

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL

**Memórias – Preserving the Stories of
Lowell's Portuguese Community**

Oral History Interview with Beatrice “Bea” E. (Silva) Hogan, August 6, 2016

Biographical Note:

Born in Lowell, Massachusetts in 1942; daughter of Mary (Avila) and Manuel Silva (1895-1976); Manuel Silva (1895-1976) was born on the Azorean island of Graciosa and immigrated to the U.S. with his parents (Mary Bella (Cunha) and Andrew M. Silva) in 1906; Mary (Avila) Silva (1906-1975) was born in Lowell, but her parents were also from Graciosa; Beatrice (Silva) Hogan grew up in Lowell’s major Portuguese neighborhood, “Back Central,” and attended the city’s public schools, graduating from Lowell High School; she married Francis W. Hogan, of Irish and Portuguese ancestry, with the Portuguese side of the family also having the sir name Silva; following high school graduation she worked in a clerical job before having children and then returned to the workplace, managing the women’s department in a Sears department store.

Scope and Contents:

Interview conducted by local historian Mehmed Ali; much of the focus is on family history of the Silva (Portuguese) and Hogan (Irish) families in Lowell, as well as growing up in the 1940s-1960s in Lowell’s “Back Central” neighborhood, the Portuguese businesses and culture in this locale, and in the occupations of the Silva family; there is also some information on the city’s ethnic diversity in various neighborhoods and in the public schools, and cultural differences within the Portuguese community, namely in relation to Madeirans and Azoreans. [For more on Beatrice (Silva) Hogan and these topics, see “Oral History Interview with Beatrice “Bea” E. (Silva) Hogan, September 10, 2016.”]

INFORMANT: BEATRICE (SILVA) HOGAN

INTERVIEWER: MEHMED ALI

B=BEA

A=ALI

A: Okay. This is interview with Bea Silva Hogan on August 7, 2016. Can you imagine it’s 2016?

B: I know, but it’s August 6.

A: Glad you were here to keep me straight.

B: That’s okay.

A: So Bea, first a little bit of background information. Where and when were you born?

B: I was born in Lowell, Mass., and I was born on September 18, 1942.

A: Okay. You've got a birthday coming up (B: I do) in a few weeks or so.

B: Well a couple. Yah, a couple of months. (A: Good) Yes.

A: And where were you raised?

B: I was raised in Lowell on Charles Street.

A: On Charles Street.

B: 182 Charles Street.

A: And what neighborhood do you call Charles Street?

B: We call it the Back Central Neighborhood.

A: Okay.

B: That's what we always called it.

A: Good. Now I've also heard people call it the South End.

B: Yes, it was called that too.

A: Now why the two names for the same neighborhood? Any ideas?

B: Well because the north was the Acre part. And so we were the other part of the city.

A: Okay.

B: The beginning of downtown so to speak. And the Acre was the other part, you know, going that way. So that's, that's how it was the South End and Back Central Street was because we were in back Central Street.

A: Now was there a Portuguese name for Back Central? Like did they translate? Would they use that term Back Central, or would they use a Portuguese term?

B: If they did I don't, I don't know.

A: Okay. Good. What did your parents do for work?

B: My father was a laborer in the mills. He swept the floors. He did all kinds of janitorial work.

A: Yah. Now were they immigrants, or your grandparents?

B: My father was an immigrant. He came over here when he was eleven years old. He was born in 1895. So he came over here in 1906 the year my mother was born.

A: Okay.

B: But she was born here.

A: Okay.

B: But her parents were over in Terceira, Azores. My father came from Graciosa, Azores. (A: Okay) And they migrated to Lowell and that was it. They, you know, of course they all lived, everybody lived. All your relatives lived together back then. Like my grandfather was there. I don't remember him. I was like a year and a half when he died. I don't remember my grandmother, but we had aunts that lived upstairs from us. We owned a three tenement building and we owned a cottage, and they owned a house in the back. This was all on that little block there, Charles Street. (A: Yah) And they sold the house in the back because it wasn't (--) It wasn't rented by Portuguese people. They were French so to speak, you know, that's what they called them, [whispers] the French people. And they sold it to them and they moved the house over to Tyler Street right across. That was quite interesting back then. And then, but the cottage was theirs and then the three tenement. And they took it by eminent domain in like 1956, [19]57. They took all of the houses on Charles Street and Tyler Street, they took all of those houses.

A: Okay.

B: And before it was even announced that they were going to take it, it was a beautiful neighborhood. I mean it was just, you could get around. You could do whatever. Everybody watched you. There was no hiding or doing anything, but it was great. It was really a good neighborhood. You had a lot of friends. All of your friends were from there, because of course you couldn't go very far. You had to you know. And so it was really, really a good neighborhood. We had a lot of good times. Once they announced that they were going to come and take all of the houses, the eminent domain part, it became run down.

A: Really?

B: Yah, because people, they moved. If they were renters they went and they bought a house, or they just moved, you know.

A: So a lot of the properties became vacant?

B: Yes, we had a lot of vacant properties.

A: Okay, and then what happened after that?

B: And it just became very run down. You know we used to have a couple of bars up the street, but you never even knew they were around. But once again, when this eminent domain, you sort

of knew the people (--). It was just, it was not conducive to bringing up a family, let's put it that way. (A: Yah) So we, we got bought out obviously. My father lived there for thirty-nine years. Did not want to move, but of course we had to. So we moved.

A: And where did you guys go after that?

B: We went up to Belvidere on Rae Street.

A: Oh yah, yah. So what was the policy about urban renewal, and what was it all about? Do you know?

B: Yah, they were building a shopping center.

A: Okay.

B: At first they were going to do the Connector. The Connector was supposed to go right through our house, but that never happened. Instead they built this shopping center, Zayre's. I don't know if you remember.

A: Yah I do. I do.

B: Do you?

