

Interview with Mark Fonseca and Valerie Fonseca, Residents of Reservoir Triangle

Interviewer: Adriana Isaza

Date: December 5, 2011

Time: 7:00pm

Place: Mark Fonseca's Home on Humes St., Providence RI

Adriana Isaza: Alright, so, can you guys state your names into the mic?

Mark Fonseca: Mark Fonseca.

Valerie Fonseca: Valerie Fonseca.

Isaza: Great. So, how did you come to live in Reservoir Triangle?

M. Fonseca: I was looking to buy a house in 1981. Came around in this part of town from a lead from a realtor and, I didn't particularly like the house that I looked at so as I was leaving, I happened to notice the water twinkling in the distance and I was kind of surprised that there was a pond here. So I checked it out and found a house that was close to the water, and checked into it, and eventually bought it.

Isaza: From where did you see the pond when you first came?

M. Fonseca: Probably a...

Isaza: Just like at the end...?

M. Fonseca: ...block. Yeah, a block from here on Sibley St. I think I was looking on Sibley. And as I came down Sibley towards the water, that's when I noticed it.

Isaza: Were all the fences and everything up at the time?

M. Fonseca: Some were, yes.

Isaza: Yes? Did – where did you walk down to the water?

M. Fonseca: The end of Sibley.

Isaza: Yes, just there. Did you wonder about the fences when you first saw it?

M. Fonseca: Which fence?

Isaza: Were the fences that are now up along, like the...

V. Fonseca: Sidewalk?

Isaza: ...sidewalk and like the parts where you can't pass because it's still contaminated. Were those up or were those...?

M. Fonseca: No.

Isaza: Ok, so you had no idea.

M. Fonseca: Mhm.

Isaza: And you found this house presumably. And you moved into this one?

M. Fonseca: Actually, I was looking at the house next door to this one.

Isaza: Oh, really?

M. Fonseca: And, this one was boarded up at the time. It was in a trust. Family trust, and the house that is next door here, I decided not to buy it kind of at the last minute and a friend of mine bought it and then let me know that this house was available and then I got a chance to buy this one.

Isaza: And did you fix it up and everything on your own?

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: That's fantastic.

M. Fonseca: Oh, thanks.

Isaza: What, I mean you said the water drew you to this particular area. Was there anything else that made you think that this would be a good place to live?

M. Fonseca: The neighborhood was nice. It's very convenient. It's located in a great spot. Close to everything. And just, liked it. Just kind of fell in love with it right away.

Isaza: Did you know anyone here apart from the friend who bought the house next door?

M. Fonseca: No, actually. No, I didn't.

Isaza: Do you know people in the neighborhood now?

M. Fonseca: Oh, yes.

Isaza: Yes. In this block, or...?

M. Fonseca: Oh yes, I've seen them come and go, and stay, and pass away, and babies born. Yes. Been here a while.

Isaza: That's wonderful. Do you find that a lot of the people...do you find that there's a high turnover of people, or is it mostly stable?

M. Fonseca: It's a good turnover.

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: There's a lot of rental and apartments, so, see new...

Isaza: Around where?

M. Fonseca: Right around here. This whole neighborhood basically is pretty much multi family, so.

Isaza: What was it like when you first moved in here? Can you talk a little bit about what the neighborhood was like back then, your first impressions of it?

M. Fonseca: It was blue collar. There were a lot of firemen and policemen that lived here. And, yes. Yes, pretty much...I would say it was mostly...it was a good mix, but it was mostly Caucasian people and with a few Spanish people. A few African Americans, and that was about it.

Isaza: How do you find the neighborhood has changed since you moved in?

V. Fonseca: [laughter]

M. Fonseca: Yes, it's changed. Yes, the demography, the demographics have changed.

Isaza: Yes?

M. Fonseca: I would say, along the pond is still kind of working middle class people. But the rentals are pretty much Hispanic now.

V. Fonseca: Mhm.

M Fonseca: Yes, I would say it's predominantly Hispanic.

Isaza: Yes? Do you...I know that there's a Cambodian population around here [05:00], do you think that...?

M. Fonseca: Yes. Yes, there are a few, yes. There's maybe one...I think there's one or two streets that are mostly Asian, but...yes.

Isaza: Which streets are those?

M. Fonseca: Alvin. And other than Alvin Street is....yes, that's about it.

Isaza: Can you maybe talk about some of your early memories of living here and sort of your...I don't know, how you got to know your neighbors or sort of your relationship with the neighborhood?

M. Fonseca: Well, it was kind of centered on the pond. We would have a pond festival every year. There'd be a fishing contest and there were activities for kids, and we would do a clean-up around the pond.

Isaza: Can you tell me more about this festival? I mean, who sponsored it, when was it?

M. Fonseca: It was usually in the spring. And kind of right around Earth Day. When is that? April?

Isaza: I don't know.

M. Fonseca: It's like late April, something like that. And it would be held across, over at the baseball fields. And we would kind of troll around on the pond and pick up shopping carts, and washing machines and things that got tossed in and...yes, a lot of debris that found its way in there and...it was fun.

Isaza: Wow, that's big debris. [laugh]

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: I would say. What's the biggest, or strangest, I guess, thing that you found cleaning up.

V. Fonseca: Snapping turtle.

M. Fonseca: As far as debris goes? Wow, that's a good one. Wow, I think there was...I think it was a car probably. Yes, it was probably a car.

Isaza: What part of the pond was that found?

M. Fonseca: That was on the other side, there's a little boat ramp that you can get into, and I think they just drove it in and...yes.

Isaza: Wow. And you said a snapping turtle?

V. Fonseca: Yes. There's...I've heard some stories about snapping turtles.

M. Fonseca: Yes. There's been some big snapping turtles. There's a lot of wildlife around here.

Isaza: Yes?

M. Fonseca: I've seen deer, with many pointed antlers come through. Hawks.

V. Fonseca: Coyotes.

M. Fonseca: Coyote.

V. Fonseca: Wolves. Not wolves, foxes. Sorry.

M. Fonseca: Yes. Ah, yes, a couple of foxes. Plus we've brought some in too. We've had chickens, and cats, dogs, squirrels. Had a pet squirrel that we found here. So, yes.

Isaza: [laughter] That's...a pet squirrel, I haven't heard that. Do you remember...was the, festival I guess you called it, just neighborhood?

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: Like, people in the neighborhood created it?

M. Fonseca: Yes, it was created by, I think...the guy who did a lot of work on it, his name is Dave Talan. I don't know if you've met him yet. Have you met him?

