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Marilia Coquim Wiget: An Oral History

Interviews conducted by
Don Warrin
in 2013

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Marilia Coquim Wiget

Marilia Coquim Wiget is very active in Portuguese community and was president of the the Sacramento-based Portuguese Historical and Cultural Society for many years. She lives in Sacramento.

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Introduction by Don Warrin

I interviewed Marilia in her Sacramento home in November of 2013. She discussed at length her maternal grandfather's background in northern Portugal and his moves to Lisbon, Hawaii and Sacramento. She talked as well of her father's origins and the occupations of family members in the Sacramento area. Although she spoke the language as a youngster and was raised with a sense of the significance of the history of Portugal, her family did not generally participate in Portuguese community activities. It was only as an adult that she became committed to this, especially after starting work at the California Department of Education, under the education consultant Julia Gonsalves. Much of the interview deals with her adult activities with the Portuguese community, especially the Sacramento-based Portuguese Historical and Cultural Society, of which she was president for several years, and her work as editor of the society's periodical, *O Progresso*.

Interview 1: November 21, 2013
Audiofile 1

Warrin: Today is the 21st of November, 2013, and we're in the home of Marilia Wiget, in Sacramento. So Marilia, can I ask you, where were you born and when were you born?

01-00:00:26

Wiget: I was born here in Sacramento, July 13, 1937.

Warrin: If we can go back and talk about your family. Start with your grandparents, Antonio and Maria. Antonio, where was he born?

01-00:00:49

Wiget: He was born in Urros, Trás-os-Montes. I guess it's a province of Bragança, Portugal, northeastern Portugal.

Warrin: I think you had mentioned Torre de Moncorvo?

01-00:01:00

Wiget: Right. I guess that's the *concelho* (town).

Warrin: Okay. What kind of an education did he have?

01-00:01:08

Wiget: I have no real knowledge about him at all, other than he was married to my grandmother's cousin, Barbara. I'm not sure at what age, but I think my grandmother was probably six or seven years old at the time that he and Barbara married.

Warrin: Got married.

01-00:01:29

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: How many children did they have?

01-00:01:32

Wiget: They had three. As far as I know, the two older boys, Albert and Joe, were born in Lisbon. The third, Bill, may have been born in Lisbon or in Hawaii, because back around 1911, they did leave Lisbon and go to Hawaii, as many in their village did.

Warrin: And Barbara, where was she from?

01-00:02:00

Wiget: She was also from Urros. But I don't know her surname or anything, other than— She was Barbara Eugenia, if I'm not mistaken.

Warrin: And they, at some point, moved to Lisbon?

01-00:02:18

Wiget:

Yes. And I'm not sure why. My grandmother was about twelve years old. Apparently, she may have lived with them. I'm not sure if her mother died in childbirth or at any early age, when my grandmother Maria was quite young. I never knew much about her dad; I never really heard much mention of her dad. But when Antonio and Barbara moved to Lisbon, they took my grandmother with them.

Warrin:

And she was about twelve years old at that time?

01-00:02:52

Wiget:

She was about twelve at that time, I think.

Warrin:

What did she do for the family? Or was she just with them as a stepchild?

01-00:03:05

Wiget:

I think it was more like they were just caring for her. When she was a young girl in Urros, she was kind of like a little chambermaid or errand girl for the *morgado* (landowner). They always called him Senhor Morgado, so I have no idea what his name was or anything, but one of the wealthier families in the village. I found that out from my Aunt Minnie recently, that my grandmother was actually like a little errand girl for them.

Warrin:

That must've been, obviously, when she was seven or eight years old.

01-00:03:44

Wiget:

Yeah. We think she was born in 1890, around February. She always said it was the shortest month of the year, we assume it was sometime in February. Well, Barbara was her cousin, so when she and Anthony got married and they moved to Lisbon, they took her along with them. And she, I think, became more like another chambermaid, and then eventually, I think, a governess to the children, because she would talk about she would go to the theater with them and travel along, almost as one of their children, whoever she was working for.

Warrin:

But particularly for Antonio and Barbara, she would—

01-00:04:37

Wiget:

I have no idea.

Warrin:

Yeah, you don't know.

01-00:04:38

Wiget:

No.

Warrin:

She might've been a chambermaid in some other household or something like that.

01-00:04:45

Wiget: Yeah, it was not their household.

Warrin:

Oh, okay. And this was already in Lisbon, perhaps—

01-00:04:51

Wiget: Right. Yes, it was.

Warrin:

—that this was happening.

01-00:04:53

Wiget: Yeah. She said she lived on the Avenida da Liberdade, and on the balcony, she could see up to the Edward— Is it Eduardo VII Park?

Warrin:

Eduardo Sétimo, right?

01-00:05:05

Wiget: Yeah, she could see the park.

Warrin:

A wonderful location.

01-00:05:09

Wiget: Yes.

Warrin:

Yeah. Did she have any education?

01-00:05:16

Wiget: As far as I know, none.

Warrin:

Yeah. Not if she got pulled out and was working by the time she was seven or eight—and certainly, in Lisbon. How long, do you know, that they might've been in Lisbon?

01-00:05:31

Wiget: They left, I think, in 1911. My grandmother did not. She stayed there and Anthony and his wife and the kids went to Hawaii, I think around 1911. Quite a few families from Urros made that trip at that time. I don't know if he went with— The Nunes-Seco family made the trip. I'm not quite sure the relationship between the Nunes-Secos, the ones that I know here that I'm related to— I don't know for sure the relationship. I think that my great-grandfather was also the great-grandfather of Al Balshor—I don't know if you know Al Balshor—

Warrin:

I've heard the name.

01-00:06:26

Wiget: —through his mother. So some people say that Anthony was a brother of Mrs. Balshor. I don't know if that's for certain or if maybe Mrs. Balshor's grandfather had a brother that my side is descended from. We're in the process of trying to find that out.

Warrin: Discovering the ancestry.

01-00:06:55

Wiget: Yeah, yeah.

Warrin: So your grandmother Maria was left in—

01-00:07:00

Wiget: Yeah. She stayed.

Warrin: Did she go back to Urros?

01-00:07:02

Wiget: No, she stayed in Lisbon, because she was, like I say, a governess or household help for somebody in Lisbon. After my grandfather and his first wife came from— They went to Hawaii. From Hawaii, they came to Sacramento. That was a short period. They didn't stay in Hawaii as long as some of the other families did.

Warrin: People from Trás-os-Montes or Bragança, how did they get attracted to Hawaii?

01-00:07:36

Wiget: I think because of the contracts that were made in Urros, I think life was pretty sparse, and I think a lot of them decided, let's try to make a better life and make the move. Now, since they had already left Urros, I'm not sure, maybe through correspondence or something, with other family members, if they found out that, okay, this bunch is going; let's go along with them. At some point, like I say, they didn't stay in Hawaii as long as the others did, and they came over here to Sacramento. I did find a record of one of the ships that they had come over on, and it lists Anthony and Barbara and the three sons, but it doesn't even give a name for the youngest son; it just says, baby in arms, type of thing.

Warrin: Do you remember the name of the vessel?

01-00:08:39

Wiget: No. I have it written down in here somewhere.

Warrin: Yeah. That's okay. So I know that particularly a lot of Madeirans were signed up to go, and in the Eastern Azores, too, in San [São] Miguel, Santa Maria—and in some of the other islands, but principally there and principally Madeira—they got signed up to and transported to the Hawaiian islands, to work in the sugar fields.

01-00:09:13

Wiget: Correct.

Warrin: Is that essentially what it was?

01-00:09:14

Wiget:

I think that's pretty much it. The ship that they took from Portugal to Hawaii was the *Ortizio*. I think that that name has— It's different if you're saying it from a German point of view or from the Portuguese. I've also heard it as the *Ortizio* or *Osteric*, but I'm not sure. We always call it the *Ortizio*.

Warrin:

Horticio. So a lot of those families stayed there for some time? Or maybe simply settled there and descendants could possibly still be there.

01-00:09:55

Wiget:

Yeah. Some of the cousins came over. Let's see. I think my grandmother and grandfather— It was 1911 that he left Portugal for Hawaii; but it seems like by 1912, he was already here. And some of the other families didn't come here til about 1913. Maybe even after that.

Warrin:

Yeah, there was a movement—I'm not quite sure exactly when it was—but quite an influx from Hawaii into California, particularly in the San Leandro area. A lot of them settled there, after having been in Hawaii for a while. Others, of course, who stayed in Hawaii, ended up moving away from the fields and opening small businesses, or maybe being foremen on these sugarcane plantations. That's a story in itself.

01-00:11:04

Wiget:

Yes, it is.

Warrin:

So they came to Sacramento. Did they come directly to Sacramento from—

01-00:11:14

Wiget:

I think so. I think so. Now, I've never heard of anything in between. Well, let's see. They came to Sacramento, and shortly after they were here, Barbara passed away. I think it may have been in childbirth, or shortly after. The baby did not survive. So I don't really know what took place there, but neither she nor the baby survived. And shortly after that is when Anthony sent for my grandmother, Maria. He had to fill out some forms and attest to the fact, and have people sign and attest to the fact, that he was an honorable person. By that time, my grandmother Maria was twenty-four years old.