A: Yah, on Church Street.

B: Yup, umhm.

A: And Tsongas had a cleaner's in there for a short time.

B: Did he have a cleaner's there, because he used to have one on Gorham Street.

A: In Gorham, but I think he opened up like a second branch.

B: Okay, maybe.

A: Yah.

B: Because we went to school with Paul.

A: You did.

B: Yes we did, we went to school with him.

A: And was there a "Stop and Shop" there originally down the other end?

B: There might have been, but not when I lived there, you know.

A: No, okay.

B: My mother used to shop in Brockleman's, what was called Brockleman's?

A: Yah, down in Kearney Square

B: And she would walk. Now just picture this. She would walk down there, we'd go with her, and carry the bags home. Can you even imagine? I mean I look at that now and I say, "Oh, how did she ever do that?" [Both laugh]

A: So how did your parents meet? Do you know the story?

B: Um, they met, they met over here. They just met through friends. And then they got married. It was that simple. You know my father was like eleven years older than my mother.

A: Okay.

B: But my mother was an orphan. She had become, her and her two brothers had become orphaned. Her mother and father passed away when she was ten and twelve. And then an aunt and uncle took them in, because that's what happened. And the aunt and uncle was the brother and sister of her mother and father.

A: Okay.

B: So a brother and sister married a brother and sister.

A: Oh really?

B: Yup, yup.

A: Okay.

B: So they took them in. And my mother did a lot for them. She had to clean and stuff, because you know, they had six kids. So it was pretty difficult, but anyway. So she was an orphan. She met my father later on in life. I think she was like, I think she might have been twenty-nine when she got married even, which was unheard of back then. Today it's common.

A: If they get married.

B: If they get married, right! [Both laugh] But, so she got married then. And then she had the three of us. We have, I did have a brother [Arthur J. Silva] and sister [Florence (Silva) Hilton]. My brother just passed away.

A: Oh, sorry about that.

B: Yah, but so that was it.

A: Now did your mom ever work in the mills?

B: Yes. When I was about eleven years old my mother went to work the second shift on 95 Bridge Street. I'll never forget it. And it was like, what they did was they did socks. And she ran like about eighteen machines, because I used to go down to see her and what she breathed in today would be terrible.

A: Sure.

B: They had no air conditioning. We're so spoiled today. And they had no air conditioning. They'd open the window sometimes, but in the 95 degree heat it was terrible down there.

A: Um, um.

B: And that's what she did. And she would walk to work and walk home at eleven o'clock, but when she walked home there was always policemen on the corners. (A: Yah) So she felt very safe.

A: Wow. And which mills did your father work in?

B: The same. It was in that same vicinity, (A: Okay) at 95 Bridge Street, but he worked during the day.

A: How did your father, how was he able to purchase all, you know, these couple of properties?

B: He didn't. My grandfather bought all that.

A: Okay.

B: He came to this country, my grandfather, and I guess from (--)

A: And this is your father's father?

B: My father's father. And what happened, he went to work and they were very frugal as far as saving their money and he worked in the mills too. The reason for coming here was to, it was prosperous so to speak, and went into the mills, worked there. My father, my brother, his brother, his brother worked in the tannery. You probably have never heard of the tannery.

A: The tannery (B: The tannery) on, over in Belvidere?

B: Exactly, exactly, he worked there. And I guess they pooled their money all the time. I don't know if my grandmother worked, but she probably did. And they bought these houses which today you would never be able to. I mean it was a three tenement, a beautiful cottage, and the house in the back. It was just unbelievable.

A: Yah, it would be, I think it would be hard to do that working in the mill, but.

B: I think so too. I know.

A: They must have been very wise with their, with their money.

B: Well they were. They were just (--) They knew how to, I don't know, save a buck I guess. I don't know anything about that, because I'm not good at that. I didn't get that from them. [Both laugh]

A: Now your parents were from little different parts of Portugal.

B: Yes.

A: Was there any little differences you know between the families or anything?

B: Not really. (A: Okay) A little bit, but not. Terceira and Graciosa, they're pretty much they're the same. Now the Madeirans, they were the, what we call the "smart ones."

A: Why so?

B: For some reason if you were a Madeiran you were more educated, more up to date with things. (A: Okay) You could read, write. You know, I remember, well this was Herb's grandmother, because Herb and I grew up together. Herb's grandfather would, he could, he used to (--) Like they would get letters from Portugal. They would take it to him so he could decipher the whole thing. He would translate the whole thing. Not that they didn't speak, or not that they couldn't write a little bit, but they didn't really, you know, especially my mother, because she was born here and she spoke fluently, but to write, to write it, it was more difficult. So she gave it to my (--) And my father wasn't educated enough to. So he would translate the letters. So.

A: So were there any social differences between the people from Madeira and other parts of the community?

B: Oh yah there was. There was, just the way they dressed, their dances were different than what the Azores was like.

A: Okay.

B: You know, they had their songs were different.

A: Okay.

B: Different like that. Even the way they spoke was a different dialect than the Azorean.

A: Okay. Do you remember some different word choices, or?

B: I can't remember the word choices, but I can tell you this too. People who came from the mainland Portugal, they were different too. They spoke in a different dialect. It was amazing because the Azorean was more of a slang Portuguese, and the Madeiran was the proper, and Portugal was even above that.

A: Okay. (B: Okay) Okay, very interesting.

B: Yah, because Azorean was very slang, slang Portuguese.

A: So the differences again in like for example the language or the educational level, was that also like economic attainment might have been better for Madeirans than Azorean folks?

B: Yah, exactly.

A: Okay.

B: Exactly, for the most part, I mean, you know.

A: Now I'm not trying to focus on these differences too much.

B: No, that's good.

A: But what about, because I know from listening to Greek folks that you know, well you're from northern and you're from southern, and sometimes the families didn't want them to marry and all these things.

