

“Having Our Say”

Voices from the Cape Verdean Community

Jackie recalls stories from her grandfather, a harpooner:



“He talked a lot about perfecting his art, how he learned not to be afraid, how he learned to step up in sort of the position- and throw that harpoon just in order to get the job done”

– Jacquelyn “Jackie” Ramos

Jacquelyn “Jackie” Ramos
August 6, 2010

Interview with Jacquelyn “Jackie” Ramos
Conducted August 6, 2010
By Ann Marie Lopes

Beginning of File

ANN MARIE LOPES – Today is Friday, August 6th. This Ann Marie Lopes conducting an interview with...

JACQUELYN RAMOS – Jackie Ramos. Jacquelyn Marie Ramos.

ANN MARIE LOPES – At Sunshine Place.

JACQUELYN RAMOS – At Sunshine's Place...

ANN MARIE LOPES – A place of business.

JACQUELYN RAMOS – An early education center named for my grandfather.

ANN MARIE LOPES – Sunshine!

JACQUELYN RAMOS – Sunshine.

ANN MARIE LOPES – The man who used to raise the flag all the time.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - The man who used to raise the flag all the time, and the man who actually was a whaler. Came to this country as a child, and we'll get to that, but yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Let me just get your age. Just so they can put it into context.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I was born on September 5th, 1950, so do the math (laughs).

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, I think they can handle that. So basically, we could start with your father.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Grandfather.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Grandfather. Excuse me. I'll get into the swing of this in a minute.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Not to worry, not to worry; it's a fun thing.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Please; I know Sunshine. Or at least I knew him.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yep. Do you remember him at all?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yes.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well, let me just say this because it's fitting that we do this here because it really is named for him. It's a childcare center, and the sun is very apropos of children. But anybody who is of this community -- South End of New Bedford -- often now called South Central, which I don't shine to, so South End of New Bedford. Anybody that lived anywhere around Acushnet Avenue and Bedford Street knew Sunshine Ramos, is the point. As I started to say, Sunshine is the name of my grandfather -- though, sort of. But you know the nickname, the fond nickname, that my grandfather carried for many years. He -- anyone who lived in this area -- meaning Monte's Park, Bedford Street, Acushnet Avenue, the Band Club, the Vets Club -- anywhere in this area knows the name Sunshine Ramos. He was the biggest kid in town. His name was Antone Emeliano Ramos, but he was always known as Sunshine because of the sparkle in his eye. He had beautiful hazel eyes, and he was a big kid.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - He had 55 godchildren, last count we could manage. He was the deacon at the church. He was the one who raised the flag -- the first flag -- over a public school in the United States. Not just in Massachusetts, in the United States, second only to the principal of the building, who I think lifted it the first two days, and then my grandfather did that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Every day?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Every day until he no longer could do that. And it sorta stays in the family, so to speak, in that the flag is still being raised.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And there's a monument?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - And there's a monument on the corner of Pleasant and Russell Streets that is a veterans' monument that speaks to that corner, it being in his name, and it tells the two or three sentences of that story to remember him as the person who lifted that flag up every day.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And was he the first one from your family to come over?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - From my father's side of the family, as far as I know, he was. There's some rumor that his father had come to the United States and went back to Cape Verde. Kinda can't get that straight. But the relevant part of his life story aside from being a favorite grandfather and a big kid in terms of the work that I do, is that I would sit a lot with him, and as a grandchild, he told me a lot of stories. And he told me the story of how he came to this country, and it is in fact, a story of a young man stowing away on a whaling ship. I have any amount of information -- unfortunately most of it in my head, but I have a lot of things written from him. When he got -- when he was ill, and he was taken to bed and, he'd tell the stories then. But the truth of the matter is he was 12 years old, and he left Cape Verde on his own, stowing away, on a whaling vessel. And if my recollection would have it, that vessel left Cape Verde then went to South Africa first, and he survived in hiding -- all of that -- and survived the trip to this country. And if -- eventually he was found out and was taken under the wing of some -- some of the sailors, and he learned the whaling business and stayed at sea. So he came to this country, and just like many the other young men -- I can't tell you the story except that there were hundreds of them. How he managed to actually land without papers. But in fact, he really did go out to sea all the time, and he became a harpooner.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What island is he from?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - My grandfather was born and raised 'til 12 years old on the island of Sao Nicolau.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And when he came here, he didn't know anyone here? Or did he?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - No, he -- I'm not so clear about that, but what I do know is that he really -- he really came for work -- for work. In fact, the love of his life was in Cape Verde. So as time went by, he kinda came and went between the two, but the love of his life was a woman in Cape Verde, who he then became of age, brought to this country, and they made their home here in New Bedford. I think -- I wanna say, it

has to have been a large friendship network that had them land here. And I say this because -- and I think this would be of interest to you, Ann Marie -- my grandmother became a woman who managed what fundamentally became a boarding house. And it was a boarding house for all the alone Cape Verdean men who were sailors and had nowhere else to be -- didn't know anyone. She would house them and feed them. It became a boarding house. In the first home, was down on Water Street -- that part of the waterfront that was taken up by Route 18 many years ago -- that was all neighborhoods. And they had this huge, huge three-story rooming house.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That they owned?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes, that they owned. And my grandmother maintained it while raising eight children of her own. I hope I got that number right. Before we sign off, I'll go back and count.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - But eight children of her own -- eight or nine! And that's what she did. So when my grandfather went out to see with all his compards and Nho Jacques **and** Manumeeka and that one there, and they all came back. They came back to my grandfather's house because my grandmother kept the boarders. They then left that house and moved to Bedford Street. It's much smaller, but nonetheless, still maintained it as a boarding house. Sixty-one -- I'm sorry, 54 Bedford Street and I now know -- I know the people who own the house now, so it's really a lot of fun. But it was, again, a family house.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How is that in relation to the Lewis Temple House?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - That -- you know, that conversation has come up before and --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Near the Fire Museum?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes, it's across the street.