Warrin:

Oh, okay.

01-00:12:09

Wiget:

She came here in April of 1914.

Warrin:

About how old was Antonio at that time?

01-00:12:16

Wiget:

I don't know. I would assume at least ten years older than her, if not more.

Warrin: Yeah, particularly if they already had several children by the time they went to Lisbon. So he sent for her in Lisbon. He had obviously kept some contact with her.

01-00:12:43

Wiget: Yeah. I'm not quite sure, but they were married by proxy. She came here in 1914.

Warrin: So you say married by proxy. They were married while he was here and she was there?

01-00:12:57

Wiget: Mm-hm.

Warrin: So that she could emigrate without any problem?

01-00:13:03

Wiget: As far as I know, yeah.

Warrin: So then she had the responsibility of three stepsons.

01-00:13:16

Wiget: Right.

Warrin: Then she gave birth to your mother.

01-00:13:24

Wiget: Right. Yeah, after Barbara died, there was a short period between, but I think the three boys—because my grandfather was alone at that time—the three boys were actually sent to the orphanage, Mount St. Mary's Orphanage, I think it's called, up in Grass Valley. It's no longer there as that. That was pretty difficult for him, so that's, I guess, when he decided to send for my grandmother, and she came over. She wasn't here very long and my mother was born, in 1915. I think by the time my mother was about eight months old, he had drowned. Apparently, it was getting dark one night—I don't know where he was working, if he was working in the hop fields—but they had ferries, I guess, that were going across the river. It was taking too long for one of the ferries, and he got anxious and decided he would try to swim across.

Warrin: What exactly was he swimming across?

01-00:14:30

Wiget: He was swimming across, I think, the American [River]—

Warrin: Wow.

01-00:14:34

Wiget: —because his sons were on the other side. It wasn't the Sacramento; that would be way too long a distance.

Warrin: Right. But something happened and he didn't make it.

01-00:14:43

Wiget: Something happened and he didn't make it, no.

Warrin: What kind of work was he doing at that point?

01-00:14:48

Wiget: I'm not sure. I think he may have been working in the hop fields, because we did have quite a few around.

Warrin: Did he own any property at the time?

01-00:14:58

Wiget: I know nothing more about him.

Warrin: So that left your grandmother with a super responsibility—

01-00:15:10

Wiget: Yes.

Warrin: —of three stepsons and a child of her own.

01-00:15:14

Wiget: Yeah. I think at that time, my Uncle Albert was about thirteen or fourteen years old. I'm not sure the age difference between him and my Uncle Joe. I think my Uncle Bill was probably around five years old.

Warrin: Were they going to school?

01-00:15:33

Wiget: They did go to—I think Lincoln School, at the time, was not a junior high. I think it was a grammar school. They did go to school for a while. I know my Uncle Joe graduated from Lincoln.

Warrin: Junior High?

01-00:15:50

Wiget: Yeah, but I think it wasn't a junior high at that time. I think it was like a K-8, really.

Warrin: Oh. Yeah, elementary school. Oh, okay.

01-00:15:57

Wiget: Yeah. And Albert, as soon as he got out of school—so I'm assuming that he also graduated from Lincoln, but I'm not sure—he went to work for the railroad, Southern Pacific. I guess he lied about his age. They said they dressed him up in coveralls and a hat, and he managed to get a job at the SP shops.

Warrin: And what about the third one?

01-00:16:26

Wiget: Oh, he was still little.

Warrin: Little, okay. And your grandmother, at that time?

01-00:16:36

Wiget: What type of work she was doing?

Warrin: Yeah, what was she doing?

01-00:16:39

Wiget: She was housekeeping for people, taking in laundry, that type of thing. She would cook for weddings. I had heard that, that she would cook for big parties or weddings or whatever. Then she ended up working at various ranches, keeping house for some of the various farmers.

Warrin: So she didn't have much education?

01-00:17:04

Wiget: Oh, no. No.

Warrin: Then at some point, she remarried?

01-00:17:14

Wiget: Yes. I'm not sure how old my mom was at that time, but my grandmother married John Corey. Correia, but they Anglicized it to Corey. He already had a daughter named Mable. Mable, just in looking at some of the pictures, she was probably about four or five years older, maybe less, than my mother. Then they ended up divorcing. At one point, they moved to Niles, and they were living on a farm out in Niles. It was some time after that, that they divorced and my grandmother came back to Sacramento and worked in the canneries for a while, seasonal work in the canneries, and whatever else she could find.

Warrin: Yeah. so all of these people were involved, essentially, in manual labor.

01-00:18:09

Wiget: Yeah. I recall my grandmother mentioning that one of the fellows down there, Mr. Viegas, took carloads of Portuguese to work in the orchards— This was down in what they call Arizona, in the South Sacramento area.

Warrin: Why do they call it Arizona?

01-00:18:26

Wiget: No one really knows for sure. It's just a name that they've used. There're different theories on it, and I don't know all those. But some of the older fellows know. That was down around 1st, 2nd, 3rd Street, around Southside Park. They call it Midtown now, I guess.

Warrin: What kind of contact did, say, your grandmother have with the larger Portuguese community?

01-00:19:01

Wiget: I don't know. She had some best friends, a couple of ladies that I recall. Like I say, it was mostly either doing household chores for them, washing. I don't know if she sewed for people, although she did; she was a seamstress, to an extent. And the cooking, like I say, for parties. But mostly cannery work.

Warrin: Yeah. But she didn't belong to any organizations or anything like that.

01-00:19:34

Wiget: No, no.

Warrin: Where was your mother born?

01-00:19:43

Wiget: My mother was born in Sacramento.

Warrin: In Sacramento.

01-00:19:46

Wiget: Yes.

Warrin: Yeah. I think you mentioned the year.

01-00:19:50

Wiget: 1915.

Warrin: 1915. What kind of an education did she have?

01-00:19:59

Wiget: They moved around. I think she went to Jefferson School, out in the Natomas area. She graduated from New Hope School, in Thornton. That was it. She did not go to high school.

Warrin: Okay. So what level of school was that?

01-00:20:22

Wiget: Eighth grade.

Warrin: Eighth grade. So she finished junior high, which was quite common in those days, I would imagine, in the countryside. Yeah. So you mentioned some of the jobs she had, like working in the canneries.

01-00:20:40

Wiget: My mother?

Warrin: Yeah.

01-00:20:42

Wiget:

Yeah, she worked seasonal in the canneries. Let's see. She worked for a couple of laundries. Shasta Laundry, I think, and Golden State, I think, here in Sacramento. And the almond growers. A lot of ladies worked in the almond growers. I know she worked at Libby McNeill [Libby, McNeill & Libby] and California Packing and Del Monte. Then she did get a permanent job that she held until retirement, as a time-study analyst with Campbell's Soup.

Warrin:

So she worked her whole life, essentially?

01-00:21:22

Wiget:

Yes.

Warrin:

When did she meet your father?

01-00:21:29

Wiget:

She met him while my grandmother was cooking for someone out, I think, in the south Sacramento County area. Or northern San Joaquin, somewhere out there in the Delta. My grandmother was keeping house for— As far as I know, it was a young man that didn't have a Portuguese name, but he's listed in the census as Portuguese. But she was keeping house for him. My father had come over to the States and was working out there in the Delta, and my mother met him while he was working at a ranch out there.

Warrin:

He was from Ílhavo area?

01-00:22:17

Wiget:

Right. Right.

Warrin:

Right. You mentioned Gafanha?

01-00:22:21

Wiget:

Yes, he said he was born in Gafanha da Cal da Vila. There are several Gafanhas in the Aveiro-Ílhavo area.

Warrin:

Oh, really?

01-00:22:31

Wiget:

Yeah. Well, it's a *ria* (delta) that comes in from the ocean, and I guess there're all these little parcels that are kind of separated by canals and so forth.

Warrin:

Okay. Do you know what year he was born?

01-00:22:43

Wiget:

He was born in 1903.

Warrin:

1903. So he was a bit older than your mother.

01-00:22:49

Wiget:

Yeah, twelve years between he and my mother.

Warrin: Yeah. What kind of an education did he have?

01-00:22:56

Wiget: I'm not sure. He must've gone through the lower grades. Then when he got here, he was basically self-taught. He would read the newspaper, and eventually, he took citizenship ESL courses.

Warrin: Okay. So he was literate.

01-00:23:18

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: When did he get to the US?

01-00:23:22

Wiget: About 1920. He was just under seventeen, I think.

Warrin: Okay. Did he come by himself?