Isaza: I haven't, personally. I don't know if somebody else in the class has. The name kind of rings a bell.

M. Fonseca: Yes, Dave's been like a neighborhood organizer for as long as I can remember. [phone rings] You know, even before I got here....Oh shoot.

Isaza: [laughter]

M. Fonseca: Let me get this, ok?

Isaza: Yes, go for it. [M. Fonseca steps out] I'll ask you some questions.

V. Fonseca: Great.

Isaza: Have you seen the snapping turtles or wildlife in the pond?

V. Fonseca: Our cats, they...we have two cats, they're brothers. One of them was a hunter and he would bring fish up every once in a while and they were kind of odd looking fish. [laughter]

Isaza: Why?

V. Fonseca: Just the...I don't know. I don't know if it was the pollution or just if it was that kind of fish, but they were big and not very nice looking. [laughter] Kind of looked like a piranha. I highly doubt it was. I haven't personally seen the snapping turtles, but I've heard that one got stuck in a trash can and my dad had to take it. And then two of his friends, and they were not very nice. But not too much that would do anything, really.

Isaza: Have you...did you ever go to this festival by the pond as a kid?

V. Fonseca: Actually, this is the first time I've been hearing it.

Isaza: Really?

V. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: As a kid did you...or, I mean, when you visit now, I guess...do you ever go down to the pond?

V. Fonseca: Well, I lived here for twelve years and then that's when we moved. We...I would go down there. We...my dad built stairs, into the pond, [10:00] where we put the boat, and we would go...for a while we went a couple of times in the summer. I would go down there and there would be tons of snails. And so, I would get as many as I can and put them in a shoe box, and then those would be my pets. And the [laughter] they would either climb out or shrivel up. [laughter] But that's...and, I mean, I would go down there when it was really nice but the boat's there now so you can't really sit down there. And the dock that's in the water has kind of fallen apart. But, if I could I would so go down there.

Isaza: Do you...do you guys use that boat on the lake...on the pond, still?

V. Fonseca: We haven't in a while. I mean I would like to but we haven't used it in two years, three years.

Isaza: Did you used to use it a lot?

V. Fonseca: Yes. We...our neighbors, they go on the pond and they do the tube surfing...I don't, I don't know what it's called. But I just, I wouldn't personally do that.

Isaza: How come?

V. Fonseca: I just...the debris that I see in there. I just, that would make me feel icky.

Isaza: What kind...I mean, what kind of debris have you seen?

V. Fonseca: Just trash. Like, bottles, and newspapers, and just stuff that people just threw in, kind of.

Isaza: Do your neighbors still do that now?

V. Fonseca: The tubing, or the...?

Isaza: Yes.

V. Fonseca: I saw them last summer, this...yes, this year. But I only saw them once or twice.

Isaza: Did you ever, as a kid, swim in the pond, or go into it?

V. Fonseca: No. I would...when we were on the boat, I would stick my hands and my feet in, but that's as far as I went.

Isaza: Did you ever want to, or...?

V. Fonseca: Yes. I wish that I could go swimming in there so bad. It would be so nice, just to cool off in the summer.

Isaza: Do you remember, like, did your parents tell you you couldn't go swimming?

V. Fonseca: Well, I mean, they kind of did, but the kind of thing was, in the boat, they would kind of say, "Oh, don't go in or the snapping turtle will get you," so that I wouldn't fall over or jump in, because I liked to swim. I always have. And, then, on the edges I wouldn't go in because I would see the trash, and so it would kind of [laughter] keep me away.

Isaza: For sure. Did you guys just go out to like, ride the boat around, or did you fish?

V. Fonseca: We didn't fish, personally. We would just go for boat rides. But there was people who fished.

Isaza: People that you know now, or...?

V. Fonseca: Some neighbors. I've seen them, but I don't really know them, know them. Just neighbors.

Isaza: Yes. Just people who are around. [M. Fonseca returns with box]. Ooh. [laughter]

M. Fonseca: I have a few things, if you want to look at them.

Isaza: Yes. I would love to, actually. [shuffling papers]

M. Fonseca: This is, kind of...did you see that?

Isaza: Yes. This is what we created.

M. Fonseca: Ok.

Isaza: Is this the right time? Yes. [papers shuffling] Where did you get this? Just out of curiosity, to know what's getting out.

M. Fonseca: That?

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: That was sent by David.

Isaza: Oh, ok.

M. Fonseca: Dave Talan. Yes. Dave Talan...you met Dave Kennedy, right?

Isaza: Again, I didn't personally, but one of the girls in the group that I'm working closely with in the class did their interview with Dave and Dave and we've talked a lot about them.

M. Fonseca: Ok. Are you all up to date on what's going on with the Gorham property and all that?

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: Ok, so I have some information on that. This is one of our Know Your Neighborhood booklet. [pages turning]

Isaza: [inaudible]

M. Fonseca: This was...

V. Fonseca: Hasn't he been running...?

M. Fonseca: That's David right there. Yes, that's...

V. Fonseca: [laughter] He was running last time that they were voting.

M. Fonseca: This was a plan done. [papers shuffling]. Vincent Cianci was mayor. I wonder, does it have a date on it? Yes it does.

Isaza: 1996, maybe?

M. Fonseca: Yes. Ok. [pages shuffling].

Isaza: And what was this a plan for?

M. Fonseca: Well, they were going to do a park here. Ok, alright. Here's the Gorham site, right here. This was going to be turned into a park. They wanted to continue it around. Around the whole area here, [15:00] this was not going to be part of it.

V. Fonseca: Where are we?

M. Fonseca: This was part of it. This is private right here. This is part of it. We are right here. This part here and this part here is private. Residential area. And this is over where....there's a boat house there now.

Isaza: Have you been to this boat house?

M. Fonseca: Yes. I have.

Isaza: When it was open, and everything, too?

M. Fonseca: Yes. Yes.

Isaza: So this was all going to be park space.

M. Fonseca: Yes. [hitting the table] This was the plan for the boat house. This is like a little peninsula.

Isaza: Mhm.

M. Fonseca: And they did build...they built the...well they didn't build that but the house is there. And they didn't use that for the shelter. They built a storage.

V. Fonseca: [inaudible]

M. Fonseca: Yes. [shuffling papers] This was the Gorham plan. This was going to stay all green here. Tennis courts, parking for the park, and then they were going to keep the existing factory and maybe rehab it into office or residential or something.

Isaza: So when you moved, you saw the old Gorham factory.

M. Fonseca: Gorham was still open. And at 3:30 everybody got out at once, and they all got out and came this way. And if I was...happened to be trying to leave my street, it was a long wait sometimes. Because the traffic backed up quickly. And yes. Yes they were still open when I was here.