ANN MARIE LOPES - From the Fire Museum?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Probably next-door to the Temple House.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I think it's in -- I think it's the house next-door. Exactly. Because the house -- there's a house on the corner, and then there's -- oh what was my grandfather's house? Fifty-four Bedford Street, and I think the Lewis Temple House

is the one on the corner. Because that whole area! You know they went, they were moved out from the waterfront when redevelopment was already happening even back in the day, and they moved up a little bit further, and that's where my grandfather and grandmother landed still doing the same thing.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I've looked through census reports from a long time ago. I can't tell you what date. There were several rooming houses located -- considered -- well, rooming houses on that street I think. But, I made you jump ahead. So your grandfather, 12 years old! He's here. How does he become a harpooner?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well he just stayed on -- he stayed on the ship and they -- and they taught him. They tau' -- he just grew up until he became of age, and then he did the -- whatever official training. And he -- he went out on a series of boats all the time, and as I said, whoever took him under their wings that's what he -- that's what they taught him. And he would tell me stories of the great adventure and the great threat. You know, I mean it was just sort of wild and crazy, but, there they would be, all the wonderful pictures that we still have in our museums and in our libraries. He was telling me stories of what that felt like, to be one of those men on -- on those little boats that became the -- what did they call them? They call 'em the sleds? Because they would hit the whale and maybe not quite right, or maybe the whale was bigger and more stronger than they expected, and off they would go, flying. He talked about all of these things. He had so many stories about losing comrades. He talked a lot about perfecting his art, that how he learned not to be afraid, how he learned to step up in sort of the position, and just -- and -- and throw that harpoon just in order to get the job done back at that time.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I would think there wouldn't be a lot that would scare a 12-year-old who would get on a boat and --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well I think that's probably the case. I think that's probably the case. And he did that for a number of years. Then he -- he in fact, did stop going out to sea to tend to his family and friends. He still maintained the boarding house, and he did local work. But he talks about his years as a young man, really spending his life at sea. So what I don't know is exactly how he and my grandmother -- how and when they connected -- but he brought her from Cape Verde, and they married and raised a family here while he still was going out to sea at that point.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you know how old she was when she came here?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I really don't. I really don't know right now. And there are things that I can sort of figure out and tell you if they are helpful to you, later. I do know she was older than him because she died -- actually she died two months before I was born, so she's not someone I ever knew. And she was about -- he was 85 when he died. He was born in 1887, and she was probably born in 1879 or something like that. So she was maybe almost ten years older than him.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Did she bring family with her?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - She actually did have one son before she married my grandfather, so. My eldest uncle came with her from Cape Verde, as best I understand, and then they married and had a family together here.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK. And do you know what she did? I know she did boarding house --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - She -- that's what she did. That's what she did. She cooked --

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK, and so she cooked --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- she cooked, she cleaned --

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- and cleaned.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- she farmed. Oh, I'm sorry I left that whole piece out because even when he -- even before he finished going out to sea, again that section of Route 18 that's changed the lives of a lot of immigrant Cape Verdeans. There were farms all down there. My grandfather had a farm. So she tended that farm. And I mean he had goats, and chickens, and all the various requisite green vegetables --

ANN MARIE LOPES - On Water Street.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- all of that. On Water Street, exactly. And because I remember -- now I come into the picture as a little girl, and he's no longer goin' out to sea. I can remember being his company, and I would walk down -- oh we would skip, rather -- we would skip down Bedford Street down to Water Street because he would have to go feed the goats, and I'd have to watch out where I step because there was you-know-what all over the place --

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- and the chicken. But I always looked forward to going with him, and that was my job, was to go with him and help him tend the garden, feed the goats and the chickens because that was part of how they survived. They always, even the backyard of the house on 54 Bedford Street had a bit of a farm because there was a flat -- that particular property had a flat stretch in the back of the house that was just really prime for a small garden, and that's what they did. So my grandmother tended that garden. They took care of a whole property down on Water Street. And that's what she did. So that is what she did. And I have stories - I wish I didn't miss her -- but I have a story that is so engrained in me that I almost feel like I lived it. And that is just of her sitting -- she was a tall, large woman. My grandfather was like six feet five; she was clearly over six feet tall herself. And she

would sit with her big apron on her stool in the backyard and shuck the corn, break the beans, or cut the potatoes with her big apron on, and that's how she did with her corncob pipe in her mouth. And that's how she got her work done, and everybody would come and help, but her clear job was raising the family and taking care of the boarders, who were all whalers.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now the pipe. Tell me about the pipe. Do you know why she -- she just smoked the pipe?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - She liked smoking her pipe, and at that time, no one was gonna stop her. That was her joy, and she would never -- the stories are, if she was sitting out in the backyard doing her vegetable duties, that pipe was in her mouth. Again, unfortunately, she died before I was even born. But I've heard so much of that story that I feel like I lived it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you have pictures of them?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I most certainly do.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Together? Just wonderin'.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Way back I can find, but of the pictures that I have that I deal with regularly, it's just portraits of them. And her name was Mary, Maria Britto, and she was fondly called Mombia. That was her name, Mombia. But that was her job. That's what she did -- raise the family and took care of the boarders. While my grandfather was at sea, that was her life and her work.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now, how many kids did you say they had?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well, OK. They had Frank; Dawn; Jack, my father; Antonia; Luisa; Mike; Mary -- yep, eight. There were eight. Oh, my uncle Manny, the eldest! Eight. I was right. They had eight children.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's lovely.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - And raised probably other peoples' kids along the way, truth be told.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Because that's the way it was.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Because that's the way it was.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's the way it was.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - In fact, I think really, in truth, two of the eight were not actually biological. I think they were cousins, but they were completely raised by my grandparents, so they had eight.

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did they do for fun? Do you know? What did they do to socialize? I'll give you an example. One woman I interviewed told me that her mother played the piano. And then she laughed. And I'm like, "Well that was nice she played the piano." No. It was one of those player pianos, and her mother would have people come in, and she would sit at the keyboard, and then people thought she played. But, that was her way of having fun with music and things like that.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well I would say the same is true on Bedford Street. In fact, because, I don't ever remember a time when that house didn't have a gigantic, upright piano. And several different people played it. My dad was into music a little bit -- he tended to be. But my dad was, by the way, the baby of all of them. So there are also some things that really, kinda way ahead of me because he was the baby in his clan. But yeah, they'd party --

ANN MARIE LOPES - What do you mean?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well he was the baby, so they were so much older, that by the time we came along, there was so much of their lives of things that they had all gone on and done their own thing. So there's stories that I'm not so intimate with because I'm the next-to-youngest grandchild. And you put it that way, I'm the next-to-youngest grandchild in that entire family. So that what's I mean. These are some things I missed.