01-00:23:29

Wiget: Yes. Apparently, my grandfather, my dad's father, was here, had come over here. I guess it was kind of a habit to come over to the US and then send money back, and then go back or whatever. But he was here for a little bit. I did find a record of him in Contra Costa County, at one time. So he had sent for my dad. But when my dad got here, my grandfather had either already gone back to Portugal or soon after, went back to Portugal. One of my uncles—I think my dad's mother's brother, Sebastião Anastácio—was here with one of his sons, and I think that they kind of all worked together, out in the ranches in the Delta.

Warrin: Okay. Yeah, there was, at that time, quite a movement back and forth, particularly the men, fathers coming and sending money back—

01-00:24:35

Wiget: Right.

Warrin: —and hopefully, going home for a while, at some point. Or bringing the children or the wife, at some later point. So he worked on farms in the Delta, is that right?

01-00:24:56

Wiget: Mm-hm. Apparently out here (in the Riverside Packet area), too, because one of the people that he mentioned, actually, a lot of this property belonged to—it was a Mr. Zacharias, but everybody called him Jack Rice. So he owned property out here in this area, and my dad worked for him. He also worked for a Chinese farmer and drove the team of horses and things like that, to plow the fields, etcetera.

Warrin: Yeah, I saw on the map that the Pocket is very close to here.

01-00:25:32

Wiget: Yeah, we are in the Pocket.

Warrin: Oh, you're actually in the Pocket, yeah. That's well known, if I'm not mistaken, as a Portuguese area of Sacramento.

01-00:25:42

Wiget: Right. In just about every block out here, you'll find us.

Warrin: Portuguese, in some way.

01-00:25:50

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: Of course, it's changed a lot from his days.

01-00:25:53

Wiget: Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah. We moved here in 1972. At that time, Park Riviera was part of Riverside Boulevard. There were ditches with olive trees on both sides. Right behind us, there was one more street, and then the rest was like farmland. One of the farmers, Mr. Silva, who kept cattle in Herald would bring his bulls over to the field over here. So it was still quite a bit of farmland, yeah.

Warrin: So when you moved in, it was in transition, in the seventies.

01-00:26:35

Wiget: Mm-hm.

Warrin: What kind of contacts did your parents have with the Portuguese community? You mentioned that they weren't joiners.

01-00:26:47

Wiget: No, they really didn't, I think a lot, because my dad was a laborer seasonally for quite a while. They were just kind of on the move. At one time, when I was an infant, they lived with Celeste (Stella) Adoa's sister and her husband, in the Bay Area. When they came back to Sacramento, my dad was working out in the farms. He eventually worked for the Western Pacific Railroad. But they were not people who— We would go to the festas; they would go to the festas, maybe, but not hold any office or anything like that, at any of them.

Warrin: So there was perhaps a structure there, a hierarchy, and they didn't feel comfortable functioning at that level, except maybe going to a festa.

01-00:27:55

Wiget: Mm-hm.

Warrin: But when you were little, you would go to festas.

01-00:28:01

Wiget: Yeah, we lived very close to the Portuguese Hall, down on 6th Street. And there is the Holy Spirit Festa, we would attend.

Warrin: Where did you live at that time?

01-00:28:14

Wiget: We lived on T Street; at one point, at 5th and T, and then we moved over to 6th and T. We rented from John Fraga and then Manuel Machado.

Warrin: How were relations with the islanders? You're from the *continente* (continental Portugal). Were they totally open?

01-00:28:38

Wiget: I really don't know about that. Most of the people down in the 3rd Street area, as far as I know, were *continentes*. Quite a few of them were second cousins or third cousins on my mother's side. My dad's relatives were not here. My dad was a quiet, shy type person. I kind of lost my train of thought. But most of them were continentals, and I've never really heard too much about too much association with Azoreans. I knew that some of the people down in the lower area of Sacramento there were mostly *continentes*.

Warrin: So there was some—you wouldn't call it segregation, but some preference for neighborhoods, for living with people from your region, and neighborhoods sort of set up that way? In other words, where you lived, they were mostly *continentais* (individuals from continental Portugal), right?

01-00:29:46

Wiget: Yeah. Now, 5th Street already was more integrated. We had Hispanic families and Slavonian families, Italian families, Asians. The further out you got in the numbered streets—seven, eight, nine, ten, et cetera, et cetera—then it was a lot more integrated.

Warrin: But there was a concentration of Portuguese, either *continentais* or Azoreans, in particular?

01-00:30:27

Wiget: I don't know much about Azoreans, because we never really talked about a distinction. It's just, oh, so-and-so down there and so-and-so. I just knew them as Portuguese.

Warrin: Right. So there wasn't any outward discrimination.

01-00:30:49

Wiget: Not that I know of, but I was young. There was always that little thing about— It was just, so those from the Azores, or it was the *Cabo Verdes*, those from the Cape Verdean Islands.

Warrin: There were quite a few Cape Verdeans in this area, right?

01-00:31:17

Wiget: Mm-hm.

Warrin: They came up to work on the railroad, early on. In the nineteenth century, actually.

01-00:31:26

Wiget: Yeah. I only knew two or three families, because the kids, we went to school together. But later on, I've been studying some of the history and so forth.

Warrin: So you didn't have much interaction with Cape Verdeans. What about Madeirans?

01-00:31:45

Wiget: My mother's best friend, her family's from Madeira. I don't think I ever really knew that until after we got older and the discussions kind of came up. I mean they were just Portuguese.

Warrin: Yeah, right.

01-00:32:01

Wiget: Yeah. Now, I failed to mention that when my grandmother was married to John Corey, they had a daughter together, my Aunt Filomena. Everybody called her Minnie. So she was about eight years younger than my mother.

Warrin: Oh, okay. Is she still living?

01-00:32:21

Wiget: No, she passed away just about two years ago.

Warrin: Oh, okay. You were brought up speaking Portuguese?

01-00:32:33

Wiget: As far as I know, yeah. I've thought about. Like gee, when did I make the transition? What did I speak at home? It had to have been Portuguese, because my dad spoke Portuguese. My maternal grandmother, spoke Portuguese, and she was with us quite often; and my mother spoke Portuguese. So I think that's basically what we spoke at home. But it was always just the casual conversations that you have at home, parents and kids or whatever. It was never the more educated Portuguese language, just the basics.

Warrin: But by the time you went to school—?

01-00:33:21

Wiget: I don't recall any difficulty between English and Portuguese when I went to school.

Warrin: Some people that I've talked to remember going to school and not knowing a word of English. But you must've been exposed to it, maybe through neighbors and friends, and wherever your parents were working.

01-00:33:40

Wiget: Yeah, I think so, because like I say, I don't recall any difficulty, any transition. Just every once in a while—which still happens—there's a Portuguese word that describes exactly what you want to say, as opposed to the English word.

Warrin: And then you sort of have to hesitate—

01-00:34:05

Wiget: Right.

Warrin: Or just say the Portuguese word. That's happened to me, too. I tell my wife, "There's a better word for it in Portuguese."

01-00:34:13

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: So what kind of community contacts did you have early on, as a youngster?

01-00:34:24

Wiget: With the Portuguese community, not a whole lot. Some of my friends were Portuguese descent, but we had our own friends and we didn't hang together as a group or anything like that. We just knew that, oh, okay, this one's last name is such-and-such, so they're Portuguese descent. Or I knew some of the kids down from the west area of Sacramento that were of Portuguese descent. We were friendly, but we were not best pals or anything like that.

Warrin: So the family didn't have the habit of going to festas a lot and things like this? They didn't belong to any organization?

01-00:35:14

Wiget: No. No.

Warrin: So your early contacts were limited just to friends who happened to be Portuguese? Would you speak Portuguese with any of them, or just in your—

01-00:35:27

Wiget: No, just a few words, maybe, if you didn't want somebody else to maybe know that you were talking about them or whatever. But really, not much of that. We went to St. Elizabeth's Church, so that's where we would run into more of the Portuguese families and so forth. We went mostly to the Cathedral because my sister and I went to Cathedral parish schools.

Warrin: But you didn't have the very typical upbringing of the festa queens and all of that?

01-00:35:59

Wiget: No, I did participate in one parade. I forget how old I was, maybe about ten or twelve. They needed somebody to be—I think it was somebody who carried

the horn of plenty. I don't even know what they called her. But I had this funny little hat and I carried the typical thing that you see, that little conch-shaped thing with fruit and vegetables in it, and I marched along with one of my friends. That was the only time I was ever in a parade. I would've liked to have been in them, but in order to be queen or at like that, you had to be out selling tickets and trying to drum up money, and we didn't do that sort of thing.

Warrin: You didn't do that. How did you get invited to be in this parade?

01-00:36:59

Wiget: My girlfriend was in it, and her mom asked me if I wanted to be in it. Yeah.

Warrin: So growing up, you and your family were a little distant from the more proactive community.

01-00:37:15

Wiget: Yeah. Yeah.

Warrin: So what about your education?

01-00:37:24

Wiget: I went all the way from kindergarten to high school, in Catholic schools. Holy Angels School was the school down there in the old neighborhood, and St. Joseph's Academy. Then from there, I went to Sacramento City College for my AA degree, and then continuing education ever since.

