

“... TO DO CREDIT TO MY NATION, WHEREVER I GO:”
WEST INDIAN AND CAPE VERDEAN IMMIGRANTS IN SOUTHEASTERN NEW
ENGLAND, 1890-1940

By

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ABSTRACT

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Though approximately 145,000 African-descended people voluntarily migrated to the United States between 1899 and 1936, African and Caribbean immigrants are underrepresented in American and African-American historical scholarship. “... *To Do Credit to My Nation, Wherever I Go:*” *West Indian and Cape Verdean Immigrants in Southeastern New England, 1890-1940* is a community study that centers the experiences of black immigrants as an overlapping diaspora in multi-ethnic and transnational African-American history.

This project contributes to existing scholarship on the African diaspora and United States immigration by arguing that, through the operationalization of their familial networks, ethnic organizations, and neighborhood enclaves, black immigrants in New England depart from traditional histories of assimilation and acculturation. Though much scholarship has been dedicated to the politically charged organizations and black immigrant participation in New York, this microhistory of Southeastern New England’s port cities — Providence and New Bedford — demonstrates the commonplace, quotidian lives of West Indians and Cape Verdeans as neighbors, friends, and relatives experienced and adapted to their diaspora condition differently. While West Indians altered their community landscape and eventually assimilated into the African-American community, Cape Verdeans retained a Cape Verdean ethnic identity, bolstered by their transnational shipping fleet and the constant flow of people, goods, and ideas from the homeland.

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INTRODUCTION

both.
i want to stay.
i want to leave.
i am three oceans away from my soul.¹

Rendered invisible as Black and as Black foreigners, African and Caribbean immigrants have been under-researched and underrepresented in American and African-American historical scholarship.² Between 1899 and 1936, approximately 145,000 African-descended people migrated to the United States as doctors, clergy, farmers, day laborers, maritime workers, and students.³ Immigrating as early as the mid-eighteenth century, Cape Verdeans are distinctive as the first voluntary African migrants to the United States. Following Cape Verdeans, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Caribbean people constituted the highest populations of Black immigrants in the United States. By the early twentieth century, approximately 70% of foreign-born Blacks were from the West Indies, especially Jamaica, Barbados, and others from the Eastern Caribbean. Despite this enduring history of immigration, “they suffer double invisibility in fact as blacks and as black foreigners.”⁴

Building on Michael Omi and Howard Winant’s emphatic statement, “Blacks in ethnic terms are as diverse as whites,” this project centers on diverse Black ethnic experiences within

¹ nayirrah waheed, “*lost*,” in *salt*. (2013).

² Note on Terminology: I define “Black”, “African-descended”, and “African” as persons having origins in the indigenous ethnic groups of continental Africa and its islands. “Caribbean”, “Afro-Caribbean”, “Black Caribbean”, and ‘West Indian’ refers to people of African descent from the English-speaking Caribbean, including the mainland nations of Guyana and Belize, as well as their descendants from the English-speaking African Diaspora communities in officially Spanish- and Dutch -speaking countries.

³ Ira De Reid, *The Negro Immigrant: His Background, Characteristics, and Social Adjustment, 1899-1937* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939).

⁴ Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte “Black Immigrants: The Experience of Invisibility and Inequality,” *Journal of Black Studies* 3, No. 1 (September 1972), 31.

African-American identity.⁵ Privileging the narratives of Black immigrants, my dissertation, “... *To do Credit to my Nation, Wherever I Go:” West Indian and Cape Verdean Immigrants in Southeastern New England, 1890-1940*, centers on ethnicity, immigration, and Black immigrants’ experiences in the African-American historical project. This research uncovers the history of New England’s invisible Black immigrants through an investigation of their social lives, community networks, and organizations in New England port cities, New Bedford, and Providence in the early twentieth century. The 50-year scope of this project enables a long view of the history of multiple generations of Black immigrants living in the southeastern New England enclaves. The narrow location and framing of this dissertation enables a view of the community adaptations as they buffet and adapt to the winds of local and international changes.