ANN MARIE LOPES - But you're really lucky that your grandfather had conversations with you. That's really fortunate.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well, yes it is, but I will tell you, because I think my personality -- I was always curious. My other grandfather was very well-educated, also from Sao Nicolau, and I knew him longer, and we had more intimate conversations about education and stuff. And so I was always the grandchild, my point is, that wanted to investigate our family history. And that's really what happened. My grandfather that told me his stories of going to sea told them to me because I asked. Like you're asking me, I would sit with him, and I'd say, "Pa, when you were -- how did you come here?" All the things you're asking me now! I would do that! And so what happened is, you know, he opened up because "Aha, I have a grandchild, that's interested in how I got here, and who I was, and who I am now." And then as I said, there was a certain point he became ill and housebound. So I would go and sit with him for his company again, as more of a grownup and continue to ask him questions. So that's why. We were very close; we were a very close family, so even back to your question of social -- social in my family really was a lot about family. There was a lot of family events. Every holiday you could imagine was an occasion to have a huge celebration and invite family. And we

have family from Connecticut and Rhode Island, and everything was an occasion for family to come and visit. So I would say, that's a lot of how we enjoyed ourselves, at least as I recall being a little kid sittin' on the floor and watching all the grownups. And they'd be out, they'd play cards, and I guess my grandmother smoked her pipe. But they also did a lot of music. A lot of -- even while my grandfather was alive -- a lot of the younger people tended to be into music and would play instruments and sing, and he would sit there and smile. But a very social, a very social family. I would also say very community-conscious family. Because my grandfather was involved in all the things in the neighborhood. Like I said, he had 55 godchildren. People don't give you that many kids when you do nothing. So he, you know, his house was open. His heart was open. His family was open. He was the keeper of the key. He was the deacon at the church. He was the one -- he not only raised the America flag, he was the one who opened the doors to Our Lady of Assumption Church every morning at 5:30 or whatever time it was. This is, again, more in his retirement. You know, because he stayed busy. That's a legacy that I'm proud of. That side of my fa' -- both sides of my family -- but that side of my family is a whole story of you just got involved with the neighborhood. Whatever that might mean; whether it was creative or whether it was out of need, you just did it, and my grandfather was at the center of that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well obviously he passed it on to you. But did he -- how did he pass it on to his kids? What did they do?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh my goodness. Well in that period they all -- that generation -- they all grew up in war time. They all went into the service. So there was all of that. My eldest uncle -- no, I'm sorry, second eldest uncle -- was the first commander of the very first Veterans Club in the city of New Bedford. The Vet, you know, Cape Verdean American Veterans on Purchase Street. Its very first commander was my godfather.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And his name is?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Antone Junior, otherwise known as Don. Don Ramos. And it's in every archive and any record you wanna ever see. He was the very first commander. So that -- I mean, my grandfather passed it on in myriad ways.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So why did your uncle want to be commander of the Vets? What was his commitment to the organization? Why was he there? Why was he part of that organization?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well, he was a veteran, and that was his neighborhood, and they needed a club. It was non-existent. It wasn't just a first commander of something that was there. They had to create it. They had to find the way to find a facility, be able to make it happen. And this was all after coming out of the service. They all did something like that. My aunt -- two of my aunts -- got involved with young people. One of my aunts was known for having record hops for the other generation -- they'd come down. She'd also have little tea parties because she

believed that little girls needed to learn how to be proper young ladies. And she did all of that, you know, tea party. And she and another sister and other friends did the cotillions, and they had all those things because that was to be a proper young person in the city, was to do all of those things, and they did them. So that's how my grandfather -- how exactly? I don't know, but he sure did it because every one of them, my Uncle Mike, who was committed -- committed, yes, well committed to a wheelchair almost from birth because he had Polio -- was a lead Boy Scout troop leader, Michael Ramos, for something like 35 years.

ANN MARIE LOPES - He's your uncle?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes, he was my uncle.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I knew him.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Mikie.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, he used to come visit my father.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Absolutely. He's one of them. And I don't think I can name a person of those eight that my grandfather and grandmother raised that there isn't a story of community service. So how they did it, I don't know, but I think it was the life-line; it's what you did. It was a close knit community, and if you had a skill or a talent -- I think that part was very clear to me early on. If you knew how to do something or had one thing more than the next neighbor then your job was to share it. Your job was to share it. So they shared any number (laughs) of things. You know, by taking in other peoples' kids, by having events in the community so that the kids wouldn't be on the streets, that they'd find things to do, help them develop their self-esteem, run the first Veterans Club in the city. You know, my father was also a member of the first golf club -- you know, all black golf club -- created in New Bedford. And on and on and on. They did these things. They were just known, and people came to them. And they always responded. Were they all perfect people? There's nothing about that kind of thing, but they were always there. My Aunt Louisa -- the Olympia Towers, the senior citizen housing -- was the first president of the Senior Citizens Club. When she moved there, they decided to organize. I mean, that's -- I don't know how to say it other than by example. That's what you do. Well, we gotta have a club, don't we? We gotta take account for the rights of our seniors. Just because we live here, doesn't mean we just live here. So we have to have things to do, and we have to organize. That was my aunt. She gave up her home at an age and went into one of those -- and it was a brand new development. And but of course she should do that, and so she did, and she was repeatedly president for until she just couldn't stand doing it anymore. (laughter) So I honestly don't know how to answer that question in any other way.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well it sounds like there was no choice about it; it's just what you did.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well I -- that works for me.