Warrin: Oh, okay.

01-00:37:49

Wiget: So I probably could've gotten a bachelor's or something like that, with all the units I've taken.

Warrin: Let's take a short break. [audiofile stops & restarts] So at the time that you were going to school, your family evidently was less mobile.

01-00:38:30

Wiget: Right, right. Yeah.

Warrin: Your father had a job working—

01-00:38:35

Wiget: Yeah, he had gotten on with Western Pacific Railroad.

Warrin: Oh, right.

01-00:38:40

Wiget: So that was more stable. And then my mom was working for the laundries and then the almond growers and then Campbell Soup, so those were more stable positions and they weren't seasonal.

Warrin: What did your father do for the Western Pacific?

01-00:38:56

Wiget: He was a car man, which was a mechanic for the cars, various cars.

Warrin: When you finished school, what did you do at that point?

01-00:39:13

Wiget: Oh, let's see. I went to work. Yeah, I worked for Dohrman Hotel Supply, here in town, which was headquartered in San Francisco. From there, when I looked to see what type of salary and advancement I could make, it wasn't very much. So I took a test for the Feds. I worked out at Mather Air Force Base for a while; just a couple years, I guess. And then I had taken a State test, because the drive out to Mather was getting to be rather tedious. I took the State test and they took me out on interviews right away, and I got a job right away, with the State.

Warrin: Was that the Department of Education, at that point?

01-00:40:04

Wiget: We were in the Parks and Rec building. That was for the Youth Authority. So I was with the Youth Authority for, oh, maybe a year or two. Bob and I married during that time, and our first child, Cynthia, was born in 1959, so I stayed home. I was a homemaker, until—let's see—my youngest one started first grade.

Warrin: How many children did you have?

01-00:40:41

Wiget: We have three.

Warrin: Three.

01-00:40:43

Wiget: Yeah. Yeah. Two girls and a boy.

Warrin: So when your youngest child was in first grade and essentially in school during the day, then you sought employment again.

01-00:40:53

Wiget: Right. I went back, yeah. I went back. That's when I went to work for the education department. That was 1971, when Wilson Riles took over as superintendent.

Warrin: Right. What was your role there?

01-00:41:11

Wiget: I was a secretary to two foreign language consultants.

Warrin: One of them was Julia Gonsalves.

01-00:41:20

Wiget: Julia Gonsalves, yes.

Warrin: Could you talk about Julia a little bit?

01-00:41:25

Wiget: Well, she was great. Yeah. She was just a very sweet person and very active in promoting the Portuguese language. At one point, there was a program with NASA and the schools, and a lot of that was because of her instigation, I think. Also she did quite a bit for the Cape Verdeans here in town.

Warrin: Yeah, because she was Cape Verdean herself.

01-00:41:54

Wiget: Right, yeah. And she used to dictate in Portuguese, and I would transcribe in Portuguese. She always marveled at that. I'd say, "Well, it was Gregg shorthand, writing sounds. Since I know the Portuguese language fairly well, I'm just writing the sounds, and then I can transcribe it." She was one of the first, also to get Sacramento celebrating the Dia de Portugal. This was way back, like 1972 or something.

Warrin: Was that the first celebration?

01-00:42:38

Wiget: Here in Sacramento, I think so.

Warrin: Okay. Yeah, I knew Julia quite well.

01-00:42:44

Wiget: Right.

Warrin: I wish I could've interviewed her, because she told some of her stories about crossing the Atlantic from Cape Verde. I think it was during a storm and I think they never saw any daylight.

01-00:43:06

Wiget: Oh, gosh.

Warrin: They just were—

01-00:43:07

Wiget: Yeah, down there in the—

Warrin: —down below somewhere, yeah. But yeah, she did an awful lot for the Portuguese and Cape Verdean communities.

01-00:43:19

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: As I recall, she was an instigator for Portuguese bilingual education in California, right?

01-00:43:36

Wiget: Yeah. In fact, when I was working at the State, Sac State [California State University, Sacramento] actually had a Portuguese program. They had that for quite a while. Oh, I can't think of his name. Henry Dennis, I think was his name. Anyhow, he was the head of the department, I think. Harry Dennis. It was Harry Dennis. I know a Henry Dennis. But after he left, then Fausto Avendaño took over the department.

Warrin: Right. Yeah.

01-00:44:15

Wiget: So they still had it going for a little while, and then it just kind of petered out, which was really too bad.

Warrin: So it's no longer an active program there?

01-00:44:25

Wiget: No.

Warrin: That is too bad, yeah. So anything more about your working for the State Department of Education, and particularly the Portuguese aspect of it?

01-00:44:40

Wiget: Well, they changed some of the departments around. There was always some kind of reorganization. We started out in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and then they made some changes and went to a bilingual unit. When they did the bilingual unit, I think by that time, Mrs. Gonsalves had already retired. She was not in the greatest health, all of a sudden. Her husband wasn't, to begin with.

Warrin: He wasn't, no.

01-00:45:12

Wiget: No. And then she had had an incident that just was very stressful and she decided, "I'd better quit now, while I can at least enjoy some time," with her husband Ben. So she did quit, and they were merging then to different units and they started a bilingual unit. They weren't going to take me along in that unit, and I did have someone, surprisingly, who kind of mentored me and said, "You've got this person here who knows Spanish and who also knows Portuguese, and she should be in the unit." So I stayed in that for a while, and then I ended up going to Title III. We also had a program called National Diffusion Network.

Warrin: What is Title III?

01-00:46:08

Wiget:

Title III, I'm not quite sure. [Limited English Speakers (L.E.S.)] I never got into that, because our particular little unit was National Diffusion Network. And what we did was bring federal programs that they were experimenting with, and programs that they found worked in the classroom, and then we would go to the different school districts and bring these presenters and put on what they called dog-and-pony shows. But we would bring the different programs to the school districts, so people in the districts could see the type of program and what was successful, so they could implement the programs.

Warrin:

What experience did you have with the Portuguese bilingual education in California?

01-00:47:02

Wiget:

Not anything, really.

Warrin:

But Julia was working with that.

01-00:47:11

Wiget:

Right.

Warrin:

Yeah. So in spite of not being very active with the Portuguese community as a youngster, you have picked up on that substantially, in recent years.

01-00:47:29

Wiget:

Oh, yeah.

Warrin:

When did this start?

01-00:47:34

Wiget:

It started way back when I was a kid, with my dad. My dad was very proud of his Portuguese heritage. When we would be studying history in school on something, he would— You know that Magellan is not Magellan; Magellan is Magalhães.

Warrin:

Right.

01-00:47:51

Wiget:

He was Portuguese, and Vasco da Gama and Dias—all these explorers and everything. That hit home with me. I was very proud of the heritage. What brave people and enterprising people. This little, teeny country, sending their people out all over the world, in some little ship bouncing along.

Warrin:

Right.

01-00:48:21

Wiget:

But yeah, he, I think, instilled that in me. My dad's family, when my grandfather left here and my father stayed here in the States, my grandfather went back to Portugal. This is about the time, I guess, of the Depression, when

things were going pretty bad, and he ended up selling his property—and I understand he had quite a bit of property. He ended up selling that property and moving the family to Brazil. So when he went to Brazil, it was he and my grandmother, my dad's younger brother and sister, and two older boys. My dad was the oldest. So they went to Brazil. I'm losing my train of thought on that. Oh, okay; I know what I'm going to say. The younger brother, my Uncle Angelo, wanted to learn English. So I wanted to learn Portuguese, so from the age of about ten, I corresponded with him. He would write to me in Portuguese; I would write back to him in English. I listened to Portuguese music—lots of fados, too.

Warrin: And he was in Brazil?

01-00:49:47

Wiget: Mm-hm. Then it expanded from writing in English to him, to my writing in Portuguese, then, to my aunt and to the other brother. So that's more or less how I learned Portuguese, was through the writing, the speaking that we did at home. I was interested in the language; I just wanted to learn more. I did go to Sac State and I sat in on a class. Then we also had a conversational class that several of us signed up for, and I met a couple that was out here in this area, that was taking the class. We wrote little poems and read little compositions and things like that, because it wasn't such a formal class.

Warrin: Right. In a way, it's obviously a fun way to learn; you're not under pressure and you're motivated. So that part of your family, did they remain in Brazil?

01-00:51:02

Wiget: Yes, they did.

Warrin: Are they still there?

01-00:51:05

Wiget: They eventually moved back to Portugal. My grandfather died, I think when he was about fifty-five or sixty-five, and the family stayed there, I think until about the seventies. I'm not quite sure of the dates, but it seemed to me in the seventies, they moved back to Portugal. Then my aunt ended up going back to Brazil. One of the uncles never did leave Brazil. My Aunt Clementina went back, and she kept house for a fellow back there, and eventually went back to Portugal. So she did a couple of trips.

Warrin: You've kept some contact with these people?

