

Frank Rudd: This tape is a property of Tales of Cape Cod, Inc. and cannot be reproduced without their written permission. Today's date is July 20, 1978. We are in the home of Eugenia Fortes of 400 Pitchers Way in Hyannis, Massachusetts. Ms. Fortes was born on November 14, 1911. Ms. Fortes, are you native to Cape Cod?

Eugenia Fortes: No, I was born in the Cape Verde Islands. In 1920, my mother and I came to find my father in New Bedford. We came on one of those three-masted schooners, and it took us thirty-one days to cross. I'll never forget the Gulf Stream. For a child, it was quite something. We came to New Bedford, and we lived there for about two and a half years. Then we moved to the Cape, to Harwich, where the family home is now. My mother still lives there. I go back and forth.

FR: Why did your father come to New Bedford?

EF: Well, at that time, they were all coming to the New World, and the island wasn't supportive. I mean, you couldn't live there because it wasn't [inaudible]. No jobs, just farming and fishing. So he came to find a better life.

FR: What did he do in New Bedford?

EF: He worked at the New Bedford [inaudible] for the two and a half years that we were in New Bedford, and then my aunt's daughter was getting married in Harwich, so we got an invitation. My Aunt Eugenia lived in Harwich, and we got an invitation to come to the wedding. It was my cousin Nellie who was getting married, and her son now – her first son is the chief of police of Harwich. We came to the wedding. I liked it so much that after we went to New Bedford, I just worried the family sick until we moved to Cape Cod. Well, as I say, the family home is there.

FR: What did your father do in the Cape?

EF: He worked in the cranberry bogs. Also, he worked for William Jones on construction because that was a big thing, building the roads. Most of the Cape roads my father helped to build, and then in between, he'd work on the cranberry bogs.

FR: What did he get paid working at the cranberry bogs?

EF: Oh, I think he used to make about fifteen – sixteen dollars was the most he'd make a week. Then after I got through school, I went out and worked. I've cooked most of my life and helped the family.

FR: Shall we take a walk down Main Street in Harwich back in the earlier days?

EF: When we first came, of course, there weren't too many stores. We had an A&P in Harwich Center. And Lloyd (Gage?) used to be the manager, and he still has family on the Cape. Then the Exchange Building, which was the biggest building on Cape Cod, was there and (Tobey's?) groceries was on the first floor. The Exchange Building had all kinds of functions. I think they called it the fifth-largest building on Cape Cod. Then John Condon's was the shoe store. I used to always go by longingly because I wore out shoes as fast as they could buy them, and they couldn't afford to buy them. So it was treed – it still is. There's quite a few trees in Harwich. Harwich hasn't changed. Harwich Center hasn't changed as much except that the Exchange Building was torn down. But the main street is still about the same. Of course, I love Brooks Library. I used to about live there. That was the highlight of the week to get all the work done on Saturday and go to the library and get books.

FR: Were there any other places of business on the main street?

EF: Yes, there were smaller stores. Now, let's see. There was Tom Eldridge, who had the grain store, but that was lower main. And (Dini Hall?), [inaudible] Hall's father, who had the oil and coal – kerosene them. They didn't have number two at that time; it was kerosene and coal and wood. Let's see.

FR: Did you have a school on the main street?

EF: No, this is a funny thing. I went to a segregated school in Harwich. They bussed all the North Harwich children to West Harwich. The Cape Verdean, which I am, were sent for the North Harwich school. But the white children of North Harwich did not go to that school. They bussed them to West Harwich. Just the Cape Verdean children went to North Harwich.

FR: Was that an all-Black school?

EF: Well, it was all Black at the time that I went to, yes. And for many years. Then after a while, one of our men in Pleasant Lake got very upset about it. They started complaining. Then they built a new school in Harwich Center, and all the children went. But for a long time, North Harwich School was just for the Cape Verdeans.

FR: What was the breakdown of the population, Black versus white? What percentage?

EF: Well, there wasn't – were very in the minority. Maybe fifty or sixty families – no, less than that. When I first came, there weren't that many. See, the Cape Verdeans settled in Harwich, in Pleasant Lake, and also Harwich Depot. But there weren't that many of us. Maybe twenty families in one area, and maybe fifteen or sixteen in the other. Now, of course, they're spread out

all over the town, and they live everywhere. But at that time, we lived in Pleasant Lake and Harwich Depot on Kelley Street. At Pleasant Lake, they all lived on Queen Anne Road.

FR: What were the streets like? Were they macadam?

