

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

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**S = SIMAO
F = FERTIG**

LFP BF-A006

[radio plays in background during entire interview, making it difficult to hear at times]

S: --because that's the, the feast. Ah, they do it every year. (F: uh-huh) And uh every procession they go, they invite like some different people, you know, the more--well, let's say-- (F: people who are leaders in the community) l-l-leaders in the community. (F: yeah) Like uh (F: yeah) business people. And also they invite the mayor to go to, to see with them. The traditions from the, over the Azores. (F: mm-hm, mm-hm) That's, that's what it was all about.

F: Are you from the Azores?

S: Yeah. I'm from the Azores.

F: What city are you from?

S: I'm from uh [Gracioso]. Ah, w-island [Gracioso]. (F: [Gracioso?]) Yeah. And uh, the, the city is like uh [Terceda], the island from [Terceda]. That's where they have the em, you know the em, like Boston, you have the small towns and all this. That's [Terceda]. (F: uh-huh) , that's our district. And uh, that's there where I went to the service, I went to school (F: uh-huh) nights there. And at the same time I was working there. And that's how I started from there. That's where they, the United States have the base, the Azores base there. (F: oh!) That's-- (F: yes!) where yeah--

F: And so you worked for them?

S: Mm-hm.

F: Does that have anything to do with your coming to the United States?

S: No. No. Doesn't have ah anything to do. What made us come in here like my grandfather in uh world four three, four three, where there was the war. (F: uh-huh) He went back to Portugal. And ah, evidently ah my father's--y-you know, he have like my father's American citizen and all the, the . (F: uh-huh) So I have my father and I, my father has another brother and they were--he, before he left, you know, he put him ah in Lawrence like was American citizen. So this is what a gives my father the , (F: uh-huh) come back. (F: uh-huh) Because there was kind of difficult to go to school and life is a little more tight than ah is in here so--

F: So how old were you when you came?

S: I, I wa--I was twenty-six. I was just get out of the service. From there then that's--I was--that's when I came.

F: Did you come by yourself?

S: No. I came with my father, my--all my family came at the same time. Yeah. But it was kind of ah, exciting for us because my father happens to work in construction. He was a construction ah, ah--he has his own company and he was over eh this island doing the building for the post office. (F: mm-hm) And this priest, an old priest there, he was ah in the United States with my grandfather. And my father didn't even know he was an American citizen, because my grandfather never told him; (F: oh-ho!) for the reason, you know, he was afraid they were going to take off and they were going to leave him there by himself. (F: mm-hm) It's probably one of the reasons. That's whether we more less we figured it out. And um, this priest over this island, he says "How come you never thought of going to the United States?" My father say "Well, I wish I could." And he says "Ohh, you can because I know if your, your father h-has you as an American citizen when he was there, and ah this, all this papers supposed to be in Lawrence, with some church in Lawrence where he was have them." (F: mm-hm) And ah, on this box your father have from the United States you should be a papers, you know, [good looking] picture, you know, (F: uh-huh) papers and ah that's, that papers would say. So my mother's uh write a letter to the island where we were. W--and uh he ask my uncle to look on the box, you know, and the papers were there. So they went down to the, the city and that's how we decided, you know, how we came up. (F: mm-hm)

F: So your-- (S: what's was--) had your grandfather been in Lawrence then, when he was here?

S: Yes, he was here, yeah. He was in Lawrence. (F: mm-hm) He was here for, for really quite a few years.

F: Did he work in the mills in Lawrence?

S: Yeah, in the mills in Lawrence. Yup.

F: And did you come straight to Lowell, or did you come to Lawrence?

S: [interrupts] I came straight to Lowell, yeah.

F: Did you have family here? Or how did you--

S: [interrupts] No. We only have friends. We have friends--well, actually we have friends in here, but that time Lowell has like more facilities for work, you know, was more factories (F: uh-huh) than was in Lawrence. (F: uh-huh) And so the friends were responsible us. (F: uh-huh) He says "I think the best eh if you stay in Lawrence", I mean in Lowell, and also y-like we have the Portuguese church, we have a lot more g--um Portuguese people in here than ah w-w--it's in, in Lawrence. (F: uh-huh) So we decided to stay in here. Which was good. And I al--for the twenty-two years we been in here it's, it's always been good, being in Lawr--in Lowell.

