

Interviewee: Debra Vieira

Interviewer: Kate Hadley

Time and Date: 3:30 pm, Monday March 16th 2009

Location: Vartan Gregorian School, Providence, RI

Kate Hadley-This is Kate Hadley. I'm here with—can you say your name for the recording please?

Debbie Vieira-Debra Vieira

Hadley-On Monday March 16th 2009 at the Vartan Gregorian School on 455 Wickenden Street. This interview is for the Brown Oral History Project. And if at any point you would like to pause the interview, just, or just let me know...

Vieira-Ok

Hadley...or if you're ready to stop.

Vieira-Ok

Hadley- So, my first question is about your parents. You said your mom was from Portugal...

Vieira-Right.

Hadley...and your dad was from East Providence.

Hadley-When did your parents come to Fox Point?

Vieira-That...I'm not sure what year they came.

Hadley-How did...do you know how your parents met?

Vieira-Yes. They both worked at Arden Jewelry. And that's...yeah, they met...they were very young.

Hadley-Can you tell me a little bit about your parents?

Vieira-My, ok. My mother when she first came to this country lived right across the street from this school. And, I guess she worked...oh and she attended the...well when she first came she was thirteen years old and so she attended Fox Point. And a teacher here taught her how to speak English. And...I don't even know if she...oh, she ended up going back to Portugal, and then when she came back, my uncles both enlisted in the army and they both fought in the Korean War. One Uncle was prisoner of war for a year, and my other uncle died in Korea. And, my mother

started working at Davol Jewelry, because this was a big area for costume jewelry. And she worked there and that's where she met my father. And they were young when...they were dating when my uncle died in Korea. And they were going to marry but they had to wait a year. You know, that's the way the Portuguese believed you waited a year after family, a death in the family. But what happened is it took a long time for them to find the...his remains and send it. So it took a little longer. And then they both married. They were like only 18 and 19 when they married. And my father was in the navy. And he was stationed down in Virginia and that's where I...I was born here but then my mother went down there to be with him for...for some time. And then we came back.

Hadley-Do you know what years you were in Virginia for?

Vieira-Well, I was born in '53, so it was...yeah, maybe '54. Between...yeah.

Hadley-And when did you...when did your family move back to Fox Point?

Vieira-My mother...well they always let my...my grandparents after living across the street here on Wickenden, bought a house on Preston St. A 3-family, and that's...my mother lived on the first floor with my dad and me, and my grandmother who owned the house...my grandparents lived on the second.

Hadley-So who were your parents' closest friends, or, do you remember any of their...their friends while you were living in Fox Point?

Vieira-Well, actually...there were many families on our street. Just our street alone. And we all grew up together. And you know, we would just go house to house. There was like five families that we were very close to. And you would just...holidays, we would just, you know, spend like Christmas Eve together. Everybody would take a turn at their home. You know, we were like 7...8, and we'd always be together.

Hadley-Yeah

Vieira-It was really neat.

Hadley-So you can you tell me more about your house on Preston Street?

Vieira-Ok. It had 3 bedrooms. And, you know just a kitchen and living room. That's how a lot of these homes are, you know, were built. And...there was 7 of us. So, there was...there were four girls in one room, with two sets of bunk beds. And my brothers had a room to themselves with another set of bunk beds. And the baby was always in a crib somewhere. I mean there was a lot of people there, for, you know, one...Fox Point apartment. It was nice. And then I had my grandmother upstairs, so a lot of us would go upstairs to, you know, looking for space, and...it was nice.

Hadley-What was it like being the oldest of seven?

Vieira-I was always trying to find...I don't know, space for us, you know? I remember cleaning out a basement, a room in the basement, painting the walls so that we would have, you know, space or some place for us to go. And, my...my father bought us a table tennis, he bought us a ping pong table, and, which we all got very good at. We would bring friends over and challenge them, and it was fun. He kept...he tried to keep us off the streets. And one summer my mother didn't want us hanging around. And so she...she signed me and my brother up at Fred Astaire Dance Studios. And I was on...on TV. The...in Fall River, or New Bedford, the Portuguese Around Us, that's a...a Portuguese channel. Showing all our, you know, our dancing. So we did that.

Hadley-What kinds...

Vieira-But

Hadley-What kinds of dancing?

Vieira-It was ballroom dancing. So, I was ahead of myself. And this...water Park now used to be a pool and...I used to go there. A couple of summers that's where I spent every day. Every day, walking back and forth on Ives St. To go to the pool.

Hadley-What else do you remember about your street, the street...

Vieira-Oh

Hadley-...Preston Street.

