



Cidalia Gomes Lobo

Interviewer:

All right, so this is Emily. I am here with a storyteller who's going to tell us this story. So why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself and we'll get started.

Cidalia Lobo:

My name is Cidalia Gomes Lobo. I was born on the island of Brava, Cape Verde Islands in 1948, the daughter of Domingo Andrade Lobo, and Olivia Dia Gomes Lobo. My parents had six children. I'm the fourth. The children was Ablino, Adelina, Ocelia, Cidalia, Deolinda, and Jose. Adelina and Jose is deceased. Olivia was the daughter of Adelina Dias Gomes Lobo, and Manuel Cayello Gomes.

Brava is the smallest island, the group of 10 islands in Cape Verde, the smallest of the 10, approximately six and a half miles long. My parents made the courageous decision to move to America for a better life for them and for the children.

And my mother came alone because there was not enough funding to bring her and the rest of us. So we came a little at a time. After my mother arrived here in New Bedford, she stayed here for about a month, then she traveled to California to meet up with her two brothers, Daniel Gomes and Jose Gomes. They lived in Sacramento at the time. After my mother came, she was able to get a job as a housekeeper. She worked and saved every penny. And a year later, she sent for my brother, which was the oldest, in order to avoid the draft. So he had to come first, and then they came and worked together and saved every nickel again. And we sent for dad and my youngest sister. And then a year after that, myself and one of my older sister, it was our time to make the journey.

Interviewer:

How old were you?

Cidalia Lobo:

And I was 14 and my sister was 17.

We made the journey together from the island of Brava into the next bigger island, which is San Vicente in just a little boat. And I remember as a younger girl, I was pretty smelly. We got pretty sick, but then when we got to San Vicente, things were better, and then we were able to board a bigger ship to Lisbon. And so we stayed there about two weeks and then made our way to the United States. Up to that point, we were pretty comfortable. There was a lot of other people that spoke our language or Portuguese that we were able to communicate with. Though once we got in the plane heading to United States, it was a different story. Then we couldn't understand anybody, nobody else understood what we were saying either.

But then when we got to New York, we expected to meet up with our family. Well, that wasn't the case because they were in California, of course, we didn't know what was going on. Finally, they took us off the plane and we went for a long walk and finally got to this room. There was a bed, and so we figured, well, maybe we need to go to sleep. So we did.

And then we were awaking by this ringing sound, which at that time we had no clue what it was. Knowing now it was a wake-up call, but we didn't know that because we didn't even know what a telephone looked like or what we were supposed to do with it. So that was pretty funny. Well, thinking now, it wasn't then. So we decided to pick up the phone, but we didn't hear anything and we put it back down, but it stopped ringing, so that was good.



But then in a little while, so we decided, well, maybe we better get dressed. So we did. Soon there were people at the door with breakfast, so I guess it was a good thing we got up.

And so we ate breakfast, and then they went back and got us and took us to wait for the plane. So we did. We went down and sat and wait, and they finally put us on the plane and we head to California. Then It was an exciting reunion with the family. They were all there waiting for us. So that was really, really a happy moment.

And then the next day was our trip to the grocery store for the first time. So we went and we were amazed with all the different foods and different things that we saw, different kinds of food that we'd never seen before. And of course, they loaded the carts with all kinds of things that they thought we would like, plus many, many, many, many other stuff. And so then we head on home, and some of the food we like, some we didn't like, but soon enough we got used to stuff. And my mother cooked a lot of Cape Verde dishes, but along with some other dishes that she had learned to prepare. And she was an excellent cook, so we were happy.

And we lived in a small town in Walnut Grove, California, and my family started working on this mushroom plant picking mushrooms. Well, my father and brother used to prepare the beds that these mushroom grows on. And anyway, they picked mushrooms. So the whole family. I wasn't at age to work, but even my sister at 17 and she went to work with them. But six months later, the plant was closing and they asked our family if they would like to move to Oregon, which there was another plant. And so that's how my family ended up in Oregon.

And my mother and brother went to check the place out along with the supervisor of them, and they decided, yeah, we'll make the move in order for the whole family to work at the same place. My brother was the only one that spoke just a little bit of English, and that was able to drive. So he thought that was the best place for us, for everybody to be together.

And so we made the move. Well, but before they went back to California together, the rest of us, they bought a small house in Salem, Oregon, and then they would return to California. Well, we all load up in my brother's 56 Ford and drove to Salem, Oregon with just a little trailer with a few of our belongings. And when we got to Salem, the little house they bought had been caved in by a Columbus Day storm. There was a big tree that fell on the house. And so we were all devastated. Now, what? But I don't know, my mom and brother had enough knowledge to be able to, they bought the insurance on the house, so the house was repaired short time after that. So we all lived in Salem, Oregon until I moved. I got married and moved away here to New Bedford in 1970.