F: And did you say that you went into the construction business here [both talk]

S: Yes, yeah. Well, when I came I--first of all I have to go work in the factory, in the shoe shop. [chuckles] (F: in the shoe shop!) In the shoe shop. That was--that's ah, I guess everyone was that time, that's what we have to do and ah-- (F: uh-huh) So I worked there for three months. Then I went and work on one of those um, what they're w--they called wennalastit, where they have that uh historical (F: oh yes) museum (F: yes) and all this. (F: uh-huh) I worked there, too. (F: you did!) For six months. (F: uh-huh) Then, yeah, I--about ah ten months after that I was start working in construction. (F: uh-huh) I was start working in the const--our company from ah, Winchester, Winchester High School. And we--I work in ah Concord. Concord ah [Millis]-- (F: New Hampshire?) No, Concord, Mass. (F: [talks at same time] Concord, Mass., mm-hm) On that Concord school. they have the big eh high school. (F: mm-hm, mm-hm) That was my first job. (F: that was your first job) From there ah, I went to ah Winchester High School. I, I started there from, right from the ground. I stayed for three years when they build that, which was very good. At that time was a good money and-- (F: mm-hm) And I was very pleased, but it was the, the--was funny because at first the experience I have from construction over in the old country because al--my father always been in construction, and I know a little bit. I couldn't speak English much at all. It was, it was hard for me. (F: mm-hm) So, the--most of the carpenters they have um--you know, they put up a wall and I could more or less look what kind of stuff has to go on this wall, on that wall. And after we put one wall, I know exactly what the stock goes, and I put all the stock in, and sometimes they were talking to me, I didn't even understand. [interviewer laughs] I didn't even know what to do like for what. What's, ah was very good and everybody kind to like it, and I was the only Portuguese around [when he didn't], you know. I never--it's, was kind of ah, compliment they give it to me after, the way the what I done. That's why the, the company they never, you know--they really cared for me. And after two, two years or so they made me as a foreman, which was great, too. But (F: [talks at same time] you must have learned some English by then [laughs]) they didn't even know-- Yes, I w--I would know, I did know some. And uh we did Winchester High School, from Winchester High School we came from [Volks] we--Lowell. (F: uh-huh) I started in there, eh in [Volks] School until the end. From there we went eh to [Woodfor] School in Somerville. I start there, too. We went until the end. Then, like in the meantime on this, ah what oo I was

doing, I was working my eight hours in the construction, and eh I was buying like a building in Lowell, ah, fixing, (F: uh-huh) renting-- (F: a house or--) A house. (F: a house) A house. Sometimes uh--

F: I think we have company.

S: Oh, yes. Thank you.

F: Thank you very much! Yeah. That looks hot!

S: Well--mor--was--I bought a--the first house I bought was the house I l--whe--was living in. I live in here for eighteen years. I just moved about two years ago. (F: uh-huh) What it was at that time it cost me four thousand, yeah, and five hundred dollars, forty-five hundred.

F: Was that one of those houses--I've been told that a lot of houses had simply been abandoned and had gotten into bad shape and that the Portuguese who came over at that time bought those houses and made them all over and--

