

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Stella Adoa Baptista

RECOLLECTIONS ON LIFE IN THE CANNERIES

Interviews conducted by
Don Warrin and Deolinda Adao
in 2004

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Stella Adoa Baptista, "Stella Adoa Baptista: Recollections on Life in the Canneries" conducted by Don Warrin in 2004, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2007.

Interview History—Stella Adoa Baptista

This interview took place in the home of Stella Baptista in February of 2004. Many Portuguese and Portuguese Americans, especially women, worked in the canneries in various parts of California, and so we wanted to get a sense of this experience. Stella followed her mother in this occupation. In this interview she talks about her childhood, growing up with immigrant parents, first in Sausalito and then Oakland. Stella talks about life in the canneries during the War Effort (World War II) and also discusses the effects of unionization on the work experience. She also discusses several aspects of life in a Portuguese immigrant community.

Interview #1: February 13, 2004

00:00:10

Warrin:

Can you give us your full name?

00:01:07

Baptista:

Stella Adoa Baptista. You want my maiden name?

00:01:12

Warrin

Sure.

00:01:13

Baptista

Stella Celeste Pinto, and I go by Stella Adoa Baptista

00:01:18

Warrin:

And you explained that Stella was a nickname that...

00:01:25

Baptista:

When I went, when they registered me in school, I guess they couldn't understand the person that was registering me at school. They just put down Stella, and that's the way it stayed.

00:01:36

Warrin

And when, what was the date of your birth?

00:01:39

Baptista

July tenth, 1919.

00:01:41

Warrin:

And you were born in?

00:01:42

Baptista:

Sausalito, California.

00:01:44

Warrin

And your mother was a recent immigrant?

00:01:51

Baptista

Yes, she was.

00:01:51

Warrin:

And where in Portugal did your parents come from?

00:01:56

Baptista:

Ilhavo, Portugal.

00:01:58

Warrin

And when did they meet, your parents?

00:02:00

Baptista

Oh, I don't know.

00:02:01

Warrin:

They didn't talk about that? And who came first to California?

00:02:09

Baptista:

My father.

00:02:09

Warrin

Do you have an idea when he came?

00:02:11

Baptista

Yeah, he came in nineteen-seven... nineteen-sixteen.

00:02:15

Warrin:

1916. Before the war.

00:02:17

Baptista:

Yes. Mm-hm.

00:02:18

Warrin

And what did he do when he arrived here?

00:02:22

Baptista

He worked as a farmhand at a farm in Rio Vista, Ryde.

00:02:31

Warrin:

Do you know anything about the community of people from Ilhavo who settled in Rio Vista?

Did they ever talk about any other people...?

00:02:45

Baptista:

Oh, God, I don't know their names, I forgot their names already. There was, most all of them that came from Portugal all landed there. Even the younger boys, they all landed there.

00:02:56

Warrin

In Rio Vista?

00:02:57

Baptista

Mm-hmm. Oh no, in Ryde. R-Y-D-E.

00:03:00

Warrin:

Which is not too far away.

00:03:03

Baptista:

Yeah, no, it's on the—where is Ryde? On the other side of Sacramento? Someplace around there?

00:03:08

Warrin

And your father was here for how long before he sent for your mother?

00:03:16

Baptista

About three years. [a timer goes off and she says "That's not—that's the timer.]

00:03:23

Warrin:

About three years?

00:03:25

Baptista:

About three years.

00:03:25

Warrin

And your mother came and you were born how long after she arrived?

00:03:35

Baptista

Let's see, my brother is seven months older than I am. Oh, about a year.

00:03:41

Warrin:

So he was born here?

00:03:44

Baptista:

The both of us were born in Sausalito.

00:03:47

Warrin

And is your brother still living?

00:03:51

Baptista

Yes, he is.

00:03:53

Warrin:

Where does he live?

00:03:54

Baptista:

He lives in Pleasanton.

00:03:55

Warrin

I see. And do you know anything about your parents' parents?

00:04:02

Baptista

No, I don't. All I know, I even forgot their names. My kids have that in their family tree but I don't have it.

00:04:12

Warrin:

Did your parents talk much about Ilhavo and Portugal?

00:04:18

Baptista:

No, they didn't talk too much about it, no. My father was very rarely home, because when he worked as a deckhand on the boats he would come home every, about every two days. He'd go and then stay in Sausalito and then he'd come home, over the weekend like. And for a while there we just saw him a couple of times during the week. And Mama took most care of us, and she didn't have time to sit down and talk to all of us. At that time they didn't talk too much about things.

00:04:47

Warrin

Yeah. Where did the boat go that he worked on?

00:04:52

Baptista

From San Francisco to Sausalito.

00:04:53

Warrin:

Oh, okay. It was a ferry boat.

00:04:56

Baptista:

Yeah, the ferry boat.

00:04:57

Warrin

I see.

00:04:58

Baptista

That's when they had ferry boats.

00:04:59

Warrin:

Yeah. And how long did he work at the...?

00:05:03

Baptista:

Oh God, a long time. Over thirty years.

00:05:07

Warrin

Really?

00:05:07

Baptista

Yeah.

00:05:07

Warrin:

And so he retired from...

00:05:09

Baptista:

Then he retired and then he went to work at Hubbard and Company for about three years.

00:05:15

Warrin

And what did they do?

00:05:16

Baptista

He was a watchman there.

00:05:18

Warrin:

I see. And your mother, she...

00:05:23

Baptista:

My mother worked in the cannery for a while.

00:05:27

Warrin

What cannery?

00:05:29

Baptista

Del Monte, Plant 35.

00:05:31

Warrin:

Plant 35, was that...?

00:05:32

Baptista:

In Emeryville.

00:05:33

Warrin

In Emeryville. Was that the one... whereabouts exactly was that?

00:05:39

Baptista

Well, they shut it down, where they made the new center.

00:05:42

Warrin:

At Ashby and San Pablo?

00:05:45

Baptista:

No, no, no, it wasn't Ashby. Fortieth and San Pablo.

00:05:48

Warrin

Oh. Okay, where the theatre is now and so forth, that big com...

00:06:02

Baptista

It used to be where they had the baseball park, where the A's used to play, when the A's first started.

00:06:07

Warrin:

Yeah.

00:06:07

Baptista:

There was the baseball park there on the corner, of 40th and San Pablo, and then the cannery took it over and made a warehouse out of it. And when they used to play baseball there, us kids used to go over there and look through the peephole to see the ball game. And the Pachecos and all of them started out and they start calling themselves the A's, the Oakland Athletics.

00:06:31

Warrin

What were they before?

00:06:32

Baptista

What were they before? I don't know what, they were just kids.