EF: No. When we first came, they were just hard dirt. And then, after a while, they became hardtop.

FR: How did people earn a living?

EF: Well, if you're seasonal, between highways – building the roads – and cranberries. I remember we used to go to Falmouth and pick strawberries in June. That was quite exciting because you had to pack up and go, and then come back. Then we'd stay about, say, three weeks. Then, we'd pick blueberries a lot. We used to sell them. Of course, cranberry was the big thing because you had to get money for the winter for food. We always bought everything in bulk, like a hundred pounds of this, a hundred pounds of that. Of course, we have the mainstay that we eat. We call it jagacida, and that is rice and beans. So you can be assured that everybody had a hundred pounds of beans, a hundred pounds of rice or more in the house. Now I find that it's one of the best foods you can eat because dried beans have more iron than anything. So we were well taken care of. At the time, a lot of us didn't know it.

FR: Do you still make that as part of your diet?

EF: Oh, yes. That's the general diet even now in the young people. In fact, the *Cape Cod Standard-Times* has recipe contests. I entered. I did all the Cape Verdean recipes, such as canja, which is our chicken and rice soup that we have for weddings.

FR: How do you spell that?

EF: It's C-A-N-J-A. That's for special occasions. Then manchup, which is another – I wouldn't say mainstay because jagacida is the mainstay. But I did put in all the recipes. Even now, a lot of the young people meet me and say, "Oh, Ms. Fortes, I'm so glad you had that because now it doesn't come out too soft or too hard." So I feel very good.

FR: Tell me, what would be a typical day? For example, you'd get up in the morning, have breakfast. What would your breakfast consist of?

EF: Well, I'm very Americanized. My breakfast consists of orange juice, toast – and I love cheese. So I'm apt to have a piece of cheese in the morning.

FR: Is that when you were a youngster? I'm talking back then.

EF: Oh no. Back then? No, back then, we had oatmeal or some hot cereal. Then, for lunch, I know in the fall of the year, we always had apples. My father loved to farm. We had big gardens. We had all kinds of animals. I remember one period; we had a cow, then we had calves. My father, in the spring, would walk to Brewster to pasture at Talbots – I think it was in Brewster – to take the calf for the summer. Then we'd kill it in the fall and have meat for the winter. We had goats. We had chickens – oh, chickens. A hundred was nothing to have. Then we'd have our own eggs. We had a real typical farm. It supplied us. We had all – the cow, the milk – mother would make butter.

FR: How did you refrigerate the milk?

EF: We used to have an icebox. In fact, I have it down in the cellar now. I wouldn't part with it. They wanted to buy it for a bar and everything, but I'm very sentimental.

FR: Getting back to a typical day – after breakfast, did you have chores to do? Or would you go to school?

EF: Yes, yes. Especially with my mother with the other children. See, I was born in the islands. But my sister Julia, my brother Julio, and my brother Andrew and Marian were born in – Julia and Julio were born in New Bedford, but Marian and Andrew were born in Harwich. So I had to help with children. I had to wash – and that's before going to school. A lot of times, Mother would get me up at 5:30. No, there were no idle moments, not like the kids have now. We were busy. At least I was. Well, my neighbors, too. All my friends were. We all had things to do.

FR: And you went to school?

EF: Went to school.

FR: What was the school like?

EF: Well, Mary A. Sylvia – in fact, she changed her name after that – I don't think she was too crazy about being a Portuguese person – to Stanford. She was Mary Stanford towards her latter years. But she was Mrs. Sylvia at the beginning. She had fourth grade, fifth grade, six, seven, and eight. She had four grades in her upstairs. See, this was one building. The lower floor was Miss Moriarty. She had first, second, and third grades all in one room. And then Mrs. Sylvia had the rest of us upstairs. We got home around three o'clock, and then you had more chores to do, help with supper, and then you went to bed. That was it.

FR: What did you do on weekends?