Isaza: Now, the fire was after that, right?

M. Fonseca: Oh yes.

Isaza: It was the last fire...?

M. Fonseca: Which fire?

Isaza: Well there was one last one that like destroyed one of the buildings, right, and after that they decided not to do anything with Gorham.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: Right?

M. Fonseca: Yes. They were never really...I don't think they were ever really serious about doing anything with the building, they were just trying to figure out how they could do something, you know? At one time, there was going to be a developer who was going to keep the building and rehab it and turn it into condos, and maybe build another building. That was in, 87, I think? And right after he purchased it, the market just tanked. So, he more or less just walked away. And I think one of the...I think the bank got stuck with it. So, they didn't want it, so the city ended up with it, because of tax...taxes due on it. And then, the city kind of initiated the demolition and they couldn't find anybody that was willing to come in and take care of it, so they had it demolished. And they tried to bring in a supermarket, and they didn't really remediate it completely and there were some issues there. So, that didn't work out. So, instead of remediating it, and fixing it, build a high school on it! That's what you've got to do. [laughter] So.

V. Fonseca: Yes.

M. Fonseca: As you can tell, I'm not too happy about that.

V. Fonseca: Yes. When we had to go vote, my mom and I, we went in and we were there for ten minutes, and we came out, we had, such big headaches. You could just...

Isaza: Really? From the air?

V. Fonseca: From the air, yes, it was bad.

Isaza: Could you smell it, or...?

V. Fonseca: I don't...it wasn't really the smell, but, I guess, maybe it was, but, it just hit you. And then you got used to it, but then when you went to the fresh air it just...whoa.

M. Fonseca: Sensitive, are we?

V. Fonseca: Yes.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

V. Fonseca: I don't think that it was sensitive, I think anybody could...

M. Fonseca: Well, I mean they've had it...they're running it as a high school and it's been there for a while, so, I don't know. I haven't been following the follow-up environmental inspections and stuff like that. I kind of just got busy with other things.

Isaza: Now, you said that you don't think that they were ever actually going to do anything with the site, why do you say that?

M. Fonseca: I volunteered to be on a few of the boards and committees concerning this, [20:00] and kind of got the impression that they already...they really, I think they were just having these public meetings because they need to by law, and I think they kind of had an idea what they were going to do and who was going to do it. And, that's my opinion, but...

Isaza: Who would go to these meetings? Like, what would go on at these meetings?

M. Fonseca: It's in a newspaper, right there. The minutes are available. In fact, one of my neighbors was very good about that, he's got all that information. He's got all the neighborhood minute meetings. And he's done...

V. Fonseca: Which one?

M. Fonseca: Robert. [moving things] And he's done a lot of the research and...

Isaza: Robert...Robert whom?

V. Fonseca: Dorr.

M. Fonseca: Robert Dorr, yes.

Isaza: D-O-O-R?

M. Fonseca: D-O-R-R.

Isaza: Where can you find the minuets for that?

M. Fonseca: Um...

Isaza: With the city?

M. Fonseca: He has...yes, the city, sure, yes. Department of Planning. Department of Planning, they were the ones who...and Robert Dorr I'm sure has copies of all that stuff. He would be a fascinating interview, by the way, if you could get in touch with him.

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: I may have his number somewhere.

V. Fonseca: Well, what's his address? [moving things]

M. Fonseca: He has some issues, and I think he is in the hospital now. That's what Dave Kennedy was telling me today when I spoke with him. You've seen this picture?

Isaza: Mhm.

M. Fonseca: Yes. The H-building. It's pretty impressive. They built it right around the turn of the century, and it's probably one of the world's most, you know, respected bronze and silver, and they did a lot of stuff here. Most of the statues you see around Providence were all done here. They even did some Department of Defense work that was kind of hush-hush.

Isaza: Hush-hush?

M. Fonseca: Yes. Yes, it was during World War II, and they didn't...no one really knew what it was about. I mean, there was a lot of that going on then. It wasn't a Manhattan Project or anything like that, but they did do some work for the Defense Department.

Isaza: Do you know anything about that?

M. Fonseca: Not much, no. Robert would know about that, he's the one who told me about it. Yes, no it's got a real interesting history. A lot of people that lived in this neighborhood worked here. And that's really...it was what supported the blue collar people around here, there's a lot of good...there were a lot of trades in here and...everything, you know, from administrative to production, to labor, everything. When Gorham first opened, they used to have visitors come, traveling salesmen and reps and stuff, and they would...the casino, which is right here, that's where they would stay. It was a real nice building, and there was a bowling alley in the basement, they really...they had a nice, like park area right there for them. Yes.

Isaza: Do you remember what the community reaction or involvement was as they started talking about new plans for Gorham?

M. Fonseca: I think a lot of people didn't want anything that was going to cause a lot of traffic or a lot of noise, or make a mess, like any normal neighborhood, I guess. They were thinking about having it residential and professional offices and stuff, which seemed like a great idea. And then it kind of got a life of its own, and got tossed around, like an unwanted step child [laughter] and I think they just had to do something because it was being vandalized, and there were people living in it. And summer time you'd always see tents up outside, and there were squatters, especially right here. It's very...I don't blame them, you know? It's very nice back there.

Isaza: [laughter] Yes?

M. Fonseca: But fires would start. They were taking out, you know, pipes and wire and things like that so, it was a big liability. [25:00]

Isaza: Did the police or the city do anything to stop this, or...?

M. Fonseca: Yes, but there's not much you can do. I remember we took a tour through there, and there were a few...there was some neighborhood police who actually lived in the neighborhood came on the tour, and there were people up on the roof throwing stuff at us. I mean they...because they thought we were trespassing, invading their home [laughter]. So, yes. I don't have my glass, what year was that?

Isaza: It's 1988.

M. Fonseca: 88, yes.

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: Yes. Thanks. Yes, I remember when they started tearing it down.

Isaza: Uhuh.

M. Fonseca: There was a couple of fires, and that just kind of about, sort of did it, everybody just kind of threw their hands up and realized that nothing was going to happen here. And the longer they waited, the worst it got. The condition of the building really started to deteriorate. They didn't maintain the roofs. They didn't...the windows, I mean water was getting in the bricks, the mortar was starting to get compromised. So. There was some historical value to it, but it really was kind of a hodge podge, you know. I mean they originally built this section here, and then they added this, and then they added that, and then they...it didn't quite have what they were looking for I guess. Yes. Because back then there weren't....there wasn't, you know, they depended a lot, you can just see by the way it's laid out, they didn't...they used natural light. You know, they didn't have, they didn't depend on electricity so much. You know, so, there were a lot of courtyards and it was open. But anyway, that's that.