00:06:35

Warrin:

What were they called before?

00:06:37

Baptista:

Oh, no, they weren't called anything, they were just kids playing baseball.

00:06:39

Warrin

Oh, really.

00:06:41

Baptista

But, like every Saturday or Sunday they'd have a great big baseball team playing against each other, and that's how they started playing baseball.

00:06:48

Warrin:

And where was this exactly?

00:06:50

Baptista:

On 40th and San Pablo.

00:06:52

Warrin

Fortieth and San Pablo. And were there many other Portuguese families there?

00:06:57

Baptista

Oh yeah, it was all Portuguese and Italian and Spanish, was very rarely anybody else.

00:07:02

Warrin:

And what kind of work did most of them do, did many of them work in the cannery?

00:07:07

Baptista:

The women, yeah, and the men worked at the soap factory or the, Hubbard's and Company, they all had their little group...

Adao:

And the rubber company?

Baptista:

The rubber company was there too? No, Hubbard's was pole line and hardware, for the poles.

Adao:

They made screws?

Baptista:

And the electric company, what do you call the electric company, G.E.? And the soap factory.

00:07:38

Warrin

All of them were around there?

00:07:40

Baptista

They were all around there, yes.

00:07:42

Warrin:

And...

00:07:42

Baptista:

Nobody was out of a job, everybody had a job.

00:07:46

Warrin

And what years was this?

00:07:48

Baptista

Oh God, I started to work in 1942.

00:07:54

Warrin:

But before that your mother was working at the...

00:07:55

Baptista:

Oh, long time. When she first came from Portugal.

00:07:59

Warrin

She started working in the cannery?

00:08:01

Baptista

She, after she had my brother and I, yeah.

00:08:04

Warrin:

And what year did they move from Sausalito to Oakland?

00:08:09

Baptista:

1919.

00:08:11

Warrin

So they weren't there long in Sausalito?

00:08:13

Baptista

No, she was there six months after I was born.

Warrin:

I see.

Baptista:

So she had to be what, 19? 18?

00:08:20

Warrin:

Presumably they were, you moved to Sausalito because that was where your father could get the boat...

00:08:28

Baptista:

My father had bought a house.

00:08:29

Warrin

Oh, he had bought a house.

00:08:30

Baptista

Yeah, he bought a house, yeah.

00:08:31

Warrin:

And do you know why they moved to Oakland and...?

00:08:36

Baptista:

No, I don't. But I, he bought a house.

00:08:42

Warrin

And then he bought another house in...

00:08:44

Baptista

No, he was renting in Sausalito. Then he bought a house in Oakland; and then my mother, we moved over here when I was six months old.

00:08:51

Warrin:

Oh, okay. So you grew up in...

00:08:53

Baptista:

Oakland.

00:08:54

Warrin

In Oakland. And where did you go to school?

00:08:58

Baptista

Clausen.

00:09:01

Warrin:

And Clausen was an elementary school?

00:09:06

Baptista:

Kindergarten to sixth grade.

00:09:08

Warrin

To sixth grade. And after that?

00:09:11

Baptista

I went to Hoover Junior High.

00:09:14

Warrin:

Hoover Junior High. And did you go on to high school?

00:09:21

Baptista:

No, I didn't. I didn't finish high school. I went to high school, but didn't finish.

00:09:26

Warrin:

You didn't finish. Can you say why you didn't...?

00:09:33

Baptista:

Cause I got married. I was a bad little girl. [laughs] I was a bad little girl—we got married and that was it! Then I had to learn on my own.

00:09:44

Warrin

And what year was that?

00:09:46

Baptista

Uh, that was 1935.

00:09:48

Warrin:

1935. And while you were in high school, were you working also?

00:09:54

Baptista:

No. I just went to work after I got married.

00:10:00

Warrin

I see. And do you have many memories, going back to your mother—of your mother working in a cannery?

00:10:10

Baptista

Her coming home very tired. At that time when they worked in the cannery, it was no unions, no nothing. And they'd work fourteen, fifteen hours a day. And a bunch of water up to their knees.

00:10:25

Warrin:

Did she work just seasonally or did she work...

00:10:28

Baptista:

Seasonal, seasonal.

00:10:29

Warrin

She worked in the summer.

00:10:30

Baptista

Seasonal, yeah.

00:10:32

Warrin:

Did she talk about it at all—the experience?

00:10:36

Baptista:

No, not too much.

00:10:40

Warrin

Did she complain at all?

00:10:42

Baptista

Yeah, she was tired and it was sloppy working there. And at that time when they was working in the cannery, it was like in bins you know? And the food would come down in bins and then that food would sit there and kind of rot in that stuff. Then you'd have to keep your hands in water all day. And things have really changed now, but that's the way it was in the cannery.

00:11:02

Warrin

Yeah. It was a dangerous work too.

00:11:04

Baptista

It was very, yeah.

00:11:06

Baptista

You can catch a death of cold, or pneumonia, whatever.

00:11:09

Warrin

Right. And machinery...

00:11:12

Baptista

And the machinery wasn't up to par either.

00:11:15

Warrin

Yeah.

00:11:16

Baptista

Very little machinery.

00:11:18

Warrin

And this was Del Monte plant 35?

00:11:21

Baptista

Plant 35.

00:11:23

Warrin

And after you married, and dropped out of high school, did you go to work soon after?

00:11:30

Baptista

Yes—mm hmm. I went to work in 1942.

00:11:34

Warrin

In the cannery.

00:11:36

Baptista

In Del Monte cannery.

00:11:38

Warrin

In the same one.

00:11:39

Baptista

In the same one.

00:11:40

Warrin

And did you find it any different than your mother?

00:11:42

Baptista

Oh yes. Yes, I did. Yes, yes. It was more modern. Then we had a union and the work was better. And the wages were better.

00:11:55

Warrin

Were you paid by the hour or piece work?

00:11:59

Baptista

Well, we got piece work, and then we got paid by the hour at thirty-three cents an hour.

00:12:03

Warrin

So you had a combination of the two.

00:12:05

Baptista

Yeah—depending on what you were doing.

00:12:08

Warrin

When your mother worked did she work piecemeal?

00:12:12

Baptista

Yeah, she had piece work, they were all piece work.

00:12:15

Warrin

And do you know when that changed and why?

00:12:17

Baptista

No, I don't.

00:12:18

Warrin

Or how it changed?

00:12:19

Baptista

No, I don't.

00:12:20

Warrin

Did the union have, do you think, have some effect?

00:12:22

Baptista

When the union went in, they changed a lot, yeah.

00:12:27

Warrin

What were some of the things that you think the union did?

00:12:30

Baptista

Well, we got better wages. We got more machinery for safety. And we got promoted to different things, different places in the plant.