EF: More work. That's what I told you. I loved to go to Brooks Library because I had to scrub the floor. We had hardwood floors. We didn't have rugs. My mother had to have it shining. And then I had to do whatever she wanted me to do. Then we helped with the garden. Then in the fall, we all worked in the cranberry bogs. In fact, I ought to tell you a funny story that happened during the war – '41, '42. Everybody went to work in the defense plants, and I didn't. So one day, I was reading the paper, and I saw where this man wanted somebody to help pick his cranberries. It was (C.B. Burse?) in Centerville, one of the old Cape Coders. So I called him, and I told him where I worked for the (Falvey?) family for twenty-six years. I cooked for them in Hyannis Port. I told him that I wouldn't be able to do it in the morning because I was busy. But in the afternoon, I'd love to come over and pick for three hours or so. Say, come at one and get through at 4:00, 4:30. He sounded kind of down when he found out I was a woman. I went over to see him. He said, "Well, all right." He thought I could start the next day, and he had sections and sections in Centerville of cranberry bogs. So the next day, I had (Falvey's?) dog whom I adored – Peter. So I put Peter in Harriet, my car. I called my car Harriet. I said, "Pete, let's go." I have a cranberry scoop, a special one that (Antonio Virgo?) made for me. He made all the scoops in Harwich, this Cape Verdean man – beautiful scoop. I've got it upstairs. So I got my scoop and put Peter in my '31 Chevrolet Roadster, and off we go to Centerville. Mr. (Burse?) was waiting for me. He said, "Ms. Fortes, I've gotten just a few boxes. I think maybe you fill them by the time I get back. I've got to go off, but I'll come back a little later." I said, "All right." I said, "Mr. (Burse?), do you have any more boxes?" "Oh, yes," he said, "there's a pile of them over there. But these will do you until I come back." So Mr. (Burse?) left. Of course, there's nothing I like better than being in a cranberry bog, picking cranberries. I started picking. My scoop is – two scoops will fill a box. When Mr. (Burse?) came, I had – oh, he had told me – I asked him how much did he pay first. He said, "Well, for you, being a woman, I'll give you a dollar a box." I said, "All right, that's fine." When Mr. (Burse?) came back, I had forty boxes, and he nearly died. [laughter] (Jean Burse?) and I often laugh about it. Then, (Jean?) came. When she found out I was helping pick, she came down and helped to pick, also.

FR: Did he continue to pay you a dollar a box?

EF: He certainly did. And I made a fortune that fall. I really did. [laughter] It was up in the hundreds.

FR: Tell me, we're getting back to weekends. What did you do on Sundays?

EF: Sundays, we went to church, and then we came home and worked some more. All my life was work to get ready for Monday. Because if my mother was going anyplace or she was going to work, we had to get the house clean. My mother is immaculate. I had to help.

FR: What did you do for clothes? Did you purchase them? Make them?

EF: My mother made most of my clothes because it was cheaper to buy the material than to buy them store-made. We couldn't afford them.

FR: Where would you buy the material?

EF: (Buttoners?) in Harwich Port – she'd get some. Then, I'll tell you a funny thing. For many years, grain bags were made of lovely cotton prints. Mother would take all the grain bags, and sometimes, there'd be two or three alike. She'd make them into clothes for all of us.

FR: Suppose you were ill. Did you have a doctor in the area?

EF: Yeah, Dr. Nickerson in West Harwich. One of the finest doctors Cape ever had. He used to come to the house. He made all the calls. We'd either go to – there weren't too many cars in the village, but they'd be one or two. You could always get somebody to take you if you were very sick.

FR: If you had to go to the hospital, where would you go?

EF: Cape Cod. Cape Cod Hospital, just a white building then, the small house.

FR: Did you have a dentist in the town?

EF: There was the school dentist that came around once a year because we couldn't afford to have teeth done. Just too expensive. But the school dentist seemed to take care of all our needs.

FR: When you were young, what did you do for entertainment?

EF: Well, we have a pond. I don't know what they called it. I think they call it Flax Pond. It's back of our house. We can walk through the woods in three minutes [and] we're at the pond. We used to go swimming. Then we'd walk, and we played hopscotch. Well, the usual thing that kids do. Of course, I loved nature. I used to go out to try to find flowers and plant them. Half of them would die, but it was a lot of fun getting them – that type thing.

FR: Would you go to the movies?

EF: Yes. They had the modern theater in Harwich Port. That was great. If you could get there once a month, that was luxury.

FR: What did they charge at the movies?

EF: I think it was thirty-five or forty cents for young people, and I think fifty and sixty for older people. I can't quite remember, but it was no big amount. But once a month, that was lovely.

FR: Were they silent pictures?

EF: Yes. [Rudolph] Valentino, and all of those.

FR: Do you remember any pictures that you saw?

EF: Most of them that they had at that time. They were good. Of course, the love scenes were great.

FR: Did they have serials?

EF: Yes.

FR: Do you remember the holidays? What was Christmas like?

