

GARDNER

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Family Through the Generations Teresa Vasko connects with her cousins

By: Teresa Vasko

One of my fondest extended family memories is when Uncle Raymond and his family would come to stay with us in the Spring. I think Raymond got laid off and came to do carpenter work with my Dad, Homer.

The first year when they arrived, I remember there were two children, Gloria was Glenn's and Steve was mine in the games we played. I recall being SO excited to get home from school and entertain our new "friends." We played "horsey" and another game about each of us carrying a child on our shoulders and seeing if the other child could knock their sibling off - probably not the safest game, but fun. The following year, Raylene was added to the family. As I have told her many times, she was teething and bit my sunburn...OUCH!

Moving ahead a few years, I noticed that my neighbor had a new playmate and was told that he was a "fresh air" child. I went promptly to my Dad and asked if we could have a kid from the city for the summer. He thought and said "We have family that live in the city."

That was the beginning of new adventures with Raymond's family. Whenever one of Raymond's children reached 13 years of age that sibling spent time with

us during the summer. When they were 14, they worked at cabins in NH for an uncle on Margaret's side of the family. Steve was here for a whole summer. I think that was the summer when the pig barn burned, although there was no connection to Steve's visit. The next year, Steve and Gloria were here for two weeks. I think that's why Gloria's family decided to build a camp on Willoughby Lake.

The summer when Raylene was supposed to visit us in Vermont, she spent it with me in Pennsylvania instead while John was contracted out to the Navy and I would have been alone in a new city. We had adventures, - but that's another story. (You can write those stories, Raylene.)

More years passed with visits back and forth. Before my daughter, Cynthia, went to college, she spent the summer with Raylene and Mike and worked at the family's natural food store. My son, JJ, did the same and he also stayed in Ithaca for a time and worked at the store.

About the same time, Gloria took a summer course and we had Robyn and Eddie for 6 weeks, connecting with their parents on the weekends (missing only one weekend) at the camp on Willough-

by Lake. The camp, cruises and being treated like royalty on visits to Boston are some of the wonderful memories we have of Bob and Gloria's family.

Each of Raymond's other children spent a summer with my parents; Sharon, reading every book my parents had; Ellen, collecting bugs and helping as we built our house; and Cheryl, playing with my kids, which was a big help to me.

A few more years go by and now we have a special connection with Raylene's daughter, Megan. When she was starting high school, at John's suggestion, we took her "school" shopping in North Conway's discount malls. This has become an annual event. She is visiting us right now after finishing her freshman year at Simmons College, and we have gone shopping. Now she is helping me clean my nursery/sewing/craft/yarn room. Very few people have seen it in recent years, since it was hard to open the door. I wouldn't let just anyone help me clean it. She is special. And part of her being special is because she reminds us of our summer with Raylene. This makes us feel young.

I believe that this is what family is all about! Don't you agree?

Desperate for Company OR Desperate Company

Teresa Vasko's Harrowing Tale of "Visitors" from Hell

By: *Teresa Vasko*

When our children were preschoolers, I seldom slept soundly. One winter night, temperature below zero, I heard a knock on the door at 2:00 AM. Half asleep, thinking that it might be my parents, I went to open the door. In came two men, clothed in several light jackets and sneakers. In very broken English, they asked if they could sleep here. I gave them each a blanket and then they lay down on the living room floor.

I went back to bed, but not to sleep. I told my husband what I had done. He uttered a few choice words and fell back asleep. I did not get to sleep; for when I get nervous, I see headlines; "FAMILY MURDERED IN BEDS" or "ENTIRE FAMILY DISAPPEARS."

By 6:00 AM, I finally got up to use the bathroom. In the hall between our bedroom and the bathroom, leaning against the wall, were two backpacks with a huge machete strapped to each pack.

When the kids got up I put them in a rocking chair and they quietly watched the two men sleeping on the living room floor.

Thinking of what might happen, I naively decided that if I cooked them a really good breakfast, they would not harm us. So I was at the kitchen counter preparing coffee, sausage OJ, and pancakes with real Vermont maple syrup when I heard a sound and turned to see one of the men standing stark naked. I told him where the bathroom was and quickly went back to fixing breakfast.

At breakfast, I learned that the men had been in Mexico for a couple of years and were on their way back to Canada. They had gotten a ride for a long way with a trucker; and realizing how close they were to home, had given him all of their money. They asked if there was any traffic on I91, which borders our property. It was recently opened and was not very busy. They were afraid that

they would be picked up by the police. Seeing a light on in our house they climbed the interstate fence and came to the door. All of this info was delivered in halting English. I made sure that they knew I was married and that my husband was here.

After eating they thanked me for everything and left to go on their way.

My husband slept through this and never did see them. When my Dad heard about our adventure, he yelled at me like he hadn't done since I was a kid.

When he finished, I asked, "What would you have done?" He quietly said he'd have put them in the barn.

Now, I was not the only stupid person in this situation.

At some point, friends stopped by with their two daughters. They were on their way to Boston and I was to have the girls for the weekend. They saw the backpacks against the wall and asked who was here. I told them that two hitchhikers from the interstate were with us. They left the girls and went on their way.

I remember the four kids and I standing on our couch to watch out the window as the men climbed the interstate fence and got on their way.