00:12:47

Warrin

Can you describe a typical day in the cannery? What it was like—what time you got to work and what you did?

00:12:55

Baptista

We started about 6:30. And we left about 4:30. And we made fruit cocktail and we made diced peaches and pears, canning.

00:13:11

Warrin

And how did you...?

00:13:11

Baptista

Working out in the warehouse. In the nursery school.

00:13:15

Warrin

How did you make fruit cocktail for instance?

00:13:19

Baptista

Well, first the fruit goes on a machine and it's sliced, and then cut in half or whatever. Then if it goes in the cocktail, it goes on a dicer—and it dices all the fruit. And then it goes on a belt to the cook room—it goes in the can in the cook room. Then it goes out to the warehouse. And then if you wanted—they had some fruit salad—it went in a jar. And some fruit salad went in a can. It was called grade A, or B or C or whatever. And went in different size cans—then there was somebody at the end checking it to see if the fruit was okay or whatever—or if it wasn't.

00:14:01

Warrin

And what specifically did you do?

00:14:04

Baptista

Me?

00:14:05

Warrin

Yeah.

00:14:06

Baptista

I worked, oh, I worked in everything. I started in the basement making boxes. Then I got promoted to upstairs. Then I went to the nursery school and worked at the nursery school. Then I went to work in the warehouse. Then I came back—whenever, wherever they needed somebody to do something real quick—there was Stella. And then I worked myself up till I was floor lady; and I was floor lady for about twenty-five years.

00:14:32

Warrin

And that was something like a foreman?

00:14:34

Baptista

Yes, mm hmm.

00:14:39

Warrin

While this food was going along a conveyer belt, what would the women be doing?

00:14:48

Baptista

Oh they'd, turn the fruit up—over—to see if they had brown spots or there was pieces of rotten fruit or peels on the fruit, and then they'd have to sort them—take them out.

00:15:01

Warrin

And what was the name of the union at that time?

00:15:05

Baptista

Umm—Warehouse—oh God, I got it in my safe deposit box.

00:15:17

Warrin

That's okay. We can actually...

00:15:20

Baptista

Warehouseman's Union?

00:15:21

Warrin

Yeah, we can find that out

00:15:26

Baptista

I can look—I can go—I can get it Monday.

00:15:29

Warrin

Sure. Next time we can talk about that. How many years did you work in the cannery?

00:15:38

Baptista

Oh, about thirty-two.

00:15:40

Warrin

And did you work twelve months? I mean, were you...?

00:15:42

Baptista

No, seasonal. I worked seasonal.

00:15:44

Warrin

You worked seasonal also.

00:15:46

Baptista

Yes—mm hmm.

00:15:50

Warrin

How did people obtain jobs in the...?

00:15:54

Baptista

By [word of] mouth and friends.

00:15:55

Warrin

Friends. So there was a networking..., people?

00:15:58

Baptista

And if you didn't know anybody, you'd have to go stand outside early in the morning and then somebody would come outside and call you, you know. And while you'd come in, they liked your face or something—you got in. If they didn't like your face, you stayed outside.

00:16:12

Warrin

You stayed outside. How many hours a day did you work?

00:16:18

Baptista

Oh, sometimes I worked twelve, fourteen hours at first and then when the union got in there, we worked our regular eight hours.

00:16:26

Warrin

So the union wasn't there at first.

00:16:28

Baptista

No, not at first.

00:16:31

Warrin

When did the union appear?

00:16:33

Baptista

When I got in there—it was right after I got in there.

00:16:36

Warrin

Oh okay. During the war.

00:16:38

Baptista

Yeah.

00:16:40

Warrin

There obviously were men working there as well as women.

00:16:45

Baptista

Oh yes, oh yes.

00:16:48

Warrin

What did the men do?

00:16:51

Baptista

Well, they worked out in the warehouse—packing and with the jitnies and stuff, taking out stuff to the warehouse—and fixing the machinery and stuff.

00:17:04

Warrin

Did they act as foremen inside the...?

00:17:09

Baptista

Oh yes. They had—they were foremen on the inside.

00:17:14

Warrin

And so they were bossing the women?

00:17:15

Baptista

Yeah.

00:17:17

Warrin

Yeah. What was the relationship of men and women there?

00:17:38

Baptista

It was okay.

00:17:39

Warrin

Okay.

00:17:40

Baptista

We hardly seen them because they were out in the warehouse most of the time.

00:17:42

Warrin

They were mostly in the warehouse.

00:17:43

Baptista

Just the mechanics were more in the inside—on the inside.

00:17:48

Warrin

So when you were there, the women actually were—you call them floor ladies?

00:17:56

Baptista

I was a floor lady.

00:17:57

Warrin

Yeah, so...

00:17:58

Baptista

We had another one on top of us. A head floor lady.

00:18:01

Warrin

So the women essentially supervised themselves.

00:18:03

Baptista

Yes, uh huh.

00:18:04

Warrin

Okay. Were there friendships or romances that developed?

00:18:10

Baptista

Oh, there was a lot of romance and a lot of friendships in there—especially in war time. [laughs]

00:18:15

Warrin

Yeah.

00:18:16

Baptista

There was a lot of romancing in there—and I wasn't one of them.

00:18:19

Warrin

No. I certainly didn't imply that. You were married at the time.

00:18:23

Baptista

Yeah. That don't make any difference, did it? [laughs]

00:18:25

Warrin

In those days—a lot of...

00:18:28

Baptista

They had three shifts—we had three shifts.

00:18:30

Warrin

Yeah, yeah. And a lot of...

00:18:33

Baptista

Sailors. A lot of sailors.

00:18:34

Warrin

Uh, yeah.

00:18:35

Baptista

Used to work in there. You know they'd come when they were in port here.

00:18:39

Warrin

Oh really?

00:18:40

Baptista

They'd go to work for three or four days.

00:18:41

Warrin

Oh. And what would they do?

00:18:43

Baptista

Checkers.

00:18:44

Warrin

Checkers and so forth. So, just to pick up some extra spending money.

00:18:48

Baptista

Money.

00:18:49

Warrin

Yeah. And then a lot of women whose husbands were off at war probably were there working also.

00:18:54

Baptista

Yes, there was—yes, yes.

00:19:00

Warrin

What were the chances of advancement there?

00:19:04

Baptista

It was pretty good. It was pretty good. It was pretty good. I went up pretty fast.

00:19:11

Warrin

Depending on what?

00:19:12

Baptista

How fast you work and if you was there on time—never lost any time. You didn't take more than your ten minutes recess.

00:19:27

Warrin

And what other nationalities were there, besides Portuguese?