B: Oh I know. Yah, well.

A: Was this the same for?

B: Basically, although when my time came, when I was growing up, if you just married a Portuguese they were happy, [Laughs] because they didn't want anything else. And of course unfortunately, well not unfortunately, but my husband, he's got a little bit of Portuguese. So when introduced him, and when I introduced him the whole family was there to meet him by the way. They, you know, I had (--) They asked if he was Portuguese. And he said, "Oh yes." I told him, I said, "You better tell them that your grandmother is Portuguese."

A: But the rest of him was Irish?

B: The rest of him was Irish or French. (A: Okay) He was a real mongrel.

A: Yah, yah, yah. So was he accepted by your family?

B: Yes, he was.

A: None of the old aunts and uncles?

B: Well they looked at him, you know, as they did all Irish and English people as they called them. They looked at them with ah, worry maybe? Like non-trusting issues, you know, they didn't trust the fact that, okay, this is a different person. If they were Portuguese they'd be more comfortable. You know, that would be more (--) They did, but once they get to know them, once they got to know him they were fine. And the fact that he had that Portuguese in him and it counted for a lot.

A: That's interesting.

B: Yah.

A: So what about the earlier generation? Was there that difference between Madeirans and Azoreans?

B: Yah, there always was. They would (--) Like I can remember sitting out in the summer and we would be sitting there and one of the guys would come by and say, "Ah, they're el a Madeira." And they would talk about how "They think they're so smart." The Azoreans would say that and the Madeirans would just (--) They were the smarter ones you know.

A: So, but did the Azoreans kind of pooh, pooh them in a way that they were, oh they think they're better than others and that?

B: Yah, yah, they did.

A: Okay, all right. That's an interesting kind of social phenomenon that I think it's not, it's everywhere.

B: It is everywhere, yah, yah they did.

A: Good. So tell us about your kind of childhood days. Where did you go to school?

B: Okay, so I went, I started school at the Ames Street School. Then I went to the Coburn. Then I went to the Butler, and then I went to Lowell High where that was a whole different aspect for me going to Lowell High. Going to the Ames Street, the Coburn and the Butler, it was very normal. People there were in my class so to speak. So we all got along. Everybody was comfortable with one another, but Lowell High of course was a different, different issue.

A: How so?

B: Well if I can put it to you. I always felt it was tiered, you know, T I E R? (A: Yah) You had your first tier who were the kids who were well known, whose families were well known in Lowell. You had that. And then you had your second tier. That was the kids who came from schools like the Dailey up in the Highlands, Moody up in Belvidere. You know, well to do, well back then well to do schools. And then you had your third tier. You had the catholic school kids

who were quiet, but still in that stage. And then you had the fourth tier which was the rest of us who were just there. We had people who, mothers and fathers, who went to work. Nobody knew who they were, but they went to work every day, earned a living. Nobody knew who we were. We were just there to get an education. And that was okay. But you did see that. That was definitely there.

A: Did you feel some level of discomfort on that?

B: I wouldn't say it was uncomfortable. Actually it motivated you. It motivated me anyway, because I said, "I'm going to be like them." [Laughs]

A: Okay.

B: You know I didn't feel, no, I didn't feel discriminated against or anything like that. (A: Okay) I felt motivated. You know? I felt like wow, if he can do it I can do it and I'm smarter than him! Because for the most part, and that's what you saw, you saw this un, I shouldn't call it unfairness, but if they got a hundred in an algebra test, oh my god! It was like the world would end. So they got 105. But you got a hundred even though your answers were the same. You know?

A: Yah, so maybe a little even favoritism?

B: Favoritism was there, yes. That's what I would call it. That's what I would feel, is like they favor them. (A: Umhm, umhm) But I was a twirler in high school also, and that was another, you know, you had that, that class was the third class where they all came from these uppity schools. Well, back then, the Dailey and the Moody. (A: Okay) I was the only one from the Butler.

A: And were you in the Girl Officers' thing?

B: I was baton twirler. Back then it was very prestigious. (A: Okay) Because we had sixteen head twirlers back when I graduated.

A: Okay.

B: Sixteen of us.

A: And you were one of them?

B: And I was one of them.

A: So let me ask you along these same lines. For these kind of tiers was that also kind of, was ethnicity evident in these tiers?

B: Um, yah.

A: And how do you describe that?

B: Well let me see. Well like I said, the fourth tier was us. So all of your immigrants, if you were a first year American, or if you a second (--)

A: Yah, like first generation?

B: First generation, or second, even second generation, that's where you were.

A: Okay.

B: Okay?

A: And who was in that group besides the Portuguese?

B: I would say some Greeks. Some, because some had already risen. (A: Okay) Some Greeks, some Italians. Who else was there? Polish.

A: Okay.

B: Umhm.

A: Okay. And then the "higher tiers", Irish?

B: Irish. We had some Greeks; (A: Yup) A lot of Jewish.

A: Okay.

B: Yup. And not that none (--). These kids were very nice.

A: No, no, no, but this is the system.

B: To this day I'm still friends. But it was the way (--). It was the way I felt back then. It was very different, you know. So when I hear about kids feeling discriminated against, or whatever, and I'm sure it's a different world because of social media. I never felt discriminated against, but I knew my place so to speak.

A: Okay.

B: Because you knew you were here. You knew that there were those tiers, but again, it just motivated me. And I said, "I'm just as smart as he is," which I was.

A: So were you the only Portuguese girl in the baton twirlers?

B: Well we had another girl. In fact Richard DeFreitas' wife, Pat Silva was her name and I was Bea Silva, and so, but she was only part Portuguese and they never even celebrated their culture. So for the most part the only thing that was Portuguese about her was her name.

A: Okay.

B: Okay? So yes, I was the only Portuguese. [Laughs]

A: This is very interesting. This is a whole world that I've never really kind of heard about.