Vieira-Preston Street? Just that you know, you could walk out...walk out of your door and be with a friend, someone that you've known. Just, you know, as far back as you can remember. And just go in their homes with them and their backyards and play. I used to, you know...we used to always be playing in the Sandlot...there was a big parking lot and we would play there. And there were older kids too in the neighborhood, and they kind of looked out for us. I mean, it was one...you know, they say it takes a... a village to raise...it really was that way. But it was mostly though the the bottom part of Preston Street between Gano and Ives. It was where all these families were and...it was very nice. And safe. A very safe environment at that time.

Hadley-Wow that sounds great. Did all of your siblings get along with each other for the most part?

Vieira-You know, I was the oldest, always trying to find my way. I think in a big family...everybody kind of did the same, you know...I think you grow apart and then when you get older you all come back together again. That's how it was for me.

Hadley-Did any of your other relatives live in Fox Point, besides your grandmother and your...

Vieira-My other grandmother also.

Hadley-...your family?

Vieira-Yes. And that was...that was it, because my father. My mother, well she had lost the one brother. And her other brother lived in Cranston. But...and, my father was an only child, but all his relatives were from Fall River and New Bedford and East Providence. So...I didn't have many cousins.

Hadley-Did you go to that grandmother's house a lot?

Vieira-Oh, the one...she used to live on Wickenden. She would come and stay with us for the weekend. So I always had both my grandmothers. Always. Every weekend. I wouldn't know what it was like to be without my grandmothers.

Hadley-What about your grandfathers?

Vieira-My father's father died when my mother was still carrying me. He died of a massive heart attack, so I never met him. And my other grandfather died of cancer when I was fourteen years old.

Hadley-So what is your earliest memory of Fox Point?

Vieira-Of Fox Point...Well my father never really let me leave the street mostly, so...it was just growing up with all the other kids, you know, in that ar... on that street. But then as I get older, you know, we ventured out, and I would go skating. There used to be a big arena on Main Street. And I would go ice-skating there. Or, there was a big ice-skating rink at the shipyard where Johnson and Wales is...is now. And I'd go skating on Sundays there. My father would take us. So he kept us active. And then summertime was...we were always at the beach. We would go eight in the morning my mother would make breakfast on the grill, then we'd have lunch. And supper. And it'd be, you know...my family and the seagulls would be the only ones left on the beach cause my parents loved the beach, and so we all do.

Hadley-What beach was this?

Vieira-This was Scarborough. Well, it's Scarborough now, but back then it was divided up into 3 beaches. It was Scarborough, Olivos, and Lidos. And Lidos was more of a grassy area so you could drive up with your car, and you know, make...pitch a tent, like, and...and just stay there all day. A lot of families did that. I mean, that beach was always full.

Hadley-Did a lot of other people from Fox Point go to that beach?

Vieira-No. I mean, there were so many of us, I mean seven of us, that we would just go alone. Sometimes we, you know...other families that we knew would be up there, but...Not that we went with them, you know, to the beach.

Hadley-What chores did you have growing up?

Vieira-What chores...Ok, when I was a little older I would have to do the dishes after a big breakfast on Saturday, clean my room that I shared with my sisters, and clean the bathroom. One bathroom for everyone.

Hadley-What kinds of chores did your siblings do?

Vieira-Well, I was the oldest, so I kind of...I did...I did mostly everything. I did that, and then, you know, as I wore...as I, you know, went to high school and then had part-time jobs then they took over the same chores that I did. So they came after me.

Hadley-So did you have family meals often?

Vieira-Oh yes. Yes. We...yeah. That's the way it was. Yeah. My mother made supper. We were all home at a certain time and we all ate together. Always. Always. Not like today. I mean, I didn't even do that with my sons because my husband worked late...they had, you know, they had different schedules. But, that's...you know, I did miss that.

Hadley-Did you and your siblings or your father ever help your mother cook?

Vieira-No my mother wanted to be in the kitchen alone. So when I got married I was constantly on the phone with her asking her how to make this or that.

Hadley-Did you ever help do the shopping?

Vieira-Shopping? No. I just remember when we were all little. We used to, there were no markets around here so we used to have to go across the bridge to East Providence. And all I remember my mother saying was, "Ok, everyone pick out the kind of cereal you wanted." And we'd all come back with our own cereal of our choice. And...so that's all I remember.

Hadley-Do you remember what kind of cereal it was that you picked?

Vieira-I, oh...even to this day I love Frosted Flakes.

Vieira-Now I get the reduced sugar.

Hadley-What other things do you remember from your childhood?

Vieira-Always going to...an ice cream place in East Providence where they made the best homemade ice cream. I mean, my father took us. It was the best in East Providence. It was really good. There used to be a lot of ice cream places around here.

