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John Nicholas Brown Center For American Civilization,

Interviewer: Scott Middleton

Narrator: Winston Lima

St. John's Cathedral, Providence, RI

Middleton: This is Scott Middleton on March 6, 2009 interviewing Richard Worrell about his experience with the Fox Point neighborhood of Providence, RI as part of the Fox Point Oral History Project to be archived for posterity at Brown University. Our legal agreement will be signed at the end of the interview. Mr. Lima, I thought we might start at the beginning, were you born in Fox Point?

Lima: Yes I was. I was born on 10 Wickenden Street.

Middleton: On Wickenden Street, would you mind telling me the year?

Lima: 1941, February 12, 1941. Keep that in mind. That's where I got the name, well 1941 keep that in mind, that's where I got the name Winston because of Winston Churchill.

Middleton: Is that his birthday?

Lima: Well that's because of the war you know? Pearl Harbor and all of that was, you know. And I could've been named Abraham because I was born February 12. Thank God they didn't name me Abraham. But, you know.

Middleton: Were you parents born in Fox Point?

Lima: No, my parents came from the Cape Verde Islands. And both parents were born in the islands, and all the children were born here.

Middleton: And that was typical of Fox Point in that era?

Lima: Well in those days yes. The parents came over and the children were all born here. Today it's not the same. Now if you look at Cape Verdeans today most of them were born on the islands and they came over here after they were born. But I think basically when we were kids. And most of them came over here to be whalers

in New Bedford and that was the job that they took. Because Cape Verdeans, and I always brag about that, are probably the best sailors in the world. I mean, we would come to this country on boats without engines before that was a thing you did. And they had two boats, the *Ernestine* and the *Madeline*, and they came, I don't know I'm not sure about, they were here every other year. And they came without engines and they sailed from the Cape Verde Islands to Rhode Island and, you know, I would say the laws were not as strict as they are. They used to bring food. And people came, and you know, but now today you couldn't do that because the government wouldn't allow it, especially, you know, with immigration and everything else.

Middleton: So where did you go to school?

Lima: At my age, let me see, I didn't, Fox Point Elementary School wasn't there. I went to Thayer Street School and then Thayer Street School was torn down before we finished and they built Fox Point Elementary School, but that was being built when I should've been there. So what they did was we went to Nathan Bishop up here on the East Side, which we, which was a junior high school and they put Thayer Street School students in there and we went. That was our elementary school. So I, instead of spending three years at Nathan Bishop, I think I spent five. And then we went to Hope High School, which is up the street up here.

Middleton: You mentioned that Thayer Street School was demolished while you were a student. What was that like?

Lima: You know, that part I don't, it was just a school. I'll tell you even where it is. It was Thayer Street School between Charlesfield, Thayer, yeah. Between Charlesfield and Thayer. I don't know if you're familiar with that area, there are dorms there now. If you look right next to Thayer Street School, Charlesfield, Thayer, and Power, that used to be a field, which is more dorms. And we lived on, you know then we had moved from Wickenden Street to Benevolent Street, which basically is not Fox Point, but you know close enough. And you know, we went to Thayer Street and then, you know I don't remember a whole lot, I was real young then because I'm the baby of ten. So my brothers and sisters have more input on that, but I do remember 'cause my mother used to take us to school there and everything else. And I remember more, as I said, Nathan Bishop. We used to catch the bus down at the Bond Bread Bakery. They used to, my mother would

take us down. Bond Bread Bakery is, used to be, Brook, John and I can't even think of the other street. And anyway there was a bakery there and we used to catch the bus there and that used to take us up to Nathan Bishop. And you know Thayer Street I don't remember a lot. I recall a lot about Nathan Bishop. You spend five years somewhere you gotta remember a lot about that. Nathan Bishop, I think, is still up there. They're gonna make it a charter school now.

Middleton: Can you tell me about your teachers in Nathan Bishop.

Lima: Oh yeah. I have, there were two teachers that really I remember a lot. And that was Miss McCaffey, no she came from, she was at Thayer Street. But I remember her from Thayer Street because this woman could tell stories. And this woman was so good at it the kids were always quiet because she was a good storyteller. And then I remember my American History teacher, Miss McGavigan, I don't believe, she had one arm, she only had one arm. She was very strict, but she was good I remember her. I remember the principal, his name was Wayne W. McNally and I don't know if you're familiar with Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd, well it's a cartoon, but this guy looked just like Elmer Fudd and that's what we used to call him. Elmer Fudd instead of Wayne, well we didn't call him to his face. But it was a great school, you know it was, we took the bus. When we were in elementary school we took the bus because we were too young. But once we got to junior high school we walked from Fox Point to Nathan Bishop, which is up near Brown Stadium. So, you know, it was like you had a social life in there. You know, you walked with a bunch of kids and you had a great time because, you know, you horsed around going to school, you horsed around coming back, you walked with the girls and all. So you know, it was a real quality time, you know. Because when you got home you had to do some work.

Middleton: And how was the transition to Hope High School? Did you enjoy that as much?

Lima: Yes. Hope was, well, 'cause now if you went to high school obviously you were big time then, you know? The thing I remember, Nathan Bishop was more a neighborhood school and Hope had a tremendous amount of diversity. Believe it or not, Hope High School was probably the number school in the state for its diversity and everything else. Kids came from the South Side and the East Side, Fox Point. They came from all over the city to go to Hope because it was that type of a school you know. It was really hard to get into Hope.

Middleton: Was there an application process?

Lima: You know, I'm not sure how it worked. I know I went and I didn't care how anybody else got there, but kids did come from across the, you know they could've went to LaSalle, Central was there, all these schools were there. And as I say, laws or whatever rules they had weren't as strict as they have today. They try to keep people in their neighborhoods. But Hope, you know the funny thing about it is. I remember Hope from Nathan Bishop usually was a transition. The kids you went to with at junior high

school you went to school with in high school. You know, you just move from school to school. And I remember at Bishop there was a large community of Jewish kids and there were minorities. And we knew each other, so we knew each other for what, maybe six years 'cause we went to school wherever we moved we went. I sat behind a boy name, his name was Stephen Lende, Jewish kid. And I sat behind that kid for five years. You know because they put you in alphabetical order. And so I knew him very well and every once and a while, even today, I'll see him in a restaurant in East Providence and you know we talk. And that's probably one of the things I liked the most is those kids were my friends then and, if they're still around, they're still your friends today. And that sticks with me the most about school.