Later, I was telling my neighbor, who lived closer to the fence than we do, about this. She told me she had entertained several hitchhikers. One guy even came back for a second time. I decided that if this ever happened again, I'd send them to her place. Fortunately, there has never been a repeat experience.

In retrospect, I wonder what would have happened if I had refused them.



"I don't care if it is Stockholm syndrome, IT FEELS FANTASTIC!"

Jean Gonzalo and Paul Gardner Celebrate Their Portuguese Heritage

The "Costa Cousins" (Eleanor Strong and Richard Mendes) Proud of Their Portuguese Dad

Reprinted from *Sunday Telegram*, February 1, 1981

BOAT TO U.S., DAD'S \$600 LAUNCHED HUDSON MERCHANT

By: Elwin s. Greene

HUDSON – Faustino Mendes of 58 Brigham Street is well known as a retired soccer player, coach and internationally traveled fan of the sport. He was recently honored at a banquet for his help to the Local Keyman Soccer Club.

(Note: The first soccer teams were established in 1923 known as the Hudson Portuguese Club and the Madeirense Soccer Ball Team. Faustino Mendes was the most famous player, to the point of playing on the US National Team.)

But few realize this 77-year old gentleman from Portugal once borrowed \$600 from his father in "the old country," Madeira Island off the coast of Morocco, to go into business in Hudson.

That was during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Mendes had been laid off as a laborer at Wyman's Nursery in Framingham, and he didn't know what to do.

Father Owned a Plantation

"My father was well off, owning a sugar plantation and

four houses on Madeira, so I asked him for some money to get started in business," Mendes said.

He founded the Central Street Market about 1937 with Alec Abreau, and bought out Abreau's interest when he retired in 1962.

"For the first few months our

play soccer, and he wanted me to go to a Portuguese possession in Africa where the Portuguese language was spoken," he said.

"Many of my friends were going to the United States with tales of rags to riches, and my father finally gave me permission to go.

So at age 16, of working

and buying another house in Madeira. "This happened four times," Mendes said.

Faustino married the former Mary V. Costa, a native of Lawrence, and they had three children.

Mendes said he became restless working indoors, and got a job working outdoors at Wyman Nurseries.

Mendes served as the first soccer coach at Hudson High School, a position he held from 1952 to 1956. He later coached at Xaverian High in Concord, and came back to Hudson in the early 1970s.

With a typical American sense of humor, he said he thought playing soccer would help him to learn English better. But it wasn't easy.

"It was hard to learn proper English with all that brogue among the Scotch and Irish playing the game," he laughed.

This man of hard knocks has become a director of the Hudson National Bank, and is a former member of the Finance Committee.

"We must give credit to the Yankee ingenuity that build the country," he observed.

Mendes retired in 1970 at age 67, and sold his store.

Since then he has been enjoying soccer in the northern Hemisphere. He has been back to Madeira twice, and saw the World Cup soccer games in London in 1966.

In 1970, he saw the World



"COSTA COUSINS"
RICHARD MENDES, ELEANOR MENDES
AND HER HUSBAND, WARREN STRONG

only pay at the store seemed to be our own groceries," Mendes said.

Finally times got better, especially with a beer and wine license, and they expanded the store three times. But they worked long hours there.

Couldn't Play Soccer

Why did he leave a prosperous father and plantation in Madeira to come to the United States in 1920?

"There was no future there; my father wouldn't let me

age and able to play soccer well, he came to Lowell.

Playing soccer, he became acquainted with eastern Massachusetts and with Hudson.

"I heard I could get a job at Firestone Company at \$29 a week, compared to \$12 in Lowell," Mendes said. "So I switched and joined the local soccer team in 1923."

Mendes recalled that his father gained most of his "riches" by going to South Africa for two-year stretches, working in a gold mine, returning

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Cup play in Mexico City with several other coaches. Among them was Coach William “Fritz” Wiedergott of St. Mark’s School in Southboro.

“Fritz was a native of Germany, and wanted to see Germany play Italy that time,” Mendes said. “But he became sick and missed the match.”

More recently, Mendes became a fan of the New England Teamen soccer team, which was headquartered in Foxboro. Since the team has moved to Florida, he said he is somewhat at a loss for a local favorite.

But he never loses interest in local soccer, and has time for a little gardening.

His only regret is that he didn’t hold onto his store. “If I knew then about inflation and that, I would have hung on a little longer,” he said.



CENTRAL STREET MARKET, HUDSON, AS IT APPEARS TODAY



HUDSON PORTUGUESE CLUB IN HUDSON, MA WHERE THE COSTA FAMILY REUNION WILL BE HELD ON OCTOBER 6, 2013.



UNCLE DON AND AUNT BEULAH GRIFFES, JEAN AND MIGUEL GONZALO AND AUNT LOIS CARDWELL - JUNE 2013



SIGN CURRENTLY ON THE GRIFFES' PORCH. UNCLE RAYMOND SAYS THE 1920 CENSUS OF CHARLESTON, VT LISTS GRANDPA GARDNER'S OCCUPATION AS "ICE CREAM MAKER."



MIGUEL GONZALO AND AUNT LOIS ON HER DECK IN NEWPORT, VT - JUNE 2013



UNCLE DON AND AUNT BEULAH GRIFFES AND AUNT LOIS CARDWELL- JUNE 2013