Isaza: Do you remember, sort of reactions once they started tearing it down?

M. Fonseca: I think it...you know, everybody was resigned to the fact that that's...unfortunately it was the only alternative at that time.

Isaza: Did people keep going to the site, as the demolition...like, you said there were squatters, did people keep going back to that site as it was being torn down?

M. Fonseca: I think once it...once the demolition began, that it really wasn't inhabited anymore. I mean, there were crews there every day, and so...

Isaza: How long after the demolition did they start construction again, do you remember?

M. Fonseca: It wasn't very long, because they did have a plan to build a market. And there was quite a bit of hazardous material that had to be removed, so that took some time. I think they may have had it demolished in six months.

Isaza: Wow.

M. Fonseca: All that had to get hauled away, broken up, hauled away. Some of it probably got left on site, you know, and buried, but most of it was taken away. There were a lot of things like very large wooden beams that were sold to companies that deal with reclaimed wood, you know, ancient wood. So, some of it got recycled. Not really sure what happened to everything. I kind of took my eye off the ball there once it got knocked down.

Isaza: Did they inform the community at all about the toxic material that was being removed from the site?

M. Fonseca: They did, yes, they did, but they didn't do a very good job of it.

Isaza: What back then was the awareness of the toxicity of the Gorham site?

M. Fonseca: Most people realized it was an old industrial site that was...had a lot of asbestos and heavy metals, and things like that. And they knew...a company, there was a company that was hired that specialized in removing that that came in, and took the asbestos off all the pipes and all that, but they weren't...I don't think it was supervised very well. I think they did a little more damage, you know, pipes were broken and water was leaking. I remember seeing one of the basements was full of water because a pipe broke [30:00] and they didn't fix it and they didn't shut the water off. You know, I don't think they could for fire hydrant reasons, or whatever they couldn't...and they couldn't isolate it, so it just ran, so. Yes, they had their hands full there, definitely.

Isaza: What was the change in the neighborhood after the Gorham site was taken down? I mean, it's such a big thing, it must affected the whole vicinity, I imagine.

M. Fonseca: If I can remember correctly, it was down for a while, and it wasn't finalized as to what they were going to do. And it kind of went on and on for a little bit and then they built the...they built the shopping center, and they put in a gas station, which was not really on the plan, it kind of got put in after the work had started. But, once the market was up and running, I think it was a benefit to the community. Everybody seemed to really appreciate having a market close by. And it did work out well. And then they built another one, not too far from there, and I think the two of them so close together, and maybe for other reasons...I know there were some, there were some other reasons inside the building, they were having some environmental reasons. So, I think that Stop and Shop decided just to shut it, to concentrate on the other one.

Isaza: Mhm.

M. Fonseca: And they just recently built one not too far from here, probably about two or three miles from here, so...yes. So, I don't think anything is going to be happening over there soon.

Isaza: No?

M. Fonseca: Unless you ...do you know something? I don't...I'm not really...

Isaza: I mean, as far as I can tell, the people who own the Stop and Shop are just sort of letting it sit, and that's about it. Yes, I mean, I know that there's the church there in that same area, which I hear gets decent activity at times.

M. Fonseca: Mhm.

Isaza: I don't know if you guys have ever been there.

M. Fonseca: No. I know what you mean, though.

Isaza: Yes, yes.

M. Fonseca: And then there's the high school, and yes. That's...and the high school as kind of a surprise, because there was going to be another big box store built, I think, originally in the plan. Maybe like a Home Depot or something along those lines. And they backed out. And the YMCA was going to go there.

It was like four...there were four parcels. And when it started coming to light how bad the situation was there, I think everybody just backed out. Nobody wanted to put a building up and then have to deal with contamination issues, or add the...added extra cost of filtration or whatever needed to be done. But the high school was federally funded, I guess, and they had the money and it was not a problem to them. But there was some resistance. There are a lot of people who thought it wasn't a very good idea to do that. But they did it anyway.

Isaza: What's the relationship of the neighborhood with the high school? Because I know it's a lot of outside kids, right?

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: Not really from this area.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

V. Fonseca: I don't know anybody that goes there.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

V. Fonseca: I haven't...honestly, I haven't seen anybody like, going out...

M. Fonseca: Mostly...I see the kids walking north when the school gets out so I think it's mostly for the Elmwood kids. And there's...Paul Cuffee's over there. I don't know if you saw that. Did you see? Yes. One of the other, one of the commercial buildings is a high school now. A charter school.

Isaza: Do you...you mentioned other kids...did you go to school with people from this neighborhood?

V. Fonseca: No, but I mean, I know quite a few. But I don't know anybody who has gone there, or I haven't really seen anybody walk in. I mean, I guess I don't really go there in the early morning or around school when they get out. But...I haven't..."Oh yeah, I go to the school that's next to the old Stop and Shop"

Isaza: Where did you go to school when you lived here?

V. Fonseca: I went to CVS Highlander, and then I was homeschooled, and then I went to Meadowbrook Waldorf School, which is in Richmond, [35:00] and then homeschooled, and then moved.

Isaza: Alright. Going back to the issue of the toxicity, you mentioned that you weren't aware of it when you moved in here, right?

M. Fonseca: No, I didn't know anything, really about that, I kind of found out as I went along.

Isaza: Can you talk about that?

M. Fonseca: My interest was the pond and I talked to some people who were active in trying to clean it and the first thing that I noticed in the spring was once it started to get warm, like in May or June, there'd be this tremendous algae bloom. To the point where it looked like hundreds and hundreds of

gallons of green paint had gotten spilled in there. And it's...you know, after finding out it's just a lot of phosphate in the water, and there's a lot of chemistry that promotes that. And at one time...at that time, Narragansett Brewery was open. And they released a lot of phosphates and if you look on the map, Mashapaug is like the last pond before it goes towards Roger Williams Park. So we get the stuff from Spectacle Lake, and Tongue Pond, which is over by the brewery. All that comes through here. Plus lawn chemicals get washed...I mean, we're just...it's an urban area surrounded by all kinds of things. There's a huge parking lot on the other side, so all the drippings that may come off cars all gets washed in. So, I realize that, you know, it's not going to be a pristine Walden Pond or anything like that, and the best thing to do is the best you can considering the circumstances. So that meant, like pulling the washing machines and the shopping carts out at least. And hoping that maybe down the road it could change. I mean, it is...there hasn't been a big assault on it like there was in the industrial era. It's actually tapered off. So, it's better now than it was thirty years ago, I think.