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's the answer.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I think that is the answer; that is what you do but --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Kind of in your bones --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- because there were no -- I can't think of anybody that just kinda didn't care about somebody else or just went off and did their own thing or just went off into a corner and didn't associate with the world. I don't know that anywhere in that generation of my family. Everybody did something of service, of value. And yeah, and that had to -- that came from my grandfather, who skipped up and down the street with all the kids -- I'll go back to him -- 'cause that's what he did. And I've got people my age, who whenever we have these conversations, remember, and they remind me of things I've forgotten. "Ohh, but don't you remember when he did this?" And, "My grandfather and your grandfather..." and before you know it, we're laughing and giggling, remembering another memory of -- because they were -- he was a fun, fun grandpa. He really -- he really was. And so I can only imagine if I felt that way about him as a grandfather, how he must have been as a dad.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - You know, that's what I mean because he was -- I mean, I know grandparents tend to get away with other things, but he just was always happy and fun. And he let me call him "Tony" to everybody else's chagrin, but he loved it because of course, he was Pa. But his name, for short, was Tony. And he just loved it. He would giggle. I'd say, "Hey, Tony! --

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- How you doin' today?" And he'd giggle, and everybody else would get angry. So he was young at heart. My brother came from the service with a big afro, and everybody in the family just had a fit! I remember this. And he went to my grandfather, and he said, "What do you think, Pa?" And he said, "Do you like it?" And he said, "Yeah!" And he said, "I like it." That was him. That was him. So they made life -- they made life good.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So let's talk about the other side of your family.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh, OK.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, there were two sides.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes...

ANN MARIE LOPES - So let's start talking about your mother's parents.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well, my mother -- it's a similar story in many ways, but I will say this -- you know, just to kinda, the quick profile as we're talking. My grandfather, his name was Joachim DoLivramento Junior -- blanking on his middle name. And my grandmother was Clara Britto Livramento He, my grandfather, also -- both of them by the way -- also from Sao Nicolau. My entire family's first generation origins out of Cape Verde is from Sao Nicolau, which I thi' --

ANN MARIE LOPES - That probably makes it easier than, you know, to use a munchupa/cachupa things.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well, yeah, and I'm clear about that one.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - (laughs) I'll keep it to myself, but I'm clear about that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK, just 'cause, you know, my parents had a little.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yeah, no, but that's right. But yeah, so they were all from the same island. Very different time because again, my dad was the baby of his family, and my mother was in the middle of hers. So their times in Sao Nicolau weren't exactly the same moment. But my grandfather came as a young man -- very interesting story -- because he was educated -- he was raised by his grandparents, Grandma Olympia and Grandpa Jacques. And I have their picture -- their picture together at home. I was able to have my grandmother save that for me. She says, "Well, no -- nobody wants these pictures." I said, "Yeah, but I do." And again I did the same thing, especially in his case, he was a well-educated man, and by the time I went to college, we were having conversations by letter. So let me just say that quickly. So I got to ask him all of my things. But --

ANN MARIE LOPES - In writing?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - In writing. And I have it. And I have the book -- and I have them. Oh I will just say this because I'm just so amazed by it. But you know how people write and study -- calligraphy?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mmm hmm.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - That was his natural handwriting. So I have this beau' -- these wonderful letters. And of course after a while as he got older, they weren't as

attractive. But I have these wonderful letters written by his hand. I saw him writing. He didn't do anything fancy; he just wrote. That's how he learned because he was educated in Cape Verde very strictly in a Catholic church, and he told those stories and was raised by his grandparents. So he was very well-educated, not unlike many, many others of our grandfathers and grandmothers who came here then -- came here and found themselves not qualified to get any job other than working in a factory. You know, the language issue, what have you. But he was well-educated. But he, too, at very young -- had a family, and that's all that mattered to him, so he went to work in the factory -- in any one of the factories. And that's what he did professionally. But what he did outside of work, really is also a very wonderful story. He was a musician as well. And he's one of the cofounders of the Ultramarine Band Club, for one thing. He also -- he played the guitar -- I have that. He played the mandolin -- I have that in the cases. Oh he also played the piano. They had -- they too had one of those big, gigantic upright pianos. So he was a musician, first and foremost.

ANN MARIE LOPES - When are you going to open your museum?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I'm telling you, I do have a lot of stuff. I do, do but I --

ANN MARIE LOPES - You ever look into -- It's important stuff. You need to --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - It is! It is.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You need to make sure that it keeps going.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well that's --

ANN MARIE LOPES - But I interrupted you...

JACQUELYN RAMOS - No, no, no, no, no! But I -- no -- I'm in that moment. I'm just, you know, I'm just trying to sort of figure out how to present and preserve that stuff. Because absolutely. I have cousins who want to take things from me. And well you know what, I was the grandchild that was curious, interested, and attended, and, so this is what I have.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And they gave it to you.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes, and I am, you know. Oh just any number of things. But the very key thing about him that I think is part of our legacy as well ties both the war time and culture and family and music together is that a very, very popular -- you may know this, Ann Marie, but maybe you don't -- but a very, very, popular, old Cape Verdean song -- you know, Cape Verdean music -- old music -- had different beats. And there was one sorta upbeat, and then the one that was really the most common, called the morna, that was the long suffering and the story of woe and

famine and why other people came. Well my grandfather wrote a morna at the request of one of his sons, and it became -- it is now very, very well known in the Cape Verdean communities around, and I dare say may be even outside of this country, and it's called -- the song is called *Armor de Mai*. All the young musicians sing it. It's a song of real sadness because the story that's told is one of my uncles -- all three of whom on my mother's side were career military because that's what you did. That's what you did. It was war time, and one went in each branch of the service. Well the middle one wrote and said he wanted his dad to write a song for his mother while they were in Europe. You know, "Mother's Day is coming Pae. Write a song for mom from me." And he wrote the song of mother's love. Mother's love is more profound than this and all that, and it's just an incredible song, but it's a very sad song so it's sung at everybody's funeral, few artists have recorded it -- Flash and Vicki Vieira, the father of the Tavares Brothers and their aunt, have recorded it on CD. The more contemporary Candida Rose got my family's permission to record it. It's on one of her CDs. In the Cape Verdean community, it is very well known because he was a musician. And so that was one of the things he did. But the other side line that he had that always appealed to me is, because he was so well-educated, all the people who came with questions about their papers or needed to communicate some legal document back home, or something had gone wrong and they needed some professional piece of work or opinion, they came to my grandfather. He became known as "the community scribe." And that's actually what they called him.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Because he would -- you know, people would be confused about some document, and they would take it to him. And it often required a response -- he would do it for them. he wrote any number letters to the editor when some injustice was going on that he thought needed to be spoken to. So that side of my family very quickly engaged in being in this country and being of service, and like the other.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And your grandmother?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - My grandmother, also. Then she -- I got this one right -- she was the mother of 12 children, two of whom were sadly lost -- not uncommon -- at early, early infancy. So ten. And so that's what she did. The job was to take care of her kids, and do that. And she became also a member -- because as they grew up -- and she did a very good job with all of that -- she also joined every social club. So all the different, little functions the Cape Verdean Women's Association, also known as the CooCoo Club.

