



Francisco Arruda

Translated from Portuguese

Interviewer: Say your name.

My name is Francisco Arruda. I came here in [hesitation] 2081, in 81, eighty one.

Interviewer: One thousand nine hundred eighty-one.

Eighty-one. I am here. Never went back to Portugal. Never went again there. I am working.

Interviewer: From the Azores or Continent?

I am Azorean. St. Michael.

Interviewer: St. Michael?

St. Michael.

Interviewer: County, cidade, which?

Still is Ponta Delgada.

Interviewer: Capital.

I belong to the County of Ponta Delgada. I live in Santo António. A parish more to the north. I belong to the county of Ponta Delgada. That is my parish. I came here to work. Work, work, work. Was until now. Now I did my retirement. Now I rest. But I am going there this year. This year or next year I go. I have my house there and everything. It's probably in need of repair and old.

Interviewer: Your work here as?

I had various jobs. First, I started doing boats, fiberglass. In Warren, Rhode Islasnd.

Interviewer: Ok.

After I went to the construction field, cement and all that—construction. I was there about 7 to 8 years. After that was heavy work, I said: "I am going to find a lighter job in a factory." And I went to the scissors factory, making scissors here in New Bedford. I was there about a ... After went up to the shop of knap shoes, the shoe factory.

Interviewer: Knap shoes?

Yes, the shoe factory. Yeah, I was there. It was my life, that one. I was only working. I didn't make no history.

Interviewer: Activities, outside of work? Church, family.

Church, yeah. Family. My mother died already. My brother too. My brother died las year. Died at age sixty-something. He dies suddenly. That is life.



Interviewer: Did you visit the islands before you immigrated?

No, didn't get to, I came here—never been there. Never been, but I want to go there. I never been there.

Interviewer: Got family there?

I have cousins only, cousins. More distant relatives. Don't got family. My brothers are all here.

Interviewer: You live in New Bedford, or ...?

New Bedford, Ever since I got here, have always lived in New Bedford.

Interviewer: Do you like to row boats? Or only to build them?

Rowing, rowing, never been. I would travel in [boats]. There yes, but here no. There in St. Michael we would go to sea. At times I would take trips there. Row no. They had a motor.

Interviewer: Do you like to fish?

Fishing? Sir, don't tell me if I know. Me? I don't know how to fish. Would like to know, but I don't. Fishing, don't know. I don't even know how to hook a lure. You know what is to hook a lure? To prepare a fishing pole, nope, I don't know. I was a farmer. You know what is a farmer?

Interviewer: Farmer?

Work in the field, to dig with a hoe, you know? I went to school until I was 11 years old. Started school with age 7 and exited at age 11. I left at 11, went to the fields. My mother was poor, my father was already dead. And we needed money. We had to work. I was the youngest and went to work/hoe the soil at 11 years of age. I would travel from Santo António to Sete Cidades. Do you know Sete Cidades?

Interviewer: Yes, I ...

To Sete Cidades carrying bundles of large grass on our backs. You know what is large grass. To build dividing walls. To make walls. To make large grass. We would carry with other boys. The older one, the ones there longer, to cut the large grass so we could carry it to the town there. They were carrying the large grass there. It would take almost two hours from Santo António to inside of Sete Cidades, every day. It was every day, every day.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

It was a pain. I was a child. And there were more, not just myself. More, more boys to work there. We needed to get there, at times it was raining like it is raining here now. Go back. It was almost a lost day. It was almost a whole day lost. I mean, you get to the top and can't even work because it was all mud. At Sete Cidades, that is most pastures. In Sete Cidades, not pastures? It was all mud, you couldn't carry it on your back it was all water like it is here now. Everyone was sick, pain in the lower back ... [inaudible]... You are Portuguese? Yeah? You are not Portuguese?

Interviewer: My father's family was from São Miguel, but my mother wasn't Portuguese.

It's because your father would probably know what I am talking about. He would know what I am saying here. It was more like slaves. You know what are slaves? It's work, work. Only work. We had no value. We didn't have value. It was like a slave. Endless work.

Interviewer: The same happened with my grandparents here at age 13. Work, don't need to go to school.



It's work. But it was a very sad life. A side life. Here, if I had know how to fish and all, when I came here, there were many fishing boats and all. And still are. And Portuguese, they are. I would have spoken to a captain of a boat to ask if I could go. But I don't go there. That is back to the head, and you do nothing but throw up. But it would have been good. My story is weak.

Interviewer: Have you been in this program for many years?

I have been here, I got my American papers from here. I was in school here to learn English for the questions to have my American passport, it was here. I have been here since 2016. Two thousand sixteen. 2016 I came here. And two years, that is two thousand eighteen, I got my American papers. I have an American passport, I have everything. It was the best thing I did, we are American and that's it.

Interviewer: This program here is on Wednesdays?

Wednesday? No, Tuesday. This program is on Tuesdays. Tuesday.

Interviewer: Today is Wednesday, no?

No, today is Tuesday!

Interviewer: Feels like Wednesday.

Wednesday (laughs).

Interviewer: Anything else?

Mister, my life is this. Went to work, it's work.

Interviewer: But the stories of people that worked in this city, in this area, at times they are important. Your story is very similar to other people's stories.

Yeah, immigrants..

Interviewer: They work, work, work, work.

It's only work.

Interviewer: Go to church on Sunday, and then back to work.

At times they don't even get a chance to go there. At times don't even got time to go to church. I worked many jobs out there. I worked in Boston, every day would go to Boston. Boston, Providence, Connecticut. I even worked also in Connecticut also. It's a sad life. But it's the life of the poor. You have to work, you know.

Interviewer: And now, what do you do during the day, generally?

Nothing, it's at home. House work. I have been retired for three years.

Interviewer: Dis you do a garden?

I don't have a garden. My house does not have a garden.

Interviewer: Only an apartment?

It's a single-family house. Only one residence. It's no mine. It's my wife's. It's hers. It's a single-family house. It's not a three-family. It's really close to here, right after this church. And that's life.



Interviewer: Mr. Francisco, thank you very much.

You are welcome. I liked, I liked talking to you, sir.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time.