B: Oh really?

A: So no. (B: Yah, I know, well) And this would have been really in the 1950s right?

B: Yah, late 1950s.

A: Okay, good, and then just the last kind of major ethnic group in the city, the French. Not as many French kids at the high school?

B: There were, but they were interspersed and most of them were, their parents said they were part French. Some of them were full French, but they were, they were part of us.

A: Down on the "fourth" tier.

B: Yah, fourth tier.

A: Okay, very interesting.

B: I shouldn't really label it like that, but.

A: Oh no, no, it's an interesting phenomenon so.

B: But it was just (--)

A: No, let's keep going on the school thing because this is very interesting. So with the Ames Street School who was there ethnic-wise?

B: Okay, ethnic-wise there was Irish kids that were there, a lot of Irish kids, because a lot of them were my friends. I loved the Irish kids, because I wanted to be like them, you know, blonde, blue eyed, and a lot of Portuguese kids. And again, we didn't (--). You know how today in schools they have special classes for kids, like if you came from another country you'd be in that class. (A: Sure) Well when I was, this was in middle school, I was in the fourth or fifth grade, and these kids came from Portugal. They went right away into the class and they were very smart. They were very smart. So a lot of Portuguese kids, a lot of Irish kids, Italian, French.

A: Umhm, okay, good. And the Coburn School, very similar?

B: Same thing, very similar. We just went from (--)

A: And Butler?

B: Butler was very similar too. Yup, because the schools it took from was the Central Street School, which is right on Back Central. It used to be, it's not there now.

A: Oh, is it the place that's the police station?

B: Yes, exactly. And the Ames Street (--)

A: The Ames Street was as Lawrence and Ames, right?

B: Correct.

A: Yah, I remember that building.

B: And there was another one too, but I forget, but it was still in the same area.

A: Okay.

B: So they all went to the Butler. So you were still in the same (--)

A: So the Ames, the Central Street, and another school (--)

B: The Coburn. The Ames, the Central and another school, I forget the name of it.

A: Were they all feeders for the Coburn?

B: The Coburn School.

A: And then Coburn fed the Butler?

B: Coburn (--)

A: Or you went to the Butler because your family's house got demolished?

B: No. I went to the Butler because we lived on Charles Street at the time. I was fifteen when we moved.

A: Okay, and that was in Butler's district?

B: Yes. Yah, that was another thing. When we moved I was in high school, because I was just going into high school. So you almost became another class. [Laughs]

A: You know I heard that the only reason you became a baton twirler was because you moved to Belvidere.

B: Yah, that's right. [Laughing]

A: No, I'm kidding. That's the only reason they let you in.

B: I know.

A: No, that's good. Okay. Let's talk a little bit about kind of Portuguese heritage and culture as you're growing up (B: Okay) before you get to full adulthood.

B: All right. So when we were growing up the big thing was all the feasts that we had. And I can remember the Holy Ghost, that we had two, two weeks of that. We had the Pentecost and the Trinity. (A: Okay) And each time we had that we would have a procession. And of course my mother, we had to go in to the procession. So we did that. And then we had Saint Anthony's feast. And we used to celebrate that in back of the church, which was very interesting, because I used to say, "How could we do that and make all that noise for people who lived there?" But you know what? We really didn't. We didn't make. I guess it wasn't as loud as (--)

A: I don't think they had the speakers that they do today.

B: Maybe that's what it is. That's probably right. [Laughs]

A: Sometimes I go to Cambodian dances with my girlfriend and it's ridiculously loud.

B: I know. I know, and probably that's why. But we used to have it right there in back of the church. It wasn't a parking lot at the time because everybody could walk to church. So at that time it was all grass back there. So we used to have our feasts there. And then Our Lady of Fatima in August was there also.

A: So the Holy Ghost is what period?

B: That was in usually May. It's seven weeks after Easter. They have the two, the two weeks of the Holy. I don't think they have a procession now. They just have it one week. (A: Umhm) We used to have it for two weeks. We used to do a procession. The last week, the eighth week, they'd have this big dinner up at the Holy Ghost Park. So you'd be in the procession and you'd all go up to that. They'd have a bus that would take us all up, the band and everything.

A: Yah, yah.

B: Not today. [Laughs]

A: No, fend for yourself.

B: I know.

A: So Holy Ghost in May for two weeks (B: Yup, umhm) and then?

B: In June we had St. Anthony's Feast.

A: Okay, at the church.

B: Usually at the church. We'd have the mass. We'd have the procession, and then we'd go back behind the church right there where the parking lot is and we'd celebrate, you know. It was really nice. We'd have auctions.

A: Okay.

B: The auctions were great. My uncle used to be the auctioneer. He used to (--)

A: Now all done in Portuguese?

B: Sometimes, but sometimes not. It was done in both. You know, everything was done in both, even our mass back then. When I went to mass they did the gospel in Portuguese and English.

A: Okay, and you're talking in the [19]40s, [19]50s?

B: In the [19]50s.

A: Okay.

B: Yah, yah, they did the mass in English and Portuguese, that one mass. Now they'll do it all in English.

A: Yah, okay. They don't use any Portuguese at all?

B: Yes they do. They have a mass especially, but it's just Portuguese.

A: Okay.

B: Okay. So they have the English mass and the Portuguese mass, but at one time they used to do, the English mass was Portuguese and English, and the Portuguese mass was Portuguese.

A: Okay. And what was the third religious ceremony that (--)

B: The Feast of the Our Lady of Fatima.

A: Our Lady of Fatima.

B: And that was August.

A: And what was that all about? What was the (--)

B: Well that was celebrating when she appeared to the three children. (A: Umhm) And so we would celebrate that then. And they would carry the statue. I think they still do that.

A: Okay. And it must be coming up soon then?

B: I think they do it in a different time. They do now in May.

A: Oh really?

B: Yup.