Isaza: Can you tell the difference?

M. Fonseca: We still get algae blooms. In fact, I was just out looking at it today, and what it is it, December? The first week of December. There's an algae bloom again! This weather is incredible.

Isaza: It is. The trees on campus are all blooming. It's really sad because they're all going to die very soon, you know, if the weather dips.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: Did you move in here with the intention of using the pond? Like swimming, or whatever? Or did you already like see that it was not...?

M. Fonseca: It wasn't...yeah, you could kind of tell it wasn't good for swimming. But I had a canoe, and I boat. I love to go out on...and boat on it. My neighbors across the pond were water skiing on it. And people would skate on it in the winter. So it was being used recreationally. So...I just liked the fact that it was just right there at my back yard. And it was...I'm in a spot where I get to see the sunsets in the winter, and it's awesome.

V. Fonseca: The view is beautiful.

M. Fonseca: The view is just absolutely spectacular. Every one's different.

V. Fonseca: Even when you don't get to swim in it.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

V. Fonseca: It's worth the view. Especially in the winter, the sunsets. [phone rings]

M. Fonseca: Yes. And, you know, like I said, it's so conveniently located. I mean, it's just a couple of blocks from a real busy main road. And then you come down the dead end street and you're here and you're here, and it's great.

Isaza: Do people still ice skate on that?

M. Fonseca: No, I haven't seen that in a while.

Isaza: Does it still freeze over, or does it not freeze?

M. Fonseca: It does. It does, but to get the conditions just right for ice skating, it has to...you know, it only happens once every ten years. Where it freezes and you don't have snow on it, you don't have slush on it, you don't...and it's smooth, and it's thick. It has to be cold [phone rings]because it's...[40:00] it has spots. It, like...it's very dangerous, actually, going on it, because there's a lot of thin ice. There's springs. There's springs in it. There's...as you get along the shore, if the land is still warm the ice won't freeze. So, I haven't seen the ice skatable in a long time.

Isaza: Since like when? When did you last...ish, see ice skating?

M. Fonseca: I skated on it, actually.

V. Fonseca: [laughter] that must've been a while ago.

M. Fonseca: Twenty? Probably twenty years ago. Yes.

Isaza: I take it you never saw ice skaters on it, then.

V. Fonseca: No.

Isaza: [laughter]

V. Fonseca: No. We used to try and throw things on it to see if it was thick enough, but of course they would always go through.

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: I...just off the subject a little bit. I had a surprise visitor one day, who was doing some genealogical research and his great grandfather, I think, built this house.

V. Fonseca: I remember that.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

V. Fonseca: Just, all of a sudden, "Oh yeah, great grandfather built this house."

M. Fonseca: Over a hundred years ago. And described the house and the area in a letter that he wrote to one of his relatives. And there was a forge, a steel iron forge over there [pointing to other side of pond], and it was pretty interesting. Had some old pictures, so. I was very lucky to be able to meet them.

Isaza: Yes. What did that letter say? I mean, apart from the forge, what more did you learn from it?

M. Fonseca: That he built the house, he had a wife. He described the area.

Isaza: How did he describe it?

M. Fonseca: So there were a lot of trees, and he described the pond. I think he may have been in some kind of a trade. I can't remember. But, yes. Described what he was doing. Yes, this was actually like, the sticks, back, a hundred years ago, this was kind of like the sticks. Then they built the factory, and you know, I mean, it's...there's a lot of old cemeteries around here. Providence was pretty much just right downtown and right around downtown.

V. Fonseca: Around the pond's really the only forest around here.

M. Fonseca: There was an Indian village around here. Yes. Know about that? Yes.

Isaza: Yes, we were trying to get in touch with somebody who would know more about that, but we didn't manage to find anyone.

M. Fonseca: Yes. You need to speak to Robert Dorr.

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: He's got all this information.

Isaza: I will definitely pass on that name. I don't know if we have time to use it for our project, but I think the class is going to happen again, so I'm sure that they'll build off of what we have, and keep looking for more stuff.

M. Fonseca: Ok.

Isaza: Which is pretty cool. Going back to the...going back to this pond festival, does that still happen?

M. Fonseca: No.

Isaza: When did it end?

M. Fonseca: I think it ended probably, maybe four or five years ago.

Isaza: Oh, fairly recently.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: How come?

M. Fonseca: It just...I think it was...

V. Fonseca: No one was interested.

M. Fonseca: Yes, I think lack of interest, you know.

V. Fonseca: And that's when...

M. Fonseca: Like I said, the demographic changed. And the new...

V. Fonseca: Yes, that's when everybody started to move, and move in.

M. Fonseca: Yes. The people that moved in were not as connected to the pond and stuff as the previous inhabitants were, you know. Like, I have a friend who lives not far from here, who was born in 1970, and he remembers, as a kid, coming down to the pond in the summers. That's what they would do. They would all gather and they'd play around it, they'd walk around it. But now kids just aren't really doing that anymore. They kind of stay in the house or they go somewhere else or...

V. Fonseca: On the street.

M. Fonseca: Yes. It's not like...times have changed, you know.

Isaza: Did you, or do you ever...did you play around the pond when you were a kid?

V. Fonseca: Not really. Mostly...we have a trampoline, so on there, in the yard, or on the front dead end. Bikes, we had a basketball hoop...

M. Fonseca: Mhm.

V. Fonseca: Up the street kind of. Not really around it.

M. Fonseca: Yes. We're kind of fortunate here because there's not many houses on this street and there's no traffic, so we had a good [45:00] set up, you know. And like an extended yard, you know, and there were a lot of places to play. So.

Isaza: What about the park? Like, the park with the fields, also, and the ensuing little walk through the woods there.

M. Fonseca: That's...that was pretty...that's only been around, that hasn't been around too long has it? I mean, time flies, I do lose track, but, I would say, what? Maybe, ten years? Maybe. Yeah, we'd ride our bikes through there and, you know, it's nice.

V. Fonseca: There's the school playground that we would go. Or down the street there was the baseball field with the little playground.

M. Fonseca: The end of Ardoene St. There's a big field there, a baseball field, playground with swings, and there's another one over here. Yes, we knew where they all were, actually. We used to...

V. Fonseca: Squeaky swings.

M. Fonseca: Yes. We used to travel around and hit all the spots and have fun. It was good.

Isaza: What's your favorite memories from, like the pond, or from this area, just...?