S: Yes, yes, yeah. Must a be one of the streets right by the river (F: yeah) there. (F: uh-huh) There--that's Concord Street, yeah. (F: yeah, uh-huh) Matter of fact on that street, was funny because uh I bought the house, the first house I bought er, you know, was really a-almost all going and um I started, I was working there Saturday, Sundays, you know. (F: mm-hm) And, came out good. Then after was done was a neighbor was Mr. [MacGoun], eh used to have a furniture store up on Gorham Street. And he saw the, the, the work I done and he came to-- because he has a six-family house right (F: mm-hm) on the side. What's at that time he was have--the rents were low and he has kind of a problem, trouble to collect the rents, and also-- And he came to me and he [offered] me the house if I want to buy it. So, I thought about it-- (F: [talks at same time] want some to eat?) No, that's okay. Uhh, I thought about it, and uh I talked to my wife and she was kind of little scared because, you know, was another--would be another building, and I start to figure out what the income was and all what was going to get fixed so-- (F: mm-hm) So I did. Was a six-family. And I--we're not too happy with the kind of neighbors was next door, too. Let's say, you know, it's not because I have anything against the Spanish, but was Spanish people and they would drink, threw the--my (F: uh-huh) driveway was right in the middle, (F: mm-hm) and they threw cans and--music so loud and so-- Was it, was kind of a little ah disturb eh (F: mm-hm) on the neighborhood. So, then I bought it. I went through the whole building, fix it, and today it's still the same way. It's, it's there and it's right next--

F: [interrupts] Do you live there now?

S: No. (F: no) No, I um, I was live in that house for eighteen years. I live there eighteen years. And uh about--through--two years ago, two years ago, (F: mm-hm) three years, we decided to buy a house, just a single house, up to the street, too. (F: mm-hm) On uh 45 Wentworth Avenue. What's, it's, was--

F: [interrupts] Is that up the hill from--

S: [interrupts] Up the hill, yeah. A little bit. (F: it's nice up there!) Yes, really nice. We're very pleased.

F: But Concord Street is very nice now, too!

S: Yes. Yes. But I didn't have as much room for park the cars (F: yeah) and all this. (F: yeah, yeah) That was the only thing. It's uh-- (F: mm-hm) I--if I had a bigger yard I would have be--I would have (F: mm-hm) still--

F: Did you get married here? Did you meet your wife here?

S: Ahh, no, I met wife over in Portugal. I was, I was seeing her for four years before I, I came. (F: mm-hm) Then, after four months I was here, I went back and I marry her and uh, she came up, she came over, then uh that's how we start.

F: Can you say her first name for me?

S: Naer. (F: Naer) Naer. [spells name] N-A-E-R. Naer. And uh without her--she was a great help. She did very good eh to help us out. Like she always took care of the bookwork and I was out doing the work and (F: mm-hm) it was, it was a great things. (F: mm-hm) But now it's kind of too big uh, too much to do and we get it a little-- Because somebody has to be here on this all the time. What's--I feel a lot tired, too than what I was before. And my attentions is like have some like that, you know, it's, (F: uh-huh) it's a little easier than be out there banging nails and (F: yeah) take walls down and (F: yeah) move walls down. So I figure some like this would be like a little retire and, you know, a little income for retirement and all this.

F: Well, you must like it better if you're going to go on and do a, a, a new restaurant.

S: Ah, yes. (F: yeah) Well I'd like to do-- What my dreams is always going in the building and see an old building and, and renovate it. (F: uh-huh) That's, that's--some like this I, I like to do. It's, (F: mm-hm) it's my dreams and, you know, it's--I, I, I really enjoy do--just started uh, doing something, you know, it's like under the ground and (F: uh-huh) bring it right up (F: uh-huh) and all this. I even like this even better than if I do a new construction. Like the building up on Concord Street, as you go on Concord Street? (F: uh-huh) I just finished that. That's mine. A-a green--

F: [interrupts] So y-you're still doing construction as well?

S: Ahhh, from the last three months I didn't been done anything. (F: oh) For the last three months I, I ain't been done anything. But I just finished that last eh--this summer. (F: mm-hm) Ahh, which that building was in really bad--bad condition. Ah for a while there I was, I was kind of thinking was a little too much, (F: uh-huh) and I was getting a little tired but uh-- But it was, was great, was--

F: Well now, tell me about your decision to go, to, to um, (S: from--) to be a restaurateur

after being in construction.

