --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah!

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- like where all the office -- office is right now, they'd go down.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That sounds great.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - See, I didn't know that, never.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, it would be -- Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I never really went. The only time I've been to Zeiterion shows is lately, that these last few years or more. They'd have a lot of nice things. But when we came up, it was mostly movies --

ANN MARIE LOPES - And Car--

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- all day long.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And Carmen Miranda. Carmen Miranda came here.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I wonder if I ever see -- saw her in person.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Carmen Miranda. Some-- Oh, who was it? Oh, it was Mr. Monteiro again, talking about how his -- his mother had to go see Carmen Miranda there.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - (laughs)

ANN MARIE LOPES - Every time Carmen Miranda was there, he knew where his mother was going to be.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh, my goodness!

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. And that was --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Really?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That's amazing. New Bedford had a lot of nice -- The Woodrow Wilson had a lot of big bands there. There were so many different halls!

ANN MARIE LOPES - Let me back you up a little bit.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You keep talking about your genealogy. What made you decide you to go into the genealogy and find out about your past?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - My mother. My mother was a family historian. My mother was always talking about the family, what they did. And especially, I'll tell you, she was so proud that her grandparents owned three houses. (laughs) She owned hers. Well, actually, to tell you the truth, it was my grandmother and grandfather that bought the house but my mother was the only child, so naturally she lived with them. You know, they bought tenement houses. But she always would talk about her grandparents, what her grandfather did, what the people did, constantly! So I would always hear, because I was always interested in it. And then it was in 1960 -- She'd visit me. I got married -- well, in 1960 I got married. After -- a little after the '60s my mother would visit me in New York, tell me things. So I started to -- See, I'm going to mark -- I'm going to start writing these things down. Because I was a secretary. I went to Campbell's Secretarial School -- I graduated -- in New Bedford.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mm-hmm. They taught you shorthand.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Excellent. I have excellent secretarial skills, that got me my good jobs at Chase Manhattan Bank. And I always think it was my New Bedford high school education and Campbell's Secretarial School education that allowed me to move up in the secretarial level. Because they really taught well. Very few secretaries that I worked with at Chase took shorthand. And they were always amazed. I said, "Well, for number one, to be a secretary at Chase, you have to have shorthand."

ANN MARIE LOPES - Why wouldn't they take shorthand? It would just seem that --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh, they -- they told their boss they don't want to do it. Tha--

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Well, I couldn't -- I wouldn't dare -- because of my upbringing, I would not dare tell my boss, "I can't do that. I wo--" You know how it is. It's just like when you come up and your parents tell you. And I said, "How could I tell this man --?" But they were brazen. They were a younger generation than me. Because I came up from the old school. And my boss was so proud of it. Because he used to always brag. But for the longest time, he wouldn't give dictation. He always wrote everything -- always. I never used my skills. But finally, years later, he says one day -- he says, "We're going to be moving." He kept getting promotions. And everywhere he went, I went. He said, "I'm going to start giving dictation." (laughs) And I almost dropped dead.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I said, "Oh, my God! I haven't taken dictation in 20 years!" I graduated in 1954. In 1974, he's telling me he's go-- So I -- I went and I got my -- all my Campbell Secretarial -- I've still got my shorthand note-- I brushed up. And I start practicing the -- my skills on the typewriter. Because I love to take dictation but I hated to transcribe it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, I can understand that. Because I'm not crazy about transcribing. It's hard.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Oh! I ha-- That's why -- I refused big jobs because of that, because I was intimidated. But, you know, finally it reached a point in my life that says, "I've got to stop this. I've got to stop being intimidated like this. I've got to have more courage." So my boss, when he told me, I says, "I just got to do --" And I gradually, gradually -- And he was so good. He was good. He was a wonderful man. And he was a CEO. But the thing is, as I start to do it, I loved it! Before you know, I was so proficient! And I said, "Why wasn't I like this before?" It took me that long to get that courage. I still, today, use my shorthand, in the church. I'm in a church office. I've been there 20 years. And I still take my dictation when I want to take notes. People call. Write the message. But I'm not as proficient. But I use it. And I always say, it was my New Bedford High education, plus Campbell. Plus, when I got a big promotion, and on my job -- It was at Rockefeller Center. I'll never forget. Because the chief economist asked personnel -- he wanted me to be his secretary. I didn't know that he was a chief economist. But he used to give me things to do as a favor and I'd do it. I had a boss. But what I didn't know, my boss was under him. But he was so unassuming and so down to earth, that I'm thinking Steve [Kantor's?] the boss. So I would do -- I'd always do the work for him. So he asks for me to be the secre-- So they call me, in Personnel, tell me that, "Mr. Gilbert

has requested for you to be the secretary." "Oh, no, I don't want to! I don't want - I don't like changes! I already work with Steve Kantor. Oh, no!" She tells me, "Oh, you don't know, Isabelle. You should go home and think about it. He's nice to wo--" She don't tell me nothing else. So I went home. I start thinking about it. And I said, "I don't know why I feel like maybe I should take this job." So I did. Right after I take the job -- I started working for him. Then when I got my first paycheck, I noticed I got a big raise in pays to me, \$26 a week -- at that time was big. And I told my girlfriend, "Oh, my gosh! Look. They must have made a mistake." But what I didn't know, because he was a chief economist, a CEO, they elevated my secretarial title --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- like in grade. Plus your level. Plus you get more pay.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Wow!