Hadley-Do you remember any of their names?

Vieira-The name of the ice cream...No, I don't. I don't remember.

Hadley-Did you travel to East Providence often?

Vieira-Yes. Yes. Well there were no markets here at one time, so yes, we used to have to go there. And a lot of department...not department stores, but like, Zayre's...and used to have to go to there. You know, we used to have to go over the bridge. And my father grew up there so we had a connection to East Providence. So we was...so we were always there.

Hadley-What other kinds of things did you do there?

Vieira-He just had friends and we would go to their houses. That's all.

Hadley-So, you said that you went to Ives St. School until 3rd grade...

Vieira-Yes, yeah.

Hadley-And Fox Point School until 6th grade. How...what was that like?

Vieira-Well, I was very...a very shy as a child. So, you know, I didn't...I didn't work to my potential because my shyness...it was very nice just walking out of my house and then crossing the street and...we would go there for the mornings, and then we were released at lunchtime, and we would all walk right there to our homes for lunch. And then go back for the afternoon. And that was at Ives Street School. Now it's just a playground. It's just a little playground. And then when I came here, I thought "Oh my god, this is such a big school". Actually the room we're in right now is where I attended third grade.

Hadley-Oh, wow.

Vieira-Ok. And then...no, I'm sorry. Fourth grade. I was in the fifth grade when President Kennedy was shot. You know, an announcement came over the intercom, and they just released us, and we just...all just went home. You know, really not understanding, you know, the ramifications of all that. But yeah, I remember that, and then we all just stayed glued to the television, you know, that whole time. So...

And then, I attended Nathan Bishop Jr. High...and...and that was just, I don't know. I was afraid of that...you know, I was shy when I reached there too. The schools are getting bigger now, you know. But it was okay. And then...you know, when I got to high school I was...I came out of my shyness a little. And so I tried to, you know, get more involved in...in...the schools and....and I was a Hopette. And that was fun, so. I went to a lot of school dances, and...

Hadley-Can you tell me more about the dances?

Vieira-Oh, the dances. Well, ok. I started going to the dances in Jr. High. And, just like you see in these older movies, the boys on one side and the girls on the other. Sometimes I would be asked to dance, and other times I wouldn't, so. And then when I was in high school I would go to the dances at St. Ray's on North Main Street. You know, with some...you know with my friends. And we would meet other kids that grew, that grew...they grew up on the East Side. Because Hope High brought the kids from Fox Point, and Nathan Bishop did too. From the East Side and Fox Point together. So, we made friendships, you know, with some kids on the East Side.

Hadley-Was there a clear distinction between kids from the East Side and kids from Fox Point when you were in the high school?

Vieira-Yes there was, yeah. I always felt like, you know, like we were shunned upon somewhat. You know, being from Fox Point. I know the...the gap is closing today, but back then there was, a...a definite distinction.

Hadley-What other memories do you have of...your time in school?

Vieira-My time in school...What...high school? Jr. high?

Hadley-High school.

Vieira-High school? Oh, I was...I was at Hope High School when they had the riots....that was very scary. They wanted, the black students wanted us to want...well they wanted black history introduced into the curriculum. And the morning of the riot...they had this all planned, but the other students, we didn't know this, but we were...I was upstairs on the third floor in the science room. And Hope High is built just like this school, one big square where you could see the, you know, the center. And it was all opened. And, I guess they weren't happy with their demands not being met at the meeting they had because all the black students went right into the auditorium, and...I guess I don't know who enticed it, but they were told...they all ran out, and whoever had their lockers on the first floor, they already had bats and things all ready for [inaudible]. And I saw all the windows being broken. You know, in the courtyard or whatever in the center of the school. And all the teachers that were on...I was in the science rooms. That side was all science. And they brought us all into one room and locked all the doors. We were on the third floor. And then the intercom went and all you could hear was the screaming in

the office and them yelling, "Call the police!" And it was frightening. It was. I didn't attend school for two weeks after that. Afraid to go back. And it was a little hairy after that.

Hadley-Wow. So were these...what were....what were the ramifications of these riots? Sort of, in the aftermath.

Vieira-Well, we were all given black history books. And I don't...rumor has it was a...a Brown student who enticed this. That's what I had heard. And, what happ...you know what? The school was never the same after that. Everybody was just you know, everybody was walking around on eggshells. And, the first year after, the...the black students didn't come to sch...to class. They all went out in the field, on the football field, and they all sat on the bleachers and we all stood inside, not knowing what they were going to do again. But they did nothing. But it was just...you know. I could see growing up when you know, being in elementary, you know, the black kids and the white kids...I don't think kids see color. And then going to junior high we all started to...you could see the separation. And then, that's what happened at Hope High with the riot and all.