S: Well, when I was in the service uh, I, I always like that, because I was like in charge of the kitchen. (F: uh-huh) I used to do the, the--I used to come to Lisbon. I was right in, in the airport in Lisbon. (F: uh-huh) And was a lot of exciting because I uh, I used to the--all the shop for the, for the kitchen, for the cokes and uh all that, and uh-- Of course when you do that and you feed everybody and you see everybody eh goes out with feeling good, you know, (F: uh-huh) i-it's gives you a--I, I, I think it's great! And if everybody, you know, like in here I w--I'm really concerned is people, is people comes in and they didn't like the food, I would appreciate it if they say they don't like it. But it's nothing better than people say "Oh, I, I like the food. The food was good, so." That's a very um, very uh, good feelings. (F: mm-hm) I do like to see people uh-- Course I, I like, I don't like to eat much, I-- But when I was a little younger, I, I really enjoyed food and all this, and, (F: uh-huh) and I, I thought it was great. And I like to be around people, too. It's--that's, that probably one of the reasons it's makes me (F: uh-huh) go for this more, because, see this way here I have the opportunity to see people and, and uh hear a lot of different ideas, and so-- (F: mm-hm)

F: And so, th--you decided, you to--you told me the other night, you decided to open a restaurant because no one was serving Portuguese food in Lowell?

S: Ah, there was a lot of , too about that, yeah. It was because uh, is a quite a few people, ah they used to go from here to Cambridge, because there's a Portuguese restaurant in Cambridge. Then um, they ah--when I first opened--even before I was open, I was start talking about I was opening, a lot of people would say "Joe, yeah, you do the right thing, because we really need a good restaurant," and, you know, (F: mm-hm) in Lowell because we didn't have one, because we have to go to Cambridge; we have to go here (F: mm-hm) and there to eat Portuguese food. And what it was, I have um, a license from before and I says "Well, since I have the license I might as well do it." And that's how, how it's came true.

F: You had a license from before?

S: Yeah, I got a liquor license from before. I used to own a bar, ah, a bar on the corner where all-l, a lot of blacks used to be, you know, on the corner there, well-- (F: well, I don't know it, but uh--) Well, yeah but it--that's, that's the license. I used to have it in here then. (F: mm-hm) I been really uh [tricky] with the, with the city of Lowell I guess. (F: uh-huh) So I have that, and they took the building for eminent domain which was a rooming house, was a nice looking building, nice looking building. If I have that building today, yeah was--what a dream that would have be. Yeah.

F: And that was just up on the next corner [both talk]

S: [interrupts] Yeah, right on the next corner.

F: Is that next to, next to Barry's uh--

S: Before Barry's. (F: before Barry's) You know, as you go, as you go up in here, you

know the white building in here? (F: yeah) You know the empty lot in here with-- (F: yeah) That's-- (F: yeah) it was that-- (F: that's where--) there were-- (F: that was where it was) That's where it was, yeah. (F: ohh!) Yeah.

F: And they just took it down.

S: Just took it down. They had to widen--the state has to widen the street. (F: uh-huh) They didn't have it all this uh uh and the (F: mm-hm) winch for that. And actually, after all there was no use to take it down, but-- (F: no) One of those things. Yeah more less I keep myself eh very occupied. I always have like a two jobs, uh two and a half jobs uh-- [interviewer laughs] Yeah.

F: And how many children do you have?

S: Two. (F: two of them--) [interrupts] Yeah, Joe-- (F: [interrupts] I'm looking at them, right?) Yeah. Joe and Karen. (F: Joe and Karen) Joe is seven and Karen was thirteen.

F: And you speak Portuguese at home?

S: Y--ahh, most of the time.

F: [interrupts] I mean Karen, Karen is very fluent in both languages.

S: Yes. Yes. Oh she--what we done ah with Karen is like every year in ah school vacation she--we--my uh grand uh, grandfather, my, yeah, my uh godfather is there and she goes there with them, you know, she goes there for a month or so, (F: ohh) and she-- (F: how wonderful!) Yeah. She's learned--she pic--she can write it and, and read it in Portuguese, too. Yup. (F: terrific!) So we still have some parents in there like cousins, second cousins. (F: mm-hm)

F: Do you get back at all?