ANN MARIE LOPES - CooCoo Club! I love the CooCoo Club!

JACQUELYN RAMOS - The CooCoo Club. She was either a past-president -- I know she was a mother of the year because I was just a speaker at their event, and they were honoring all past mothers of the year. So I know she was a mother of the year, but

she might even have been a president. Ah, the dear thing. So yeah, so she did all the clubs, and my grandmother would be another one of them who wouldn't step out the house without a big hat and dress too because that's whatcha did. And all the kids following behind -- the same. They might not have anything new, but it was clean, and sharp, and they were good to go. Very engaged in the church, very engaged in the community via local social clubs. But first and foremost, a stay-at-home-mom.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So, your mom -- she's in the middle of all of the kids up to 12.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yeah, ac' -- yeah, yeah. She's pretty close to being a middle child in that sense. Yeah.

ANN MARIE LOPES - As close as you can be to 12.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - As close as -- right, exactly. Exactly (laughs).

ANN MARIE LOPES - What did she do? What did she end up doing for fun? As a kid. What did she like to do?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - (laughs) My mother was afraid of dogs (laughs). I don't know why that is, but she just a soon stay in the house if she saw a dog. She was also very articulate, and she took care of -- there were two, particularly two littler sisters, and her job was taking care of them. But my mom had a big friendship group from childhood, and those were lifelong friends. In fact, my mother is survived only by one...there were six of them. and there's like one or two. I'm really thinking one -- left. But that childhood friends. So you know, friendship was the cornerstone for her; her girlfriends. And they would do -- you know, they'd go and they would play in the -- somebody's yard and go take all the apples and run away --

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- you know, everybody has that story. She was a part of a gang that did that. But no, she just had a lot of friends, but she was also a good student. So she went to school, and she graduated high school, but she -- that was her -- she had a lot of friends.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Where did her friends -- where did they live? Her family live?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh my, you kiddin'? Houses apart. If you're trying to ask that question, all in the neighborhood. Everybody lived around the corner, a stone's throw from the backyard...

ANN MARIE LOPES - So describe the neighborhood -- the boundaries of the neighborhood for me. The town that we're talkin' about.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I'm not sure what you mean by boundaries of the neighborhood.
I'm just --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well South Street to... --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh, OK.

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- or School Street to...

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh OK, OK.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Potomska.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - OK, gotcha. All right, so as one of the earliest houses where family friends, that I know of the address, we're talking Potomska Street. Potomska and Purchase. So again, all around Purchase Street down as far as -- yeah, I would say -- a little further -- yeah, Potomska, Rockland, down that far, all over to Water Street. At the time the development here, the projects, the Bay Village was built then, several of them moved in there -- not my grandparents, so several of her friends moved in there. So all the way up Acushnet Avenue, all the way up Purchase Street, on over to maybe, maybe, maybe even County Street. But really just, where we are right now. Pretty much. So how does that go? To Walnut Street? Or Madison. Down to Rockland Street, and Water Street, Acushnet Avenue, Purchase Street, Pleasant Street. So, what? Ten-twelve blocks? Give or take and that was everybody; that was absolutely everybody. Her dearest friend lived with her dad in Bay Village. The next one lived on Pleasant Street -- Chica, Pleasant and Wing. Mona lives 'til this day on Purchase Street next-door to the Vets. Really. I mean a short walk to each and every one of them. Rose lived on Pleasant and Grinnell. I'm just trying to remember whom I'm leaving out of the friends. Oh, Mary! Mary lived on the corner of South and Acushnet Avenue. You get me?

ANN MARIE LOPES - Mmm hmm.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - That's where. So that's how they were. So there were six of them. You could spit between here and there to get each other's attention and their families. And that was how -- yes, and everything was intertwined in that sense. Absolutely.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How did your parents meet?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I'm not so sure how they met, but again, they go way back because of the neighborhood issue that you just asked me to describe was also true for my father. And it's the same neighborhood. In fact, there were people who just say our families look extraordinarily alike. And there really is no crazy relationship in the past, but I believe some of that is just that it's the closeness over time in

generations coming from the same place. You know people just sorta take folk for all being related together because tha' -- in the same ten blocks! And that was true; my father grew up on Bed' -- you know, Water Street and then Bedford Street. And they had common friends all along, you know. His friendship group and my mother's. I will say though, that they were childhood sweethearts. They met and -- as young people would say to that -- connected or hooked up or whatever at age 14 and 15 and spent their lives together until my father passed at 73 -- couple of months short of their 50th wedding anniversary. So I don't know how it got started but it only took a minute (laughter) and lasted a lifetime. And really truly, a lifetime. No up and downs, no on again, no, you know. I'm blessed in that sense. I'm blessed in that way that was -- it was an intact family. He went to work, she went to work; we became latch key kids out of necessity at an early age, and every member of the family took care of that, and that's just the way you did it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - How many are you? How many siblings do you have?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Ah, one.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Really? You're the only child?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - No, I have one -- I have an older brother.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, OK.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - There's two. We're two.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yep. One of each.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - One of each. After growin' -- yeah, but after growin' up in a family of 25 in each house --

ANN MARIE LOPES - And 55 godchildren (laughs).

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Exactly. My parents have two (laughs).

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, they must have gotten tired a little [there?].