EF: Well, Christmas was not always so great because the American tradition is presents. But we were very poor, so we didn't get many presents. If we got an orange, an apple in our stocking, that was good. That was very good. That was about what we'd get. Then, of course, as I went to work and all, I'd see that the other children had more. But with me, if I got an orange in my stocking, that was a big thing.

FR: Did you have a Christmas tree?

EF: Oh, no. We didn't. But we would go to church, and mother would always send us to church on Christmas Day, the night before, or something like that.

FR: Do you remember Thanksgiving?

EF: Well, yes. But you see, Thanksgiving also was an American holiday. We are always grateful for what we have. We're thankful and all, but we had to work into that, too. At that time, mother maybe would cook a chicken or something like that. But we never lived high. We had good food from the garden or what we had. The rest was luxuries which we couldn't afford.

FR: What about the Fourth of July?

EF: Well, the parades. Harwich usually had a parade, and you'd walk to Harwich Center and watch the parade or go to Brooks Park. There would be something doing. Sometimes, once in a while, they'd have a few firecrackers. It was great to walk from Kelley Street to Brooks Park, which was about a mile, mile and a half. It was lots of fun.

FR: Do you remember any other holidays?

EF: No. The only thing I remember would be the christenings and weddings. Of course, there'd be a lot of food, and all the people would gather in their best clothes. We'd all have a lot of fun together.

FR: Was there much intermarrying with the Cape Verdean and the local Cape Coders?

EF: Very, very few, maybe one or two families, but not very much.

FR: Do you remember the advent of the automobile?

EF: Oh, there were automobiles when we came in 1920. But they were specials. You looked at them. And once in a while, you'd get Model-Ts. My cousin Isaac, my aunt's son, had a Touring. That Isaac was really popular. Everybody wanted to ride. He was real nice. He always would give us a ride like that.

FR: Was there electricity then too?

EF: There was, but very few people had it. I think it was in 1928 or '29 that we had it. My chore was cleaning lamp chimneys and washing them. You had to do it every day because sometimes they'd smoke – my mother is very fussy – and they had to shine.

FR: Did you have indoor plumbing?

EF: No. For a long time, we didn't. Many years, we didn't. We had an outhouse. I'll tell you something funny about that outhouse, too. Halloween, the kids, would celebrate. The boys in the village would all come. For a couple of years, they turned it over. One year, my father decided he was going to stay in it and wait for them. [laughter] He didn't hear them, and they turned him over in the outhouse. Oh, was he mad. I think my brother was part of the crew. [laughter] That was really funny. It wasn't at the time.

FR: I'm sure it was.



EF: We were killing ourselves laughing, but father wasn't.

FR: Surely. Do you remember the advent of the telephone?

EF: Well, there weren't telephones when we came to Harwich. Only the (Reino?) family had it, Antonio (Reino?). If anybody called you, which was rare – but if you wanted, say, to call a doctor, an emergency, you always had to walk to the (Renios?) to call because there was no other phone in town.

FR: What was the weather like?

EF: Well, I don't think the weather was that much different than it is now. The winters were cold. We had wood stoves, but we all stayed warm. The houses were wrong. My father cut wood in the winter, too. He cut it. Mr. (Hall?) in Harwich, the coalman – he was very good friends with my father. He worked for him. In the winter, they could cut it because the wood was cold; it cuts better in the winter, father said, than it did in the summer because of the sap. We had wood stoves for years – and coal. At night, you see, they'd bank it with the coal. Then, in the morning, you start the wood. So you didn't use – you used more wood than you did coal.

FR: Do you remember prohibition?

EF: Yes. And the rumrunners. They were all over the Cape.

FR: Tell us about it.

EF: Well, I don't know how much I really can tell you. But I know that there were a lot of problems. They were picking them up and raiding places. They found some in barns. In fact, our neighbor (Mr. Lopes?) used to sell moonshine, and he used to bury it all out in the woods. The boys finally got a hold of – they knew where he hid it. They'd go and steal it. It was great going on. Prohibition was quite a period on Cape Cod because they came in from every – Cape Cod Bay, the Atlantic, Chatham, Provincetown.

FR: Did they make moonshine, too?

EF: Oh, yes. We knew quite a few families that did.

FR: They would sell it?

EF: Yes.

FR: What would they get for a bottle? A quart bottle?

EF: I don't know because I was young. But they didn't do badly on it. They sold it for the going price, whatever that was. I really couldn't tell you because I've never had a drink in my life.

FR: Do you remember the Depression?

EF: Yes, very much so.

FR: How did it affect people in your area?