The title of the dissertation is a segment of the Barbadian national pledge. Though New Bedford and Providence had a small population of Barbadian immigrants, the promise to do and give credit to their nations was a central organizing point of Black immigrants in the West End and South End enclaves. From their family reunification to their transnational shipping fleet, through thought and action, their actions were for the betterment of their nation and their people in the homeland and diaspora.

Much of the current scholarship on early twentieth-century Black immigrants has been dedicated to the politically charged organizations and spaces in New York and Boston. This dissertation diverges from these histories through a case study of New England’s immigrant enclaves. New Bedford and Providence provide excellent sites for this study because, though the population of southeastern New England’s Black immigrants was small, the maritime trade network facilitated an expansive, long-standing community of sailors and others, particularly

⁵ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 23.

from the West Indies and Cape Verde. Living in residential enclaves in the cities allowed the small community to build on traditional adaptations in diaspora to create new ways to organize and operationalize their community networks. Further, the resident Black immigrant populations were from uncommon regions — the Eastern Caribbean’s Dutch West Indian Island of St. Eustatius and the Portuguese colony of Cape Verde. Though Cape Verdean immigrants have recently been subject to several studies, the Dutch West Indian Statians have not received scholarly attention. These unlikely subjects of this study, converged on the whaling ships, setting sail for new opportunities in the United States.

Fashioning a path of migration on the maritime network, bypassing the labor projects in Latin America, West Indian and Cape Verdean men and women left their homes, their families, and their loved ones for the opportunity to emigrate in search of a better life. Life as a whaler was arduous, dangerous, and required months at sea. The pay was low, with their food, clothing, and other items discounted. Despite this, these immigrants saw their work on the ships as a passport, a means to escape the conditions of landlessness, poverty, and for Cape Verdeans, the constant specter of famine. Emigration was the most viable option for survival and ensuring the survival of their loved ones who remained. After months at sea, these Black seaman disembarked in the southeastern New England’s port cities of New Bedford and Providence to bustling cities with strong employment, affordable housing, and the maritime connections enabling them to return home on the next outbound ship.

Through an investigation of Black immigrants from the British and Dutch West Indian colonies and from the Portuguese colony of Cape Verde, this dissertation seeks to expand the scholarship on adaptation strategies among Black ethnic groups in the United States that attends to the complex relationships across language, nationality, and color. In their ethnic enclaves,

West Indians and Cape Verdeans established strong social networks connecting them to ethnic communities throughout New England, New York City, and New Jersey. Their familial, local, and transnational institutions enabled them to dwell-in-displacement as members of their communities in the United States and with enduring connections to their respective homelands. Maintaining links to home is commonplace in immigration narratives and in the experiences of Great Migrationers settling in New England. What distinguishes West Indians and Cape Verdeans in this space is *how* they adapted to their new conditions in their host communities and how that adaptation resulted in varied forms of integration and maintenance of homeland connections.

Focusing on the familial networks of West Indians living in New Bedford's African-American enclave, the West End, this study proposes that owing to their small size, relative homogeneity, and their dense clustering in the enclave, West Indians had no use for the homeland societies⁶ of their peers in nearby Boston and New York. They operationalized their familial, ethnic, and neighborhood relationships to provide the same resources as homeland societies. West Indians in the West End provided financial, social, cultural, and political support. They were grounded in the host-land as land and business owners. Instead of maintaining the promise for return, they instead brought their families and friends to them, effectively recreating their small communities in the Caribbean. First-, second-, and third-generation West Indian Americans joined local religious and social institutions and became leaders, effectively turning

⁶ I define ethnic organizations or homeland societies as formal and informal institutions of specific ethnic groups that "enabled the mobilization of resources toward common goals, increased social cohesion within communities, and supported political debate." Using this framework, this investigation of ethnic homeland associations considers their usefulness in the United States and provides context for their roles in their respective homelands. Bart Bonikowski and Miller McPherson, "The Sociology of Voluntary Associations" in *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook*, ed. Clifton D Bryant and Dennis L. Peck (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc., 2007), 198.

the once African-American intuitions into West Indian hubs in the city. It was in this way, making an enclave within an enclave, that New Bedford's West Indians gradually, slowly integrated into becoming African American.