S: Yes, I did. Uhh, six years ago I was there.

F: Uh, do you belong to um, any Portuguese organizations in the community?

S: Yes. Yeh. I'm a member of the Lowell United. Which is the club, and also the Holy Ghost Park. (F: uh-huh) And uh, that's, that's almost it, and yeah. And the ch-Portuguese church of course. (F: of course [laughs])

F: And do they celebrate the Holy--the Feast of the Holy Ghost in [Gracioso]?

S: Yes, oh yes. That's wh--that's why that feast is so, (F: uh-huh) so big in here because that's a really a tradition from [Gracioso]. (F: everywhere in the Azores) Everywhere in the Azores--actually it's everywhere in Portugal. Everywhere in Portugal. Even if you go to Lisbon or everywhere, that's-- Yeah, but I would say it's probably a little stronger than uh in Portugal, I mean on the Azores (F: mm-hm) than it's in Lisbon. Yup.

F: Now, are there any traditions that you practice at home that w--that, that you can tell us about? What do you do for Christmas?

S: What do we do for Christmas? (F: yeah) Well, for Christmas we have the codfish. We have a big dinner.

F: You have the codfish? (S: yup) How do you fix the codfish?

S: Ahh, with the oil and vinegar; with the vegetables.

F: Oil and vinegar and vegetables. (S: yeah) Oh I think I know. You put it out on a platter, (S: yup, yup, yup) and you put the oil and (S: mm-hm) vinegar over it? (F: mm-hm) Oh.

S: That's ah, that's the plate for that. (F: uh-huh) And of course we all have our presents. We have uhh Portuguese moonshine; a bottle at every house; glass of water to [hose it down]. (F: really?) Yeah. [both talk]

F: What, is it wine, or--

S: Uh, no, it's like a brandy. It's a brandy. It's on the brandy side. (F: uh-huh) And they have these cookies, you know. They make they own cookies at that uh day.

F: What are the cookies like?

S: Dry cookies. Y--like uh, regular sweets, you know, like uh w--

F: [interrupts] Are they anything like the biscuits that you buy [both talk]

S: Yes, like the biscuits, yeah like--some like that. (F: yeah) Yeah. They have uh like some islands has a different ways, the different to do. (F: mm-hm) But th-that's a big party. That's--(F: mm-hm) that's a big uh--

F: And for Easter? Do you have Easter?

S: Pr-- Yes we do. We have the sweet bread; (F: uh-huh) with the egg on the top. (F: with the egg on the top; ah-hahh) That's--and every body has to put uh, wear their new clothes, you know. More (F: uh-huh) or less (F: uh-huh) they all have to dress. Yup. The same. Then they all go to the cemetery to see their parents after the church. But it's a very good uh--very big day, too. (F: mm-hm) But it very, very seldom you see a person who doesn't, you know, dress in new uh, (F: in new clothes) in new clothes for that day.

F: Are there any other holidays or feast days in the islands that are not celebrated here, or that are only celebrated (S: [interrupts and both talk] San Martin) among Portuguese?

S: Sao Martin. That's-- Sao Martino uh it's, s--but the other holidays are kind of small, you

know. It's (F: mm-hm) not really a holidays. You don't really take uh the-- Ahhh, that's the-- that's one, Sao Martino, it's a holiday. It's a holiday but not for everybody. Like if you want to go to work, you can go to work. If you don't want to work--i-in--I mean no one calls this a really a holiday (F: uh-huh) but they celebrate that. And that's that one. And that's like the trick or treat in here. That's the first, May first, that's what they have it in Portugal. That's on May first, you know. (F: uh-huh) People goes, you know, to the ocean and they have a picnic and-- It, that's-- (F: ohhh) Yeah. It's on May. It's like in the spring. (F: uh-huh) That's, that's a day what everybody drinks their wine and, yup. (F: uh-huh)

F: And what did you say it was again?

S: Ahh, May first. It's like the trick or treat in here; when yo--the kids goes around, asks for the candy and all this.