A: Why did they switch it?

B: Because I think she first appeared in May. August was like her second or third appearance. So that's why we used to do it in August, but then (--). You know we didn't have people from St. Michael here back then. It was very few.

A: What do you mean?

B: St. Michael is one of the Islands in the Azores.

A: Oh okay.

B: They're very different too than Graciosa or Terceira, because St. Michael is the capital. So they're more cultural, and they're different in the way they celebrate things than Terceira.

A: So at one time there were people from St. Michael here in Lowell?

B: No, there is now.

A: There is now.

B: There are tons of people from St. Michael, but at one time I don't remember anybody from Saint (--). I'm sure there were. There were people from St. Michael, but I don't remember them.

A: Okay.

B: I just remember Terceira, Graciosa, and Madeira.

A: Those were the main ones.

B: Those were the main ones back then.

A: Was there anybody from the Portuguese mainland in the community?

B: I don't remember that either, no.

A: Okay. So those three groups, and differences and I mean distinctions between Terceira and Graciosa?

B: Not much.

A: Not much. (B: No.) Okay, more of a distinction between those two and Madeira.

B: Madeira, yes, and then of course St. Michael, which they're there now. They came in the [19]60s and [19]70s. So.

A: Okay.

B: So those would be the people you'd want to talk to from there.

A: Yah, no that's interesting. Now why, do you know why the people from St. Michael only came later than the other folks?

B: I don't. I don't know if it had something to do with the uprising, because I don't remember them. Again, they might have been here though. You might have had, you might have had some people, but I don't remember them. I just remember Terceira. But then as the years came, [19]60s, [19]70s, I remember a lot of people from St. Michaels.

A: Okay, okay. So there was the big earthquakes at some point around 1960 [1957-58].

B: Okay. So that might have brought them.

A: It might have been that, because there was special legislation. I know Ted Kennedy I think sponsored legislation maybe around 1964 or something? [Senator John F. Kennedy cosponsored the Azorean Refugee Act in 1958, which permitted an increase Portuguese immigration from the Azores.]

B: Okay.

A: And then a lot of folks had come over.

B: A lot of them came, yah, that's probably what happened, because I don't remember them. But like I said, they might have but we didn't hang around with the St. Michael people. [Laughs] They might have been from the Tremont, which is what they said was up in Ayer City.

A: Tremont was downtown (B: Uh huh) by the mills, by Moody Street.

B: Oh okay. I always thought it was Ayer City, but you're right. It was Moody Street.

A: Yah, it was down there because Joe Camara grew up there.

B: Yes he did, umhm, because he's Madeiran.

A: Madeiran, okay. Yes, right.

B: Yup.

A: And so probably the Madeirans were the first group to come to the city as well maybe?

B: They could have been.

A: Yah, I'm not sure of that history.

B: I don't, I don't know about that.

A: So the folks from St. Michael's, is it San Miguel?

B: San Miguel.

A: Come, and they have some different kind of cultural practices?

B: Yah, yes, definitely.

A: And that's probably why the date got change for Our Lady of Fatima?

B: Probably. I don't know why, but that's probably some of the reason, people with different you know. (A: Yah) It was interesting, because when I grew up and we went to Sunday school I wanted to be American. I was an American and that's what I wanted to be. There was no question about it, American first, Portuguese second. I'm still Portuguese, but second. And all the kids I grew up with that were Portuguese felt the same way. We were all American first, Portuguese, yes we were. We celebrated our culture and everything like that, but American. We were American. And when I taught CCD it was so different how these kids were Portuguese first.

A: Hmm, and what's that change? How did that change?

B: Well I have to say it must be from the parents. I don't know. I must be from the parents, the way the parents.

A: Okay.

B: Like my parents were very proud to be in America, very proud that they could, they had a chance. My father became a citizen as soon as he can. And you know, times were different I

agree, but it's just that (--) And so they pass that on to us. You want to be an American, you're an American, yada, yada, yada, but don't forget you're Portuguese and stuff.

A: Umhm.

B: But these kids, Portuguese all the way.

A: And when, what time period did you start teaching CCD?

B: Probably in the 80s.

A: Okay.

B: Yah, in the 80s. I started teaching CCD and it just amazed me, because when I went to CCD Sunday School the teachers, they were all English speaking but you wanted that. When I was teaching the kids said to me, "Are you even Portuguese," because I didn't have the accent or anything. And I said, "Yah, I am!" Very (--)

A: So do you think there's some kind of newer element of pride that's come around in the last thirty, forty years?

B: You mean to be Portuguese?

A: Yah.

B: Yah, that might be what you call it. I call it, "If you're here in America you should be proud to be an American." [Laughs] Come on!

A: Understood. Let me just ask you more about the urban renewal angle. What other stories did you, occurred at that time with you or other families? Do you remember your neighbors talking about it?

B: Oh, everybody was afraid of it. You know, they just didn't want it to happen. They were afraid that it was going to (--) And this went on I would say for a good maybe ten years.

A: Oh really?

B: Yah, they just kept talking about it and talking about it, and then finally they did it, but it didn't (--) I mean until it got in the paper and until it got really out there that, "Yes, it's going to happen," did the neighborhood go down. It just went to pieces. It went to nothing.

A: I know there was some Lithuanian Clubs in that neighborhood right?

B: Yes, yes we had a lot. We had some Lithuanians that lived with, near us too. Very good friends.

A: Yah, and at one time there was two clubs.

B: Yup, the DLKB and (--)

A: And then there was another club that was on, (B: Civic Club) I think on Tyler Street.

B: On Tyler Street? Oh I don't remember.

A: Was Tyler the one that would be behind the (B: Charles Street) shopping center?

B: Um, probably. I don't know.

A: Well anyways, I know there was Church Street, there was a street in the middle and then there was the last street.

B: That was Tyler Street, the one in the middle.