As soon as they emigrated to New Bedford's South End and Providence's Fox Point, Cape Verdeans created various ethnic-based societies and cultural institutions, including churches, musical clubs, social and benevolent societies, labor guilds, and gendered associations. Within these enclaves, these clubs had a dual role of acclimatizing new arrivals to the community and retaining cultural heritage. They were spaces where Cape Verdeans were shielded from the racial realities of the United States' Black-white racial dyad, which was contrary to their own social system based on overlapping status signifiers of race, occupation, and phenotype. Within their residential enclaves, Cape Verdeans cultivated a Cape Verdean-American ethnic identity that found support through the one-of-a-kind transnational sailing fleet, owned and operated by Cape Verdeans in the United States and on the Islands. These transnational social and economic institutions allowed Cape Verdeans to retain ethnic and cultural identity, impeding the traditional process of integrating and assimilating.

This study employs social network analysis⁷ to demonstrate the ways West Indian and Cape Verdean immigrants created community spaces through their connections with their fellow citizens, other Black immigrants, and native-born African Americans. Social network analysis, mainly utilized in sociology and anthropology, provides the tools to engage the ways nodes (a person or site of contact) interact with others. According to sociologists Alexandra Marin & Barry Wellman, there are three principles that provide the boundaries for analyzing social

⁷ For more information on Social Network Analysis, see Barry Wellman and Stephen D. Berkowitz. *Social structures: A Network Approach* (Vol. 2. CUP Archive, 1988); Nicole B. Ellison, "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13, no. 1 (2007): 210-230; and, John Scott, *Social Network Analysis* (New York: Sage Publishing, 2012).

networks — a position-based approach, an event-based approach, and a relation-based approach. This current study will use combined tactics of the position-based approach and relation-based approach to examine the social networks within organizations and economic institutions.

Through the lens of their ethnic-specific institutions, memberships in churches and other community groups, as well as marriage choices, this project considers the ways Black immigrants created identities that were both part of their host society and reproduced the cultural norms of their homelands. The “position-based approach considers those actors who are members of an organization or hold particular formally defined positions to be network members” and excludes others outside of this particular network. The relation-based approach “begins with a small set of nodes within the population of interest and then expands to include others sharing particular types of relations with those seed nodes, as well as with any nodes previously added.”⁸ This dissertation offers a flexible analysis of Black immigrant communities through both approaches. Approaching West Indians’ organizational membership and leadership, using the relation-based network analysis provides insight into the social and intimate choices Black immigrants and their children made in their local institutions, marriage practices, and residential clustering. Using the position-based analysis, Cape Verdean organizations’ overlapping memberships can be traced from a small contingent of Cape Verdean-American leaders that spanned Massachusetts and Providence.

Rather than emphasizing Black immigrants as separate, unrelated groups rarely interacting with the larger African-American community or each other, this dissertation presents the following main focuses — community interaction between Black immigrants and African Americans, diasporic identity formation among West Indians and Cape Verdeans, and Black

⁸ Alexandra Marin & Barry Wellman, “Social Network Analysis: An Introduction,” in *Handbook of Social Network Analysis*, eds. Peter Carrington and John Scott (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc), 14.

immigrant transnational relationships through social and economic institutions. This emphasis does not suggest that disunity and tensions did not exist, as they certainly did. This approach examines Black communities from a bottom-up, community-level approach to engage the spaces where these groups intersected and where they remained segregated at the cultural level, work, in marriage, and organizational development.

Cross-referencing archival maps, census data, marriage records, and church accounts with organizational commemorative journals, local and international newspaper articles, oral histories, city directories, and immigration records, “...*To Do Credit to My Nation*” explores how Cape Verdean and West Indian immigrants retained relationships with their home through their membership in ethnic, social, and political societies and their operationalization of economic institutions. Oral history interviews were prominent features in this dissertation, adding to the narratives the notions of cultural retentions, and enhancing the narratives in gaps in the historical record. In particular, the records of New Bedford’s West Indians were scant, passing references in black-and-white print. To that end, the narrative of the West Indians in the West End was enriched by the local presence of the descendants of New Bedford’s pioneering West Indian families that remained in the area. Over a series of interviews and meetings with members of the Drayton, Kydd, and Groebe families, I was able to incorporate their stories and memories of their families and the lives of others that lived in the West End. As they shared their experiences and memories of their grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles, their narratives recreated the day-to-day lives in the neighborhood enclave. This project benefitted from their candor and desire to have the unwritten stories of New Bedford’s West Indians documented. The recollections imbued the black-and-white facts with colorful commentary and stories that could not be captured by census enumerators. In the process of writing, I was aware that these

recollections were coming from the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of these pioneering West Indian families. To mitigate any inaccuracies and inconsistencies in memories, I rigorously fact-checked the stories against the available historical record and other oral histories.