00:19:30

Baptista

Oh, all of them. It was a mixed. It was Portuguese, Mexican, blacks—it was everything. Puerto Ricans—it was everything. War brides—everything.

00:19:42

Warrin

How did people mix—people from different cultures?

00:19:46

Baptista

Very nice. Very good. Very good. Very good.

00:19:51

Warrin

There were ethnic friendships and...?

00:19:54

Baptista

And very good workers—very good workers.

00:19:57

Warrin

What about outside—what about when people went home? Did you maintain friendships with Mexicans or blacks?

00:20:09

Baptista

Yes—yes! Till this day. Yesterday I got two Valentine cards from—till this day I still get telephone calls and everything from the girls. Very good—when I had my heart attack there, I was the only one that they, the three shifts collected money for, and they brought me seven hundred and fifty dollars.

00:20:25

Warrin

Oh. When was this?

00:20:27

Baptista

This was in 1977.

00:20:30

Warrin

Seventy seven.. So this was close to ...

00:20:32

Baptista

No, nineteen—yeah, 1977.

00:20:34

Warrin

Close to the time that you retired.

00:20:36

Baptista

Yes. Cause my husband passed away in '78 and I retired in '78. After he passed away, I had a heart attack.

00:20:47

Warrin

Could you speak—could people speak other languages—Spanish or Portuguese? Was it allowed in the plant?

00:20:57

Baptista

Yeah, yeah—they did, yeah. It was amazing because sometimes you couldn't understand them and they'd go like this or go like this and—or come over here and you know, and you'd understand them by the way they were acting with their hands or something. Or if they liked you they'd go like this and say, "Oh, you're nice, you're nice" you know. And then they'd ask you how to say this or say that and they'd learn. And I learned a lot of—I used to understand a lot of languages, but I don't anymore. But Mexican and Spanish I can understand very good.

00:21:35

Warrin

What were some of the hazards of working at the cannery?

00:21:40

Baptista

Very bad. Very bad. The gratings on the floors were broke. Cause I went through a grating myself. And I cut this finger off on the cocktail machine. And then the union put new machines in there. Made it nice for the rest of them.

00:21:59

Warrin

Yeah. And you mentioned the water on the floor for when...

00:22:04

Baptista

It was big big improvement. It was a great big improvement. As people got hurt or something, they'd fix it right away—the union would fix it right away.

00:22:14

Warrin

And you think a lot of these improvements were because of the union?

00:22:18

Baptista

Yes—mm hmm—oh definitely, yeah.

00:22:21

Warrin

And pay as well as safety?

00:22:22

Baptista

And the pay was good too.

00:22:24

Warrin

And the uh...

00:22:25

Baptista

If seventy-seven cents an hour was good, that's what it was—out in the warehouse, yeah.

00:22:31

Warrin

Around that area—I'm not quite sure where this took place, but they built some homes for the workers.

00:22:43

Baptista

No, not the cannery. Oh the cannery had...

00:22:46

Warrin

Had little...

00:22:47

Baptista

Little homes for the workers—they came from Fresno or from far away—to work the season. They had, they had little places for them to live, yeah.

00:22:58

Warrin

Were they nearby?

00:22:59

Baptista

Right there on the floor—on the grounds of the cannery.

00:23:02

Warrin

Right there. But they were temporary places for people who came from far away?

00:23:05

Baptista

Yes—for them to live in, yeah—during the season. Yeah they had...

00:23:13

Warrin

I copied a statement out of the Oakland Tribune in 1921. And it was close to the time that your mother probably started to work in the cannery.

00:23:40

Baptista

[Answers phone and talks for a bit]

00:25:03

Warrin

This appeared in—related to the Western Canning Company in 1921, in the Oakland Tribune. It said “In brief, the employee is made to feel at home and the big brotherhood idea between employer and employee as exemplified here cannot help but bring its reward in human happiness, health, contentment and prosperity.” They tried to paint a picture of big brother company that was taking care of the employees and everybody and...

00:25:30

Baptista

Well, they were very, very good to the employees. They were good to the employees.

00:25:34

Warrin

In what ways?

00:25:35

Baptista

Well, if you wanted to go to the doctors or something, they would let you go off. You’d check out or you’d check back in. Or if you had—they had a nurse there on the thing there. If you had a headache or something, you’d go there. They didn’t bother you too much.

00:25:51

Warrin

What facilities did exist when you began? And you said there was a nursery?

00:25:59

Baptista

There was a school nursery for the workers—to bring their children. That was at plant 7. Not very far from plant 35.

00:26:09

Warrin

And then they had a nurse on duty.

00:26:11

Baptista

They had a nursery school there. They'd drop off their children, which was very nice.

00:26:16

Warrin

And what about in your mother's time? In your mother's time twenty years before?

00:26:23

Baptista

I think they had the nursery then.

00:26:25

Warrin

Okay.

00:26:26

Baptista

I think they had the nursery then.

00:26:27

Warrin

And some little place to go in case you felt bad or something like that?

00:26:35

Baptista

Yes, they had a nurse's station there.

00:26:37

Warrin

I see. And...

00:26:39

Baptista

They were very good—they were very good to work for—very good people to work for.

00:26:43

Warrin

And looking back on those years, how do you look back on that?

00:26:52

Baptista

Well, it was an experience because as things got changed you look back and you say, "My God." When I first started there, you worked on the belt, it was just water—it wasn't even on a belt—it was on a sink like—and the food would come off of the belt and would go into the sink, and if you didn't work fast they would turn black and you'd have to keep your hands in water all the time and then they were forever washing... [coughs] Excuse me—they were forever washing the floors because the food would fall on the floor. It wasn't that healthy.

00:27:29

Warrin
Right.

00:27:30

Baptista

It wasn't that healthy. And then all of a sudden the changes—was they put belts—the fruit would come down on the belt and you didn't have to stand in that water anymore or keep your hands in that water. And it was a big change. I saw a big change in there.

00:27:43

Warrin

What years did you see most of the change?

00:27:47

Baptista

Oh, about five years after I worked there. That would be what...?

00:27:52

Warrin

'47, '48—something like that? And what prompted those changes?

00:27:57

Baptista

What prompted them?

00:27:58

Warrin

Yeah.

00:27:59

Baptista

Well, the union went in there and they saw—they changed things around. The girls were complaining that the water was cold.

00:28:09

Warrin

So, all in all, you have positive memories of those times?

00:28:15

Baptista

Oh yeah. I never forget them. But the workers were very nice. Everybody got along together—I don't think I ever remember a fight in there. I don't think that I ever remembered a fight being in there.

00:28:28

Warrin

You started work in 1942, just after the war began. What was life like in the cannery in the wartime years compared, say to afterwards?

