



# Pauline Roderiques

My father, Jeremias Francis Mendonsa, was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1903, and was the eldest of five children. He stayed in elementary school until the third grade, and then had to work in the textile mills to help support his family. My mother, Georgina Ventura, was born in New Bedford in 1913 and was one of 12 children. She stayed in elementary school until the sixth grade, and then had to work in the textile mills to help support her family. Both parents' parents immigrated from St. Michael, Azores. Both fathers went to work in the textile mills while the mothers stayed home taking care of the growing families.

My father took responsibility for his mother and siblings after the death of his father, Swel Mendonsa. During the Great Depression, he moved his family for financial reasons to New York City and worked in the Brooklyn Boat Yard, and later at professional children's school. He passed away in 1961 from lung cancer and pneumonia.

My mother knew of the Mendonsa family before they moved to New York, and on a visit there with her sister as chaperone, she fell in love with Jeremias and they were married in 1934 in New York, living in the borough of Queens. My parents had two sons and a daughter, with only the daughter, me, living at home until 1960s. My mother missed her family who were still living in New Bedford and moved back to New Bedford in 1967 along with me. It took me about a year to get accustomed to the huge change between life in New York and life in New Bedford, but eventually the proximity to the ocean and my extended Azorian family helped me grow to appreciate the area.

About the second year in New Bedford, I fell in love and married a young man from the area, and we have a son and daughter that have stayed local and we have two teenage granddaughters. After passing away my husband Raymond, I spent my time healing by taking walks at New Bedford's Fort Taber and Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven. The salt air, call of the seagulls, and the fishing fleet and natural beauty of the area, to this day revives my soul. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.