Middleton: So you maintain a close relationship with people you went to school with?

Lima: Well not as close as you'd like to, but I mean you could see them anywhere and as I said I still see some of them. Some of them are judges, lawyers. And we still remember each other and we're still friends and that's good. We didn't have that, you know, we were Fox Pointers all around here we really didn't have that much of a problem with the. You know, the problems they have today with the people mixing and all of that. I mean I'm not saying we didn't have that. But it wasn't that big a problem. I didn't realize all this segregation and all this stuff until I got old enough to go in the service. And it became a big shock to me when I first experienced that.

Middleton: Were you at Hope High School, do you remember the so-called race riots?

Lima: No, I got out in '61.

Middleton: Oh, OK.

Lima: And when, wait a minute, I got out in '58 excuse me. '61 is when I got out of the service. At Hope we didn't have no things like that, I mean I'm sure they had fights and stuff every school does, but you know. There were never any problems that I remember that were big problems in that school. I'm sure they had a few big things going on there, but as far as, you know, problems with different races were not that big a thing that I would say it was an everyday occurrence. I'm sure it happened, but not the kind of thing where you had to everyday worry about going to school. See, as I said, I came out of Fox Point. And we had all nationalities down there. We had the Cape Verdeans. We had the, of course, we call them Portuguese, you call them, you have Yumbabs. There that we call them "White Portuguese" we're the "Black Portuguese." "Port-a-geese," "Portuguese," I'm just using those expressions. And those were my friends, still are my friends. And we had

Armenians, Irish, you know they lived their little groups. If you think about Fox Point, Gano Street and all of that was the White Portuguese and when you get to the middle around East Street the Irish were all in there. The Cape Verdeans were down more around South Main Street, Pike Street in that area and the Armenians were on Benefit Street. And you know we lived together for as long as I remember and when we went to Hope we went together. And if there were any groups that wanted to pick on anybody it wasn't about what color you were, it was about what neighborhood you came from. And that wasn't allowed. If we went, you know, and the white guys were there and somebody wanted to pick, "No, no, no, they're from our neighborhood. If they go, we go." It was that type of thing and we still have, like yesterday I was at a meeting for the Fox Point Boys Club – the alumni, I'm in the Association – same guys I went to school with. Same stuff, we're still doing the same thing. And you don't see that much today.

Middleton: You mentioned that you lived on Benevolent Street, which is actually north of Fox Point. Did you feel removed from Fox Point at all because of where you lived.

Lima: Yeah. I did. But you know, we went to, matter of fact some of my friends bust my chops about that every once in a while. "You don't live in Fox Point anymore." Well, you know, rightfully I guess they could say that because we lived a little outside of Fox Point. My father, he had a vision and he bought two houses on Benevolent because they were house in the front, house in the back. And I was much older when they did that. But we got up, every Sunday morning and we walked from Benevolent Street all the way down Brook Street to Holy Rosary Church. Everything we did, everything we always did all the time, except we just moved a little bit further. We were not allowed to drive cars. Nobody, well I wasn't I was only a kid. But there were ten of us and for some reason, my oldest brother I don't know how he got out of it. But my mother and nine children, every single Sunday, we walked to church. And we looked like ducks.

Middleton: Did you get dressed up?

Lima: Got all dressed up and went to church. People would be sitting out on their front porches. You know, in the morning, drinking their coffee in the warm weather. We'd wave and talk. My mother would stop and we'd talk. We'd walk to church. We'd converse after church, we'd come back and talk with the same people. And they always looked forward to see you, you know the ten of us every week. And that was the story of our life, my mother, we did things together. We ate together. There was none of this you eat, you come in, you go out. No, no, no, no. You need to be home everyday at, a lot of times to eat. Those meals.

Middleton: Could all ten of you fit at one table?

Lima: Well sometimes, no not really. We kind of ate in. Well we had the kitchen and the dining room were together and some of them ate here, some ate there. But we had a dining room table that we could stretch out and make it big enough with the, you put the slots in it and make it bigger, but we didn't do that. It was kind of informal. Some ate at the kitchen table, like that was one table there, the dining room was here. But we were all together. It was lax. I don't mean we all had to sit down, but we were all at one time sitting there eating that meal together. And the same things with holidays. But with Cape Verdeans everybody's welcome in your house to eat. And the way they would do it, my brother would always bring people home on Thanksgiving Day. I don't know why he did that, drove my mother nuts. But the proper thing to do was, we would have to get up, and the guests would eat and when they were done we would eat. But it was always a tradition that I could go in the middle of the week and not eat supper in my house maybe sometimes for a couple of days because when you hung around with your friends and your mother said, "You guys want to eat?" she would feed us all. And that's how we lived. But most of the time you ate with the family. That was the only way you could get out of it, was if someone offered you. And I hung out with a group of five or six guys, we were always together, and a lot of that always happened. A family would feed us. "I'm not eating, mom. Mrs. Palace fed us, Mrs. Britto fed us." And, you know.

Middleton: Since you mentioned the Boys Club, how often did you hang out there as a kid?

