



William Corvello

My name is Bill Corvello (full name William F.). While a native of Dartmouth, I have not lived in Massachusetts for many years. As a memorial to my parents, Roderick F. and Mary S. Corvello, we have been regularly contributing to the Museum over the years. My father, a native of the Azores, came to this country aboard a whaler as a young boy, enlisted in the Army in later years and served in France during WW I, settling in Dartmouth after returning to the states. I left Dartmouth High School to enlist in the Marine Corps, serving in Korea with the 1st Marine Division in 1951-52. Returning to the states, I settled in Virginia as a member of the state police, eventually being appointed Superintendent of the department by Governor Douglas Wilder. I am a graduate of the College of William & Mary. Following is my contribution to the Common Ground, A Community Mosaic.

In the early 1940's and as a resident of the Sol-E-Mar area (I'm now a healthy 88), I was a newspaper carrier for the Standard-Times serving residents of the general Padanaram village and extended area. My delivery route began when I picked up the newspaper bundle at "Ma Russell's Store on Elm Street next door to what later became Ray Woodhouse's Grocery Store at the corner of Elm and Bridge Streets in the village. Immediately across from Ma's was the Tilton family residence; Charlie Tilton being a fellow student at Dartmouth High School and an outstanding basketball player. Two doors further west was the Catholic Parish that was occupied by Father Downing, directly across Elm from the Catholic Church. To us Catholic youngsters, Father Downing ran a tight ship; we were always on our best behavior in his presence. Further west on Elm was Jim Simpson's Auto Repair and immediately next door was the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Lucas. Mr. Lucas was postmaster at the post office located at the corner of Elm and Bridge at the time and one of my very favorite adults. Our family rented post office box #102 and whenever I stopped by to pick up our mail, Mr. Lucas always took the time to converse with and treat me as an adult. In later years Mrs. Lucas, a much beloved and respected lady, was cafeteria manager at Dartmouth High on Slocum Road. Turning left on Prospect St., my paper route took me around to Bridge Street at the Padanaram Bridge and the Swanson residence. Carl Swanson was my age and could be found much of the time fishing on the bridge, thus his nickname "Scup". Across from the Swanson's was Sam Dunn's Fish Market, another customer of mine. One of Mr. Dunn's brothers was Ben Dunn, the town Truant Officer, whom school boys all feared. The teachers at the Padanaram Grade School would threaten to call Mr. Dunn should any of us pose a behavior problem. I began the 1st grade at Padanaram School under Ms. Marshall and it was here that I became acquainted with other students who became good friends. Incidentally, the second grade teacher at Padanaram in those years was Marian Freitas, 3rd grade was Ms. Ashton, then later Bertha Hurtle – Ms. Ashton as principal did the spanking when such became necessary; you extended your hand out, she held it then walloped your hand with the strap one or more times depending on the gravity of the offense. Fourth grade teacher was Ms. Walsh, loved by everyone as I recall.

Moving on from Sam's Fish Market north on Bridge, we came to Brown's Drug Store (note it wasn't pharmacy back then, it was Drugstore). Across from Brown's was Julia's Lunch where one could get a burger for twenty cents! Crossing Elm and just north on Bridge was a Texaco service station operated by Mr. Maynard who was well known in the community. Mrs. Maynard, equally well known, was a 6th grade teacher at Cushman School who taught music. One paid strict attention in her classes or suffered the consequences. Continuing north on Bridge Street, we came to the District Fire Station on the right. Many residents of the area were volunteer fire fighters and the station was the center for various community activities such as voting as well as for entertainment with Friday night movies.

As we moved north, Bridge Street gradually elevated to a hill from its intersection with Middle Street south. In the wintertime during heavy snows, Bridge Hill as it was known became closed to traffic and opened to sledding!! Young and adults alike came from miles around to sled on Bridge Hill during those times.



Moving west on Middle from the intersection of Bridge, my next delivery was to the residence of Dr. Joshua Weeks on the right. Many my age were acquainted with the Weeks children – Randy, Billy, and daughter, Diana, was the oldest. In later life Diana married Henry Berry, an excellent author of books about the Marine Corps, my favorite being one about the Corps in Korea entitled “Hey, Mac, Where Ya Been?”

Two doors further west was the residence of another of my customers, Dr. Gendron, a local dentist and his family. The next residence just west of Gendron’s was the home of the Pettway’s – sons Brander “Bud”, and Robert “Doddy”. Bud was older of the two and a fine basketball player while at Dartmouth High. Mine and Doddy’s friendship began at Padanaram School and extended through high school and I considered him my best friend during that period. We each went our separate ways following high school; Doddy to college and I to the Marine Corps and we never again met. I was saddened to learn later of his premature passing.

From the residence of the Pettway’s, my route took me from Middle Street onto Prospect and east from Prospect into another residential area. My next delivery was the residence of the Dahill’s – Edward Everett was Fire Chief, City of New Bedford. His son Teddy and I were members of Boy Scout Troop 58 which met at the Congregational Church on Middle Street, our Scout Master at the time being Ralph Metcalf. Ted was a fellow student with me through Dartmouth High where he excelled at football. Following graduation from high school Ted entered the navy, became an officer and helicopter pilot. As many will remember, he enjoyed a notable naval career and piloted the copter that picked up one of the earlier astronaut crews from the Pacific where they had alighted after drop from a space flight.

Next on my route was the family residence of Manuel King and son Milton, an exceptional athlete and fellow student through high school. Milton and I remain in occasional contact even now. I next delivered the Standard to the Strain family and seemed to find their son Ted doing homework each time I came by. Ted was another notable athlete at Dartmouth High. In recent years I learned that he had married the former Gloria Hollis, a student at Padanaram School at the time I had attended. I also recalled that a relative of Gloria’s had been member of an explorer team that had visited either the Arctic or Antarctica, if I remember correctly, and who presented a program on his experiences to us Padanaram School students.

My next delivery was to the residence of the Manchester family, daughter Joyce (now Joyce Huffines) accompanying me through high school. Joyce and I remain friends through the present and often communicate. She is among others of that period who have continued as close friends and remained in contact over the years – Eleanor Paull King, Theresa Mello Freitas, Eleanor Protami White, Joan Rocha Cass, Clete and Nora Anthony Lawson, Russ and Sue Schofield Worseley and Bob Vieira.

My final stop was the residence on School Street of the Packard family, daughters and twins Janet and Janice, and son Roger. I developed a crush on Janet in the third grade and couldn’t understand why it was such a hopeless cause. Should you ever have opportunity to view a snapshot of me during that period you would clearly understand the reason – when virtually all the boys were already in long pants, I was the only kid in the school still sporting knee length britches with knee high boots that sported a jack knife in a side pocket! To add to the impossibility of it all, I was not a handsome “dude” as its now defined!!

While my thoughts and recollections of the long ago in the Padanaram and New Bedford areas as a youngster are generally pleasant and satisfying, I can now understand that the relationships between the Anglos and Portuguese in those days left much to be desired, a natural reaction between long term residents and the recently arrived. Such might be considered as occurring right now across our nation, but in the extreme. Hopefully, all can ultimately get a grip and come to terms.