01-00:51:46

Wiget: Yes. Had the opportunity to go to Portugal. Bob and I went on our twenty-fifth anniversary, with my sister. We went to Ílhavo and met my—I had met my uncle before, because when I graduated from high school, my dad I went to Brazil. It had been a long time since he had seen his mom. So as a graduation present, I got to go with him. So I had met the family there. Then

in '83, when we took our little tour of Portugal, my sister got to meet my uncle and his family.

Warrin: Ooh, that's nice, yeah.

01-00:52:28

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: Why don't we take a break here?

01-00:52:44

Wiget: Sure.

Audiofile 2

Warrin: So when did you get really active yourself in the Portuguese community?

02-00:00:16

Wiget: Probably at about the time that— Like I mentioned, Mrs. Gonsalves had organized the Dia de Portugal here in Sacramento.

Warrin: What year would that have been?

02-00:00:28

Wiget: That would've been probably about 1972, somewhere around there. Of course, having the opportunity to go over to Sac State and sit in on Harry Dennis's class. Because I've always been interested and wanted to learn more of the language, rather than, like I say, the basic language we spoke at home. I wanted a better education in it. I don't even remember how I heard of the Portuguese Historical and Cultural Society, but they were meeting out here at the Portuguese Hall, in Pocket. So I did attend a couple of the meetings and basically, since then, got more and more involved. They offered language classes that Bob and I attended a few times.

Warrin: What year would that have been?

02-00:01:17

Wiget: Maybe the mid-eighties, something like that. Yeah, because by the nineties, then I was on the board. I don't even know when I was president. I was president about 1998 to 2005 or something like that.

Warrin: What is the history of the PHCS?

02-00:01:41

Wiget: It started out because this area, as I mentioned, when Bob and I first moved out here, it was still quite rural. They were starting to build up south of us, along Riverside road, which forms this Pocket-Greenhaven area. A lot of the Portuguese had owned property out here. So they were selling, because taxes were going up, and the properties were being sold to developers. They were

getting some good prices for the property, and it was too hard to maintain, with the level of agriculture that was going on. Well, Joseph D'Alessandro and his mother, Lorraine, and his mother's sister, Evelyn Nordeste Tachera, started talking about, with other people, that, hey, our history is being lost in this area. People are selling their ranches. No one's going to know what a vibrant community was out here, of the Portuguese. So they got together with friends, and word of mouth, et cetera, and quite a group got together and decided they were going to try to do something to preserve the history of the area. One of the means was to establish a park. So there was land—I'm not even sure if it was donated land, but the city had land—and with the group that was forming, they decided that they could use that to develop a Portuguese-themed park in the area. The park sits where there's a conjunction of canals that lead out to the river, so they thought that was a good site, because it had the water, which is typical of Portuguese and the sea. They put a playground in that had some little Portuguese-themed items. Oh, they did kind of a wooden Tower of Belém structure and a sea monster fish for the kids to climb on and stuff, and a gazebo, kind of like the ones that they have in the Azores and so forth.

Warrin: Is that still open?

02-00:04:10

Wiget: Oh, yeah.

Warrin: Whereabouts is it?

02-00:04:12

Wiget: It is on Portugal Way. Portugal, off of Durfee.

Warrin: Is that in this area, in the Pocket?

02-00:04:23

Wiget: Yeah, yeah. It's further towards Freeport Boulevard, closer to the I-5 freeway, as it comes out of the Pocket Road area.

Warrin: Is it still a popular place?

02-00:04:38

Wiget: Yeah, the neighbors over there use it a lot. It's got a huge soccer field. They redid the kiddie area. It's got some picnic tables. One of the structures, it's supposed to be like— you know, everything is plastic now, but it is this caravel, with the Portuguese flag on top. The kids can climb all over that and on the tower, and they can ride the little kiddie toys that are there. So we've had a couple of events over there, and every once in a while, we'll go over and do a park cleanup.

Warrin: Who maintains it?

02-00:05:20

Wiget: The city does.

Warrin: The city does.

02-00:05:21

Wiget: The city does, yeah.

Warrin: Well, that's good.

02-00:05:22

Wiget: Yeah, yeah. So the Portuguese government donated some money towards that; people contributed to that, local people contributed to that. And there are a couple of benches that have tiled backgrounds on them; and the inlaid cobbles, to kind of resemble the Portuguese—what are they called, *calçadas*? Yeah.

Warrin: The sidewalks?

02-00:05:53

Wiget: Yes.

Warrin: Yeah. Right, the tiled sidewalks.

02-00:05:57

Wiget: Yeah. There're a bunch of olive trees planted over there, too.

Warrin: That sounds like a very interesting place.

02-00:06:03

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: So to get back to the PHCS, when was that founded?

02-00:06:11

Wiget: 1978, they started; 1979, they became more formalized, where they actually had a little bulletin. Then I think by 1981, we had incorporated with the state, as a nonprofit.

Warrin: In the state of California, are there any other Portuguese historical societies?

02-00:06:33

Wiget: There's the Heritage Society. There's one in San Diego; Portuguese History Center, I think is what they call theirs. And San Jose has a Portuguese Heritage—

Warrin: Right.

02-00:06:47

Wiget: They are PHSC [Portuguese Heritage Society of California], I think, as opposed to PHCS. So people do get us confused sometimes.

Warrin: I can imagine.

02-00:07:01

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: So you actually worked your way up to be president of the organization, at some point.

02-00:07:08

Wiget: Yeah. I don't think that was too hard. You know how that goes.

Warrin: Right, right.

02-00:07:14

Wiget: But yeah, Joe Souza had been president in succession, and he had been a treasurer. Lionel Holmes was one of our presidents, and several of our board members have taken turns as president.

Warrin: What kind of activities did and do they continue to— How do they function?

02-00:07:42

Wiget: We've kind of slacked off a little bit on a number of activities, but when they were trying to raise money for the park, and also going around when the book idea came up—the book was done in 1990—they had chamarritas, or they had Portuguese-themed dinners. There's Silva's Restaurant, out in the Wilton area, and they're Portuguese-owned. Although their menu isn't basically Portuguese, they do have Portuguese items, so they would put on some dinners. And people would attend the dinners, the chamarritas, poetry readings, poetry and art shows. And we were very involved in the Camellia Festivals that Sacramento used to have, and always had a contingent in there of the Maid of Portugal. There would be a contest to see who would be the Maid of Portugal, and our ladies would dress up in Portuguese costumes and march in the parades. That went on for quite a few years. And one year—I'm not sure if it was about 1983—the theme was actually the navigators, "Portugal, land of the navigators." So a large float was built for that, and actually took the Governor's Trophy.

Warrin: Really?

02-00:09:12

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: So as the name implies, the Historical and Cultural Society, you've had a little more interest in history than the typical fraternal society.

02-00:09:29

Wiget:

Right, right. Our goals were to disseminate the history of the Pocket, but then it spread. Then we're disseminating the history of the Sacramento area—Portuguese—and surrounding counties. We've done that by having presentations in the schools, exhibits. The county has had some exhibits. We did a major exhibit in the Folsom History Museum. That was very nice. And there was a very large exhibit at the State History Museum, on Front Street. I'm not sure what they call it now; they've changed the name. But there was a major exhibit there, with Portuguese clothing and information about the history of the Portuguese in the area. [Continuing Traditions: The Portuguese of the Sacramento Area]

Warrin:

The Pocket obviously has a long history of Portuguese settlement, but aren't there other areas in Sacramento that are identified with the Portuguese?

02-00:10:40

Wiget:

I don't think per se, although the Newcastle, Lincoln-Newcastle area, has quite a Portuguese population. A lot of the people, when they first came over, went into that area of Placer County, with orchards and various farms, so there's a large group up there. And they have the Newcastle Portuguese Hall, which is an historical landmark. That was largely due to one of our members, Aileen Alves-Gage, who was instrumental in getting that designated. Folsom area had some Portuguese, because of the mining, and they also had some train communication back and forth, we had some wineries. Also Elk Grove dairy farms.

Warrin:

Yeah, well, a lot of Portuguese who headed for the mines came back to the foothills and places like Auburn, where they had ranches and cultivated fruit trees and things like this. The Dia de Portugal, when that started, you were with the State Department of Education at that time, right?

02-00:12:06

Wiget:

Right. Yeah.

Warrin:

So did Julia get you involved in it, at that point?