V. Fonseca: The boat rides.

M. Fonseca: Yes. Boat rides, yes. Yes. Being out on it is really...it's impressive. Especially when the sun is setting, or it's just the colors are very vivid and the wind, you know...we get swans here that come every year. And it's just...I feel real fortunate.

V. Fonseca: Babies. The ducks. The baby swans. Ducks.

M. Fonseca: Yes. Yes, we've adopted many critters along the way.

V. Fonseca: [laughter]

Isaza: Yes [laughter]

M. Fonseca: And just...there's always a breeze in the summer, it's just so nice here, it really is. Just, you don't have to get in a car and...

V. Fonseca: We've had a couple of random strangers just come down and look at the pond.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: Do you plan to stay here a while?

M. Fonseca: Yes. I really...I like it. I don't know, I mean...

V. Fonseca: I like it.

M. Fonseca: I'm easy to please.

V. Fonseca: I'd live here when I'm older.

M. Fonseca: Yes. I like it. I think I'm very fortunate. I feel very lucky.

Isaza: Do you still have connections with the people...I mean, you said that the demographic has changed a lot and people have moved out, do you still have a lot of strong ties to people in the neighborhood, or have a lot of people left?

M. Fonseca: Yes. Well, I have some rentals, so I've met...I've rented to people, and got to know them, and they've rented for five or six or seven years or whatever, and then they move on, and either buy a house or move somewhere. Yes, we all...we keep in touch with some. And...I just think that...what was it, 81? That's thirty years. Thirty years just flew right by. Just poof! You know? We were just looking at some of her pictures when she was a little girl. I was like, wow, that just seems like it was a couple of years ago, you know? Must be having fun if time's flying by so fast, right?

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: How about you, do you have like...do you know a lot of the kids in the neighborhood?

V. Fonseca: My sister, she's four years older, she mostly hung out with them and she got to see them. And then, kind of, things went down hillish, and then we kind of stayed away. But, over...yes, some. But not too many.

M. Fonseca: Yes. There was a lot of transient, like I said with the apartments, people would stay sometimes for a month. Sometimes a couple of years. Some of the kids were great and fun and some were...

V. Fonseca: Our next door neighbors. Live right across the street, they're just...

M. Fonseca: Yes. And some were rascals. You know, you had to be careful. You know. And this is a nice little spot so they would gravitate here and so you had to...sometimes I felt like I was a camp counselor, you know.

Isaza: So, the fences, you said, weren't up around the brownfields when you first moved in. [50:00] Do you remember going back there?

M. Fonseca: They weren't...over at Gorham, you mean?

Isaza: Well, so...

M. Fonseca: Which ones are you talking about?

Isaza: Up, I think it's at the end of this street. Like, down by the high school, behind the high school, there's fences all along the way, and all of that.

M. Fonseca: Yes, Gorham had a chain linked fence.

Isaza: Oh, really?

M. Fonseca: Yes, they did.

Isaza: Ok.

M. Fonseca: They did, but they...

V. Fonseca: We used to go back there.

M. Fonseca: Yes, I mean it was...

V. Fonseca: Some of them are recent, but we'd go back some times.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: For just...?

V. Fonseca: Just to look, we would...

M. Fonseca: We would do...actually, during...one of the things that I did with the pond festival was to take people on a hike through the woods back there and along the shore.

V. Fonseca: Isn't there a train track back there? An old...

M. Fonseca: Yes. There's an old link. But there's...the main track comes right through, too.

Isaza: What's it...I mean, what's it like back there, what does it look like back there?

V. Fonseca: Woods. That's pretty much...

M. Fonseca: Yes, kind of nice.

V. Fonseca: Some fields, but, woodsy.

M. Fonseca: Mhm.

Isaza: Any remnants of Gorham back there at all?

M. Fonseca: Yes. Yes.

Isaza: Like?

M. Fonseca: They had a...the reason they built the factory...one of the reasons was the pond, they used the pond for water. They needed the water for the production and...there are some concrete footings there where they had a...like an aqueducts connection to the pond, you can see that. And, you know, that little cove, I don't know if you...this was kind of [pages turning]...this little cove right here. That kind of like caught most of their industrial debris. And it's pretty bad, actually, but there are...there are some remediation plans for that. Which, I don't know if it's ever going to happen or not, but it would be nice. There's a lot of silt right in there, juts kind of got filled in over time and, you know. They used things like PCBs and other cleaning chemicals and things like that that kind of ended up finding their way down to the lowest point here. And this can...I think, you know, if you look, there's a...this is all woods right here. It's pretty nice, it's a nice little peninsula. It's a nice little hike in there. It can be done. Textron is still kind of...has a foot in this so I don't know how much is going to get done or when.

Isaza: I've heard rumors that the woods back there, I mean they call them brownfields, but that things actually don't grow as much back there. Is that true?

V. Fonseca: I believe it.

M. Fonseca: I don't know. It seemed ok. I mean, there's a lot of trees, there's a lot of shrubs. Yes. I think it's down lower, you know, it all...all that stuff has gotten down into the water table and, you know, the top soil is...most plants don't go too deep. Even trees don't really go too deep. So. And trees are smart, they...you know, like all these plants know, if there's something there that's not good, you know, they don't send a root into it, they go in another direction. But this area here was not really insulted too bad because it's away from the main plant up here, you know. Most of that stuff ended up in the water, I think, you know.

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: So, it's in the silt, it's in the sediment.

Isaza: Mhm.

M. Fonseca: I mean, if you were to take a sample, a core sample, which was done, you'd see it. It's been covered over in time, every year that goes by more stuff settles down over on top of it and kind of seals it in.

V. Fonseca: What was it that Nigel's mom did, [55:00] where she would come and she would...?

M. Fonseca: Oh yes, yes. That was...they check all the fresh water, ponds and lakes, in the state, and they do a set of tests involving turbidity, the amount of plankton that's in the water, temperature, things like that, you know. So they kind of monitor the health of the water and how deep is the...you know, where does the temperature change, is it...they do tests to see how much oxygen is in the water. You know, that's one of the problems around with these ponds is that the oxygen levels are getting low and can't support fish and things like that with low oxygen. And yes, go on.

Isaza: No, I was going to say, you were mentioning before that the fish...you've like, the animals from the pond like look like they're ill sometimes. Have you had that experience?