Lima: Always. The Boys Club is the heart of Fox Point. The Boys Club was actually down here on South Main Street at the corner of Power and South Main. And it was the oldest Boys Club in the country and they tore it down. Goes to show you how people can do what they want if they've got money. Now that's, and you've heard me talk about this Miss McCaffey. Now she was a teacher and she was the librarian at the Boys Club. And she was a teacher. And you're talking a place where you'd go for fun, but she could actually get guys in the library to listen to stories, she was so kid at that. You know you could've been swimming or you could've been doing arts and crafts. And you know kids would go in there to listen to this woman tell a story, but the Boys Club was one building and the swimming pool was another building and you had to go through a tunnel to get to the swimming pool. And if you talked to anybody in Fox Point you're gonna hear a lot about Fox Point Boys Club because I think it molded the lives of most of us. You know we could've went, with this day and age with kids getting in trouble. A lot of that stuff could've happened then, but we went to the Boys Club six days a week. And you know it was a Boys Club, it wasn't a Girls Club. And it wasn't until a lot of years later, "What did the girls do? What did my sisters do?" And I never realized it because my whole life and most of my stories are based around the Boys Club. And as I said we, still today, have an alumni that's close to 400 guys. And when we need things they don't question it. We get a spaghetti dinner that's gonna be held in Holy Rosary Church May 5th. If you're around, you call me and I'll get you a ticket. You wanna see a bunch of guys? You wanna see how Fox Point works? You come to that spaghetti dinner. They'll be 2, 300 people in

there. Very diverse. And you'll hear a lot of stories. I'm telling you, you can't beat the place. We always say, there's only two kinds of people in Rhode Island. Those who lived in Fox Point and those who wished they lived there.

Middleton: So did you play a lot of sports at the Boys Club and in High School?

Lima: Oh yeah. Fox Point had, 'cause, there were big families in Fox Point. And the average family in Fox Point I'd say could be anywhere from five to ten kids, but we had them as many as 18 kids in the family. And most of our families, you know, like in my group and in all the other families there'd be a boy that age. And it'd be, you know. We kind of, every family you had a trade-off. People in my family the same age people in their family, so I hung around with their son. So that's how all of my friends. They came from big families, probably the kid's the same age as the kid in my family. And we played every kind of sport you could think of down at that Boys Club. And we were good at it. Providence Boys, it was called the Providence Boys Club in those days. PBC. And we had parents' night, we had everything. You're too young to remember Johnny Weismiller. Johnny Weismiller was probably the original Tarzan. And they somehow got him into that club to swim and I never, in my day, I could still see that guy. Seemed like he swam that whole pool in about five strokes. And, you know, the Boys Club was your life because we didn't have showers in the house. We didn't have hot water and all that stuff. So there was two places you go. You could either go to Boys Club to take a shower or they had a shower house down on Wickenden Street near the Boys Club now. And that's how you got clean in those days.

Middleton: So did the girls have to go over there to shower?

Lima: Have no idea. I'm embarrassed. I'm a 68 year old man and I could not tell you what my sisters did, you know, with their spare time. The girls hung with the girls, the guys hung with the guys. And I'm ashamed to say that and I ask my sister, "Well what in the world did you..." I'm telling you, my whole life is based around that club. And I never knew what my sister did in her life, but I know like anything else, women did things that women did and men did... Kind of chauvinistic view of today, but that's the way it was. I know they didn't, my mother didn't have them washing floors and doing that, they had lives of their own, but I was into mine and I never, you know, I had three older brothers and they all went to the Boys Club just like I did. You know, you had something to look forward to when you were growing up because when I was a kid my brother were playing sports. My brother, one of my brothers, he played basketball for Hope. Actually they all did. And like I said, if you come down to Fox Point at any given time you'll hear sports stories of people that played sports. Everybody did. Me, I was never that great at it, but I was the sixth man on the... 'Cause at that time when you went to the Boys Club, community league basketball. This is all the organizations in the City of Providence. The YMCA. And we competed against them, the leagues. And this is what you did, you were never on the street because you were so busy into these sports programs. Today they don't have those things. If you look at Boys Clubs today they have nothing for the kids to do. Nothing. And these kids, you must have, if I'm right, somewhere in the neighborhood of about, in Providence alone, maybe about 30,000 kids

and you know there's only maybe about 2,000 of them going to Boys Clubs. So where are the rest of them? They're out in the street. It's an entirely different thing, we tried to change that, but you know. As of right now Olneyville doesn't have a, well they're tearing it down because they need a club. It's the oldest club of the five. They're taking up collections, they're gonna build them a new club. Now that area where Olneyville is must have 15, 20 gangs. And you know, it's. You gotta get those kids out of the street. They gotta build that club, 'cause it's the only refuge these kids have. If they're not in the Boys Club or something like that they're gonna be in these gangs. You know. And it scares the hell out of me.

Middleton: So after you left High School, you joined the service?

Lima: I went in the service.

Middleton: Did you feel like you had any alternatives at the time or that was what...?

Lima: No, see. This was a big problem in the city. I won't say all of them, but we were encouraged as children and I remember the teacher, I'm not gonna give you the name that's irrelevant, but I remember her always telling us, "You know, you children your mother and father can't afford to send you to college, so you should think about getting a job in the jewelry shop and everything." They discouraged us from going to college. At least my guidance counselor did. And they discouraged us and they pushed that. They pushed that a lot, that you should think about getting a job in the factory because your mothers can't send you to school. Well there was some kids in my class that didn't buy into that. Me, I wasn't heavy into education, I did it. You know I graduated, actually, I graduated I was only about four months after I was sixteen so I was never that dumb. But we never got the encouragement from school to pursue higher education and for that I kind of have regrets. You know, that I wasn't forceful enough on my own to wanna do that. And besides, we were always taught as kids that you had an obligation to your country and if you weren't going to college, you needed to go in the service and do your tour of duty. Because at that time they had a draft. And my father was in World War I, my oldest brother World War II, my brother Sidney, he was lucky he didn't get in any wars. He was in between, but he served. My brother next to me, William, we call him Willy, was in Korea. I came between Vietnam and my brother's son was in Vietnam. And my other nephew was in the Gulf Wars. So we took it as an obligation. Today you don't see that. I mean you look at people on TV and all the people that, the powers that be, they're not sending their kids to the service, they're never gonna send their kids to the service. And with all the problems we have there's a big gap between the people that control this country and the people that live in poverty. I don't think the news people, I like a lot of them, but I don't think they have any damn idea on how poor people live. You know I don't wanna get caught up. I wanna see in a minute, and excuse me for, but what happens is just a little example and I don't wanna hold you up, is down here we have people sleeping in the park [meaning Roger Williams National Memorial] because they have no place to go. And they serve a soup kitchen in here. And the other day, the lady from the Historical Society and when she got down the hill, she got to the park and people were sleeping in the park. She called the police on them because she was never so

embarrassed that they interrupted her sight-seeing tour. And you know, that's what you're looking at today. There's no compassion here with people. And my family, most of us from the Point, are fortunate because of places like the Club that we ended up alright in this world. And it's only for that reason that I think people have to be more conscious of people that don't, the have-nots.