02-00:12:12

Wiget:

Yeah, I was involved because I was her secretary and I helped organize some of the stuff, communicating with some of the foreign language teachers and so forth. But then there was this gap, and I don't know if it just wasn't done. I think maybe PHCS may have commemorated it more with poetry reading, some other entertainment, but not until, oh, the San Jose area took over, that I know of, did it more or less blossom into this big presentation that they do now. As far as PHCS, we were not really participating in that. As president, I thought that was something that if we wanted to maintain the society— We had already done the park, gotten the park taken care of; we had done the *Portuguese Pioneers* book, the first volume, the first edition of that; and a lot of people were involved. Besides the festa, I think probably our people going

out and interviewing a lot of the families, I think probably got a little bit more interest generated in what we were doing. Then like I said, by the time I came along, that was in the nineties. When I was president, I thought we should get more involved, in order to become more a part of the community. Sacramento seems to be, unless you're coming to a Holy Spirit Festa or the Lady of Fatima Festa—Sacramento has a couple of festas—basically, that was kind of it. We had the American Portuguese Club, and they get together and there's more camaraderie with their members, rather than branching out to let people know, hey, we're Portuguese; this is what we've accomplished here—Portuguese have these businesses—and the history of the Portuguese. It's a more contained group. Then we have the Cabrillo Club [Cabrillo Civic Club], which is the civic group, and they have their state chapters. But PHCS was, I think, more self-contained. So I thought we needed to branch out, and when I heard that the Dia de Portugal was taking place, I thought, well, that's something that we should get involved in. At the time, I think Turlock was going to hold the event. Turlock is fairly close, so I made the trips back and forth and kind of got on the committee, or at least listened to what was going on, and we participated in that. Then as the one in San Jose grew into what it is now, with all the exhibits, tried to make sure that we were always represented there with an information table. Wherever we can, when the opportunity arises, we do that sort of thing. Then when Heritage Books started, we also became involved in that.

Warrin: How did you function with the Heritage Press?

02-00:15:51

Wiget: Well, Portuguese Heritage Books, Inc., in San Jose, they were looking for participation. I don't recall if they reached out to us. But anyhow, we decided to become involved in that, and Dolores Greenslate and I are represented on their board of directors. I'm the representative, she's the alternate.

Warrin: You still are?

02-00:16:21

Wiget: Yeah, yeah. And you can't just go and sit there and listen and walk away. So even as an alternate, Dolores is quite involved with selecting some of the manuscripts that might be turned into a book. So we publicize that here. When the new books come out, we try to have book launch events to promote the books, and maybe combine that with something else, but basically, to help out that way. Of course, as editor of *O Progresso*, I always try to make sure that we have some type of article promoting Portuguese Heritage Publications.

Warrin: Yeah. You referred to the *Pioneers* book. Could you discuss that a little bit? When did it come out and what does it cover?

02-00:17:13

Wiget: *Portuguese Pioneers*. Joe D'Alessandro did a thesis, I think for his doctorate or his master's; I guess it was the master's. I'm not totally familiar with how it

started, but he used the Portuguese community and the contribution in this area, and just the settlement of the Portuguese in this area, as a theme for his thesis, and was quite extensive. Then he and Lionel Holmes put this together into a book, and then we had our board members—and I was not involved at that time; I was too busy working, and with the three kids and all that—but our members went out and they actually interviewed various families and got family history and old photographs, and put them together in a book. You have a compendium of a variety of biographies of the families in the area; you have information on the businesses that were conducted in the area, who opened them, how they continued; and the migration of the— There's a little bit of a history on the Portuguese in general, and then there's the migrations, the various times that people came over, like the volcanic eruptions and earthquakes and stuff like that, as the different waves would come, and why they came—agriculture and mining, that sort of thing.

Warrin: Background.

02-00:18:50

Wiget: Mm-hm.

Warrin: What year was that published?

02-00:18:53

Wiget: The first edition is 1990.

Warrin: And there was a second edition.

02-00:18:56

Wiget: The second edition was 2003.

Warrin: Did they make changes in it between then?

02-00:19:03

Wiget: Yes. Some things were brought more up to date, more biographies were added to the second edition, and some corrections were made to the first book, more photographs, that sort of thing.

Warrin: Were the same two people, Lionel and D'Alessandro, were they involved in the second edition?

02-00:19:27

Wiget: Mostly Lionel, in the second edition; and of course, our board of directors were involved in the interviewing and the soliciting of the biographies. Yeah.

Warrin: What kind of reviews have you had of this?

02-00:19:44

Wiget: Well, there's been the two printings. I'm not sure if we've sold about 3,000 books, or if it's more than that. I wasn't involved with keeping track of that.

Warrin: Is it actually the PHCS that published the book?

02-00:20:01

Wiget: Yes. Yes.

Warrin: You said that you're contemplating updating it and making it into an e-book?

02-00:20:11

Wiget: Yeah. Lionel Holmes' son, Steven Holmes, who's been a teacher and is retired now, was working with his dad, with the idea of, this would make a good e-book. They wanted to put something together for some relatives in Portugal, as far as I understand. We brought it up to the board of directors and decided that if we were going to do that, we needed to take a closer look, because in reviewing the second edition, we found people had complained that there were some errors. This was not their mother's birthdate; this was not their father's first wife or that sort of thing. So before publishing this one as an e-book, and possibly in a softcover edition, and maybe even a DVD or something, we thought we better take a much closer look at it, make any corrections that we already knew of or found, update some of the biographies. And we had some biographies that never even got into the second edition, so we've included those. Of course, when you scan one of these with the OCR programs, a lot of times, the OCR program will read a word incorrectly.

Warrin: Yeah. Particularly if there are foreign words and names, yeah.

02-00:21:47

Wiget: Right. So that's the type of thing that we're going through right now, is making that sort of correction, standardizing the format a little bit more. Because as people submitted biographies on their family—not so much the substantial part; that's pretty set—but as people submitted biographies, this one typed something, this one typed something, and even though they may have thought they were following the format, there's not a consistency in some of the format. Also the pictures that appeared, the historical photographs that appeared in the second edition were copies from what was in the first edition. They did not come out that well in the second and third printing, so Dolores Greenslate, one of our directors, has our whole file of historic photographs.

Warrin: So they would be rescanned.

02-00:22:44

Wiget: Yeah. So we did that. She pulled about 160 of the photographs that are in the book, and we scanned them on my scanner, changed out the scanned ones for the new scan of the actual original, and they're a lot clearer, more clear.

Warrin: Sounds like a lot of work. When you say "we," who is "we"?

02-00:23:10

Wiget: Mainly Dolores and I. Steve Holmes had done the original. I think he found the manuscript. We were debating, okay, do we take one of these books and cut all the pictures and scan, or cut each page and scan each page or whatever? Well, we found that Steve had found the manuscript, and he scanned that.

Warrin: Oh, great, yeah.

02-00:23:36

Wiget: So he already had that kind of set up in the format for an e-book, and that's when he put it on a little— What do you call that little thing that you put in the computer?

Warrin: A thumb drive?

02-00:23:51

Wiget: Yeah. So I put that on my computer and certain things started to jump out, as you're kind of looking at it. So we're going through and hopefully, we'll get it maybe on a DVD, also that people can buy.

Warrin: Oh, that'd be nice, yeah.

02-00:24:10

Wiget: Yeah. Because when you actually look at it, there's a lot of history in it. Most of us, we've seen it, we've worked on parts of it or we've done something. But as a whole, Lionel is probably the only one who's actually read the whole book from cover to cover, since he was the editor. The rest of us are kind of finding out, oh, okay, there's a lot of good information in here. And on the bios, it's really a good thing for people who are entering genealogy.

Warrin: Right, of course.

02-00:24:44

Wiget: A lot of information there.

Warrin: Yeah. When do you foresee a product here?

02-00:24:51

Wiget: Well, we're already, *¡a estamos atrasados* (we're already behind). But we were thinking sometime in September, but probably the end of this year, we'll be through with the editing part, and early next year, have it available.

Warrin: Yeah, with books, deadlines are deadly, right?

02-00:25:13

Wiget: Right, right. It's not the type of thing that you can sit there eight hours a day doing, like a regular job.

Warrin: Right.

02-00:25:22

Wiget:

You fit it in in between, in two hours here, four hours there.

Warrin:

Right, yeah. Well, good luck with that. You also referred to helping with the *Portuguese in California* documentary. Could you describe that a bit?

02-00:25:44

Wiget:

Well, Nelson Ponte-Garça is in charge of that, going around with his videos and so forth, with— Oh, what's his name? Can't think of it. Quigley, I think, was the gentleman's name, from the Sister Cities Association. In fact, it was a couple years ago, in fall, when President [Aníbal António] Cavaco Silva was in San Jose. They presented a little blurb to him, about what was in the works. Since they were going around interviewing people, I contacted Nelson and said, "Hey, don't forget about Sacramento. We've got people up here. We've got quite a few organizations that I think you might be interested in interviewing some of our people here." So we did set up a date and we had— PHCS—we contacted several of the local organizations, and those who wanted to either contribute towards the project or to have somebody interviewed, we set up a date for interviews. Nelson and, well, his interviewer, Filipe de Sa, came up and interviewed several of our people. So the San Pedro-Madeira group sent some of their people; IDES sent Monica Souza and Joe Souza, her dad, who was long-time president of that; and Larry Valim represented SPHSS, the Portuguese Holy Spirit Society; and two or three other people that were in the area. So we did some interviews and we're looking forward to that coming out. The way I understand, from what Nelson said, is it's not going to be just a presentation of, okay, we're interviewing so-and-so from this organization and you run with that person; and then maybe down the line, you run with another president. Their comments are going to be interspersed between a variety of different segments.