00:28:43

Baptista

It was hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry—get it out. More production than it was to get everything out, than there was to take time to see if you said something, like, “Oh this is not working right,” or something—production.

00:29:02

Warrin

And was this all part of the feeling that you were contributing to the war effort?

00:29:06

Baptista

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

00:29:13

Warrin

Were there different people working for the cannery during the war years than later?

00:29:21

Baptista

No, no. The racial part?

00:29:23

Warrin

Or whatever.

00:29:24

Baptista

The workers? No, no, no. They hired pretty good. They had a lot of war brides in there that couldn't speak from Vietnam and stuff like that. We had one little lady there—she was pregnant. Every year she came to work in the cannery, she was pregnant. And she worked for me and she'd say, “I'm...”. She'd want to go to recess, go to the bathroom and she'd say, ‘Shhh’. And I'd say “Yeah, hurry up, go and come back cause I can't stay in your place too long.” And the poor little thing, they would run off and they'd come back and they'd appreciate everything you did for them, the poor little things; and then they'd bring you a little something, you know. But we weren't allowed to accept it. The floor ladies weren't allowed to accept any gifts from them. So after we were finished working, they'd say, “I put something in your locker.”

00:30:16

Warrin

So, if they wanted to take a bathroom break...?

00:30:20

Baptista

We had a ten minute recess, but a lot of times, they had to go to the bathroom cause we were working with water and all that kind of stuff—you got a cold, you got a cold, you got to go to the bathroom real quick. And they'd go like this—“Shhh,” and then I'd stay there and I'd take their place and I'd say, “You better come back—no smoking now.” I'd say, “No, no, no, come quick.” And then they'd come. But everybody got along beautiful. Everybody got along fine. On my shift they did. I don't know about the other shifts.

00:30:52

Warrin

And they had a ten minute break how many times a day?

00:30:54

Baptista

Two times. Ten minutes in the morning, ten minutes in the afternoon.

00:30:57

Warrin

And how long for lunch?

00:31:00

Baptista

Every four hours we had lunch—half an hour.

00:31:02

Warrin

Every four hours.

00:31:03

Baptista

They had lunch.

00:31:04

Warrin

I see.

06:00:31:06

Baptista

You had to work four hours before you go to lunch.

00:31:09

Warrin

I see. And how long was lunch?

00:31:11

Baptista

Half an hour.

00:31:12

Warrin

Half an hour. And where would people eat lunch?

00:31:15

Baptista

In the cafeteria. Or outside or inside—or in their cars.

00:31:19

Warrin

And what was the cafeteria like?

00:31:21

Baptista

It was very nice. Very nice. Very nice food.

00:31:24

Warrin

They had hot food?

00:31:25

Baptista

Very hot food, yeah.

00:31:26

Warrin

And how was the price of the food?

00:31:30

Baptista

It was good—it was good. The pricing was good.

00:31:32

Warrin

A lot of people just bought their...

00:31:34

Baptista

Oh, the cafeteria was big—it was huge. It was pretty full.

00:31:38

Warrin

Most people ate in the cafeteria?

00:31:40

Baptista

Yeah. A lot of them had—they had a little café there in the corner. And then some of them would go to the café. Like if they were having romances or something they would go to the café and eat.

00:31:53

Warrin

Was there more romance going on in World War II than later or did...?

00:31:57

Baptista

In the wartime, yeah, there was more. Well, the sailors were good looking. [laughs]. There was some good looking women there too. I was tempted myself once or twice. [laughs]

00:32:09

Warrin

So they might have come for more than money.

00:32:12

Baptista

[laughs] Oh dear. They were very nice there. Everybody was nice.

00:32:19

Warrin

Yeah. Getting back to your mother—how many years did she work?

00:32:28

Baptista

Oh my mother. She didn't work there too—about five or six years. And when she started having children, she kind of had to stay home.

00:32:34

Warrin

I see.

00:32:35

Baptista

The oldest sister took care of the rest of us and then when there was more than three, then she had to stay home, like I did, too.

00:32:44

Warrin

Did any of your children go to work in the cannery?

00:32:48

Baptista

None, none of my children worked in the cannery. Oh no, wait a minute. Julia did. Yeah, the oldest girl did. But I don't know where she worked at. She worked in a cannery out towards Hayward.

00:33:03

Warrin

Maybe in the Hunt's cannery in Hayward.

00:33:06

Baptista

I don't know what cannery it was.

00:33:12

Warrin

What percentage of the workers were Portuguese when you were there?

00:33:18

Baptista

Oh, I don't know. Quite a bit of them.

00:33:19

Warrin

Quite a bit.

00:33:20

Baptista

Quite a bit of them. There were a lot of Portuguese people there. We had a Portuguese hotel right around the corner from where I lived and most of the men boarded there. When they came from different places, that's where they went to live.

00:33:34

Warrin

Where would that address be?

00:33:36

Baptista

32nd and Louise.

00:33:39

Warrin

And what was the name? Do you remember the name of the hotel?

00:33:43

Baptista

Baptistas —Baptistas Boarding House.

00:33:47

Warrin

Oh really. In comparison with other occupations the Portuguese followed who lived around you—what else did they do besides working in the canneries?

00:34:06

Baptista

You mean the factories?

00:34:09

Warrin

Yeah, what kind of work did...?

00:34:11

Baptista

The soap factory?

00:34:13

Warrin

Soap factory.

00:34:14

Baptista

General Electric. Hubbard's Full Line and Hardware, the Purifine, the —what do we say— Purifine soaps? But there was a whole bunch of places where they were all most Portuguese, and Italian, and Spanish. All walking distance—all within walking distance.

00:34:34

Warrin

It was all factory work in essence. And both men and women worked there. Well, it's an interesting story. Did you have any follow-up, Deolinda?

00:34:50

Adao

You have a sister who was in a very severe...

00:34:54

Baptista

Oh Hazel, my sister Hazel.

00:34:55

Adao

Yes. Where was she working?

00:34:56

Baptista

She was working in Hubbard's. In the machinery. [speaks about someone outside the room]
Oh, he's nosy—he's gotta listen to everything.

00:35:05

Adao

Okay. I wasn't sure whether she was...

00:35:07

Baptista

Yeah, she worked at Hubbard & Co. And she caught her hair in the machinery.

00:35:14

Warrin

Oh really?

00:35:15

Baptista

Yeah.

00:35:16

Adao

So basically, she was scalped.

00:35:18

Baptista

Yeah. She took her—the whole scalp came off.

00:35:22

Warrin

Did they get—could they sew it back on, or...