Middleton: So let's get back to the service. If all of the males in your family enlisted in the service when they became young men.

Lima: Right.

Middleton: What did all of your sisters do?

Lima: There we go again. They got jobs, my sisters all worked.

Middleton: Where did they work?

Lima: They did work. You know, it's unfortunate, you know, I never really got into that, but they all had jobs. They all went to work somewhere and, you know, my mother wasn't one for allowing her children to hang around. We all became independent. Two of my sisters were nuns. They became nuns and they went in the convent. And one of them went to a convent in Africa. The other was up in Boston. They were Cloistered Order, so they didn't come out or anything. Eventually they both came out. Well my younger sister was a nun and she went to Africa and they build the convent. They built it, they scrounged and they got everything and when they finished it the Pope took them out of there and put a French Order in there. And, you know, she kind of was a little ticked off about that. She got out of the convent, she had been there over 25 years. And you know, that's, that's how life treats you and it's not always fair. You know, as I said, my father always believed that we had an obligation to do our duty and we did it. I mean, I'm sure that if one of us wanted to go to college he was OK with that. Actually, I ended up going to school when I got out, but I believe that's the difference between today. You know I don't deny anybody not going to college, but you gotta look at somebody like Dick Cheney who has five deferments. Now what does that tell you about somebody with five deferments? He had no intention of doing any kind of military duty. And, but you know he loves to talk about how this country it and what it is, but he never served. And that's what I see. If I've got any bitterness in my life it's that people that like to run this country have no intentions of really sending their children or themselves to protect it.

Middleton: Well to get back to Fox Point.

Lima: Right.

Middleton: Where was your father employed when you were growing up?

Lima: My father was a cook.

Middleton: He was a cook.

Lima: And my father cooked many places, my father cooked at the Minden Hotel which is Johnson & Wales on the corner of what is that?

Middleton: That's Waterman and Brook.

Lima: Right, right. He cooked there. He cooked, he went where the money was. And he cooked at Breakers Hotel down in Narragansett, he cooked everywhere. And, you know. Cape Verdeans are either cooks or fishermen.

Middleton: So did he cook for you as a child or did you mother cook for you?

Lima: Oh, yes. My father was, you could call him, a professional cook. And I love to tell this story. I could tell it more, God forbid my mother ever hear it she'd probably smack me. My father cooked, my mother cooked. And when my father was in between, we'd rather, we'd like to have my father cook because my father cooked like he would if he was, you know, doing it as a job. So when he cooked in the house and you sat down to eat, that kitchen was spotless because as he cooked, he cleaned. See. And we all had jobs in the house. Mine was clean the kitchen. So I loved it because when we sat down I didn't have anything to do. When my mother cooked, pots and pans all over the place. So when she cooked, we sat down to eat, that sink had pots and pans that high. She didn't clean them. And my father believed in not big bowls of salad. Individual bowls. And he, as I said, he cooked, you know, as if he was working. So when we ate, we ate good food. They both of them were great cooks. My father cooked you thought you were in the restaurant. My mother cooked, you know it was the big group thing. The big plates and everything else.

Middleton: So, well, where did he learn to cook? Do you know?

Lima: Probably the old country. Yeah. That's probably what he did all his life. Yeah he was, he was a good cook. My father was a very smart man. He, a lot of the Cape Verdean would come to our house when they wanted to write letters home because they didn't know how to write, you know, Cape Verdean. And they would come there and they would dictate and he would write letters and he did a lot of that. And my mother did, like at the school, at Thayer Street, she would interpret for people. They would call her. My mother never worked a day in her life. Well she did, she got a job at the school, but it didn't last. My mother was a stay-home mom. And, but she did, she once in a while they would call her up there when they'd have some child in there or a parent that couldn't speak English they would call my mother to go up there.

Middleton: So did you speak Portuguese in the home?

Lima: No. That's a regret. They did. And I could understand, I understand. We all do.

But I would say the top eight in my family not only could understand it, they speak it, but my sister Carol and I, we were just little and we were just too busy having fun and it's my biggest regret is. That we're the only two that don't really speak the language. But, yeah, Cape Verdeans can talk to us and we'd know what they're talking about. You know, it's, you have to understand. I come from a family of ten, five were born, my mother and father went five years without having any children and then the other five were born. So there's a big gap. I'm the youngest and I'm 68. And my sister Pauline is 86, 86. Yeah. So, you know. There's a big difference in us. That five, this five.

Middleton: So when you got out of the service did you return to Fox Point?

Lima: Oh, yeah. By that time we lived on Benevolent Street, but still Fox Point and you come back, as I said, it's like a badge of courage. You go in the service. And that's, when we were in the service we were at Fort Dix and a couple of the other guys, the older guys were getting out. And I'll never forget it, we were in the barracks and they were in Fort Dix too, but they were transitioning. They were coming, getting out of the service, we were getting in. And they came to visit us in the barracks and had to be a real proud moment because they were real soldiers, we were just recruits. We were in fatigues and stuff, you know, work clothes. And they came in, you know, with their uniforms on and all their medals and you know. And all the guys looked at us, you know they thought we were something because we knew real soldiers, you know. But all through the service, wherever you went you look for anybody that came from your hometown, you know. You know, that was, you know, another thing too about the service is from my brother Willy down, we were in an integrated service. But from my father to my brother Sidney, they were all in segregated outfits. You know. You know if you think about it, we're only talking 55 years. 55 years ago I was sitting in the back of the bus and I remember being in Delaware and when we went down to Fort Bragg, that we went to a restaurant to eat and all us black guys had to sit in the bus. We couldn't go in, we couldn't go into the restaurant in Delaware and get anything to it. They made us go to the back door, where the garbage cans were, they gave us a bag lunch and we had to sit in the bus. I'm sorry, I said 55 years ago, so I get a little damn irritated when I hear people talking about the race card. You know. There's anger it's a good thing there's anger. We had groups like the Black Panthers and all of that, but that's just that frustration of the time. And it's still, it hasn't gone away. It's much better, but people still do those things. I see them around here, I walk down the street. You walk by a car and you hear the door click. I say you.