V. Fonseca: When Mr. Buff would catch a fish or two, some of them weren't exactly the... best looking.

M. Fonseca: Yes, there are some, like carp, German carp, in the pond, they look like catfish kind of. They are very tolerant of pollution. And then there's a few bass out there that...they're like the top feeders. Yes, they've taken fish tissue samples. I remember one night, actually, you just reminded me. It was in the summer, and the window, I have, you know, the windows were open, and I could hear. And I heard all this...this was like maybe two or three in the morning, I heard all this noise and commotion. And I look and across the pond it looked like a UFO had just landed. And I couldn't believe it so I...I was so curious I had to go check it out. And I went over there and it was the EPA and they were doing fish sampling and water sampling. And they had this incredible, like hovercraft boat. I've never seen anything like it before. And these guys were all out there doing their thing, and thought it was a close encounter of the fourth kind or whatever. Yes. Yes, I remember that.

Isaza: Did they publish the results of those?

M. Fonseca: Yes. All that stuff's available. Yes, they've done a lot of tests, actually.

Isaza: And what do they...?

M. Fonseca: DEM has, EPA. It all kind of comes back the same. Yes, there is high levels, there's some heavy metals, there's low oxygen, there's a lot of anaerobic activity. You know, there's petroleum, you know, things, you know, all the stuff that would run, you know. What do you expect? It's there. I've seen them fish a few bodies out of the pond too over time.

Isaza: Really?

M. Fonseca: Yes. One was a guy that...young kid, actually, maybe a teenager...was trying to cross it in the winter, and he was alone, and fell through, and drowned. And then the water...and the...it was a freaky day. You know, the ice melted and then it refroze again. And then he washed up on the shore when the spring came, the spring thaw.

V. Fonseca: Where did he wash up, do you know?

M. Fonseca: On the other side, over the...

V. Fonseca: By the...

M. Fonseca: Right where that church is over there.

V. Fonseca: Ok.

M. Fonseca: And I came in...I came down my driveway and I noticed a lot of...there was a rescue and some police cars, and I took a peak with my binoculars and I could kind of see that they had taken the body and got him up onto the shore. And, he was big and bloated, and they took him away. And found a body once when...it was murder victim, on the other side here, where the boat ramp is.

V. Fonseca: You found him?

M. Fonseca: No.

V. Fonseca: Oh. I thought you said, "I found him."

M. Fonseca: No, I was actually working in the yard, and all of a sudden half a dozen guys came walking down the driveway [1:00:00] with shirts and ties on and they were all detectives, and I said, whoa! [laughter] "Hello." [laughter] And they told me they had found a floater on the other...that's...so, they wanted to look here, see if there was any evidence here. So, "Yes, sure, go ahead." Cumberland Farms, the gold station here, they got robbed once. Armed robbery. And the mounted police happened to be in the neighborhood and I didn't know they got...I didn't know they were...I wasn't aware of it. I looked out the window and I saw a policeman on a horse in my backyard looking along the shore [laughter]. So, yes, there's never a dull moment, you know.

Isaza: But it seems like a pretty nice, not...like, a pretty quiet neighborhood.

M. Fonseca: Yes, it is. I think it is. For the most part, you know, I think so. But, you know, you're in the city.

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: And there's all kinds of things going on. At all hours.

V. Fonseca: I have a question for me. Do you know how deep the pond is?

M. Fonseca: Yes, I do, actually.

V. Fonseca: How deep is it?

M. Fonseca: It varies.

V. Fonseca: How deep is the deepest?

M. Fonseca: It's probably at the deepest point probably twenty. Twenty feet.

V. Fonseca: That's it?

M. Fonseca: Yes.

V. Fonseca: Oh, I thought it was deeper. Ok.

M. Fonseca: No.

Isaza: How do you know?

M. Fonseca: I was one of the people that was doing the sampling for URI, and they had a topographical map of it. And I could see the deepest points, you know. It kind of had all the contour lines, so. Yes. Yes, it's actually...the deepest part actually is like right here. It's not that far away.

V. Fonseca: Mhm.

M. Fonseca: Straight on ahead.

V. Fonseca: [inaudible] [laughter]

M. Fonseca: They filled in quite a bit like right here, this whole...you see that straight line? Right there.

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: That's all been filled. This whole industrial park was put in in the 50s, early 50s, and they filled that all in.

Isaza: So this pond used to go out more.

M. Fonseca: Yes. Used to be all marsh. You know, there used to be like a little buffer zone, kind of.

Isaza: Do you know how big that area...that marsh, was? Do you have any sense?

M. Fonseca: No, I don't.

Isaza: That's interesting.

M. Fonseca: No, but if you...I'm sure you could get an old map and you could see it. There used to be a neighborhood over there, actually. Used to be houses.

Isaza: Yes, I've seen some old maps, I guess I just don't remember that part of it. Do you have any other curiosities about the pond? I mean, you live here, you must know random things [laughter] or wonder random things.

V. Fonseca: I just...how deep it was. And then, for a while, I wanted to know how big it was, and the you told me but I forgot it. And then...and then kind of, what was in it, because snapping turtles and then seeing the fish, and...kind of always imagined there was a giant squid in there [laughter]. But nothing that would be too...

M. Fonseca: Yes. She, kind of...I don't know, I wouldn't say she took it for granted, but I mean she was...

V. Fonseca: Kind of.

M. Fonseca: Kind of born here and been around it ever since she can remember, so, it was...

V. Fonseca: And didn't realize what I had.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

V. Fonseca: But, always appreciated it. Just, not as much as I do now, probably.

Isaza: You both said that you like the neighborhood and would want to stay here, come back here, and...what do you imagine...like, what would you like to see happen around the pond, or just in the neighborhood?

V. Fonseca: I would like it to be clean so you could swim in it, but...

M. Fonseca: The only way that it's going to be clean enough for that is it has to be drained.

V. Fonseca: And then, doesn't it probably have to be...the bottom.

M. Fonseca: Yes, drained and then dredged. And I don't see that in the near future. Unless somebody hits the Power Ball, you know. You need like about 300, 400 million dollars, at least to start [laughter] you know. I actually, I always thought this would be a great site for Textron to get into this business. Because there's a lot of remediation that has to be done, especially in this part of the country, you know, and then the rest of the world. I mean...we're not seeing it now because it's in other countries, but they're getting trashed [1:05:00] just like we did. And Textron could come up with the technology, they could do research here, they could figure out how to do it, you know, there's different ways. You have to start somewhere, right? R and D, you have to learn...you have to jump in, so to speak [laughter]. We used to jump in, to get the washing machines out.

Isaza: Oh, you've been swimming in the...?

M. Fonseca: Not swimming. A pair of waders would work, you know. When I first started with the doing clean ups, I didn't wear waders, I just wore my clothes, and I would only go in, you know, to my knees or so, but I found that waders was a much better idea.

