Cape Verdean Oral History Project: Interview with Julio Gomes by Alberto Torres Pereira

Julio Gomes

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CAPE VERDEAN ORAL HISTORY

Tape # 10

Tuesday, October 24, 1972

Julio Gomes

Providence, R.I.

Alberto Torres Pereira, Interviewer

002- name; born July 6, 1892, Fogo Island, Cape Verde

013 - raised theretill 18 years old; farmed, raised livestock

020 - mother died 1900, raised by aunt
    papaya, manioc, figs, oranges, coffee
    small number of farms on islands

030- purchased good from other islands if drought occured

042- schooling; learned reading, not much formal training

060- needed education to secure good job

065- nine islands governed by administrator, or governor (picked by
    Lisbon)
    government programs - not too many
    cites illiteracy due to distance of school
    "needed help, professor to give education"

100- came to U.S. alone at 22 years old, by 3-masted schooner -
    the S.S. Mystic (whaler) as regular passenger $45.00 (1915)
    30-day trip

120- docked at New Bedford, port May 6, 1915

135- schooners seldom docked in Providence. Mostly in New Bedford.
    39 passengers (Mostly Cape Verdean) aboard with Mr. Gomes

148- father and uncles met Mr. Gomes at port
    immigration - did not take long. Immigration authorities visit
    ship before berthing and unloading passengers. Authorities
    helpful, but stowaways presented some problems. Interpreters
    always present. Passport needed.

201- no stops during trip to U.S.; boredom relieved by work (gratis)

210- first days in U.S. strange; autos, motorcycles, new to him (1915)
    not overly impressed by housing, in terms of size

227- settled in New Bedford (3 days) with father who worked as cranberry
    picker. Went to North Carver, Mass.; worked 10 hours, 10¢ per
    hour in cranberry bogs. Worked as strikebreaker in Boston (almost
    killed, quits, goes to Bridgeport in foundry
Julio Gomes

227 continued...
back to Carver, then to Mass, works in construction
to Alameda, California, for 11 months as farmworker, fruitpicker
back to East by train (Cape Cod) for 3 months, then to New
York State for 3 years in contract work as landscape worker

290- describes work; becomes foreman over 13 men
wages, 75¢ hourly, as foreman 80¢ hourly

314- never returned to school, learned English through listening
cites reasons for not returning to school

328- member senior citizens club of Fox Point
never belonged to Cape Verdean clubs
became citizen (doesn't remember date)
no thoughts on returning to Cape Verde Islands - too much money
retired 1954
80 years old, likes being active
of twelve children, 7 have survived; 15 or 16 grandchildren
wants to work, but part-time $16 does not pay enough - $17.44
weekly

390- lives on pension
$513.00 monthly now, expects about $600.00 monthly
discusses his house insurance

417- close tape