EF: Badly, very badly. The Cape Verdeans were hard-hit. But the thing about it is we're sturdy people. Once in a while, somebody might lose their house by not paying mortgage payments, but most people hung onto it, did with less, and paid their bills. But it was not easy. There were no jobs. It was rough. Really rough.

FR: Was there much welfare?

EF: Not that much, no. Not like it is now. Because people were too proud, a lot of people would just exist rather than go on welfare. Now, of course, they don't feel that way, which I think is a good idea because there's no sense in going hungry if you can get food.

FR: You have been very active in civil rights, have you not?

EF: Very much, yes. [laughter] I think I have, yes.

FR: Well, tell us about it.

EF: Well, I'll tell you my first experience and how I became involved. We had finished picking cranberries that year, and I wasn't working. I was about sixteen. The winter was coming on. The family was big, and I had to help. So I heard that you could go to Boston and get a job. So I told the family that I thought I'd like to go to Boston for the fall – I think it was around the first of November – and see if I could get a job. Well, there used to be trains. We had a depot in Harwich right near the house. You could go and get the train and go to Boston. It came from Provincetown, the whole length of the Cape, and it always stopped in Harwich. So I got on the train, and off to Boston, I go. Well, they had told me that I could stay at the YWCA in Boston. So I got the address and everything. I didn't have too much money. If I had twenty dollars, it was a lot. I doubt if I had twenty, maybe fifteen. When I got to the South Station, they had told me to get a cab because I was as green as green could be. I told the cab I wanted to go to the Y,

and the man drove me there. When I went to the desk, there was this sweet, elderly lady, and she asked me what I wanted. I said, "I'd like a room because I'd like to stay in Boston, and I came to find work." "Oh," she said, "my dear. I'm very sorry, but we don't take colored girls here?" I think my face must have dropped because I didn't know a soul in Boston. I said, "Well, what will I do?" She said, "Well, I'll tell you. We have a nice place for colored girls on Holyoke Street. It's the Harriet Tubman house. I'll call the lady there and see if they will take you." Then she had to call the taxi again, and I was taken to the Harriet Tubman House. This Mrs. Hill – I'll never forget it – met me at the door. She made me welcome. She told me that she had another girl that was there from Ohio who was studying at the Conservatory and that she thought maybe she'd like to have me room with her, which I did. I stayed in Boston that winter and then came back home.

FR: Did you find a job?

EF: Yes, I did. I worked in, I think it was, Newton that winter. Then I came back home in the spring. That was my beginning with segregation. I've been very active since. I worked with the Boston NAACP branch for many years before we had a branch on the Cape. When we did have a branch on the Cape, we had a president – Walter Stevenson was our first president. He served two years, and then I became president of the branch, and I served four years. I'm still on the Cape Cod Board branch. Then I've been very busy in town, too, with different organizations. I go to the First Baptist Church. I think I've served on every board they have. I was on the library board, Hyannis Public Library, for twenty years. I've served on the Cape Cod Red Cross board, the Cape-wide board. Now I'm president of the Barnstable Council on Aging. I served last year, and I was re-elected about three weeks ago. I went to the National NAACP convention in Portland, Oregon, in July. I got elected on the board again just before I left.

FR: Tell me, in your early days in the Cape, was discrimination, other than the school segregation, a problem?

EF: Yes, it was. But we were all so poor that we couldn't afford to go to the different places. In fact, I remember my father came here to help me with some work I had that he could do for me here at the house here. I was taking him home. He liked a beer now and then. It was a hot day. We stopped in Yarmouth, and he went into this place where they sold beer. It wasn't really a barroom. I guess you could call it that. It was small. He came out, and he was very perturbed because they made him sit in a back room. He couldn't be served in the front. I'm glad you spoke of that because I'd like to let that out because it upset him so.

FR: Do you recall any other situations such as that?

EF: Yes. I had two tickets once – given to me. The Masonic group here in Hyannis used to have dinners on Saturday nights years ago in the '30s. I had two tickets given to me. This person didn't realize that they segregated or wouldn't take you. So she gave me these two tickets. This friend of mine and I went to dinner, and we got as far as the door. This was Henry (Finney?) of Hyannis, who was a maid who was one of the big masons in town. He and his son Homer were taking tickets at the door. He told me they would have to refund me the money because I couldn't come in [inaudible].

FR: What about restaurants?