Warrin:

So there'll be some real editing taking place there.

02-00:28:13

Wiget:

Yeah

Warrin:

Yeah. Do you know what other parts of the state that they're traveling to?

02-00:28:20

Wiget:

As far as I know, they went to San Diego, also and they did some filming. I've seen little blurbs here and there that have been presented on Facebook and a little bit of YouTube. I know they went to San Diego.

Warrin:

Artesia, perhaps?

02-00:28:36

Wiget:

Yes, I'm sure. And of course, the East Bay area. They've interviewed some of the Hollywood personalities that are of Portuguese descent; and some of the sports figures that are of Portuguese descent; and of course, some of our

politicians, like Jim Costa, from the Central Valley is on there, and I think Devin Nunes, and several of the politicians.

Warrin: Well, that sounds like a very interesting documentary. You referred to the Holy Spirit Society. At one time, I always recall, they called it the Holy Ghost.

02-00:29:18

Wiget: Right.

Warrin: Now it's called the Holy Spirit. How did that change?

02-00:29:26

Wiget: I think Portuguese still refer to it as Holy Ghost. I think most of the people still say Holy Ghost. However, in my mind, ghost and spirit are different. Ghost, you think of a "fantasma," a scary-type thing or whatever; where the spirit, yes, you're speaking of the Holy Spirit, which we of course— It's represented by the dove; but you're also talking about the spirit inside. That's what I prefer, is the Holy Spirit Society, rather than— We're not honoring a ghost, per se. Yeah.

Warrin: It makes sense. And I just started to notice the change recently.

02-00:30:16

Wiget: Well, I think it goes back in the early translations, when somebody was translating the Bible and so forth, from whatever—Greek or Latin or whatever—and somebody translated it as ghost, when it should've been spirit.

Warrin: Right.

02-00:30:35

Wiget: And especially in the Latin, in the Catholic Church. "Spiritu" is Latin or Portuguese.

Warrin: So this change may reflect a difference which is taking place outside of the Portuguese community, just in general, no longer referring to the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Spirit.

02-00:31:02

Wiget: I'm not sure.

Warrin: Yeah. But certainly, within the community, it definitely is taking place. Well, I look forward to the documentary. I know they interviewed me in a studio. It must've been a year ago. I thought it would've been out by now. So you've been working on *O Progresso* for how long?

02-00:31:36

Wiget: I think maybe about eight years or so.

Warrin: And you're more or less the editor, right?

02-00:31:42

Wiget: Yes.

Warrin: That is put out by your PHCS, right?

02-00:31:48

Wiget: Right, right.

Warrin: Could you talk a little bit about *O Progresso*?

02-00:31:52

Wiget: Lionel Holmes was the first editor. He started doing the bulletins as the organization was developing. Each meeting had a bulletin, advising the donors and the people involved in the committee, of what was going on. Lionel did the job for twenty-two years.

Warrin: Wow.

02-00:32:19

Wiget: I don't think anybody's ever going to top that. His home situation also changed. His wife became ill, in addition to the other things that he was doing, because he's also our scholarship chairman. We started out with a couple scholarships, but now we provide about eight scholarships a year to high school students.

Warrin: What kind of scholarship, to go to college?

02-00:32:48

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: Yeah. And he is still active with that?

02-00:32:51

Wiget: Right. He is the chairman of the scholarship program.

Warrin: In his nineties, he's doing this?

02-00:32:59

Wiget: Yes, yes.

Warrin: That's amazing.

02-00:33:01

Wiget: I wish I was as healthy as Lionel. He's looking great for his age. But yeah, so he did that for about twenty-two years; then Carol Ann Gregory actually took over for maybe about three years or so. Then with her job— She works for the county; she's a city planner with the county. She's an urban planner, I guess you would call it.

Warrin: Urban planner with the county, yeah.

02-00:33:36

Wiget: Yeah. So she did it for maybe about four years or so, three or four years, and then I took over, like I say, probably about eight years or so.

Warrin: What does it entail and what do you publish?

02-00:33:54

Wiget: Well, first we tried to make sure that it was about what our organization was doing, the activities of PHCS. We've branched out a little bit more, to just what I think is an article of interest to the Portuguese community. We have about 300 subscribers. They're not all local; we have people from all over the state, and other areas. I think we may have somebody from Canada. But we also send out complementary copies to our mayor, some of the council members that have been active, helping us out with various things, and also to some of our legislators that are of Portuguese descent, or libraries, that sort of thing. So all together, we send out close to 400 copies. The scholarship winners get a complementary year's subscription, which is four; we publish four times a year. Like I say, articles that I think would be of interest, regarding Portuguese activities. There was just one recently, where in the Azores, they've found these pyramids.

Warrin: Oh, really?

02-00:35:22

Wiget: They're excavating those to see how far back this goes, and if it's just old garbage piles or if it's actually some purpose to the structure.

Warrin: Or prehistoric, perhaps?

02-00:35:36

Wiget: Right. Then there was something recently—and I don't have an article on that; I wanted to take a look at it—but underwater. Undersea, off of the Azores, they found some, I guess ruins. So things like that, that would be of interest. I've tried to promote the Portuguese heritage books. Anything that, like I say, is of interest. The Dia de Portugal, we always have something in there about that. I don't want it to be like, okay, this group had the Holy Spirit Festa here; here's pictures of the queens; this one had theirs; there's pictures of their queens. I don't want it to be something like that. I want it to be articles that are more informative. Lionel had put together some good articles. He did one that stands out to me, because I saw something not too long ago on RTP, the Portuguese channel from the continent, about the Melungeons.

Warrin: The Melungeons?

02-00:36:47

Wiget: Yes, back where Georgia, Kentucky, that area.

Warrin: Yeah, more inland, in Kentucky there and that area.

02-00:37:01

Wiget: Yeah. So articles like that; about maybe the different areas in Portugal, Trás-os-Montes was one, describing the area, some of the things that are typical of the culture back there.

Warrin: So it's more intellectual.

02-00:37:17

Wiget: Yeah, I try to do that, like I say, rather than just this activity or that activity.

Warrin: Yeah. So it's more than a newsletter.

02-00:37:27

Wiget: Yeah, I try to include photographs that would be of interest.

Warrin: And you're still doing that?

02-00:37:36

Wiget: Yes. I have given notice at home that I intend to stop. It's time somebody else took over. The situation here has changed.

Warrin: Sure, yeah. How much does it cost to subscribe for a year?

02-00:37:54

Wiget: \$12 for an individual, \$20 for a couple. That gets you the four issues; it gives you information on any of our activities. We always send out a flier when something is taking place. Some things, we discount if you're a member. What was I going to say? Well, we do a master calendar. That's kind of a big thing. In January, I send out a notice to the various organizations, pretty much locally. What's taking place within their organization?

Warrin: For the year?

02-00:38:34

Wiget: Yeah, besides the Holy Spirit festival or your card parties or your heritage nights or Bunco, whatever. So I get input from the San Pedro Group, American Portuguese Club, Cabrillo Club, and Luso-American, whatever. If they give me info, it goes into the calendar, which then we put onto our website. I also include Northern California festas for the Holy Spirit and Our Lady of Fatima or St. Anthony or whatever, and some information on the halls. And a lot of this information, we developed a website, so that people could go to the website, see what we're about, see any fliers that we have, or upcoming events. Then they can also look and see the master calendar. We have a listing of the halls and the different people they can contact for more information, the different societies. Just a variety of things of interest. In fact, we're in the process of revamping the website. It's been kind of the same for a

while, so we want to update it and make it more relevant, and people don't always open the same page and see the same thing.

Warrin: Right, right. If somebody wanted to subscribe or to learn more about this, how would they do the contact?

02-00:40:07

Wiget: We do have a little flier, a brochure that we hand out when we go to Dia de Portugal or any other event at which we are presenting our information table. We have brochures that we hand out. Plus the newsletter has information. But they can contact us through the website. I don't know. If they do a search for Portuguese societies, Sacramento or whatever, we pop up on the search, even if they're not going directly to our website.

Warrin: Or PHCS, perhaps.

02-00:40:47

Wiget: Yeah, PHCS, yeah.

Warrin: That would pop up.

02-00:40:50

Wiget: So it's just submitting \$12 to PHCS at our P.O. Box, 161990, Sacramento, 95816.

Warrin: Okay, great. So any other community activities that we didn't cover that you've been involved in?