Hadley-Do you remember what year that was in?

Vieira-That...I believe that was...had to be '70...'69...'70? Cause, I...cause the year I graduated, there were no problems. So...it was...or even before that...'68?

Hadley-Can you tell me a little bit about your teachers...at Hope High School?

Vieira-Well after that, you know, a black student would come in and not want to learn. And they would just....that was ok by them because, you know, if you confronted them with anything...there were...there were really big issues. And...and some kids would just come in and disrupt the whole, you know, your whole class. And, and that was it for the day. That was your...that's what you learned for the day. That was the teaching...But it did get better as the years went on.

Hadley-Did you ever get in trouble at school?

Vieira-Yes. I did. In high school I think I...I wrote something on...on a bathroom wall...I don't...and...and I was called. My name was announced on the loudspeaker and I had to go to the office. But it wasn't any...you know...wasn't...I didn't really get into, you know...really deep trouble.

Hadley-Do you remember what you wrote?

Vieira-No I don't...I don't...I just remember that.

Hadley-So, can you tell me anything else about your experiences when you were younger in school? At Ives St. or Nathan Bishop?

Vieira-Ives Street I don't really remember much. I started, re...you know, remembering things as, you know, when I came to Fox Point. Not so much anything in Ives St. School. I remember every Friday afternoon we would all go to the auditorium, and they'd show us a movie, and that was a Friday afternoon thing...treat. No, I don't really...No, well...like I said I was just very shy, and...you know, if I had to do it over again, you know, like everyone else says...but just...I just remember some of the friendships that I've made. And...just playing out in the playground. That's all.

Hadley-Did you have any favorite subjects or favorite classes?

Vieira-No, not really. I used to, well...No. No I really didn't. I just went with the flow. And just tried, you know...tried my hardest.

Hadley-Do you remember any of your teachers?

Vieira-I remember my 6th grade teacher because...if there's a joke I'm the first one there to be laughing at it. And we had this boy that was in my room. In the 6th grade. And he really was, I mean, he was a comedian. And I would be there....I'd be, you know...just laughing and I would get in trouble for that all the time because, you know, I love to laugh. So that's...that's about it. And she told me that, you know, I'd never grow up.

Hadley-What kinds of activities were you involved in?

Vieira-There were no...there were no sports for girls when I came up, which was really sad because I would have loved to have been in sports. I used to just play with the boys...basketball, baseball, touch football. I mean, I just think it was a shame that we didn't have any, you know, activities like that for the girls. So I was a Girl Scout, went to Camp Cookie in the summertime, you know. But I wanted more. It wasn't, you know, physical enough for me.

Hadley-Where were you a Girl Scout? Was it through the school...or...

Vieira-I don't even remember. I just remember going to the meetings, and you know, selling my cookies...and...and I really did love camp, though. I really...I would go for two weeks. Not sleepover, but just during the day. And I used to love that.

Hadley-Where was camp?

Vieira-I don't even remember. I think it was in North Kingston somewhere.

Hadley-What kinds of things did you do at camp?

Vieira-We would go hiking a lot...swimming. You know, and then...I just remember

those things. I enjoyed those the most. Hiking. Swimming. You know, and then, little, you know...arts and crafts. So...and then back on the bus and home.

Hadley-So...I was wondering what expectations were there for you, either from the community or just your parents, for what you would do after high school?

Vieira-Ok. My...being the oldest of seven there were none. There were none because the focus was always on, you know, the younger children. So...I was on my own. And, I did want to go to...secretarial school, but my fa...I wanted to go to Katherine Gibbs. My father did not have the money, so I was on my own. So I just saved up for a summer. And then I went to trade school and I became hairdresser. But then didn't like that. And then got a job at Blue Cross Blue Shield. And I was there almost ten years until I had my first son.

Hadley-So, you said that you saved up money to go to hairdresser school. Where did you get that money? Did you work?

Vieira-I worked in jewel...I worked in jewelry shops on Baker Street, off of Allens Avenue. There were a lot of jewelry factories there. And that's what I did.

Hadley-What was...what did you do for your job? Were you...were you selling the jewelry?

Vieira-No no. I was making it. Actually, I... I used to do just about everything. I used to...I worked in the plating room. With all the men. And there was another woman there too. I used to have my uniform on. My acid-proof clothing. And I would...I would plate the jewelry. And then, when the...when the shop would close down, I remember doing a whole order myself. I...you know, we cleaned the chain, and I remember packaging it, typing the labels out. I did everything for two weeks for the company.

Hadley-Did you have any other jobs growing up?