One of the most important oral histories employed in this project was a recording of William L. Kydd, a Bequia-native, boatsteerer, and pioneering West Indian community member in New Bedford. In 1968, shortly before his death, Kydd spoke candidly to his daughter Vivian Kydd, his son, William L. Kydd Jr., and his son's wife, Catherine, about his experiences as a whaler and father in the early twentieth century. In 1999, Kydd's daughters, Vivian Kydd and Leonora Kydd Whyte, and his granddaughter — Leonora's daughter — Linda Whyte Burrell, recorded follow-up recordings under the auspices of The Faces of Whaling series housed in the New Bedford Whaling Museum. The Faces of Whaling project sought to capture the stories of New Bedford's whalers as integral to understanding New Bedford's history and the history of its people. What began as recollections from the Kydd family about William L. Kydd as a whaler quickly became stories and anecdotes of the West Indian enclave, its residents, and their organizational networks extending from the West Indies to New Bedford, New York, and Perth Amboy. Through this oral history collection, it became clear that one could not disaggregate the work of whaling from the laboring people and the community they built in diaspora. For Black immigrants, the migration experience consisted of a movement of people and monies, as well as a movement of ideas. In this way, to understand these immigrants, this research requires understanding how they related with their homeland and their community in the hostland.

This dissertation intervenes in three constellating disciplines — African-American History, African Diaspora and Transnational Studies, and Immigration and Ethnic Studies. It is in conversation with the scholarship of Afro-Caribbean and Cape Verdean migration to the

United States advanced by Winston James, Irma Watkins-Owens, Marilyn Halter, Nancy Foner, Violet Showers Johnson, and others.⁹ The aforementioned scholars introduced Black immigrants into the historiography of African-American history, centering their experiences and identities in their changing environmental context. Exploring themes of tension and conflict between African Americans and Black immigrants, these scholars demonstrated that Black immigration to the United States complicates traditional African-American history as participants in American social movements, labor history, military history, and more. As political actors and social organizers, Black immigrants comprised a critical component of Black American historical experiences and have therefore been absorbed as African Americans. In community organizations, as soldiers in World War I, artists and patrons in the Harlem Renaissance, members of Black civic organizations like the NAACP, and living side by side with African Americans, Black immigrants were hiding in plain sight, rendered invisible, undifferentiated from native-born African Americans.

The aforementioned scholars engage Black immigrant and migrant relationships with their new home and its communities, but do not present a transnational, homeland-plus-diaspora analysis to explore their relationships with the homeland. Further, these scholars write about African-descended immigrants and African Americans in silos without significant overlap or

⁹ On Cape Verdean and West Indian immigration in the United States, Black immigrant identities, and their contributions to the social, political, and economic milieu of the United States, see Winston A. James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America* (New York: Verso Books, 1989); Marilyn Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity: Cape Verdean American Immigrants, 1860-1965*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Nancy Foner, *Islands in the City: West Indian Migration to New York*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2001); Violet Showers Johnson, *The Other Black Bostonians: West Indians in Boston, 1900-1950*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Aminah Nailah Pilgrim, “Free Men Name Themselves”: *Cape Verdeans in Massachusetts Negotiate Race, 1900-1980*. (PhD diss.: Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 2008); and Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

attention to other groups. This study intervenes in this Black immigrant ethnic historiography by placing West Indian and Cape Verdean's residing in Southeastern New England cities in conversation with each other. This project presents the stories of Black immigrants as part of an overlapping diaspora, side by side, as they found different strategies to adapt to their changing conditions in New Bedford and Providence.