Middleton: So what was, while we're speaking about race, what was the civil rights movement like in Providence in the '60s? Was it obvious that it was going on?

Lima: Oh yeah. They had their little, you know, meetings and marches and everything else, but one thing you say about the people down south, they were a hell of a lot more honest. They just told you exactly what they thought of you. Here they were a little, they pat you on the back today, but they weren't giving you a job, you know? It's it's it's it's, we've always had people that were prejudiced. We still have people that are prejudiced. I worked for the same company for 40 years. And all the guys that ended up being boss, I broke in on the job. And the whole 40 years I was there, I trained everyone of these

guys and the whole 40 years I was there I worked with two other guys. Not once was I ever asked if I was interested in upward mobility. Not once. Not once. And the other two guys I worked with, who I was senior to, they were asked numerous times if they were interested in this job, that job. And they never asked me once.

Middleton: What kind of work were you in? Who was your employer?

Lima: I worked for the electric company. I was a lineman. You know, I don't take it for granted, it was a good company to work for, but, you know, it was, there was no upward mobility for no minorities in that company. And, you know. And it's still you have the same problems because most of the guys I worked with were senior and we trained most of the people that came through there. And that's just the way it was. You know. I, you know, I'm just kind of a little bitter about it, but I don't let that stuff bother me. It's just what it was. And the things happen like that, but, you know, I just really get a little ticked off when I hear people talk about, "This guys playing the race card," and all that crap. You know. We got a right to be a little angry because those things happen, but all of a sudden, just things happen in this country and you know. I don't know, I don't wanna get into that part of it because I know you're not interested in all of that, but it's just the way I lived my life. But, you know, I'm happy to be where I am today and not the whole country's bad, not everybody's bad. There are a lot of good people in here and, you know, those are the people you gotta focus on.

Middleton: So when you joined the service was that your first time traveling outside of Rhode Island any great distance?

Lima: Any great distance, yeah. You know, we used to go to Martha's Vineyard all the time for vacation, you know. We were poor, but we did things together. Let me tell you one thing about poor people is, you do manage to get around. It isn't like you're stuck in your house or anything. I used to just say, if they ever wanna get rid of problems of people's prejudice, just make everybody poor because, I'll tell you, that makes you all calm and you don't have problems like what color you are. All you're thinking about is where your meals are coming from. And I think that's one of the good things about coming from Fox Point, everybody was poor. But going in the service was a rite of passage. And my brother, Willy, was airborne. And I was, that was the place to go, you know. Could you turn it off for a second? Just one second.

Middleton: Yeah.

Lima: Yeah the service was, as I said, my brother was airborne. And I, I remember him coming home with his uniform on and I was, you know real proud of him and I swore, that's what I'm gonna do. And that's right, I went airborne and I went in the same outfit he did, the 82nd Airborne. And my nephew, my oldest brother's son, who we're almost the same age, about a three year difference. I went in the Airborne and he saw me in the Airborne and he went in Special Forces and, you know, he went to Vietnam and all that. You know, we're proud of our military history and, you know, we believe in, you know, that. But there's no more draft, which I think is kind of, you know, you're not getting a

good example. You know, if you really wanna complain about things that are happening in here, serve your country. Then you got a perfect right to. But I just really don't understand because we gotta lot of people, but if you look at Representative John McCain, now, there's a guy I can be proud of. Now I didn't like his policies, but I'm proud of the guy because he was so good at what he did, but. You know, I think we should have a draft, but let's not get into politics.

Middleton: So where did you work when you returned from the service?

Lima: Oh, OK. I came back from the service and I decided I wasn't going to work right away, so I went to what they called trade school. Well what they did was, when you got out of the service, you could, you know they had these trade schools to teach you a trade, and they would get you a job. So what they would do is instead of collecting unemployment, they had a 16-week course in the trade school. So I went to a machine shop course with a bunch of guys who just got out of the service and we would go to the school, you know, during the week and they taught us a trade. They taught me how to be a machinist. And, you know, we also had a social life with this because we, you know, hung around together and they ended up. When I got done with the trade school, they gave us a job and I ended up getting a good job at what they called Brown and Sharpe, which was one of the machine shops. Very good money. So, you know, then when they gave me a job, then I worked at Brown and Sharpe. I put in, I submitted an application to the electric company, the post office, but I ended up being in Brown and Sharpe for a long time and, where else did I work? Oh, yeah. And then I ended up getting a job in the electric company, then the post office called me. But before I got in the service, I was a peanut man. I worked for Planters' Peanuts. That was just after I got out of, you know, while I was in the high school. My mother made me get a part-time job. I used to run around with that little peanut outfit handing out peanuts in the city. Little, you know. Had to have a little humility to wear that damn thing, but as I said, my mom didn't allow us to hang around. There was no hanging around, you were gonna work. I also shined shoes as a kid, I used to go out every Saturday morning, all along here South Main Street. And there were bars and things like that. And I would go in and shine shoes.

Middleton: And how much would you get paid for that?

Lima: Oh, you'd get, what was it? Ten cents for a shine. And big guys would give a tip of a quarter. And if I had a good day at that, I'd make about four bucks and my mother would take \$2.50. And I never could figure, why she would take \$2.50. You know, she didn't shine any shoes. I shined them. Why was she getting the money? Well it was a lesson she'd learned, you contribute to this family. And it wasn't going to make any much difference, but that is how we were raised. You contribute, even at an early age.

Middleton: So where did your friends work, mostly?