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh well I think that's probably true.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Having too many people around.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I think that's probably true.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So are you two spoiled?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes, in very different ways. And I would say that that's not always - that's not a bad thing. I definitely was spoiled by my father. He was definitely spoiled by his mother.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK, so tell me about it. What was it like growing up?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I had to go everywhere with my father, so you'd have to ask him (laughter) because he couldn't go anywhere without me. He just -- he'd have to sneak out or escape me -- he just couldn't -- just -- 'cause I always want to be out with my dad. I want to be out. I generally gotta say -- and I will show you before we leave -- but there's a picture on my desk that I keep that a girlfriend gave me because we were three little girls of three best girlfriends. And it's a picture of us at a beach together. That's what it was like growing up. That same thing I described to you about her six best friends -- we all grew up in that one family. So we all were the children of those friends, and we went on picnics, we went to Mary's Pond every Sunday. Whatever they did, we did, and I -- all of a sudden, really, I didn't just have a brother. You know what I'm sayin'. Because all those best friends' families connected all throughout the raising of their children years. We're still -- for me, we're still best friends -- the two in that picture. Gail is one. Anyway, like I said, you know, Gayle -- actually Gayle, was an only child. So you know, there she had a whole family ready-made. And Cindy's the other one, actually has an older brother, so it's only the two of them. But the three of us girls are, I'll say, 14 months apart in age. Cindy and I are just maybe different by three months, and then Gayle -- so we grew up as sisters, is I guess is what I'm saying. Not in the same, but that's how we grew up. It was a lot of fun. I have nothing -- really, honest, and truly -- I have nothing but fun memories. That's part of why I feel sad for so many children out here in this world, today. I really -- I had a lot of fun, and I did a lot of things. I always had opportunities my parents trusted the neighborhood. I always got in trouble -- absolutely. The first moment -- before I even got home because if I didn't look right at Mrs. So-and-So or didn't speak properly to Mr. So-and-So, my mother knew it before I got home. So I knew about being raised in a safe community, and I felt it -- unlike what you feel now. You know as a kid, I resented it. Of course, I should, that was my job. "People aren't supposed to tell me." But it was that much of a safety net. In those -- again, those ten-twelve blocks. And people knew you whether you knew them or not; they knew who you were, and they took care of business if they needed to. And it was a non-issue. So it was safe in that sense. And as I grew older, I was able to do more.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you obviously know a lot about your Cape Verdean heritage.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Absolutely.

ANN MARIE LOPES - It sounds like everyone that you knew, knew where they came from.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Pretty much.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you think that's still true now?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Not at all, not at all. I think young people, number one, don't even know what islands -- what the islands are, don't necessarily know which islands their families came from. I was not taught Creole to my sadness because my grandmother wanted her kids to speak English; she wanted them to be American until she became about 75 or nine and decided she was tired of speaking English. Then some of us, you know, forged ahead. But that said, children of Cape Verdean immigrants more recently -- that's a different story. But generations like after me that were first generation, born in this country or their children then their children's children haven't a clue. And I'm not sure why and when that happened but --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, that would be my question. Because if you're someone who grew up and knew so much about your culture, your identity, such a big part of you -- and I'm not just speaking to you, I'm saying in general -- why wouldn't you pass that onto your kids?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Well I know -- I know the fam' -- my family, my -- immediate family, yes, yes I do. But I think one of the things in defense of people just universally, families have changed. Communities like what I just described to you don't exist anymore. It's not so easy, you know. So I had to take a step back sometimes, and say "Nobody -- no, no they don't know." And there was some reasons why they don't know, you know. And we have to work harder and smarter to diminish those reasons. But, you know, communities are very, very different than they used to be. At the risk of being a little bit political as well. There's a history -- the sort of political schisms that have always been in Cape Verdean families over race and politics. You know, and so some of us don't want to talk about it. Some of us don't want to remember it. I want to celebrate it. And so that's part of why I retain my history, why my nieces -- I don't have any children. Let me just say, I have no children, but you better believe if I did, they would know all of this. So the ones I can get my hands on, yeah I do. But communities are very, very different. We're more mixed, which is a beautiful thing. There was a lot -- in my opinion, a lot of damage done way long time ago when people just fought over skin color and language as the great dividers between Cape Verdeans and African Americans. I mean you -- anybody look at a map. I used to be quite short with people, you know, when it came to that conversation. "Are you gonna tell me you're not -- you know -- you're not of African decent when Cape Verde is 250 miles off the west coast of Africa? How do you not -- how is that not an African nation?" But there were reasons why people wanted to distance themselves, and they were economic, and they were political, and they were also rooted in ignorance. So I think that played a part. That played a part in people wanting to forget about that. You know, and it's because some just wanted to be American, which is part of it. Any immigrant group goes through that.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Right, right. I mean, you said it when you talked about your grandmother wanting --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yeah, speak English.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yes.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Be American. Yes, and she very much. And that grandmother I love with my life, very clearly was not black. When there was any kind of family split on that subject, it was very clear that out of respect, you just couldn't have that conversation with her because she was not an African. So yeah, she wanted her kids to be American. But she was very proud of being Cape Verdean. You know, so that was sorta like -- how do you explain that? But she was very proud to be a Cape Verdean.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Clear in her head, though.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Mmm hmm, but clear in her head what she was and what she wasn't.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Where did you grow up?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I grew up right here in New Bedford, meaning I was born in a little -- I was actually born in a little Acushnet hospital, raised right here across the street in the Bay Village Projects until I was eight years old when my family moved to 61 Bedford Street, across the street from the first grandfather that I described to you. So you see, that's how I was -- that's how I was raised. So that -- right now, in basic terms, we're talking about one, two, three, four blocks --

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- apart. Where I was born and lived until I -- my family moved from that residence at the age of 20, but I was already away in college; that was where I was raised.

ANN MARIE LOPES - My cousin, Lucille, lived at 62 --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Right across the street.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, OK.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - There was a little one -- Seventh Street -- a one, little block in between us. That was the corner -- we were on that one corner. She, her house was the other corner. The little hill was actually a block of Seventh Street. Right

across the street was where Wayne and I were raised. It's the t-nisiest little apartment with a bedroom each, that was really literally only big enough for a bed and maybe a nightstand.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Does your brother run Upward Bound?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes.

ANN MARIE LOPES - OK.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - He's the director of Upward Bound.