In 1992, transnational scholarship pioneers Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton defined transnationalism as "the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement."¹⁰ Current transnational studies examine such cultural and material resources as remittances, telephone calls and Skype, and airplane transportation as a means of transnational communication.¹¹

This dissertation offers that the transnational social field is not a new iteration from advancing technology of the globalizing world. Cape Verdeans, in particular, employed transnational tools as early as 1892 through their shipping fleet. Familial connections are also another way that Black immigrants, here mostly West Indians, used family reunification as a transnational tool. Transnational relationships were not just dependent on immigrants abroad; their connections affected both sides of the transnational social field, changing the cultural and material conditions in both New England and in their respective homelands. This study supports

¹⁰ Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, "Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645, no. 1 (1992), 1.

¹¹ Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Michel Bruneau, "Diasporas, Transnational Spaces, and Communities," in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, and Methods*, 35-50, eds. Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Paolo Boccagni, "Private, Public, or Both? On the Scope and Impact of Transnationalism in Immigrants' Everyday Lives," in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, and Methods*, 185-204; Kathrin Kissau and Uew Hunger, "The Internet as a Means of Studying Transnationalism and Diaspora," in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, and Methods*, 245-266.

anthropologist James Clifford's claim that, "Diasporic subjects are, thus, distinct versions of modern, transnational, intercultural experience."¹² This dissertation adds to this body of research through an analysis of social, benevolent, and economic institutions to fill the transnational historical lacunae with an examination of Black immigrants' relationships with homelander.

According to historian Kim D. Butler, "Even within single diasporas, simultaneous diasporan identities are possible."¹³ Accordingly, the Black British, Dutch, and Portuguese colonial subjects in this study emigrated from their colonial homelands to New England, constituting a single migratory experience within the larger, constellating histories of African diaspora migration. Their movement was simultaneously occurring with intra-Caribbean and Latin American migration streams. This study employs Butler's contextual diaspora framework to suggest that the Black immigrant subjects still retain the features of African diaspora migration¹⁴ while undergoing a secondary or tertiary diaspora, relating to other West Indian or Cape Verdean diasporas occurring at the same time.

Overlapping Diasporas

For the Atlantic, consisting of transnational fields between West Africa, Europe, and the Americas, migration has been central to African peoples' experiences. At the root of this

¹² James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* Vol. 9, No. 3 (August 1994), 319.

¹³ Kim D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* Vol. 10, No. 2 (2012), 193.

¹⁴ These main characteristics of the African diaspora include a history of dispersal, myths and memories of the homeland, relationship with the hostland, desire for eventual return, collective identity defined by the relationship to the homeland. See George Shepperson, "The African abroad or the African diaspora," *Emerging Themes of African History: Proceedings of the International Congress of African Historians Held at University College, Dar Es Salaam, October 1965*, (Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House, 1968); William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora* Vol. 1, No. 1 (1991); Joseph E. Harris, "Introduction," *Global Dimensions of African Diaspora*, Second Edition (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1993).

migration history was the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade with an estimated 12 million Africans who traversed the Middle Passage into South America, the Caribbean, and North America. The Caribbean islands and the Cape Verdean archipelago figure prominently in this history. Migration is central to West Indian and Cape Verdean history through their experiences in slavery and abolition. Upon abolition in both regions of the Atlantic world, West Africa and the Caribbean, newly freed Blacks enacted their freedom in the mobility to escape from the severe economic, social, and political conditions on their various islands. This freedom of mobility brought these groups together in overlapping diasporas¹⁵ that had their origins in slavery and intersected in New England. In the West Indies and Cape Verde, labor and poverty shape the regions' histories and intertwined diasporas.

Cape Verdean Immigration

The migration of people in and out of the Cape Verdean archipelago has been central to its cultural heritage and its national imagery. Since the Portuguese occupied the archipelago beginning in 1460, migration made the uninhabited islands a special economic hub and slave entrepôt in the early Atlantic world. As a hub between Europe, Western Africa, and the Atlantic world of the Americans and the Caribbean, trade was an important feature of the islands and led to rapid colonization between the islands' occupation and the first decade of the sixteenth century. Portugal subjected Cape Verdean land and people to exploitation and poor colonial