F: It's like trick or treat? (S: yeah) It's (S: yeah) like Halloween? (S: yeah, Halloween, yeah) Well, how is it like Halloween?

S: Because um everybody goes and share. (F: ohhh) Ah, (F: okay) they share and they have um, you know. Everyone shares eh things, and they all go to the ocean and (F: uh-huh) have a, (F: uh-huh) a day out. Yup. It, that's because then that's, that's almost it. The holidays is more or less the same. (F: uh-huh) That's--

F: Tell me about the rooster. It's on the table there.

S: Ahh, well that's a tradition from, from the main, from (F: oh) Lisbon, (F: oh) yes. Eh every restaurant, every restaurant you go more or less has one of the roosters on them. I guess they say that's good luck for the restaurant. But that's a very old tradition from everyone. (F: uh-huh)

F: Are there any other things in particular that you do to bring good luck?

S: Ahh, I guess pray a lot. Pray a lot and be happy. (interviewer laughs) You know, have to thank God for (F: uh-huh) another (F: yes) day, (F: uh-huh) and for um-- It's--I think that's the main thing is, is you really have to be strong and just eh hope for the best, that's--

F: Portuguese are very religious.

S: I would say yes.

F: This church seems to be a very strong and well supported church. (S: yes, yes, yes) [talks to someone else] That's okay. Come here and talk to us. [chuckles] Okay.

S: Yup. That picture you see there, that's a picture from the mainland where we came from. (F: that is?) Yeah. That was uh taken, I don't know, nineteen, twenty, [both talk] nineteen ten. (F: did you find that here or did you bring it over?) No-o, I bring that over because that was from my father when my father was in the service. And uh we had that over in Portugal, so

when I was there I, I brought it with us.

F: Now, when your father was in the service--

S: Was over in Portugal.

F: So he was in the Portuguese--

S: Army. (F: Army?) Yup.

F: Were you in the Azores during the Portuguese Revolution or was that um-- (S: ahhh--) I don't know hardly anything about it. Uhm--

S: Well, I was--when I was ahm--th-they have all this problem with Angola, Mozambique. (F: uh-huh) They, they did had a, a--it was a kind of serious thing becau--I was probably one of the lucky ones, I didn't went to Angola, (F: uh-huh) I, I went , but-- (F: uh-huh) Was, was a, a sad thing. Was my--

F: [interrupts] And the government changed?

S: Yeah, the government changed, changed, changed a lot. It's a lot better today than (F: it is) what it was (F: uh-huh) before. E-even so, we all know it's a poor country, you know. (F: uh-huh) It's a small country. But to be very [true], I am very proud of being Portuguese. You know-- (F: I think you must be, yes) Ahh, as you look on historical ah things from, with the Portuguese people, they--then--as you read--of course every time any nationality when they read they, they always read the best they own (F: yes) things. (F: uh-huh) But i-it's, it's been a lot of ah results about Portugal. Course Angola I think was a mistake, we do have to agree, kind of a--It's a mistake, we shouldn't hold on that, that long. (F: mm-hm) But even so was a lot of the investment be putting in there, too. (F: well, I understand how that is,) Ahhh-- (F: it's very hard to give up) Yes, it's very hard to give up. Like we go to Macao, the China has that, it's (F: uh-huh) a small piece, but uh (F: yeah) even so nobody really likes to give away (F: right) what's uh, what's is--

F: Well, you had that for so long, (S: yes) too.

S: Yes. (F: yeah) Well they still--now they's try, they tried to give it to Macao, but eh, you know, it's like a transaction I guess they doing. (F: uh-huh) Mozambique was another one. Cape Verde, that's another one. (F: mm-hm) So, if you really looking in the district o-o-of Portugal, we, we, we have been a very [success]. I went to Brazil last-- (F: you went to Brazil?) Yes. (F: oh) I went to Brazil-- (F: tell me about that) a year ago, yeah, it was last month. A year ago. I alw--my dreams is always go there to see, because Brazil and Portugal used to be like two brothers. (F: uh-huh) Then, like was so far, ahh, so one took Brazil and the other one--oh, no. Was Brazil and Spain was two brothers; and uh Brazil was all Portuguese. But, since it was too far I guess, they, they ask for it to be independent and then Portugal-- But it's, it's always been a very close uh (F: mm-hm) friendship. But I was so--that's the only country actually it speaks the same language the Portuguese is Brazil. (F: yes, yeah, yeah) And uh I was so impressed about it