EF: Well, the main street restaurants you could eat at in Hyannis. But any of the inns and places, they wouldn't want you. You could go to Mayflower or the "Dirty Spoon" as we used to call it, down near where the railroad station used to be. They serve you at the counter. But the inns, say East Bay Lodge or those places, no, you couldn't go.

FR: It appears we've made some great strides in changing this.

EF: Yes. I feel good about it because I think I was very instrumental in a lot of these changes.

FR: Was the Cape as bad as the rest of the country?

EF: Well, no, no. The only thing is, the rest of the country, they put out signs, and they tell you. Well, the Cape – it still is subtle – but we're ferreting them out. We're getting at them. I hope before I die that it will clear up much.

FR: I guess many of the people who immigrated to the United States were – I recall the Irish had a very similar problem.

EF: Yes, but they're just as bad now on somebody else. So, no lesson was learned.

FR: Well, I guess it was diluted over the generations.

EF: Yes. Well, one thing I'd like to mention is I am a life member of the NAACP. Right now, we have another part of it – a life membership. They call it golden heritage. You pay a thousand dollars more. A life membership is five hundred. But the golden heritage is a thousand. I'm aspiring – I have the life membership, but I'm aspiring to get the golden heritage, which I hope, within the year, I'll be able to pay off. So I'm very happy with that. Then, another thing that I was very proud of – about nine years ago, I was awarded the B'nai B'rith award for civil rights for the [inaudible]. Well, they give it to a person that they feel has done something for the area, and I got it about nine years ago.

FR: That's wonderful.

EF: I feel very proud of it. At least, I'm trying to help.

FR: Ms. Fortes, what did you do for a livelihood?

EF: You mean work-wise?

FR: Yes.

EF: I cooked. I do dinner parties. I'm not a bad cook. They say I'm pretty good.

FR: You a caterer?

EF: [inaudible]

FR: Did you have your own company?

EF: Well, I do it – well, no, I wouldn't say I had my own company. But if somebody called me and said they wanted me to prepare a complete meal, I could do it and take it in. I didn't do it on a big scale. I'd rather go and do it at their homes. I've cooked, I think, in the best areas in the Cape – Oyster Harbor, [inaudible] Hyannis Port.

FR: In your occupation, did you meet many of the famous people that live here on the Cape?

EF: Most of them. I met a good bit. Of course, in the summer of '31 and '32, I worked as a waitress that summer at [inaudible] in Hyannis Port. Of course, that's directly in the middle of the compound. Ted Kennedy was two, and Bob was six or seven. Jack and Jill were between twelve and fifteen. That summer – of course, they were all very friendly with the (Tenney?) kids. They used to drive me crazy. So this friend of mine brought this friend of hers from Washington, and he was maître d' in the Senate. So he asked me when they came to visit, did I know the Kennedys? I said, "Yes, I know them all, I think." So when he went back, I think Ted came in to eat at the dining room. He asked him if he knew me. He said, "Do you know Eugenia Fortes?" He said, "No, but I know Jennie." [laughter]. I'll tell you something that was very nice that happened to me, too. This was a Black famous person. For years, you see, with the segregation and Blacks couldn't go into hotels, a lot of the Black big people, like Thurgood Marshall, stayed with me here, stayed in my small cottage for three summers. In fact, the briefs for the '54 decision [Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas] that rocked the country were all worked on in my house on Mitchell's Way because Constance Motley and Bob Carter,

who were very famous people in the NAACP – lawyers – took the cottage for the summer of '52 and '53, and they brought all the stuff down to work on it so that they were all ready for the '54 trial when it came up.

FR: That was prior to Thurgood Marshall going on to the Supreme Court.

EF: Oh, yes. He was with the NAACP then. In fact, he was out in the backyard one day and relaxed on the chaise. I said, “Some folks take it easy.” He said, “Yeah, because when I get back to New York, I think things are going to happen.” Well, he got back to New York, and Little Rock, Arkansas sprouted. But I've been very lucky. I've known many, many nice people. As I say, the famous part doesn't mean anything, just if they were decent. Well, life hasn't been easy for Cape Verdeans on the Cape. It's better now, but way back, it was hard work. We were hard workers. I think we've done a tremendous job in helping to build Cape Cod, too. I think many of us – our fathers before us, mothers. My mother now happens to be the last of the first generation. She's the only surviving person in the village. She's eighty-seven. So I feel we've contributed.

FR: You've enjoyed living on the Cape?

EF: I love it. It's my life. I love Hyannis.

FR: Thank you, Ms. Fortes. We've enjoyed talking with you.

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Reviewed by Molly Graham 1/24/2022