ANN MARIE LOPES - People were talking to me about Wayne Ramos. "Do you know Wayne Ramos?" Well, yeah. I have a cousin Wayne Ramos; it's not the same Wayne Ramos.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - That's right, that's right. And he's been confused for being my brother when people ask me who's my brother, and I say Wayne, they think of your cousin (laughs).

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. So it's good to get that all cleared up.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Right, right.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Tell me a little bit about living at Bay Village. And I raise it because, going back to Mrs. Pina. She said when she moved to Bay Village, running water, she thought she moved to Buckingham Palace. And I know people call it the projects, but these are nice.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - No, really.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Bay Village is nice. It seemed like it was very neighborhood friendly and --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I know, it really was. I have a lot of memories, and they actually just similar to the six friends and all their kids, there actually was a whole other family, and it was my block in Bay Village. Well actually I was -- the very first unit, is really where I was raised. So that was really like a city block. And then some of them are like longer stretches, but the one, Walnut Street and Madison, I guess. In any case, it's still there. It survived the last change of things, but it's still there. That entire block -- I knew everybody. The elder on the corner and the little teeny - there was always this one little studio for like an older person, and that was Nana, who lived to be 103 years old. And she was one of the neighbor family's great grandmother, and they lived two doors down from us. And she was the great

grandmother of the block. And then there were all of these houses with kids within a range of five years, you know, among us. So what was that like? (laughs) Really all I ca' -- it was nothin' but a playground. And again, every parent, every grandparent, and every other -- I kid you not. I re' -- 'cause I remember all that well. There was always eyes on you. There was always eyes. You ran out and about the ways kid play now and you -- you want -- you ran out and about -- there was no harm. There was no way our little middle street, which really didn't have much -- you know, cars weren't really supposed to drive by. But that was just like all our play area. And then on the other side there's always a little grassy area on the other side of the houses. And so you'd have another place to play, but that was fenced in. There was always somebody. If you were hungry -- I mean everybody has that story -- every family show on TV tells that story, but boy oh boy, it was true. You could go down the block and eat five times. That's how it was. Because, you know, this day Mrs. Perry made spaghetti, and this day maybe somebody made cachupa, and maybe this day somebody else made somethin' else. You just go, and you don't even have to ask because God forbid you should ask for somebody to feed you because that was a no-no. But truth is, you didn't have to ask -- "Come on eat! Come on in! You must be hungry! Come on eat!"

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah. I would think it would be an insult for someone to have to have someone ask them. It's always --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - That's right, "Come here. Oh, you must be hungry!"

ANN MARIE LOPES - Exactly. "Eat!" And if --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - (laughs) "Eat, eat some more!"

ANN MARIE LOPES - This brings me to another topic that we want to explore, which is food.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh boy.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, I don't know -- I don't know if you can relate to this, but some cultures, you know, they gather around food. And you know I'm being facetious. But what were meal times like? Did you have family meal times?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh sure.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Were there like Sunday Special, or...

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh, oh absolutely! I'll go from the little to the big, this way. My dad was a construction worker. My mom went between working in a hospital to hairdressing to community organizing, but they worked. We sat down as a family of four to every meal. Let me just say that, be clear about. I cannot -- I'm sure it

happened at some point, but I cannot recall a time when we did not sit down at the family of four to any given meal. So that's the first thing. And I really do -- and I can even still see that in both Bay Village and Bedford Street. I can see that image. But then yes, Sunday was -- no, I'm sorry -- Saturday was always go down to Nana's because she made cachupa, and so Saturday was cachupa at Nana's. Sunday was often a big meal at home, or if there was an occasion, somebody else's house. You better believe it. There were any number of rituals that was around food. Summer time picnics, birthdays, certain holidays, Christmas, and New Year's, Thanksgiving, in part to Easter, in particular were already set in stone. You went here, and here, and here on those days. That was just -- there was no, "Oh let's make a plan." These plans were made. You always went to this grandmother, to that grandfather. Twelve o'clock midnight New Year's no matter where you were, you'd better be at 54 Bedford Street in my family, and that was my whole family -- the Ramos side. You had better be at 54 Bedford Street or have a doctor's note or be in the hospital.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - At all ages -- all ages. You know when I was little, it was no issue for me, but I would wonder about my older cousins who'd be out, you know, doin' their thing. My parents, out doin' their thing, 'fore? 12 o'clock, not around 12 o'clock, 'fore 12 o'clock, you better be at 54 Bedford Street. So of course there was all that food there, too. Oh yeah, everything. You know that's very much an African and an island cultural piece. We didn't have much, but what we had, we shared. And I believe that is cultural. Not peculiar to Cape Verdeans, but very alive and well. And I love it, I love it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you still -- do you cook Cape Verdean food?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I absolutely cook as much as I can -- I know how to make. I make a mean kettle of cachupa. I sure do. And I make --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Everybody's is slightly different.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Absolutely should be! But I make my grandmother and my godmother's, and that's because that's the one I like. Everybody's is different, and some, wholly different ingredients, even.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well I was excited because a couple weeks ago, I made jag.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - OK!

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now I hadn't made jag since I moved back from D.C., really. And because my mom has dementia, I couldn't call her up. So I had to -- I was proud that I remembered the recipe. She never gave it to me, but --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Sure! Sure.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah there's somethin' about food.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yes, and jag is another one of those things that you could make a hundred different ways -- still very Cape Verdean. What other island, and where else do you not know of some form of rice as a staple dish. Oh my God, of course. So you could, yeah, jag. But then, one of the fun things is -- but then it's not quite jag! It's this, it's that, and if you put this in it, it becomes somethin' else, and if you put that in it, it becomes somethin' else. But it's still all rice; it's all Cape Verdean rice. But oh yeah, I make that good. I'm told also that, you know again on the morbid side of family life, everybody's funeral I have to make canja because my family tells me I make the best canja in the family. So that's one of my -- speaking of food. That's just like one of my jobs.

ANN MARIE LOPES - So if you ever come to my house with some canja, I should be nervous?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - No, you shouldn't be nervous! (laughter) It's also because I make it - I make it because I eat it a lot, and I like it. And it happens to be good comfort food.

ANN MARIE LOPES - It is good comfort food. It real' -- it is good comfort -- I was just --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yeah, no, no, no. No, no, no.