Lima: My friends? They all did those little jobs, some worked in markets, you know, when they were kids. And you know a few of them work at the electric company with

me and some work for Verizon. Yeah. Actually we had one guy, his name was Al Lopes, and they called him the “Best Basketball Player” that ever came out of the State of Rhode Island that nobody knows. And he was very good, but Albert, today, is, he lives in Kansas. And he was going in the service, he got out of high school, and I remember because we were down at the airport and his gym or his teacher – Basketball coach – said “Albert, you can't do this.” And he turned around and Albert never went. He got him into a school. And Albert ended up today, he's not only a lawyer, but he's an Adjutant General for the service. He's still, I think he's a colonel in the service. And that's just from people helping people, you know? You know, some guys went on, did big things and you know. We all been dealt with respectable jobs and most of us are retired today. And, you know, I did alright. I end up, I got a house here, I got a home in Martha's Vineyard. And that's just from good upbringing. And I didn't get any special favors, I worked hard. I worked for the first 20 years of my marriage, I worked two jobs.

Middleton: Did you meet your wife in Fox Point?

Lima: No, my wife comes from the East Side.

Middleton: Oh.

Lima: See, there were neighborhoods and you weren't really allowed to, you know they had, I wouldn't say street gangs, but they had boundary lines. And Fox Pointers, we stayed in Fox Point. East Side stayed up the East Side. And South Side stayed over there. You know, but, you know, we went to school with each other, but, you know, you kind of be respectful of going into other people's neighborhoods and you know, but it could get a little touchy. I won't say, every time you say somebody it was a gang war, you know they talked and everything. But you know, they, just like kids do. But we went over there, we went over, you know, we came up here because we had to go to school. It was respectful, but you know. I still, a lot of those guys. I still know a lot of them, the ones that are still alive. So.

Middleton: So you didn't travel outside of. Well, how did you think other parts of the city thought of Fox Point when you were a young man?

Lima: Well they had, you know, they had, they were just their own. Well they had, kids up here and over there had to come down to Fox Point to go to Boys Club. There was no South Side Boys Club. So they ended up coming in our neighborhood. So things balanced off. I mean, if you wanted to get nasty in your neighborhood remember, if you want to come to the Club, you're coming into our neighborhood. But they weren't, there was nothing vicious about it. You might run them out just to be funny, but it was just a territorial thing. But that's all it was. It was just to show your strength. Because we had gangs, if you want to call them gangs, in Fox Point. Every once in a while they'd mix it up a little bit, but it was a neighborhood thing. But it never really got past, most of it was respect thing. That's all. You know, because they talked and you know. We used to go to movies on East Street, they had a recreation center there. We'd go sit in those movies and they had their own little gang over there and you had to be very careful, you

know. Just be respectful of that, that you're in their area. When the movie was over we just moved back down to where we came from, but it was nothing vicious. Every once in a while, they'd mix it up a little bit. Everybody's gotta know where they belong. But we talk about it today with the same guys. Actually, they all chipped in and bought a bar down there. You know, they're older now, but now the kids have it. Nothing like Fox Point. Fox Point was the neighborhood. And, now today, it's the people that live down there, they're no more. Not too many people outside of Gano Street down there there's still a neighborhood. But now the elite have bought it up, but they don't even wanna be called Fox Point. They want it to be called.

Middleton: The Lower East Side.

Lima: The Lower East Side, you know? I've been down there a couple of times and somebody walked by, would say "Can I help you?" No, you can't help me, I'm just walking around and looking. You know? Just kind of luck wondering what you're doing here. Don't you tell me. I was here before you were a twinkle in your mother's eye. And Holy Rosary Church was the place. Everybody met on Sunday morning at Holy Rosary Church. And if you look at Holy Rosary Church, most of the people that go down to Holy Rosary Church, I'd say 95% of them don't even come from there. They come from East Providence, Cranston area and everything else. But it's their church and it'll always be there church.

Middleton: So after you were married, where were you living? Still in Fox Point?

Lima: Yes, I lived with my mother for a little bit, but I could see that wasn't going to work, you know, mother and the wife. So we moved to Valley View, which was a project, housing area, for the military. And we lived there for a lot of years. Funny thing about us, my wife and I always talk about, we moved out of there because the rent was \$67 a month and they wanted to raise it to \$72 and I thought it was highway robbery. But we ended up buying a house in Cranston and we're still there.

Middleton: So do you, did you still visit Fox Point? Did you go to church at the Holy Rosary after you left?

Lima: No, because I'm, this Episcopal Church. I always went to down there, and I don't see much of a difference. My mother, mother? My wife's been in this church for over 50 years and I don't see much of a difference in the two religions and actually I'm a firm believer that Muslim or not it's all the same God, it's just how we look at Him. And I respect everybody's to worship how they choose to, but I serve up here now.

Middleton: What year was it when you moved to Cranston?

Lima: OK. My daughter's. Let's see, this is 2009. My daughter is 33, about 33 years ago. So you can deduct that from 2009 and that'll tell you when I moved. My youngest daughter was baby, she was only a few months old when we moved to Cranston. So I've been there, yeah, about 32 years.

Middleton: So what changes have you seen in Fox Point since, the last 33 years.

Lima: Oh, everything. Fox Point is no longer. There is nothing down there that looks like the original Fox Point. Nothing. Absolutely nothing at all. And the only ones down there from Fox Point are the Gomeses, right in the middle. They own the house where, I guess it's an Indian restaurant, they own the whole three-story building. The back used to be Pike Street. Pike Street was all minorities, all Cape Verdeans. We used to have a nickname for it, we used to call it Chocolate Avenue. And there's not a house left, not one house left on that whole street. Not one. And the only one that held on to their house all the way up to last year were the Alves. And that's, if you go back there now it's not Pike Street anymore, it's Alves Way. You know, they've changed it so much and they're trying to get a whole new. And it's all based on money. Everybody's looking at their property value. It's not a neighborhood for neighborhood. It's a neighborhood for people that are, you know, in to make their property more valuable and everything else. But they don't have that same cohesiveness that we had. As I said, poverty makes everybody the same. There's no color, there's no nothing to that. You're poor, you're poor. You all learn to survive together because that's the only way you survive. And that's not the same today when you arrive down there. And their whole philosophy on everything is nothing like what we had. You know? I'll tell you how bad they are. We go down there as the Boys Club and we try to get donations from them so we can, you know, collect money for the kids and the Club and we've had more than one of them turn around and say, "What's in it for me?"