because uh, you learn a more about Portugal if you go to Brazil, (F: yeah) than you almost can learn in Portugal. E-Every monument you see, you know, this is eh, was so-and-so from Portugal. (F: uh-huh) Very little French people was there, but you see; so it's a combination French, Italian--and French, Italian, and what's uhh, what's another nationality, I saw it some-- But as far as uh names and everything it's all Portuguese, Portuguese, it's-- (F: uh-huh) It was very--

F: [interrupts] What cities did you go to, or what (S: I went--) place did you go to?

S: I went to Rio. I went [Bahias], El Salvador. That was the first uh capital of Brazil. (F: uh-huh) I went to Sao Paul. Then I came back, but it was--I went on those areas there. I like Rio. Rio was beautiful. But uh, for a vacation, vacation eh would be [great]. Life there is kind of, kind of little um expensive to live there. I mean you (F: oh) really have to have uh, you really have to have a lot of money (F: uh-huh) so you be able to live there. It's-- But it was very interesting. I uh--

F: [interrupts] Were there good Portuguese restaurants?

S: Yes, yes. They do have very good Portuguese restaurants. Portuguese, Italians, that was the best restaurants. Italians, they have a lot of Italians. Chinese, eh they do have, too, but not, nothing really (F: mm-hm) as good as like I can say--and good service, that people. You have the garcon, that's the waiters and all this. (F: mm-hm) They goo--they had a good service. Of course, the labor is so cheap. People works there just for the tips. (F: uh-huh) There's no pay! They going in there, if you have a very, very good name restaurant, people is [offer] service to be in there for free, without pay. Just living on their tips. (F: mm-hm) So that uh, that tells you how desperate that (F: mm-hm) people is eh to (F: mm-hm) make ah--

F: Would you go back there for another vacation?

S: Yes, I would. I-I, I certainly would. I would because uh the weather is so beautiful and uh, people is good, too. The people there is, is good. (F: uh-huh) It's too bad, just it's so far, you know. It's like twelve hours flying, straight. (F: oh, yes!) But eh the weather-- (F: [interrupts] that's further than Europe) Yes. (F: isn't it?) Yes. (F: yeah) But it, the weather is beautiful. The weather there is--beaches, beaches, yeah.

F: Would you like to live in Lowell for the rest of your life, then?

S: Mm-hm. Yeah, that's my dream. (F: uh-huh) I, I will have a dream for this. Probably--well, like my parents they're still, they still have eh, over in the Azores they have their houses and they have somewhere.

F: Are your parents here, or over there?

S: My parents are here. My mother still lives. And all my brothers are living. So w-we been talking about that for quite a few times. Just fix a house there. When someone wants to go there for a vacation they have a place there. But I--no one of my--my mother loves it in here.

From the day, from the day she get out of the airplane and walks on the airport, she loves it in here. She, you know, she will go if we go just to visit, (F: uh-huh) but not to uh--

F: Does she live with you?

S: Yes, she lives with us, yup. But uh she's, she didn't want to go back, she doesn't. Because she's, she find himself a better chance to give to all of us than uh, in here than could never been in there, because-- A mother I guess, that's like every mother who wants, who cares about eh (F: yes) family, and they (F: yes) all look for the best and she, she was really a, appreciate that a lot, you know. Yup.

F: Does she have things that she does outside the house, too? (S: n-no, she's--) Does she have a circle of friends--

S: Oh, yeah, she has a fr--ah friends. She goes over the friends. And she's always go to church. She's always there to help the priest, (F: uh-huh) to (F: mm-hm) help uh, the community. Like uh, Holy Ghost Park, they have feasts sometimes. (F: uh-huh) She goes there, helping in the kitchen. (F: uh-huh) She helps, eh you know. She always, she always busies, it's-- She still makes clothes, you know, she--

F: She makes clothes?