A: Okay. So whatever the last one is in the back, maybe Charles Street.

B: Yah, maybe.

A: It's where the monument is for the World War II.

B: That's Charles Street.

A: That's Charles Street.

B: Yup.

A: So I think that's where the Lithuanian Club was on the opposite side of the street across from the monument.

B: Oh yes! Yes there was.

A: You don't remember that.

B: I do remember that (A: Okay) very slightly, because we had a Lithuanian family that lived right near there as a matter of fact.

A: Okay, good. Tell us about Paul Tsongas.

B: What do you want to know? He was dull, boring, but (--). [Laughs]

A: Yah, do you remember him in high school? (B: Yes) Did you have any classes with him, or?

B: I didn't have any classes with him. My husband was a good friend of him, of his, because my husband lived in the Highlands. (A: Okay) He was that number two tier, you know. But he, so he was friends with Paul Tsongas and he liked him. We double dated with him.

A: Yah, okay.

B: And he was boring.

A: Did Paul date somebody else before Niki?

B: Oh yah!

A: Oh okay. Who, who was?

B: Well he never dated anybody (A: serious) seriously, no. No.

A: Do you remember who you guys went out with?

B: I think her name was Theresa, but I don't remember her last name.

A: Okay. Okay. Where did you guys go?

B: Where did we go? We went to (--) I think we went to the drive-in as a matter of fact.

A: In Lowell, or Tewksbury?

B: No, I was in Tewksbury, the Wamesit Drive-In.

A: Wamesit.

B: We went there and we were there, then we went somewhere to eat. We used to go to the Dutch Tea Room.

A: Very nice place.

B: Yes. And we used to go there. So we probably went there, because I don't think we stayed for everything. But he was always very smart, very smart kid.

A: What tier would you place Paul Tsongas in high school?

B: Two.

A: Number two, (B: Umhm) okay.

B: Yup, I wouldn't even give him that one tier, [Laughs] because his family wasn't well-known really (A: Yah) you know until he got to be well-known.

A: Good. So what else about (--) Oh, with the Lady, Our Lady of Fatima, what did you guys do for that celebration?

B: Well we'd have, we'd carry the saint with the three, the three ah (A: children) children. And they'd carry that. And then you'd always have somebody dressed up as the three children. You'd always have two girls and a boy. (A: Okay) And then you had all of the First Communicants in the procession. You had anybody, if they made their Confirmation that year. And you had the Sodalties, because we were very big with Sodalties.

A: Was there several for the church?

B: Oh yah! My mother belonged to Donna Maria Amelia Society. And there was another one too, but I forget the name, but she belonged to it. So they would always dawn their uniforms. They would have white dress, a blue cape, a blue hat, it looked like a nurse's hat.

A: Really? (B: Yah) Okay and what was the purpose of the Sodalties?

B: To raise money for the church. (A: Okay) They did things for the church. You know, if the church needed anything they would help. They would help with the church, the flowers and stuff like that.

A: Okay, cooking maybe?

B: Yup, they did the cooking. Oh yah, at the feast my mother would be up there all night they would stay, because I don't know if you're familiar with the Holy Ghost Park.

A: I've been a few times, yah.

B: Okay. Well when I was little that park, it was there but the building was not there.

A: Okay.

B: It was like a tent. So when they cooked somebody had to be there all night with the meat and all this stuff.

A: Otherwise somebody (--)

B: Yah, exactly. So.

A: Now where did the processions come and go to?

B: They went down. All right, they started at the church.

A: They started at the church?

B: Went down Central Street, Charles Street, and that's usually where they ended.

A: Okay. Okay.

B: And the buses would be there to take us.

A: Did a lot of non-Portuguese people come out to view the processions?

B: Anybody who lived in that area would. Yah, they would.

A: Yah, okay. What other organizations were around with the Portuguese Community?

B: Um, let's see if I can remember any. There was the Couples Club. I don't know.

A: The Couples Club?

B: Yah, the Couples Club it was called.

A: Was there a Portuguese name for that?

B: It was called the Couples Club.

A: And what is it all about?

B: I just knew that there were. I mean I was too young or anything, but I remember a lot of the like women and men, the husbands and wives would go to this. Every Saturday they would meet. I don't know what they would do, but they would, they had a club.

A: Did they have a physical location, or did they meet at the church?

B: I don't know where they met. I don't even know that.

A: Okay.

B: But were there other organizations? Not that I know of. The men had a Holy Name Society also, which they, my father belonged to.

A: And is that like a male equivalent of the sodality?

B: Exactly. (A: Okay) Exactly.

A: And where did they meet, at the church?

B: At the church.

A: What about the athletic clubs, you know, the (--)

B: Oh the CYO? (A: Yah) Yah, that was quite interesting too. We used to have a good CYO. And my brother I know would go to it. They would always go. And my cousin they would go and they'd have a great time. You had to be a certain age I think to go. I wasn't of that age. And one time they went in, the kids were all there, and they were shutting the lights on and off. And father had come in and disbanded the whole group.

A: Really?

B: Yah, so I never got to be in it! [Laughs]

A: And it didn't, it didn't go after that?

B: No. No.

A: And was that Father Grillo?

B: No, that was Father [de]Silva.

A: Father [de]Silva, okay.

B: He was after Father Grillo.

A: Okay. Do you have any memories of Father Grillo?

B: No, I was young and he passed away.

A: Tell us about Father [de]Silva. What was his full name?

B: John Silva [Rev. John F. deSilva]

A: John okay.

B: And he was, supposedly he was mean to the kids and stuff, (A: Okay) but which we were afraid of him, but then your parents told you, you know, he's a priest, respect, yada, yada. But that's about all I can tell you about him, (A: Okay) it was just that. And other societies that we had, I'm trying to think. We had the Donna Maria Amélia. There was another one too, the Holy Name. I can't think of it.