00:35:23

Baptista

Well, when she went to the hospital, it didn't affect her brain. It just took the scalp off and they took parts of her skin and grafted it on to her head. And then she had to wear a wig the rest of the time. She lost her hair.

00:35:36

Warrin

Oh wow.

00:35:39

Adao

I wasn't sure—I knew that had happened, but I wasn't sure where.

00:35:41

Baptista

She was eighteen years old.

00:35:44

Adao

I have a couple of questions, and they have to do with your neighborhood and how it was predominately Portuguese—your neighborhood. And I was wondering what kinds of resources did you have there? Were there Portuguese stores? How was it like to live in that neighborhood? Did you need to go out of it for supplies? Was it self contained?

00:36:06

Baptista

What do you mean, honey?

00:36:08

Adao

You lived in North Oakland?

00:36:09

Baptista

Yes, uh huh.

00:36:10

Adao

And most of your neighbors were Portuguese.

00:36:12

Baptista

Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, black.

00:36:17

Adao

And did you have all the stores and all the {inaudible} that you needed?

00:36:20

Baptista

Oh, we had a store near the corner.

00:36:23

Adao

And how did Portuguese have fun when they were not at work? What did they do together or separately? What kind of organizations...?

00:36:29

Baptista

Entertainment?

00:36:30

Adao

What kind of entertainment—what did they do?

00:36:32

Baptista

They would come—We lived where they were making the bridge. When they were making the bridge in 1935. They were making the Bay Bridge. Under the bridge they had like a runway like, underneath it. And men would come from different places and play—it's like a bocce ball, but it's a *malha*? How do you say it in English?

00:36:54

Adao

It's like a bocce ball—it's *malha*.

00:36:56

Baptista

But it's an all around steel thing—iron thing. They would throw it and they'd come and have competitions and then they'd come to my house, which was close to it. And on Friday night and Sunday, my house was the parking station, and we'd have barbecued sardines and have barbecue and play the accordion and dance Friday to Sunday. And they'd get drunk and they'd have a fight and who's gonna win and who was not gonna win and all that kind of stuff. And the A train and the B train would run from San Francisco in front of my house.

00:37:29

Warrin

This was the Key System?

00:37:30

Baptista

Mm hmm. And the freight train would pass my house.

00:37:34

Warrin

Very lively place.

00:37:36

Baptista

And the kids—my grandkids would all run to the screen door—the front—and wave to the guys on the trains and everybody knew everybody. You can go out and leave your doors open and your windows open and nobody would bother you.

00:37:49

Warrin

It was very safe.

00:37:51

Baptista

Yeah, we felt very safe. We'd leave the kids sitting home, "Now you sit here on the porch now while I run down to the corner store." And they'd sit on the porch and they'd be there when we got back. We weren't afraid nobody was gonna take them. Sometimes they wished they would, but they didn't. [laughs]

00:38:04

Adao

How did you meet your husband?

00:38:06

Baptista

I met my husband at a dinner. He came from Portugal. And he couldn't speak English, and I met him at a dinner and he tripped me. I was taking a bowl of rice and he tripped me. And I was gonna throw the rice at him. And then after a while he was living at that boarding house. And then after a while he kept coming around where I lived, and he kept coming around where I lived and that's the way we started.

00:38:31

Adao

What did he do? Where did he work?

00:38:33

Baptista

He worked at Hubbard & Co. Well, he worked in the ranch and then six months after he got married, he got a job at Hubbard's.

00:38:43

Adao

What ranch?

00:38:44

Baptista

In Ryde.

00:38:49

Adao

So what was he doing down here?

00:38:50

Baptista

What was he doing over there?

00:38:51

Warrin

Yes, at the boarding house. You said you met him because he was at the boarding house.

00:38:58

Baptista

Oh, he lived around the corner—he was about three blocks from me when I met him.

00:39:01

Warrin

But he was temporarily here working at the...

00:39:05

Baptista

It's a very long story. You wanna know how he came over here — from Portugal?

00:39:10

Warrin

Sure.

00:39:11

Baptista

He came over here in a banana boat. He was illegal. And all of those guys would come illegal. And they'd have to hide underneath the boat—in the ship—in the bottom of the ship. And it took him thirty days to get here.

00:39:25

Warrin

And where did he come from?

00:39:26

Baptista

Argentina.

00:39:27

Warrin

From Argentina.

00:39:30

Adao

But he wasn't Argentinian.

00:39:31

Baptista

He went from Portugal to Argentina legal. And then when he came from Argentina, he paid to come over here, but the guy that they paid him—I don't know what happened, but they were stowaways. And then when he got here, he went to this boarding house and that's how I met him. And then when we went and got married, he was working on the ranch with the rest of them. And they never bothered them when they were here, legally. If they got a complaint against them, then they would ship them away, but otherwise they never bothered them.

00:40:07

Warrin

What was his name?

00:40:08

Baptista

Manual Adoa

00:40:10

Warrin

And what brought him to Argentina?

00:40:14

Baptista

Well, he wanted to come to America.

00:40:17

Warrin

Where was he from in Portugal?

00:40:18

Baptista

Ilhavo.

00:40:19

Warrin

Ilhavo also. And had you known him there?

00:40:23

Baptista

No, no.

00:40:27

Warrin

And were there other Ilhavenses who ended up in Argentina?

00:40:33

Baptista

Oh yeah. Lots of them. Lots of them. Lots of them. Lots of them. Gina's father—a whole bunch of them. They'd use to come in bunches—like in the war time, Angeja and Cascarejo and all that, they all came like that, too, as stowaways.

00:40:48

Warrin

Is that right?

00:40:49

Baptista

And then in the wartime when they went to register for the draft, that's where they got caught. That's where my husband got—but he already had three kids and another one on the way and he had bought a house, and the draft thing was right next door to us, so he didn't lie. He just told them, "I've been here these years and I got this many family and I'm working." And then the company vouched for him and all that, and then he didn't have to go out of the state. But most of them had to go back to Canada or go back to Portugal, to come back in again.

00:41:21

Warrin

How long were you married?

00:41:22

Baptista

Forty-three and a half years.

00:41:24

Warrin

Forty-three and a half years. When did you husband pass away?

00:41:28

Baptista

My husband—my first husband passed away in 1978.

00:41:34

Warrin

1978. And then you remarried?

00:41:36

Baptista

I remarried, yes. Then I was married fifteen years and he committed suicide.

00:41:42

Warrin

Oh, that's sad.

41:53

Baptista

[Pause] It'll be what—fifteen years.

00:41:56

Warrin

Adao?

00:41:59

Adao

I can't think of anything else right now. Oh...

00:42:04

Baptista

The Holy Ghost and all that stuff?