ANN MARIE LOPES - -- bustin' your chops.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - No, but it's true.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You know that I like? goofong.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - (gasp) I figured out how to make it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, 'cause sometimes it's like a little cannonball in the bottom of your stomach and you can't -- but other times, aw yeah.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yeah, yeah. But I figured it out. Again, a cousin in the family, and he sent -- he gave my mother a recipe, a very simple recipe, and I used to try to make it. And for the life of me, it would come out like a cannonball, and I was just say, "Oh," like "ooh."

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I don't know what I did one day, but something clicked, and I said, "Oh, OK, I got it." Have you ever had -- a lot of people don't like it, but -- in the planter -- Couscous.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Couscous. See now coucous, Mrs. Monteiro used to make good couscous.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Mmm hmm. I love it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - She's the only one I can eat.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - OK, but again, that's an' -- main reason I think of it is that it's another one of those things. If you don't make it just right, first of all, it'll fall apart on you. It'll just -- it'll -- somethin' will happen to it, explode, implode, I don't know. But you have to -- you have to -- or else it's no good. It's not even edible, actually.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, it's one of those that amateurs should not try.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - They should not. Galinha gizod is another one. Chicken. Stewed chicken. But that's a good one.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, my sister used to do good stewed chicken. Good stuff.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - But yeah, I'm a good -- I like Cape Verdean, and I like rememberin'. And I have -- actually precious to -- yes, yes I am gonna open a museum -- in their own handwriting, I have some of my grandmother's recipes. You know when she sat down, and my mother would ask her or somebody. Or else it's my mother's handwriting and her telling you. But any little, teeny notebooks that I still I have. So I know that that's like the real deal. It's the good ol' stuff. A banana fritter thing called [Brinyalla?]. Nothin' but fat, nothin' but fat and banana, but you gotta when you ha' -- you gotta love it (laughter).

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well that's goofong. Once you know, you know. There's no nutritional value, but you just -- you know (laughter), like it's goofong. People have donuts, malassadas, and we have goofong.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - That's right, and we have goofong.

ANN MARIE LOPES - I just know that every place that I go that there's goofong, you got to get it while you go through the first time because it is not there when you go back.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Mmm. No, no, no, no, no. Not if there's any like common -- nuhuh.

ANN MARIE LOPES - No, if it's a buffet.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - If it's a buffet, forget about it. You better grab it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Yeah, you have someone behind you with a plate. Yeah, you shift plates.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - (laughs)

ANN MARIE LOPES - Now you talked about your grandfather coming over on a whale ship. Is there a tie to the water that goes through your family? Like after the whaling time, were they --longshoremen or fisherman or working in the fish processing plant? Any of that? Or did that kind of die down?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - No, no.

ANN MARIE LOPES - No connection? I wonder how much of that is everyone being moved from Water Street and --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I mean, that's a really great question, but I cannot -- I mean, no doubt somebody worked in a fish house here -- but nothing that -- in my family, nothing that stands out for me as carrying on any part of that industry.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Except it doe' -- a lot of people went to -- went to factories.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Right, right.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And that's where you -- and that's where you went.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Right, right. And that's kinda what happened. My memory of people doing those, you know, first work. Well first of all, my father's side. A lot of my aunts went the route -- young person labor force route -- of cleaning peoples' houses. That for sure. But I -- and then my aunt, the one who became the senior citizen organizer, actually made her career, and I have a wonderful picture that stays close to my heart. She became a seamstress. So she went to work, and she became a seamstress because she went to work in one of the factories sewing, and her whole career, that's what she did. But then she sewed on the side for her family, and she made beautiful clothes including a duplicate dress -- First Communion dress -- for my doll. Let's go back to my being spoiled.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I'm willing to say it. My favorite doll had the exact duplicate dress that I wore for my First Communion.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, well that was nice.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Because Auntie Lulu made it for me.

ANN MARIE LOPES - You still have the doll?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I still have the doll, and I believe the dress is semi-safe somewhere.

ANN MARIE LOPES - (laughs)

JACQUELYN RAMOS - "Do you still have the doll?" She's not in great shape, but I still have her (laughs).

ANN MARIE LOPES - Well, she's, you know, she's been around.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - She's still here, but she's still here!

ANN MARIE LOPES - That's right; that's what counts.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - But that's a sweet example of that. I --

ANN MARIE LOPES - So you went to OLOA.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Every day, every weekend. Again, being my grandfather's company started out, 'cause I would go with him -- not five o'clock in the morning, but I would always everything, every function, every extra thing. But yeah, very much was raised in the Catholic Church in the sense of, again, the church family. All the CCD classes, you know, from a young age I went -- you know, my family was very devout, let's say, for a time. And so I did all of that. I became a cheerleader for the winningest basketball team in the CYO league OLOA. So that meant I had to live in the church some more.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Were you at the Drum and Bugle Corps too? 'Cause that --

JACQUELYN RAMOS - I never did that one, and all my cousins did -- and I still don't know why. I don't know why -- I don't -- maybe I thought I wasn't another whatever. I don't know. But that came along. I didn't, but several of my cousins did. I think I might have been a little older at that point and had other things on my mind. Because I didn't. But I loved it. I would love watching them, but I never did it.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Do you remember the procession -- the Memorial Day procession that they would have all of the First Communion People? That was fun.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Oh yeah, that -- and going down and going up --

ANN MARIE LOPES - Up Allen Street.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - -- processing up to Allen Street.

ANN MARIE LOPES - And then you knew you were getting close to the cemetery because the music got slower.

JACQUELYN RAMOS - The cemetery because the music went dah dah dah. Yeah I thought I was the only one that remembered that stuff!

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh yeah, oh yeah!

JACQUELYN RAMOS - Yeah they kind of had a regular rhythm, and then it... And you had to be in that 'cause I was in it. I know you had -- you just had to be in it. I was in the -- my First Communion -- let me see, am I sayin' it right? Yeah, yeah, I'm that first Communion class at OLOA.

ANN MARIE LOPES - Oh, you are?

JACQUELYN RAMOS - The new OLOA. I'm in that group -- that picture that they keep everywhere -- I'm in that.

End of File