A: Now why were there two sodalities? Did they have different missions?

B: I don't think so. I think (--) My mother belonged to both of them, you know, and I think maybe one of them cooked more, the other one did more fundraising. I don't know how that worked.

A: And how about the social clubs?

B: The social clubs. We didn't have the reds and the blues. We had the Portuguese Club, (A: Okay and where was) which is now, I don't know if it's the red or the blue. It's right up at the top of Charles Street.

A: Nearest Bishop Markham right?

B: Correct. Which one is that?

A: That's the reds. Well.

B: Okay, so that's.

A: You know what? (B: I know) I think that's the blues.

B: Is it? I don't know what it is either. I get confused.

A: Yah, I think that's the blues.

B: So that's the blues, and the reds (--)

A: Is on Central Street, (B: right) up you know, going up the hill towards Hosford Square.

B: Yup. Yah, we never had the reds.

A: Any thoughts? Your parents weren't involved with those clubs?

B: They never really went into them, no. The only time they would go is sometimes, like at the monument. They would do that every Memorial Day we would have a celebration there and we would go. And then we would go and have like a tuna fish, or a codfish sandwich, bacalhau, at the (--)

A: At one of the, at the Charles Street Club?

B: Yah, because that was the only one there that I ever remembered. I don't remember the blues and reds. It was just called the Portuguese Club.

A: Okay. All right. Tell us about your working career.

B: Okay. So I started working at Sears. And (--)

A: And I'm sorry. Did you go on to school after high school?

B: Oh, after high school? No, I started working. I was working as a secretary and then I got married and started my family. And then I didn't work. And so after about seven years and four kids I said, "Oh, I hated being at home." Even though I loved my children and you know, we

didn't have as much as what they do today, you know. They didn't have play dates. If there was a friend, okay. So I said to my husband, and he was working two jobs to try and keep up. And then he became, was a firefighter. (A: Okay) And so I said, "You know what? I'm going to go to work at night and that way you can watch the kids." And it worked out good. I worked, went to work at Sears and then they asked me to go full time. I went full time. I worked there for thirty-five years. I was a manager, managed all the women's [department] in Pheasant Lane Mall [in Nashua, New Hampshire].

A: Okay. Did you work on Plain Street [in Lowell] originally?

B: I did. I worked on Plain Street. That's where I started working part-time, and then I became a manager there. And then I opened up the store at Pheasant Lane.

A: Oh you did?

B: I did that. And then I left.

A: Now when they opened up Pheasant Lane did they close Plain Street at the very same time?

B: Yup, very same time.

A: Okay. So they knew that this was where the flow of people was probably going to go, right?

B: Exactly, which was kind of sad, you know.

A: Yah, I remember going into Sears.

B: Oh do you?

A: Oh yah, yah, I bought clothes there with my mother in the 70s.

B: Yah, and it was just a, you knew everybody who came in, you know, and they knew you. And it was, once you got to the mall you didn't know the people, because it was different people coming in and out. And it was like um, it was different. But I did that for 35 years. And then I went on to Beth Israel and Children's Hospital, and I worked there until I just retired in June.

A: Okay, down in Boston?

B: No, actually I worked in Lexington.

A: Okay.

B: They have a medical center there.

A: Okay, wow. Excellent. What else about the Portuguese Community? Were there any leaders that you remember when you were younger?

B: Oh yes, yes. We had a group, and again they were a big part of the Couples Club. There was Gladys. There was Sally Correia.

A: Okay, and if you can give the full names?

B: Oh sure. Gladys Picanso.

A: Okay, yes.

B: Which (--) Gladys Picanso, Sally Correia, and their husbands too. (A: Yup) This was them and their husbands.

A: And would these people be your parents' ages roughly?

B: Yes, I would say they were my parents' age, or maybe a little bit younger.

A: A little younger, okay.

B: Okay, but not much. Glen Mello's mother and father, Angie Mello. (A: Okay) Joe Camara, he was a big (--)

A: Yup.

B: Yup. Um, there was another one too. Rose, some of them I don't remember their names.

A: No, that's fine.

B: But I do remember.

A: Tell us about these people. What did they mean to the community?

B: They were the ones who got everything going. They were the ones who got the Couples Club going. They're the ones who got the parties going, you know, when you had (--) they cooked. Gladys was always cooking. Sally the same thing. And they fought a lot, but they cooked, they did a lot of things for the church. They did, and they started it. You know, they were, yup, we're going to do this, we're going to do it this way, and they got their workers. My mother was one of them. (A: Okay) And they would just get their workers. And yah, they were very good.

A: How do you view the Portuguese Community in like, in a business sense? There were quite a few people that owned their own stores and businesses.

B: Unfortunately it was always known that the Portuguese people didn't support their own. There was always that. You know, we had a guy who used to run for City Councilor. His name was Joe Costa I think.

A: Joe Costa?

B: Yup. And he never made it and he was Portuguese, and he was like the only one that ever ran and you would think people would vote for him, but nobody did. Nobody supported their own.

A: No, okay.

B: Like the Greeks, they support. If you're Greek you voted for a Greek, but with this they really didn't. I don't know how they'd do it now, but.

A: Yah, why do you think that would be? Any thoughts?

B: I don't know. Jealousy? I don't know. I don't know. I don't know why the reason that they would not.

A: Is Joe Costa still around?

B: I think he passed away, yah.

A: Okay. Was there anyone else involved in politics over the years? I mean we have Joe Mendonca.

B: Yes, Joe. And again, a lot of Portuguese don't support him, which is sad you know. No, that's it. That's it.

A: How about famous business people?

B: Famous business people.

A: People that had very successful businesses?

B: Well Glen Mello I think has a very successful business.

A: Okay.

B: Herb Pitta had a very successful business.

A: Do you remember Portuguese markets?