Middleton: And when you say "they" you mean people that live in Fox Point now?

Lima: I'm talking about the people that own a lot of the stores and stuff down there. The only original that I know of down there, and there might be some, is Adler's Hardware. Adler's was there when I was a kid and they're still there. In the same spot. So Adler's is there, but other than that, that whole place has changed a lot, you know? And we walked through there and, you know, they're doing very well, but it's not Fox Point. It's got no resemblance to what we remember as Fox Point. Because we were people who talked, sat on porch, talked to each other. Those people are all business. It's all about the money. It's about society today, which society is, all about the money. Them that got, got. Those that don't, nobody cares about them.

Middleton: Did your parents ever move out of Benevolent Street?

Lima: No. My father died there, my mother died there. And we ended up holding on to the house and we ended up letting it go. Brown always had sights on it because, really there wasn't much left in there. Most of the houses had been sold because Benevolent Street went all the way through. All the way down to Benefit. And they ended up, over the years, buying everything in there. So finally, maybe, I think if I can close my eyes, there are about maybe three houses left on Benevolent Street between Brook and Thayer where we lived. And I think they owned those too. You know, we just held onto it as long as we could and when my mother passed away, you know, we rented out to college

kids, but they didn't wanna do it anymore, so we sold it to Brown. But if you're familiar with that area.

Middleton: Do you remember when Louis' Diner opened? Is that right in the area?

Lima: Louis? Yeah they were there. Yeah. Louis and Dominic. Oh yeah. Louis and Dominic, we grew up as kids with Louis and Dominic and their family. And they came from Huxley, way over by Providence College. But they were part of the family, you know? And they would come up, we'd be sit, 'cause we sat after supper, we sat on our porch and Louis and Dominic, as I said, they were around there all the time. Sometimes if they were walking by, they would come over and, you know, and stop and come on the porch and sit and talk to us. Louis and Dominic, I'm surprised you mentioned them, but they were two great brothers. They did everything, they were like twins. Their houses were like twins and I think they're still like that. And I think Louis just passed away a couple of years ago. But there was the Brown Bear on the corner and around the corner was Louis and Dominic's. They owned the restaurant there. And then there was the Brown Jug on Thayer Street on the other side. And there was Denny's, the liquor store, and right across from Denny's on the liquor store there's a park, which is behind where Hill House used to be. And Brown dedicated a bench in that park to my family and it's still there. If you're on Benevolent Street, Thayer Street, Brook and this is Benevolent. Hill House was here, there's a park right there. And the bench in the back is dedicated to the Lima family.

Middleton: Now why do you think Brown did that?

Lima: Well we were neighbors, we spent years with Brown. We've had our ups and downs with Brown, we've had, you know, when they had Hell Week and all these things. A couple of times the kids tore our fence down and there was always something. Most of it, 90% of it was great. And Brown was very good in helping. We had one kid that tore the fence down and they made him come down to the house and make arrangements with my parents to fix that fence. He kind of reneged after a while and they wanted to throw him out and my mother said, "No. I don't want that. I don't want that you know, because it's not worth that much to, you know, to mess with him." But you know a little humility for him because he had to come speak to my parents, but Brown was always very good with the neighbors and that family and we always remember that. We had a very good relationship with Brown and it was always an open door policy. When we had any problems with anybody that we could go there. But long before Brown controlled that, Brook Street, I would say on the east side across from Dominic and Louis', all that part of Brown was Bryant College. That's how long we've been living there. When we were there, Bryant was on Brook Street side, east side of Brook Street. Brown was on the west side, so there were two different schools. Johnson and Wales was nowhere in sight. Johnson and Wales was only a little, small place down here in the city.

Middleton: So, since you mentioned liquor, what was the role of alcohol in Fox Point when you were growing up and then when you were a young man living in?

Lima: Well, we had bars down there and they were focal points where the guys went in. They'd come home from work and we had Three Lantern Bar. That's funny 'cause Three Lantern Bar was on the corner of Brook and Pike Street. And then they closed it. The Sullivans, the Perrys, Silverster Perry owned it, with his brother, and finally they went out of business for whatever their reasons. And the people opened it up and started their own bar and they called it "Poor People's Park." And they served liquor in there. I don't know if they ever got a liquor license, but there were bars there. There was also Manny Almeda's which is on the corner that was, next to that was a little Dave's Grill. And there was Bomper's Tap and there were a few other drinking establishments going up the street. And they were places where the guys went, every day, every night, where they'd come in and they'd have a drink when they got out of work. Because you went to work, you know, weekends, day, because we had the Arcadia downtown and there were places you could go. The Arcadia was a dance hall. And they used to bring in big stars like Little Richard, Buddy Holly. You know, they would have dances up there. And you would go sit up there like Bandstand. And this was way before Bandstand, you know?

Middleton: Where was that?

Lima: The Arcadia was downtown, I don't know. There's a nightclub on. It was on Washington Street in the city and it was up on the second floor. Had a big stage and you could either dance out on the floor on front of the stage or they had a balcony you could sit up and watch the entertainment or you know. But there were a lot of bars down there. A lot of them.

Middleton: But the drinking was usually casual and social or was there a lot of alcoholism?

Lima: Oh yeah, for most people. Oh yeah, well they had there share of people that overindulged, just like anywhere else, but most of the people they drank on, you know, they might go down, mostly on weekends. They socialized. In the summertime, we'd go to the beach, go to Lincoln Woods, swimming and all that. Of course all those places were closed. And, but.

Middleton: And did you ever go to the bars before you got out of the service?

Lima: No.

Middleton: You were too young? Not acceptable?