Vieira-No...that's it. I did jewelry because, you know, it was easy to get, you know, those jobs back then. So I did jewelry.

Hadley-When did you get into that?

Vieira-Into what?

Hadley-J...jewelry.

Vieira-Into jewelry? When I was sixteen and able to work.

Hadley-How did your parents feel about you working?

Vieira-Well my mother worked in one of the places I worked. So that's how I got in. So my mother worked jewelry. My father was a steel work. He worked at Washburn Wire there in Rumford. And so they were...he was a laborer.

Hadley-So...can you tell me about your closest friends when you were growing up?

Vieira-Well...it was the girl down the street...Joanne Pontus. Who now lives in River...who now lives in...East Providence. We were together a lot. And that's who I took the dancing lessons with. And another friend Elizabeth, who lived across the street. They were my closest. And then when I got to High School, another friend Joanne who now lives in Florida. And we still keep in touch. She's the only one I still keep in touch with.

Hadley-Did you go to school together?

Vieira—yes, we went...yes. Actually, Fox Point, Nathan Bishop, and High school. But in high school we really became close. And she was the only one that, you know, I was very friendly with.

Hadley-What kinds of things did you do with your friends?

Vieira-Well, dances on Friday nights. I can't remember...oh, Crescent Park used to be a big amusement park we had in...in...in Riverside. And we would go. And they had this, I don't know, this big building, and they would have dances there on Friday night. And then, movies. And skating. I would like to skate a lot in the winter at the arena on North Main Street.

Hadley-So you mentioned that you were a Hopette in High School. Can you explain what that is?

Vieira-Ok, that wasn't a cheerleader or a majorette. We would just be in our little uniform with our little boots, and we would just...you know, do...do some kind of routine during halftime. So...that was about it.

Hadley-Did your friends do that with you?

Vieira-Yes...my friend Joanne. Yes.

Hadley-Where else did you spend your time when you weren't in school?

Vieira-Basically, I wasn't one to, you know, go out much. So it would be home.

Hadley-I've heard a lot about the role of the Boys Club that's played in the childhood of boys growing up in Fox Point, and I was wondering what the girls did while the Boys were at the Boys Club?

Vieira-I think the girls were just...just forgotten. I don't, you know, there wasn't anything for us to do. There weren't...you know. Again, I wish they had sports for the girls. But we didn't have that.

Hadley-Did you spend a lot of time at home?

Vieira-Yes, with my grandmothers.

Hadley-What did you do with your grandmothers while you were...

Vieira-I learned how to crochet. And just, you know, just sitting with them and, you know, I would go with...my...my father's mother downtown a lot...Down city they call it now. But back then you could take a cab from where my street is—Preston—go all the way down Power and it brings you right into downtown. For one dollar you could go downtown. And I would go with my grandmother. We would take the bus down, and then walk back.

Hadley-So, what church did you attend while you were growing up?

Vieira-Holy Rosary. Received all my sacraments there.

Hadley-what was that like?

Vieira-Well it was...it was...it's a Portuguese Church, so...it was nice. I mean, we used to attend...I mean I used to go to CCD class...I remember being dismissed from here, from Fox Point school, and walking down Wickenden to my catechism classes. And then we would all walk home. It was all about walking. We didn't get rides. It was all about walking everywhere.

Hadley-Did your friends go with you to catechism classes?

Vieira-Yes, we would always be....you know, there'd be a pack of us.

Hadley-What about your siblings...did they...

Vieira-I used to have to take my siblings, you know, sometimes.

Hadley-Can you tell me more about your siblings?

Vieira-What can I say...I don't know. Well, we were all very close. I mean, my grandmothers were always with us, and so...we were always all together. Christmas...Christmastime my grandmother that lived on the second floor would make, you know, the doughboys, but the Portuguese called them **aldezaldes (sp?)**. And, oh, they'd be all over the house. Her and my grandfather would be making them, you know, for days. And...and we would just be running up and down the

stairs. Watching The Wizard of Oz, you know, and my other cousin would come over, and my aunt and uncle, and it was all of our family. We were always all together.

Hadley-What other foods do you remember from your childhood besides those...

Vieira-Well my mother had to learn how to make things in big casserole dishes, so we would always have lasagna, even though we were Portuguese. My mother always made, like, Chicken Cacciatore. Always a big...always a big pan of Portuguese soup. Portuguese bread. That's about it...she always had to make, you know...whatever she made, it had to be a lot of.

Hadley-What's in Portuguese soup?

Vieira-Oh, kale, potatoes, red kidney beans, chorizo, linguisa. That's about it. You know...onions...and...yeah. Very tasty.

Hadley-Sounds great. So, when you went to the Holy Rosary...what languages were the services held in?