B: Oh yes, the Pioneer Market (A: Okay) was a big market. That was owned by the Silva's, Danny Silva, and he married Gladys Silva. Actually her name was Silva, her maiden name.

A: Okay. [Chuckles]

B: And they owned that Pioneer Market, him and his brother Paul. Paul is still (--) Yah, he'd be a good one too to talk to.

A: Who's that?

B: Paul Silva.

A: And where is he?

B: He runs (--) I think he owns the Whipple, or that café at the bottom of Wamesit Street?

A: Umhm, Whipple?

B: Is that the Whipple?

A: Yah.

B: I think that's his.

A: How old is he roughly?

B: Well he's younger than me.

A: A little older than you?

B: I think he's younger than me.

A: Okay.

B: But not much.

A: Okay, good. The Pioneer Market was on Central Street?

B: The Pioneer Market was right on the corner of Central and Charles Street. And you'd go in there. And they employed a lot of Portuguese people.

A: Okay. Was it like a "mini" supermarket in a way?

B: Yah, it was. (A: Okay) Yup, my mother as she got older she would do her shopping there, and Brockleman's closed. So she would do her shopping right at the Pioneer. They were very good. They would deliver too.

A: Oh really, yah?

B: Yah, they were very good. Of course at that time Gladys' sister lived right on the top floor of us in Charles Street, because their family lived right across the street on Charles Street. I was very good friends with Tony who passed away.

A: Yah, yah. Where did Portuguese people go for their banking?

B: Central Street Bank. What was that called, The Central?

A: Central Savings Bank?

B: Central Savings Bank. That was a big one.

A: Okay.

B: Washington Savings Bank, which is now (--) The President of that bank is Gladys Picanso's grand son-in-law.

A: Well it's one of your namesakes right? Isn't his name Hogan as well?

B: Yes he is. He is, his name is Hogan, but no relation.

A: But no relation. [Both laugh]

B: No, he married Gladys Picanso's granddaughter.

A: Okay. Excellent. That's funny. What else about the Portuguese Community? What do you think its role had been for the city?

B: Well for the most part I think they were good citizens for the city. They were always hard working people, very clean. What else can you say?

A: Took care of their properties.

B: Yup, they took care of their properties. You would never see (--) I mean they would go out and clean the sidewalks and wash them.

A: Where do you think that comes from?

B: I think that came from where they came from, (A: Okay) because (--) It was funny. When we went over there you saw people doing that. (A: Okay) And I said, "Oh my god!" That's funny huh?

A: Yah, interesting. (B: Yup) Um, any other thoughts about Portuguese life in the city, your own, your own story?

B: It was funny, because now I married Frank [Francis W. Hogan], right? So our kids, as much as I tried to keep the culture, because of course my mother was still living and she wanted them to have the culture. We would take them to the dinners for the Holy Ghost. I had them in the processions for a little bit. (A: Yup) They never really got that culture. Never, you know, it just became I don't know. But these kids who come from Portugal with parents who come from Portugal, they have a different mindset than what we did.

A: And that continues today you think?

B: I think that continues today. They have that (--)

A: Now at the event at the Boott Mills I think you told an interesting story about dating your husband before you introduced him to the family.

B: Oh yah, I did. I had seen him and we had gone. I was a twirler and he was on the football team. And we had gone out afterwards with John Varoski who was also Portuguese. That was a very prominent Portuguese family too. His mother was Braga [Mary Esther (Braga) Varoski, daughter of Manuel and Mary (Picanso) Braga], the Bragas. (A: Okay) So we had gone on a double date down to the Dutch Tea Room. My mother thought that was okay because she thought I was going with my friend after the football game (A: Yah) to the Dutch Tea Room, but little did she know that I was going with him. And so we dated then. And then what was coming up was, it wasn't called the Homecoming. It was called the Victory Dance. And that was the night after Thanksgiving. So he asked me to go with him. So I said, "Oh god. How am I going to get (--)" I would never be able to get out without telling my (--). And that's when I did tell my parents that "Oh, somebody asked me to go to the Victory Dance. Can I go?" "Is he Portuguese?" [Laughs] I said, "Yes he is!"

A: Technically! Because he really wasn't, like he really didn't know Portuguese culture.

B: No, he didn't. There was no (--)

A: Even though he had that ancestry.

B: That's right. That's right. So they said, "Okay, but we have to meet him," yada, yada, yada. And of course we were fifteen. So he came over to the house. His father had driven him, because his father was going to drive us to the (--). Because they were kind of strict too. Drive us to the dance and pick us up. So he came over to meet my mother and father, he thought. The whole family was there. My aunts, my uncles, my cousins, everybody was there! And I had to introduce him. So I did, and that's when it all started.

A: Did he know his Portuguese grandmother [Mary (Silva) Hogan] that well?

B: Oh yah. He was very close to his (--)

A: Did you get to meet her and everything?

B: Yes. Oh yah, of course. She was very, very nice woman.

A: What was her story?

B: Her story was her parents came over. They were immigrants from Portugal, Madeira, and they came to New Bedford. (A: Okay) And that's where they settled. And then she had met her husband who was Thomas Hogan, in the mills I guess. He worked in the shoe shops. So he, they met there and they settled in Lowell. And but she never kept her Portuguese culture you know. It was very funny, but she was a very nice woman, very nice.

A: Now when you met her would you speak Portuguese to her?

B: Oh god no. She spoke English. She was very American, very. Oh no, I would never.

A: Okay.

B: No, but she was glad that I was Portuguese.

A: Okay.

B: She still had that going for her you know. Okay.

A: Any final thoughts that you'd like to share with us Bea?

B: No, I don't think so. Hopefully I've helped in something.

A: No, it's been fascinating, really fascinating. So.

B: I don't know. I mean you know, I've led a dull, boring life too, but it's just the way it was.

A: Great. Thanks very much.

B: Thank you.

Interview ends