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I was --! I said, "Oh, my G --!"

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And I said -- I couldn't believe it. I said -- the first thing I said, "Me, a Cape Verdean girl from New Bedford, Mass., secretary to Dr. Leon Gilbert, Chief Economist at Chase Ma--" It took me six months to believe. But I always tell people, "The Cape Verdean thing in you does something." I don't know what it is. But it just gave me a little more self-esteem. Like even when I worked at Taunton State Hospital, I always felt, somehow or another, being a Cape Verdean just did something extra in me. I was never ashamed of it. And I was never intimidated, really, by authority. I was never intimidated by power. David Rockefeller would never intimidate me. But it was the respect that I had and the reverence -- oh, not reverence but the honor, knowing that they are above me that in title, but not that I have to submit. Because, you know, people, they'd see them, they'd run and -- They would never let him open the door. I used to wait for him to open the door for me! (laughter) Because I said, "My God, he'd think I'm not a lady and I don't know a gentleman open the door." Because he was a gentleman, David Rockefeller. And my boss reported directly to him. So sometimes, when I have to -- had to go down to bring things in David Rockefeller's office, it was like a morgue. Let me tell you, the more I'm going there, it was like a morgue. It was all bulletproof. Because they used to have of -- what'd they call those? -- activists --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- about his money and power. They were always trying to bomb the place and that sort of --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Protestors were --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Protesting. I used to say, "Man, it feels like a morgue. Everything is so quiet," bulletproof glass, and beautiful. And I'd say, "Oh, God. Please don't let me trip on a rug."

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Because being Cape Verdean -- I says -- And all the men -- It was almost -- men, waiting to get reports. Sometime my boss wanted me to bring down a report. I said, "Oh, God. Let me get the real report. Don't let me look stupid." Because, you know, you feel like -- But I'd go and feel a very stiff walk and say, "Don't let me trip on these high heels." But then, after a while, I started to relax, because they're very nice. But-- it was, like I say, something being a -- something about being a Cape Verdean. In my -- in our time of coming up, our parents did something great, and something in us. I don't know what it was. I can't put my finger on it. I wish I could explain it. But I always go back -- it's the fact that I'm Cape Verdean. Not that I felt like I was better. It was just some --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Your -- your --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - -- stability. Because, number one, I always -- we always had a very stable life, growing up. My growing up, I tell people, "I didn't have any bad experiences." I thank God. Because I know a lot of peo-- I have never had any bad experience, trauma, abuse, whether it's verbal or -- being from a husband, nobody. I've been very fortunate, very blessed that way. But there's something in us. I don't know what it is. And I always attribute it to being Cape Verdean.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you think that -- still exists in this generation? Do you think --?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No -- at all.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What happened?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Loss of respect, loss of honor, loss of respect to authority and leadership. Mostly, in the family, they don't respect the mother, they don't respect the father, they don't respect -- If they can't respect their parents, their mothers and fathers, in their house, how are they going to respect other people? I think it begins in the family. It's hard but children have to learn how to respect their parents and honor them, and the elderly. And not only do I go so far as tell my grandchildren, "You have to respect and honor your friends." There has to be a mutual honesty, integrity. There's no talking about each other. Be loyal, faithful. It was lost. But I think it was lost after the war and after everything start booming. Everybody's looking for material things. They didn't have time to spend with the children. Like we grew up at -- our mother, father, grand-- our aunts, our uncle--

our neighbors.

ANN MARIE LOPES - After World War II.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Long after tha-- in the '60s. It began in the sixtie-- I would say it began in si-- started in the '60 but kept progressing, getting worse and worse. Because up until then, people were respectable -- respectful. We respected our family. Matter of fact, I mention it, is because we were trained -- we were trained and disciplined, first of all, to fear God. Because we were always going to church. You have to have a fear of God. You know, you've got to know there's someone above. And honor and respect for our parents, not only -- our godparents, our guardians, our elders in the community. And there was a way of speaking to them. We looked them in the eye. And when they talked to us, we didn't say, "What? Huh?" My grandfather, if we ever said the word, "What?" -- We thought it was a swear word, a bad word.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - "What?" It was, "Yes, sir," or, "Yes, Grandpa." It's lost. That's what it was. It was lost. Because respect and honor and discipline -- I was trying to keep that down.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did you prepare these?

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No, I had written something before.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK. This is just like you --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - And part of it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You didn't need to prepare. You --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No.

ANN MARIE LOPES - All I had to do was say, "Hello," and you -- you talked.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I know. That's why I said I wasn't going to even look at that. I'd mentioned -- I said, "Why should I worry? She says it's a conversation."

ANN MARIE LOPES - It is a co-- it has been a conversation.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - But sometimes you forget things and you forge-- Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But you know what? I --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - That's not important.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh. Now, you know, when -- when you tried to tell me to get here, and I couldn't remember my left from my right. So, yes, you forget things but it's all part of it. What I would like to do is -- Unfortunately, I have to go to this meeting.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I know.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But what I would like to do is I'd like to continue this. Because I think we touch-- just touched the surface here --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I --

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- and I want to --

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - I would like to.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And I -- I wasn't as focused as I wanted to be.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - No. The -- It's fine with me.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

BELLA LIVRAMENTO - Wonderful.

End of File