00:42:05

Adao

Yeah. Right around the time when you were living in Oakland, is when the church was built—the one that's now almost underneath the freeway structures. My understanding is that was a Portuguese church.

00:42:17

Baptista

Yeah, that was the Trindade.

00:42:20

Adao

So that was the church of the Trindade?

00:42:21

Baptista

Yeah.

00:42:22

Adao

And do you have any idea of when that was founded?

00:42:27

Baptista

I have a book. Who'd I loan my book to? I lent my book to somebody, it's got all of that in it.

00:42:34

Adao

But do you remember if you were a little girl or...

00:42:35

Baptista

Oh yes. I was a little girl. That was the Mocidade. We had a parade that went from Haven Street all the way down to Seventh Street in west Oakland to St. Joseph's Church—Portuguese church. And there was a big, big parade... [Aside] Just close the door, close the door.

00:42:57

Adao

That St. Joseph's Church is the same one where the women of the S.P.R.S.I. put the flowers at the altar—is that the one you are referring to?

00:43:09

Baptista

No, the S.P.R.S.I.? No. The S.P.R.S.I., they had their meetings there.

00:43:15

Adao

Okay, it's the same one.

00:43:17

Baptista

But this one was in west Oakland. St. Joseph's church in west Oakland.

00:43:20

Adao

I understand, yes.

00:43:21

Baptista

And we'd use to walk at the parade—was that long. From all the way there and it would be back all the way up to our house on Haven street, and little kids would march—we would march there dressed like little angels with little paper soles on our—then our fathers would pick us up one or

two blocks, and then make us walk again. And it was beautiful and we had fireworks, on Friday nights would be the blessings of the meat. And then on Saturday nights we'd have a—they'd go get the queens at home. And then we had fireworks and a dance. And then Sunday we'd have the parade and then we'd have the food.

00:44:02

Adao

And this was way back when?

00:44:04

Baptista

That was until the wartime. Then they stopped us from having the fireworks. We didn't have no more fireworks. And then it started dwindling down and started swindling. Finally, they sold the place.

00:44:15

Adao

Okay. I can't think of anything else.

00:44:23

Warrin

What was the name of the game where the people threw the ball? *Malha*? Could you describe that?

Adao

M-A-L-H-A

00:44:35

Baptista

It's like bocci ball. It's like horseshoes, but instead of being a horseshoe, it would be a flat little iron thing. And they'd put a competition against each other.

00:44:49

Warrin

It was just the men who did it?

00:44:50

Baptista

Yeah. Mm hmm. No, the women stayed home and cooked. And then we'd have, my husband would play the accordion. And then they had a barber shop on the corner and they'd play the guitar, and they'd all gang over to my house.

00:45:07

Warrin

What language was most used? Was it Portuguese?

00:45:12

Baptista

Portuguese.

00:45:13

Warrin

How much Portuguese did you learn as a child?

00:45:17

Baptista

All of it. I learned how to read and write it.

00:45:21

Warrin

You did.

00:45:22

Baptista

Mm hmm. But my husband couldn't speak English. He couldn't write English. I had to learn how to write in Portuguese.

00:45:28

Warrin

And how did you learn?

00:45:29

Baptista

Through a book.

00:45:34

Warrin

As a young child, were you brought up speaking Portuguese?

00:45:37

Baptista

Yes. Mm hmm.

00:45:38

Warrin

Because both of your parents were...

00:45:39

Baptista

Yeah, Portuguese. That's all we spoke at home was Portuguese.

00:45:43

Warrin

And were there a lot of other people from the Continent—from Ilhavo around where you lived?

00:45:50

Baptista

Oh yes, yes, yes, yes.

00:45:55

Warrin

Were there also people from the Azores and Madeira?

00:45:57

Baptista

Yeah, but mostly ours. What do you call them?

00:46:01

Adao

Continentes [Continental].

00:46:02

Baptista

Continentes, yeah.

00:46:04

Warrin

Did your family socialize mostly with people from the Continent?

00:46:11

Baptista

We had a lodge, what's this called— the Luso-Americanano. Before it was Continental Lodge. My father founded it, had founded it. They had meetings and stuff over there. It was mostly Continental people.

00:46:30

Adao

So your dad was one of the founding peoples of the Continental?

00:46:32

Baptista

Yeah. Oh yeah.

00:46:38

Warrin

What kind of contact did you have with Azoreans for instance?

00:46:43

Baptista

Visiting them, talking to them. They were mostly our—either from—mostly from Ilhavo.

00:46:54

Warrin

Ilhavo, who settled in that area...

00:46:55

Baptista

Yeah, and then there was Spanish and Portuguese and Italian. And everybody knew everybody. We had a little trolley—it was five cents. Five cents. The trolley would go to town and nobody could understand nobody, but they all went to — my mother and all the rest of them down the street—they all got on the trolley, went to town, bought their groceries, came home on the little trolley. Finally they understood each other. I don't know how, but they all did.

00:47:19

Warrin

They didn't speak the same language, but they went together.

00:47:22

Baptista

No, the Spanish and the Portuguese were more—they could. But we had one lady from—she was Dutch on one side and there was a colored one on the other side and there was another one from something else across the street. They all got along together. I don't know how they did it, but they all got along together. And when they wanted to count, it was with beans. The little beans, red beans or whatever. My mother would put five little beans here and five little beans over there and five of them, and that made fifteen.

00:47:53

Warrin

Were there also Portuguese from Cape Verde Islands—Cape Verdeans?.

00:47:57

Baptista

Oh, I don't know. I don't think so. But once in a while you'd come across a colored person that would talk Portuguese. He would talk Portuguese.

00:48:07

Warrin

But they didn't identify themselves as being from any particular place.

00:48:09

Baptista

No, no. I remember one time we went to mother-in-law's house, when she was living over there in Albany. This colored fellow was there—very nice.

00:48:18

Adao

He was from Cape Verde?

00:48:19

Baptista

Yeah, and he was sitting there and my husband

00:48:20

Adao

You're probably talking about Seu Manuel?

00:48:22

Baptista

And I don't know who he was. My husband said in Portuguese, "Well, what's this guy doing here? Is he gonna eat here too?" I almost went through the floor. And he said, "I speak Portuguese." I almost went through the floor.

00:48:36

Adao

He was Cape Verdean.

00:48:37

Baptista

Very nice person. Very nice person. Yeah. Very nice person. Once in a while you'd come across one or two.

00:48:43

Adao

He was a merchant mariner?

00:48:45

Baptista

Yeah, yeah.

00:48:47

Adao

He would come into town every once in a while because he was a merchant mariner, and whenever his ship would come in then he would come to visit.