Vieira-Oh there was... there was some...well, I would go at 9:30, and so that was the children's mass. So it was in English. But some masses, I think...the Saturday, when they started Saturday was in Portuguese.

Hadley-Can you tell me more about Sunday school?

Vieira—Sunday school...I was always caught eating candy. Because on the way down on Wickenden Street, halfway down, over here [motions towards Wickenden] on the left, was a candy store. And I loved my candy, and I would go there, and I would buy a bag full of candy and be eating it during catechism class. And the nun would always catch me. So...but you know. And, you know, they taught us religion...and prepared us...

Hadley-Did you...

Vieira-for communion.

Hadley-Did you enjoy going?

Vieira- Yes...Yeah. We were always all together, you know?

Hadley-Do you remember anything else about going to Church or Sunday school?

Vieira-Just that there was a young nun...I don't remember her name...and I...I just...I was in awe of her. And I always remember sitting next to her during the children's mass.

Hadley-So, other people have said that the Church's in Fox Point had programs for the neighborhood kids. Were you ever involved in social activities in the church?

Vieira-No, not really. No...I just did my catechism. They did...they did start a CYO...and I...I went for a few years. And there were just meetings down in the Church basement. And they would take us to movies. That's all I recall doing with the Church.

Hadley-So where did you go see movies?

Vieira-At whatever theatre...had to be the Four Seasons...that's what it used to be called. On Newport Avenue in East Providence.

Hadley-So your husband Manuel also grew up in Fox Point?

Vieira-Yes he did.

Hadley-How did you meet each other?

Vieira-Well, I didn't...I met him when I was graduating...the year I graduated high school. My brother knew of him, but I...I didn't because I came here and he went to Cleary. And then he was at Bishop the same time I was...but I just....like again, I said I was very shy, so I never, you know...bothered with the boys that much. And then, one night, after I had graduated high school, my brother was standing outside the house, and this boy came by, and told my brother how he just bought a brand new Harley Davidson, and he said, "I'm...I'll go home and get it and bring my...and bring my..." and he said to my brother Anthony, "I'll bring you for a ride." And when he left I said, "Anthony, I want to go on that ride. I don't want you to go." And when came back, my brother Anthony said to him, "my sister really wants to go...she's not going to leave me alone until you go on that...you know, until you take her for a ride." And, my future husband said "I don't want to take her for a ride." But so, he took me for a ride, and that was it. We've been together ever since.

Hadley-How did your parents feel about you dating?

Vieira- Well...At...I mean I was already 18 at that time. So, that was fine. That was fine.

Hadley-What about when you were younger? Was that ever an issue?

Vieira-Oh yes, I couldn't...I couldn't date until I was...I couldn't have a boyfriend until maybe sixteen? Yes...my father was very strict. So...

Hadley—What other kinds of rules did your parents have for you when you were growing up?

Vieira-Oh, when I was in high school if I went out with the girls I had to be in by eleven. Not a minute after. So...that was...that was...yes. Eleven o'clock I had to be in. No ands, ifs, or buts about it.

Hadley-Were there other...were there places in Fox Point, or outside of Fox Point that you weren't allowed to go?

Vieira-Well I never really came this far into Fox Point. We just...we were always all up where...you know, where I grew up. Williams St., Preston St...we were all mostly up there. My father didn't want us coming down...too much down here. Because there were... there were a lot of barrooms back then. And a lot of drugs. So...

Hadley-So, when did you and your husband get married?

Vieira-We got married in '76, the bicentennial year. And we bought a house from his parents right here on East Street. And so we lived there for two years. And then we bought a house in Riverside. And we were there for seventeen years. And that's where we started our family. And now I live in Bristol. Always staying by the water, though. Always staying by the water.

Hadley-Did you get married at the Holy Rosary?

Vieira-Yes. Yes. That was also his...his parish. Yeah...

Hadley-What was the wedding like?

Vieira-We had four-hundred and eighty nine guests...

Hadley-Wow....

Vieira-...because it turned out to be a game between my father and my mother-in-law—who could invite more people. And they took it right out of our hands and they kind of took over. But yeah...we had a lot of people. And all my siblings and all my husband's siblings were in the wedding party. So that was something. Very big wedding party. Because he's one of five.

Hadley-What other...were there any...important events that you remember from when you were younger? Like, did you go to weddings when you were younger...

Vieira-No, I didn't go to any, no my parents didn't take...we didn't really have. Well, yeah, there were...cousins who got married, and you know, my younger sisters would be the flower girls and things like that. But there were only, you know, several of those.