Lima: No, no. Brothers would allow that. No, there was some there on South Main Street too. No, there was a line you didn't cross. I mean, you, I, all of us, in my group, we had older brothers and you don't go in them places. They'd run you out of there, they would not allow you in there. And they wouldn't tell your mother because you'd get a beating, but they would not allow us in to there, "You know you're not supposed to be in there, get out." You know, if I was shining shoes, you could go in there, but the oldest

watched the youngest and that was how it was. And if the youngest did something the oldest was around and the parents found out about it, then the oldest was in trouble because that was the job. That's how family was. Everything is based on family. It's number one. Family is number one. And the oldest take care of the youngest. And it's always been that way. And sometimes when they were going places, you know, the parent would make you take the youngest ones, even though they didn't want to. We used to go to. I don't know, you know where Lincoln Woods is? You know, I tell that story all the time about Lincoln Woods. We used to walk from Fox Point, where is it, right down here to where the tunnel is with a picnic basket, catch the bus and ride to Lincoln Woods. And you'd get out way up the top of the hill, walk through the woods to get to the beach because you didn't have cars.

Middleton: How much did the bus cost?

Lima: Oh. What? About fifteen cents? Fifteen cents. And we would do that as families. Couple of families together, carrying things. Walk. No ride. There was no cars. Nobody owned one. And that's why people were closer together because they did a lot of things together.

Middleton: Since obviously families were so close in Fox Point, do you think that generations of Fox Point, Fox Pointer descendants born outside of Fox Point, did their parents carry on that legacy?

Lima: Oh definitely. You know, I wish you had, because we just had an open house at the Boys Club down on Ives Street and now you're seeing all the younger ones. We're the older ones, we sit down, we play cards, we do that. Now our grandchildren, our children, they're taking over. See, we ran this alumni association for all these years and now we're giving it to our children and our grandchildren. And they hear all these stories and the parents, the kids still know that all the children, every family is still together. And they know the stories because we tell the stories. You know we Lou Costa and every time we have an event, Lu-Lu comes down with his cameras and everything else and he shows those pictures and those kids sit down there and the older people sit there and they say, "Oh there's Uncle So-and-So" or there's somebody they know and they'd never seen them when they're younger. And we make sure we carry that on because it's a proud heritage and we want to keep it alive. And that is the stuff we have going on with you. We want these things to be done right. We don't want to lose our history. We want to keep our history alive. And we've had a few problems with that because we've done this with other groups and they kind of shut us out of the middle of it. And we don't want that to happen, we want our children to be able to have access to everything we say because at some point we're not gonna be here. And I wanna make sure my kids know how I grew up and how my parents gave me the rules that I live by today and the same rules they live by because they came from my parents and I want to make sure that they use those rules to the best of their ability to raise their children. So they become responsible adults.

Middleton: I think we're just about out of time, can you just tell me one last thing –

what's your favorite memory of Fox Point or a few of your favorite memories?

Lima: Oh, we had a lot of. I'll tell you, my favorite memory is my friends. I am so proud of all my friends down there regardless of their nationality, color or anything else. As I said, I told you before, you're either a Fox Pointer or you wish you was one. But I'll tell you a little story and it's kind of funny. I wouldn't say we were saints. The Bond Bread. It's a story about Bond Bread. They used to make bread two days a week. And you obviously could smell that bread from anywhere in Fox Point and we used to climb up on the roof, we were kids, what thirteen, fourteen, thirteen. We used to climb up on the roof, go through the skylight, climb down in the building and steal the bread off the conveyors. Before they even cut it. And a couple of days a week we'd have hot bread. We'd go in the house and get butter, share the bread with everybody in the neighborhood. You know, now that I think about it, even when we went to school, remember I told you we went to Nathan Bishop because we'd catch the bus because our school was closed. At the back door, they always had that door open and they would cool off the bread that was going out before they put it on the trucks and a couple of us would always swipe a couple of loaves of bread and we'd get on the school bus and we'd give everybody on the school bus, you know it was like a breakfast program. And it didn't dawn on me until I was much older that they let us do that. There's no way in life you could put that bread there on the rack and somebody comes to pick up that rack and there's two or three loaves missing that they don't know that somebody took those loaves. And I thought about, they're a great bunch of guys, they knew we were taking it, but they figured, hey, we were feeding the kids on the bus. And they let us do it. And that was Fox Point. Even though we were doing something wrong, it turned out to be something good because I realize there were other people involved who knew what I was doing and, you know, their hearts were in the right place.

Middleton: What if your parents found out?

Lima: I was in worlds of trouble. My mother, see in those days, you go to school and if the teacher puts you in detention or teacher smacked you with a stick or something you got smacked again when you got home because the parent's theory was if they had to hit you, you had to something wrong and that's how we were raised. So you were not smacked by the teacher, I mean he didn't smack you in the face, he's smack you in the arm, hit you with the stick and stuff, that meant you did something wrong. It's 'cause when we went to church it was the same way, the children did not sit with the grown-ups in church. They sat in the front with the nuns. The nuns sat on the end and all the children sat together. And if that nun called you and you had to come down sit with that nun, your mother knew you did something. And you was in for it. You could get two weeks punishment just for that alone. Discipline was a big thing. I'm not saying I

condone people hitting their kids, but my mom and poppa, they used that. We had what you call a *Pelourinho*. And when you did something wrong, you put your hand out there so they could hit you on the hand with that stick and if you moved that hand, every time you moved it, you just got another slap at it. And that's how we grew up. You take your punishment. You know? And it worked. I think I'm a better person for it. And I didn't call it child abuse, although I wasn't happy about it either.

Middleton: Do you have anything else you'd like to add before I turn the recorder off?

Lima: No. Like I said, I'm just a Fox Pointer at heart and I'm very proud of my neighborhood. And I don't hold anything against the people that live there now, but I wish they'd be a little more compassionate. And, you know, Fox Point is just what it is and it'll always be Fox Point. You can call it whatever you want, but the people who lived there, as long as we're alive and we keep people like you to do our story, we're always going to be known as Fox Point and I thank you for that part of it to help me keep my history alive. And if there's anything else we can do for you, we're proud of our neighborhood.

Middleton: OK, I'm gonna turn this off. Thank you very much.