Interviewer:

How old were you then?

Cidalia Lobo:

I was 20 when I was married, so I lived here in New Bedford and I had two children, Jonathan Gonsalves and Theresa Gonsalves, and my husband was Enrique Gonsalves. He was also from Cape Verde. And then unfortunately, I lost Jonathan one night in 1992, and we lived here until 1990. Well, me and my first husband ended up and we had a divorce, so I was few years alone.

But in 1990, I remarried, and that's just before I lost Jonathan. And then Theresa got married and moved away to New Jersey with her husband after college, and then me and my new husband, we moved to Washington State. We lived there almost 20 years and then moved back here to New Bedford after the retirement.

Unfortunately, that marriage ended up in divorce, but I am now living here in New Bedford, which I love. And I have wonderful friends and family and my church, my church family, our Lady of Assumption Church, and this is the area that I most love. And so I am back and doing well.

Interviewer:

Great.



Cidalia Lobo:

Thank God. My brother and sister still lives in Oregon and their families, and that's the resting place for my mom and dad as well, and my sister.

Interviewer:

What were your first impressions of New Bedford when you first moved here?

Cidalia Lobo:

Oh yeah. It was just before. I mean, right after... No, I moved here just before the riot.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Cidalia Lobo:

And that was a very scary time for me. I worked here in downtown New Bedford for Sears. They used to close the stores and send us home. There was curfews and oh boy, I wanted to go back to quiet Salem, Oregon, let me tell you. But we got through it. But I love the culture and the community was just great right from the start, otherwise.

Interviewer:

So how was it after you moved away and went to Washington and then came back? Was it much different from how you remembered it from the first time you lived here?

Cidalia Lobo:

Well, no, because we came back often. The family's here, and so we did visit it every couple years we were back. So no, we didn't notice that big of a change.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Any final things you want to talk about? Anything maybe about Our Lady of the Assumption that you want to talk about?

Cidalia Lobo:

Oh, yes. I've been going to Our Lady of Assumptions since I baptized my daughter back in 1972. And the children, I raised them in the church, and so we were very much involved throughout the years. My daughter sang in the choir until she went away to college, and she got married in that church. And my son, of course was buried from there. That's my big family, is our Lady of Assumption Parish. And I came back from Washington and picked up where I left off and very much involved in doing what I can to help. I do the environment at the church and plus wherever they need a hand.

Interviewer:

Can you elaborate on what that is?

Cidalia Lobo:

I do the changing of the colors and the decor of the church, and I do some floral and whatever needs to be done.



Interviewer:

Do anything special for holidays?

Cidalia Lobo:

Oh, yes, yes. We decorate big time for Christmas and Easter. Yeah, it's really a welcoming, welcoming church.

Interviewer:

Nice.

Cidalia Lobo:

And I've been involved doing the float every year for the Recognition Day parade. And there's many, many activities that goes on that we do to raise funds. As matter of fact, we're doing a dance tomorrow.

Interviewer:

Fun.

Cidalia Lobo:

To raise funds for the church.

Interviewer:

For the recording, can you talk a little bit more about the Recognition Day parade?

Cidalia Lobo:

Yeah, actually the parade started in 1970, what was it, '74? That was the first parade. And I remember my daughter, I made her this cute little dress. She looked like a little Cape Verdian girl. She was on the parade for the first time. She was just a little, little, little, which at that time, sister Marianna Sylvester, which she's still around, and she did a lot of stuff with the kids at that time. And so my daughter loved it. So yeah, every year, the first weekend of July is the Recognition Day parade. That's when it's a combination of 4th of July Recognition day, and that's when Cape Verde became independent. So that's the big celebration.

Interviewer:

Great. Any last final things you want to talk about before we stop the recording?

Cidalia Lobo:

I kind of skipped around a bit.

Interviewer:

That's okay.

Cidalia Lobo:

It's kind of hard to pinpoint. I'll say my daughter, she has blessed me with three granddaughters and I do visit them often.



Interviewer:

Nice.

Cidalia Lobo:

Right now they're in Arizona, so I miss them terribly. But I'm fortunate that I get to visit. And then my family's kind of scattered everywhere. My aunts and uncles settled in Napa Valley, and so they're still there in the wine country. And I am fortunate that I get to visit a lot and sample some wonderful wines. And again, my sister and brother's in Oregon, so I visit them. Yeah, I think that's about it. I guess.

Interviewer:

Thank you so much. This has been really wonderful hearing about your life story.

Cidalia Lobo:

Yeah, thank you.