Hadley-So, it sounds like the Holy Rosary Church was a pretty important place in your childhood. Were there other important places around Fox Point...or outside of Fox point that you remember that played a significant role...[inaudible]

Vieira-Oh yeah, the pool. I mean, where my father worked, I mean, I utilized that pool, morning, noon, and night. That was...that was a great time for me. Because the older kids in the neighborhood, they worked there. So they would kind of...you know, watch over us. And it was nice. You know, I think, I believe I was like twelve...thirteen. And, we really had a lot of fun at that pool.

Hadley-Did you...

Vieira-It was nice

Hadley-Did you go there with your friends and your siblings?

Vieira-Yes, yes, my friend Elizabeth. And we would walk back and forth each time, because the pool would close for lunchtime, so you would have to go back home. And we would come back, for the rest of the afternoon.

Hadley-So you said you moved to East Street when you got married. What do you remember about your time in the house there? What do you remember about the house...

Vieira-I mean, I was still in the neighborhood so...you know...my husband and I, we fixed it up. You know, we tried to bring it up to, you know, up to code. You know, we did a lot of work to it. Put in a new roof ...new siding...and you know, I worked at Blue Cross at the time, so it was easy...I just would take the bus and be dropped off right here on East Street and go home, make supper. But we...you know we did a lot of work to the house because my in-laws that had it before really didn't do much to it, so....we did a lot of work to it.

Hadley-So, you lived in Fox Point for awhile, did you see any changes...significant changes happen to the neighborhood?

Vieira-Only when I moved out. I mean, where...you know, East Street, and there again...there were a lot of drugs. And my husband did not want to start a family here. And so, you know, we fixed up the house, and then in two years we had saved enough money to buy a single-family home. And that's what we did. In Riverside. And that's where we started our family.

Hadley-So, as a child what do you remember about other areas of Providence? I know you talked a little bit about East Providence, and downtown...

Vieira-Just that when I was old enough to, you know, do things on my own, you know, just going skating at the arena on North Main...as far as anything else, it was

just going to the Church, you know, the CCD classes. There really...there really wasn't anything else. There was the school would turn into a rec-center at night, and I would come here some nights when...you know...some of the kids from the neighborhood.

Hadley-Do you remember anything about the relationship between Fox Point and Brown University?

Vieira-no I...no.

Hadley-So who were some important people in the community while you were living there that you remember?

Vieira-I just, you know, remember, you know, my friends, their parents...there wasn't any...that I knew of.

Hadley-So...we, you talked a little about the riots at your high school...Fox Point is...is...known for it's diversity...Do you feel like when you were growing up, did ethnicity play a role in your interactions with other children...or did you see it playing a role in your parent's interactions...

Vieira-I was just...

Hadley-with other adults

Vieira-...accepting to everyone that was here. I didn't...there was no difference to me. It was just the way it was. You know, you talk about diversity. I mean, people talk about it now. I think it was here a long time ago, and it's the way I grew up. Because a lot of...a lot of the black people that were here, they're from the Cape Verdean Islands, and you know, their ways are like the Portuguese, and so...we were all one of the same. I didn't see...it was just the way it...you know, we were all together.

Hadley-Was there any...tensions for other people that didn't feel the same way as you?

Vieira-I don't know if...you know, we all just felt that way. I don't know...if ...you know. That's how I felt. I don't know how the others felt. Nothing was ever said...

Hadley-So, what do you think were some of the perceptions that outsiders had of Fox Point?

Vieira-I...I don't know...Because I know...back then, I know there were a lot of barrooms down here, and...I really don't know. I know that they, well the Eastsiders, I know they kept their distance from Fox Point...you know. But there

were a lot of good people that came out of this community. An awful lot of good people.

Hadley-Do you stay in touch with anybody that you...I know you mentioned your friend...do you stay in touch with anybody else?

Vieira-No, everybody...everybody moved away, because at, you know, at one time this was not a place to bring up kids. So a lot of the kids I grew up with, they've all moved away. But, you know, we've always...I always...my husband and I always kept our connection of Fox Point. And you know, I was always...I was able when I started working here eleven years ago, my parents were still here...and my in-laws. So at lunchtime I would leave here. And it was...you know, like coming home again every day to work.

Hadley-So I know you moved out of Fox Point a while ago, but you're back here, sort of, every day for work. What do you see as some of the major changes that Fox Point has gone through since you...

Vieira-Well, I mean I love the way Wickenden Street has become. That...I mean, it was never like that when my husband and I lived here. I only wish it was. And I just...I see a lot of young professionals coming here. And, you nev...you know, it was never like that before. It was all families. A lot of Irish, Portuguese. Some Italian. Some Lebanese. And everybody just got along, and hung together. Every three years, this...the community has a reunion. And they can't even fit all the people for the people that come back. It's really something.