S: Clothes at home. Like uh for Karen or uh my other grandchild, eh yeah. If it's a very special--like Easter. (F: uh-huh) She always uh fix some kind of dress for her to be different, so-- (F: uh-huh) She was a, she was a, she still is a very active. She's seventy-six, but she still moves--

F: Portuguese families are very close, aren't they? (S: yes, I--) It's very important.

S: I--ah, yes. It's very important for the, for them. It's, it's very, really much important. It's--I don't know, it's probably w--the way they were brought up because like in here, in Lowell, if I, I--most of the people, I would say probably a good th--sixty-five percent, if it's not seventy-five, they all came from that island where we came. Like you go to Peabody, you going to find people from a, another island. (F: uh-huh) Cambridge, you have a lot of mixed, from the most of the, the--like I would say from uh two or three islands, because it's right close to the airport and, you know, (F: oh) you see so many, you know, different ah people from the same islands. Lawrence, you go to Lawrence, it's another island, it's like flor--eh florists; they have--it's flowers. That's a island with a name flowers in Lawrence, there's a lot of them there. You go to New Bedford, New Bedford, I would say New Bedford. A lot of people from San Michael. (F: mm-hm) That's one of the biggest islands. That's where they have that feast every year. That's a feast you should eh probably do some over there. The, they call them ah [Festa des Madeiras]. That's from this isalnd. That's eh--that's the biggest feast eh from the Portuguese eh people. You c--

F: [interrupts] That's called [Festa]--

S: [Festa des Madeiras]. [Des Madeiras], that's the name of the island. [Madeiras, Madeiras].

F: Like I would say Madeira?

S: Yeah, Madeira. (F: yeah) Yeah. That's island, that's--

F: [interrupts] And they have that at St. Michael's?

S: Ah, they have that in New Bedford.

F: And they have that in New Bedford? (S: yes) And, and uhm, tell me a little bit about it.

S: So, what happens in there is they have the [Signora de Loret]. That's this um--

F: Oh, that's the, the, the one that I have a picture of you marching in.

S: Ah, yes. (F: yes) We have that (F: yes) in Lowell, but in, in New Bedford (F: yeah) they do one so bigger, much bigger than eh, than that. (F: uh-huh) Ahh, that one, comes people from Canada, people from California, buses uh, you talking probably ten, eleven thousand people from--all Portuguese, they get together then they all go-- That's one of the biggest (F: uh-huh) feasts uh, because it's--I, I think that was one of the first feasts eh Portuguese people was doing, in ah, in New England. And it's, carries such a big name everybody (F: uh-huh) goes there then. (F: uh-huh) And there you can try all kinds of food, you have all kinds of dances, you have eh (F: uh-huh) all kinds of [attractive] eh things.

F: Is that, is it the same day as the one here?

S: No, no, (F: no) it's not the same day. It's, I think it's three weeks before ours. (F: uh-hah)

F: Uhm--

S: Since was so many Madeiras in here, they decided to do this in here because certain people (F: uh-huh) couldn't go there. (F: uh-huh) And that's, that's the, the, the tradition from that island. Madeira is a very good island. Madeira is a very, very nice island. That's a good weather all year round. (F: ohh) Oh, yeah, they have all kinds of motels there, like the Hilton and all this, it's--

F: Oh, really. (S: yeah) Oh, so it's, it's really, it's internationally--

S: To--international, yeah. That's an international island, yes. (F: yeah) Yup.

F: Have you been there?

S: Ah, I went by there. I stayed just on the airpor--on the airport. When I went to Lisbon, as we go--when we go to Lisbon we had to make a stop there where that's-- Yeah I'd see a lot of

movies from there, too. But that's--people goes there just for vacation. You know, it doesn't have to be Portuguese. From France goes a lot of people there.

F: Yeah? You listen I'll put the--

[end of tape]