Isaza: How come?

M. Fonseca: Staying dry, you know, keeping that stuff off me, you know. You know, it's not so much the chemical, inorganic chemicals that are in there, it's the...some of the algae is pretty toxic, you know. And I was naïve.

V. Fonseca: Isn't...like, around here, there's just giant lily pads.

M. Fonseca: Yes.

V. Fonseca: I remember...

M. Fonseca: Yes, this whole little cove right here is completely filled with lilies that blossom.

Isaza: Wow.

M. Fonseca: Yes, it's really nice there.

Isaza: Giant, like how giant?

V. Fonseca: Not giant, giant, but like...

Isaza: But like, big. Yes.

V. Fonseca: Pretty decent sized.

M. Fonseca: White lilies, yes.

V. Fonseca: I've never seen a frog, either.

M. Fonseca: The leaves are probably like this, maybe. And they all float right on top. The lilies pop out and...yes, that whole cove right there, it's all, pretty much all just solid lilies. Yes.

V. Fonseca: It's really pretty.

M. Fonseca: They used to be, excuse me...when I was, when I first moved here, there used to be a rope swing there, and kids would swim in that. They'd swing off and ka-poosh, and swim in that area there.

Isaza: Into the lilies, or...?

M. Fonseca: Well, this little part right here didn't have much, you know. And yes, that was a big spot for the kids to hang out all in here. And unfortunately there is a drain pipe from Route 10, so all the water from Route 10, when it was raining heavy, would...there's a storm drain right there coming from the highway. So, I mean, it's highway water, it's not like it's factory discharge, or anything, but you know, the salt...

V. Fonseca: But [inaudible] yes, salt in the winter.

M. Fonseca: Yes, it gets salted, and all the debris from cars and things that leak off cars and all of that. So, I mean, it's not a big dump, but it's...

V. Fonseca: Getting there.

M. Fonseca: Yes, you know. It should be at least...it would be nice to filter it. And you know, and...I mean, they built...they built, over here, they built the other plaza, where the Lowes and the Stop and Shop is. Before they built that, that was all sand. It was like, just a huge meadow that, it was part of the brewery property but it was never developed. And I always thought if they had to drain these ponds, they could use that as a filter medium to drain it through and then pump it back in, you know. And they could get most of the stuff out of the water that way, especially if it was a continuous thing. We even talked about it with some of the planners, and they said that some of the water...the only way you're going to get a handle on it is you have to get the phosphates that are in the water, which are creating this algae that take over, out. And in order to do that...it'll do it naturally over a hundred years or two hundred years, but you can use it as...you can just take it out and just put it along the islands on Route 10, you know, right in between there. And water them. You know, you could grow something where there's...back then there was a lot of land, but now there isn't much, but you could use it to grow grasses or whatever. And those grasses would absorb the phosphate as fertilizer. And you harvest that and then grow some more, and harvest that. I mean, there is...there is potential to do it. [1:10:00] The technology is there to do it. It's not a, like an unknown mystery. It can be done, but the political will and the investment I don't think are there. So, I think right now people are just trying to survive. You know, cleaning up an ecosystem is not high on the priority list, you know. So, buy Power Ball tickets [laughter].

Isaza: Do you think that the people around the pond...like how do you think other people see the pond? For cars to get into the pond, some people clearly don't think about it too much, and then other people clearly care about it a lot. What do you think the overall feeling is, though?

M. Fonseca: About the pond?

Isaza: Yes.

M. Fonseca: I think the people that live on it really appreciate it. That see it every day, you know.

V. Fonseca: Mhm. They're like, in the middle, kind of.

M. Fonseca: Yes, and the people that are close to it, that see it every day, that realize it's here, I think really appreciate it. And, once you start to get out where people don't see it every day or even know it's here, they're just oblivious. And they try...you know, they try to get community involvement in it, but it's not, you know. It's not long term enough, stable enough. Someone has to...or a small group of people have to keep it going, keep that flame burning, and it just hasn't happened, hasn't catalyzed.

Isaza: Have you been part of the Urban...or seen the Urban Pond Procession, or any of that?

M. Fonseca: Yes.

Isaza: Yes?

M. Fonseca: Yes. I did. I got some...I got to meet some great people who were sincerely interested in it and supportive, and then there were other people who thought it would be better if you just did nothing, because they didn't want to see it developed into a public facility, you know. They didn't want...

V. Fonseca: I could see that.

M. Fonseca: ...a lot of people out on it, they didn't want a lot...

V. Fonseca: If you cleaned it then a lot of people would come and it would probably just happen all over again.

M. Fonseca: They were thinking, like Lincoln Woods or something like that, where they cleaned it up and all of a sudden it got bombed with people and there was traffic and trash and noise, so. Some people rather just keep it the way it is, kind of low key, and I can kind of relate to that. I would love to, you know, be part of something that helped in the long term. I don't know, maybe in the future, you never know. When you, when you meet the right people, come on back and visit me again. We'll take it from there [laughter].

Isaza: Someone with a few hundred million dollars? [laughter]

M. Fonseca: Yes. A nice small...or a company that's interested in getting into this. It's going to be a big business, you know? I mean, you have to have a carrot to get them to come in, you know, and this is...I would think it would be a great opportunity because there's three ponds here. There's Roger Williams Park, which is a huge recreational facility, which goes into Narragansett Bay, which is a big recreational facility. So it's all tied together, you know. You have to start up here. You can't clean up down there and expect that to be ok, when up water is going to come down.

V. Fonseca: Have to start up and work your way down.

M. Fonseca: Yes, you do. And this is upstream, right here. You know, if you look at a topographical map everything kind of tapers down into this. You know, Cranston kind of goes up on a hill and, you know, the watershed kind of goes out, probably a five mile radius around here. It's densely populated in some places, and it's commercial industrial in some places, so, it's a challenge, you know. Have to get everybody aware, and everybody kind of pulling in the same direction. It's hard. But, you know, I got...I've met people who are resistant and people who are helpful. I guess you're always going to get that. [1:15:00]

Isaza: Well, I mean, do you guys have anything else you want to add, any other illustrating moments of what life is like here, or...?

M. Fonseca: I think it's a unique place that offers the convenience of the city, very close by, yet it has the environment of, like a rural area. Not huge, but small. Beautiful nature setting, you know. There's not many places like that. So, I feel very fortunate that I get to live here. And, I like it.

V. Fonseca: I agree.

M. Fonseca: That's it.

Isaza: Thank you so much, this has been wonderful.

M. Fonseca: You're welcome. [1:15:58]