Hadley- Do you ever go to the reunions?

Vieira-Yes. I do. Yeah my husband and I go.

Hadley-Can you tell me more about them?

Vieira-The first reunion I didn't know about. They had it at the Knights of Columbus. And then there was talk of having another one, but they...their response was so great, that they decided to have the next one at...at the Venus de Milo in Somerset. And, oh my god. I can't imag...I can't begin to tell you how many people attended that one. And they have one every three years. I went twice. And I...I believe they're working on their next one. I'm not sure what year they'll have it, but...the amount of people...it's just...unreal.

Hadley-Do you recognize a lot of people that you...

Vieira-Oh yes. Yeah. Even if you didn't know them...the faces, you know, if you don't know their names, you still know their faces. Because you just walked everywhere, years ago...you just...know the faces.

Hadley-Are there a lot of people who grew up in Fox Point who work here at Vartan Gregorian?

Vieira-Yes. Mrs. Afonso...Actually, when her mother and father came from the old country, they lived downstairs from my grandparents. And so, when I came...when I came here...So many of their teachers embraced me because...you know...they knew I was from the neighborhood years back...and...and because, you know, being Portuguese themselves, it was just...it was really a nice place to come back and work after raising my sons. You know, I had been away from the work force for a lot of years. And I really questioned myself...whether I could you know, come back and work. But this was really a nice place to come back to.

Hadley-How would you compare the own...your own education that you received in Fox Point to the education offered by Vartan Gregorian?

Vieira-Now, all the teaching methods have changed so much. I mean we give the kids the freedom to think, and, you know, do so much. And back then, you know, I was afraid of my own shadow. You would never question your teacher. And, you know, I was afraid of raising my hand. But now, these kids have such freedom to express themselves. And, you know, and...and the methods of teaching...I mean, I wish I could do it over again. It's so different today, for...for young students.

Hadley-So, is there anything else that you...that you remember about your childhood that was particularly important or significant?

Vieira-Just, you know, enjoying the state that I grew up in, having so many beaches. I mean, I love the water. My husband and I have a yacht, and...I mean...ever since my kids were little, they were in diapers and I put them in swimming lessons, you know? And they love the water to this day. And I just...just, you know, going to that pool. And on weekends going to the beaches with my parents and family.

Hadley-So I wanted to go back to the question of ethnicity and race. You were young when this was happening, but do you remember any impacts of the Civil Rights Movement...or anything from your childhood experience?

Vieira-Other than what I saw on TV, I don't think that it caused any separation here in Fox Point. From, you know, my recollection. I believe the March to...the March to Washington...I don't think anybody even joined them from here. So I just...there were a lot of big families that grew up...and I just, you know, we had...I don't know, a certain bond here in Fox Point. Maybe others see it differently, but that's how I saw it.

Hadley-So, you were pretty young when the building of I-195 happened. And I was wondering if you...how you felt about any changes that occurred because of that.

Vieira-Because of what? What's the question?

Hadley-The building of the highway.

Vieira-Oh, I think...you mean this one here now?

Hadley-Yeah

Vieira-Oh, I think it's great. I mean, you know, if you're coming from that direction, I mean you always had to, you know, ease your way over to the left, now you just stay to the right. I think it's great. I mean, you know, we're keeping up with the times.

Hadley-So, the creation of India Point Park was also another change in Fox Point, how...how do you feel about that?

Vieira-Oh, I think it's nice that they're building up the waterfront. You now, I don't know what they're going to do with that building, you know, where Shooters used to be. I mean I like it, I wish, you know, they would do more.

Hadley-So, what do you...what do you think about the future of Fox Point. Do you have any ideas of what you think it will be like in the future...or what you would like it to look like?

Vieira-I never gave that much thought. I don't know. I mean, it just seems like it's going in the right direction, and for it to continue in a positive way.

Hadley- So is there any thing else you'd like to tell me about?

Vieira-Just that, you know, I always felt secure in the neighborhood. I did. I, you know...I thought it was a nice place to grow up. And when I had my boys...I was always here with my boys. And there was a time there where my boys would always be here with their grandparents. And we have a house. We bought my in-laws house. And I've made an apartment for the boys. And they would, you know, when they were done with high school they were always here. They liked Providence a lot. Even though they grew up in Bristol, and you know, Riverside, and then Bristol. Yeah, they love hanging here.

Hadley-Do they still come back here?

Vieira-Well no they're older now and they have careers, and so. But, you know...yeah, they go to a lot of restaurants and clubs in Providence.

Hadley-Great, is there anything else?

Vieira-No.

Hadley-Ok.