02-00:41:20

Wiget: Well, we have a major event each year to help raise money for our scholarships, and that's our beans and linguica dinner. We do that in March. It's very reasonable, \$10 or \$12, to come for a dinner of pretty much all-you-can-eat linguica, salad and so forth. And we have a raffle. Sometimes an auction. We don't want to auction a whole bunch of things, maybe two or three special items that will be auctioned. The rest is by raffle. So that's our major event. And we have the scholarship applications that are due usually by the end of March, so that we give them out before the kids graduate. Most of that starts happening in May. Right now, we have scholarships in memory of people. PHCS has a \$1,000 scholarship from PHCS itself, and then a \$500 one, also from PHCS. And then Mr. Holmes has authorized one for \$500, in memory of Eleanor Holmes, his wife. We do one for American Portuguese Club, and then we have two memorials for Deolinda Dutra and her husband Edward Dutra, who were involved with Dutra Dredging Company, down the river. So their family has maintained a scholarship for each one. We also have Marie Gambrel, Marie Dutra Gambrel, who was one of the prominent families here in the Pocket area, and a long-time member of PHCS, and just a devoted member of PHCS. When she passed away, there was a quite a bit of a donation towards a scholarship fund. So we've been able to have, I think two

so far, and we'll offer another one. I expect that we will have enough in her fund for probably a total of four \$500 scholarships.

Warrin: Oh, that's great.

02-00:43:48

Wiget: We were doing one for UPEC, also. Because we have our own system in place for soliciting the applications and actually reviewing and scoring them, UPEC, which is now part of PFSA, had us incorporate a scholarship for them, within our process, so they would fund that; and also American Portuguese Club has done the same thing.

Warrin: Do you continue that? Does that continued now?

02-00:44:25

Wiget: Yeah. APC [American Portuguese Club] has been pretty good. I think for at least four or five years now, they've contributed \$500. We do the processing of the applications, and then the money does come from them.

Warrin: When you say "we," who does the—

02-00:44:44

Wiget: Well, Lionel Holmes is the chairman, and we have various readers. At one point, I was reading, and our past president, Herb Perry. But we had a committee of our directors, at least three or four directors, that would read and score the applications. Lately, it's been Olivia Lage, who is one of our members, and Lionel, and our president, Mary Ann Marshall. So that committee was reviewing these and making the determinations. And we're to the point now where so many of the kids who apply don't even have Portuguese names anymore. You used to see a lot of Silva, Borges, Cardoza, Cabral, whatever. Now it's things like Krautsheimer and Jones and just a bunch of different—

Warrin: But there's some Portuguese connection there—

02-00:45:47

Wiget: Yes, yeah.

Warrin: —just through marriage.

02-00:45:49

Wiget: Yeah. Yeah. One of the things that we require of the kids is that they submit at least a 300-word essay, on their knowledge of their family background or their participation in Portuguese events—something to show that they know something of their Portuguese heritage.

Warrin: Yeah. Make them a little appreciative of that background.

02-00:46:16

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: Well, that sounds great. Anything else, before we finish, that you might talk about?

02-00:46:27

Wiget: Well, let's see. That was quite a bit about PHCS. No, that's about it. There's more you can add about the family and stuff, because there are so many little things. I spent a lot of summers with my grandmother, when she was working at local ranches. She worked out in Natomas for a while, and I spent a lot of summers out there with her and so did my sister.

Warrin: What was that like?

02-00:47:01

Wiget: Living on the farm?

Warrin: Living on the farm, yeah.

02-00:47:03

Wiget: Oh, fun. Fun. All kind of things we could get into trouble with.

Warrin: Yeah. I used to spend my summers on a farm, too.

02-00:47:12

Wiget: Yeah? Well, my grandmother, she did a lot of canning and preserving and stuff like that, and I remember sitting out on the back porch and she'd be peeling pears and throwing them in a bucket, and I'd probably be eating them almost as fast as she got them in there. Of course, she raised chickens and we had rabbits.

Warrin: Was this their ranch, I mean their farm, or she was just working?

02-00:47:44

Wiget: No, she worked for— His name was Joaquim Santos. He farmed out in the Natomas area for a while. I think it was a Miller family that had property out there. He farmed about maybe forty, eighty acres.

Warrin: Okay.

02-00:48:01

Wiget: Alfalfa, tomatoes, spinach, whatever. He was kind of more like a grandpa. At one time, when he decided, time to retire, he actually went back to Lisbon. My grandmother then worked over here in Clarksburg, for Vincent Simas (Vencelau Simas), who had a home over here in Clarksburg. Also he had a little home down on 19th, off Broadway. So she kept house for him. Of course, us kids, especially when she was down on 19th and we were older, we could just hop on the bus or ride our bicycles over there, spend time with her.

Warrin: That was nice. When you actually went out to the farm, where would you stay?

02-00:48:54

Wiget: At the house there.

Warrin: At the house. There was room.

02-00:48:56

Wiget: Yeah. Yeah. There was—let's see—two bedrooms, a kitchen and a large living room. Then I found out—and I'm not sure if it was after or before—that another family that I know, they're members of PHCS, that they lived in the same place. And at one time, we lived in a shack, right by the levee on El Centro Road, off of the Garden Highway. We lived in there for a while. I remember when it flooded. I was pretty little, but I remember one of the floods that we had. They were getting back and forth from the house to the barn in a little boat, or the real high hip boots. Our little basement, where my grandmother kept all her preserves and stuff, that was all flooded.

Warrin: Was this the delta?

02-00:49:55

Wiget: This was over here in Natomas.

Warrin: Oh, okay.

02-00:49:58

Wiget: Yeah. Just off the Garden Highway, El Centro Road, where quite a few Portuguese families lived.

Warrin: Yeah. So I guess flooding was a periodic problem.

02-00:50:09

Wiget: Mm-hm. But I only remember that one. In fact, last night I was thinking about— We used to drive out there to visit *vovó* (grandma). I remember one time where they had to put planks on the road. There was a portion of the road that was so bad that they put planks out there, so the car wouldn't get stuck in the mud.

Warrin: Yeah, that could be very troublesome.

02-00:50:38

Wiget: Yeah. But we lived in town. My parents rented from John Fraga. They had a home in the back. The urban areas here, they're the A, B, C, alphabetical and numerical streets. So the homes went from the Front Street to an alley. So that was quite a large property, and we rented in the back, from Mr. Fraga. And then we moved a block further over, and rented from Manuel Machado, who had the grocery store on, yes, 6th and T.

Warrin: Okay.

02-00:51:28

Wiget: Yeah. But a lot of Portuguese. Manuel had the two grocery stores. One at 5th and T, and then he moved to 6th and T. Then behind him, Mr. Cabral, and I think his brother-in-law, had a little grocery store on S, 6th and S. But it was still quite a Portuguese area.

Warrin: And very typical that the little stores would be run by and owned by Portuguese.

02-00:51:58

Wiget: Yeah. Continental Grocery, down there on 3rd Street. The Madeiras were cousins of ours. Like I said, we're still trying to find out, okay, exactly how we're related. In fact, a friend down the road here, Ralph Neves, was talking about a family reunion with the Crespos. I says, "I should probably go to that. I'm supposed to be related to those guys." Well, gee, I went and it was kind of like, wow. They had put up a big chart of the genealogy.

Warrin: And you were there?

02-00:52:35

Wiget: No, I wasn't, but I was looking and I thought, that's got to be my grandfather and my great-grandfather.

Warrin: Oh, okay.

02-00:52:43

Wiget: Because my uncles—I don't know if you want to keep recording—but my uncles, Anthony and Barbara's children, were Albert—Everybody called him Albert, but I found out he was really Umberto Horacio. So that was his real name. My Uncle Joe, everybody called him Joe and he always signed it Joe M. Seco. He was actually Manuel Joseph, which was, I think, my great-grandfather's name. So the youngest one, everybody called him Bill. But I think they were calling Abílio instead. My grandmother used to call him. She'd be out there, you know how you used to yell for your kids.

Warrin: Right, so the Anglicization—

02-00:53:35

Wiget: Yeah, "Ó Bilê, come on home." So everybody called him Billy.

Warrin: Right.

02-00:53:41

Wiget: But I think his name was actually Obriel. I never heard of that, but I saw something—Lionel is doing this. We go back to Lionel again. Lionel is putting this whole thing together, about how we're all cousins. Because we do have a section in the *Portuguese Pioneers* book about, we're all cousins. So

he's putting this whole thing together. I don't know how far he's gotten, but he had this huge chart.

Warrin: That's great.

02-00:54:11

Wiget: So he took information from some obituaries and different microfiche and stuff like that. So I'm looking and he's got down my grandfather and his first wife and the three kids. There are these names, and it's kind of like, I don't ever remember those names, but that's— But my uncle Bill was named Obriel.

Warrin: Obriel.

02-00:54:38

Wiget: Yeah.

Warrin: Are these all *continentais*, Lionel and so forth?

02-00:54:47

Wiget: Lionel is Azorean, of Azorean background.

Warrin: Oh, okay. But through immigration and intermarriage and so forth—

02-00:54:53

Wiget: Right.

Warrin: Well, thank you very much. It's been very interesting.

02-00:55:01

Wiget: Yeah, this was fun. If you want to stay for another few hours, I could probably conjure up more. [laughs]

Warrin: But my tape is running out of patience here.

02-00:55:10

Wiget: Yeah, your tape is running out.