00:48:55

Baptista

But he was a very nice person. Very well mannered, very well. My husband thought he couldn't understand Portuguese and he said, "What's he doing here? Is he gonna eat here, too?" And I said my God, it's a good thing he didn't cuss at him.

00:49:10

Warrin

That's embarrassing. Did you run into, being Portuguese, did you run into prejudice of any sort?

00:49:18

Baptista

No. We didn't have no prejudice. We went to the colored peoples' house, they came to our house. We went to school with them. We never had no prejudice. My kids never had any problem with them. And there was a lot of colored people after the war time. We never had no problem with them.

00:49:37

Warrin

How many children did you have?

00:49:38

Baptista

Four girls.

00:49:39

Warrin

Four girls. How old are they now?

00:49:46

Baptista

Juliette is sixty-seven, Mary Ann is sixty-five, Dolores is sixty-two, and Rosemary is fifty-seven.

00:49:59

Warrin

And do they live around here?

00:50:01

Baptista

Let me see. One lives in Pinole, one lives in Blackhawk, one lives in east Oakland, and where does the other one live? Oh, San Pablo.

00:50:20

Warrin

What was your family's relationship with the Church?

00:50:25

Baptista

Church? Good. We went to church every Sunday.

00:50:28

Warrin

And what church was that?

00:50:29

Baptista

St. Andrew's. That was the old St. Andrew's church. It was on Adeline Street. And then when the freeway bought it, they moved to Brockhurst. Now it's called St. Andrew's or St. Joseph's church.

00:50:49

Warrin

Were there any particular Portuguese activities related to the church?

00:50:53

Baptista

Oh yeah. The Holy Ghost. And they had whist parties. And they gave different things in church, helped the poor. Thanksgiving, we'd make baskets and stuff for the poor.

00:51:05

Warrin

Could you describe the Holy Ghost festival at your church?

00:51:11

Baptista

Yeah. Can I go—I was gonna see if I had another book there. The Holy Ghost would start on Friday night. They'd have the blessing of the meat and then they'd have like a little get together. And then on Saturdays they would have the parade, we'd go get the queen at home. And they would parade down the street, bring them back. And then they'd have fireworks. Then they'd have a dance. And then on Sunday, Monday they would have the parade. It was a big parade. Long, long, long parade. It would have drill teams and everything in it. Waldonian band. And it was very nice. It lasted for about three days.

00:51:50

Warrin

An auction also?

00:51:51

Baptista

Yeah, they'd have auctions.

00:51:55

Warrin

And what years was this?

00:51:58

Baptista

Oh God, since I was born I guess. They had it way before I was born.

00:52:05

Warrin

Did this change over the years at all?

00:52:07

Baptista

Yes it did, yeah. After the wartime it changed.

00:52:10

Warrin

In what way?

00:52:11

Baptista

Well, they didn't let us have no more fireworks. And they didn't give us a permit to walk as far. And you could go just down some certain streets.

00:52:21

Warrin

Before then, you walked a much longer way?

00:52:23

Baptista

Oh yeah. We walked all the way from Haven Street all the way to Seventh Street in west Oakland. And that was a long ways. And that's how big the parade was. It had the drill teams—it had three or four drill teams, it had a Waldonian band, it had three or four different bands. It was really long. It was beautiful. It was really beautiful. My kids were queens.

00:52:46

Warrin

Really? Is there still a Holy Ghost festival at this church?

00:52:50

Baptista

There is, but not in Oakland no more. They sold it to the what's the name of that colored—with the big red hats? I forgot what they call them. It's a big lodge the colored people have.

00:53:06

Warrin

And so when did it end?

00:53:09

Baptista

That Holy Ghost from Oakland? It ended in, oh God, about twenty-five years ago?

00:53:16

Adao

Actually, I don't think they ended. I think when the church was sold, they moved.

00:53:21

Baptista

To Brockhurst. When they made a new church in Brockhurst.

00:53:24

Adao

And then eventually, Trindade moved here to El Cerrito.

00:53:28

Baptista

Yeah, well, Trindade didn't make a new church, Trindade just kept the lodge going. But, Trindade had their parade one week before we did. But Mocidade was a big one. It was a great big parade. It was a big parade.

00:53:44

Adao

And Mocidade is now at Rockridge?

00:53:46

Baptista

And then, no, the Mocidade moved to Rockridge, but then they moved to Hayward. When they knocked the church down, I mean when they sold the church, and they moved to Brockhurst, the parade, the Holy Ghost, my daughter, my youngest daughter, was the last queen. The first queen to go there and the last queen to go there. And then they moved to Hayward, to the Centennial Hall, in Hayward. And then it finally busted up two years ago. The lodge completely dissolved two years ago.

00:54:23

Warrin

Was that because of lack of interest?

00:54:25

Baptista

Lack of interest. The young kids didn't want it anymore. The old people had passed away.

00:54:32

Warrin

There have been years or decades when there's been more immigration, particularly in the twenties I guess—a lot of people coming in. How did that affect participation in the church and the neighborhood?

00:55:06

Baptista

In the wartime, people came from other places and after the war finished, different people, most Portuguese people moved out of Oakland. More people moved out of Oakland to different—east Oakland and San Leandro and different places like that. And then after that, they started moving further out, further out, and further out. Right after the war. Then Oakland disintegrated. It went down really bad. Houses were falling apart and people had moved out.

00:55:39

Warrin

And evidently, the jobs moved out also.

00:55:41

Baptista

Yeah, the jobs moved out too, yeah. All those factories shut down.

00:55:47

Adao

You were one of the last to leave, weren't you? When did you move out of Oakland?

00:55:51

Baptista

When I moved out of Oakland? I moved out of Oakland in 1979.

00:55:57

Adao

There were very few Portuguese left in Oakland?

00:55:58

Baptista

There were very few, very few, very few. I think there was about five of us. After the war time, it just—the colored people came in and they didn't take care of—well, I won't say the colored people. The people that moved in, they didn't care for their properties. They let their properties run down, you know. And really, really, even till today they're building it up now. They're finally building it up now.

00:56:26

Warrin

But this had a lot to do with the factories closing and leaving, and the people who had been working there left and so people who...

00:56:38

Baptista

Yes.

00:56:38

Warrin

So people who were more marginal and weren't working, moved in.

00:56:45

Baptista

Moved to different places. And then the train stopped with the bridge when they took the trains off of the bridge. They stopped running. And then the freight train stopped running eventually, they stopped running. And it just kind of went down—really down.

00:56:59

Warrin

It was a big change.

00:57:00

Baptista

But they're building—oh, very big change.

00:57:04

Warrin

Well I think we're, yeah, we've finished here and I want to thank you.

00:57:12

Baptista

Would you like some cake and some coffee?

[End of Interview]