¹⁵ Earl Lewis, "To Turn As On A Pivot: Writing African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (June 1995); Lewis argues that African American history exists in a space of overlapping diasporas, that is, in constant conversation or interaction with other historical experiences, particularly of non-American Black immigrants and intellectuals. He questions the liminal space where Cyril Briggs and Arturo (Arthur) Schomburg exist as both African American and Afro-West Indian.

management and did little to develop the islands' infrastructure, resulting in frequent deadly famines, droughts, and systemic poverty.¹⁶

Anthropologist Richard Lobban argued, "The recurrent cycles of drought, famine, and mass starvation in islands left the population vulnerable to exploitation and primed for emigration."¹⁷ Emigration from the islands was easily facilitated through an interest convergence of American labor needs and Cape Verdeans' desire to emigrate. American captains of whaling ships began to recruit workers from the islands of Brava and Fogo in earnest in the 1860s.¹⁸ American needs for whale oil for curing skins and lighting made the waters of Cape Verde and the Azores an attractive place for whaling and other maritime trades. These maritime connections made the United States, specifically the ports in New England, the preferred place for Cape Verdean migration well into the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, the United States had no claims to African ports and territories like other world powers. Using maritime trade and labor, the United States established relationships in Africa, specifically with the archipelago. This connection was solidified through the back-and-forth movement of ships from New Bedford and Providence to the Cape Verde Islands. Grounding the connections between Cape Verdeans and the United States, Lobban states, "Whether in the fictional characters of *Moby Dick* or as

¹⁶ Between 1875 and 1921, there were five major droughts resulting in famine; Katherine Carter and Judy Aulette, *Cape Verdean Women and Globalization: The Politics of Gender, Culture, and Resistance* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 31.

¹⁷ Richard A. Lobban, *Cape Verde: Crioulo Colony to Independent Nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 42.

¹⁸ António Carreira, *The People of the Cape Verde Islands: Exploitation and Emigration* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1982), 43.

longshoremen, mariners, and harpooners, Cape Verdeans were present for at least two centuries.”¹⁹

In the twentieth century, the relationship between the United States and the archipelago would be largely maintained by Cape Verdeans in the diaspora. Cape Verdean-American’s charitable efforts, coupled with the trade relationships, made the United States an attractive destination for Cape Verdeans. The whaling and maritime industries were tools for Cape Verdeans to migrate. Between 1900 and 1952, more than 20,000 Cape Verdeans emigrated to the United States, finding work as gold prospectors in California, serving on coastguard ships in Fall River, firemen on the Pacific Railway, strawberry farmers and in the cranberry bogs of Cape Cod, and in New Bedford’s textile factories.²⁰

West Indian Immigration

The conditions in the West Indies, though not as hostile as Cape Verde, were still poor enough to facilitate movement. Caribbean out-migration to New England, particularly that of Barbados, St. Kitts, St. Eustatius, and other islands of the Eastern Caribbean, is historically characterized by a lack of access to land and depleted arable land, but according to O. Nigel Bolland, the intentional monopolizing of the land created a planter class with power over the vulnerable, newly freed Black populations.²¹ The emergent plantocracy in the post-abolition period retrenched their efforts to maintain a pliant Black working class through the manipulation of legislation to effectively bar former slaves and other free Blacks from voting; they

¹⁹ Lobban, 36.

²⁰ Carreira, 48.

²¹ Nigel O. Bolland, *The Politics of Labor in the British Caribbean: The Social Origins of Authoritarianism and Democracy in the Labour Movement* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2002), 39-40.

strengthened the powers and organization of the police, militias, and courts and allowed Asian indentured servant immigration, granting them land, access to voting, and other consolations at the end of their service. Landlessness was not as pervasive a problem in the larger colonies of the Caribbean, such as Jamaica, British Guiana, and Trinidad, as it was in the smaller islands of the Leeward and Windward regions.²² In the context of coerced labor, indentured labor driving down employment, state political repression, and purposeful limitation of land, Caribbean migration emerged as a viable solution as a means to a better life and social mobility.

For West Indians, this amounted to three overlapping migratory streams from the post-abolition period to the early twentieth century — intra-Caribbean migration, circum-Caribbean migration, and migration to the United States and Canada. Since labor is at the center of this region, Caribbean migrants proceeded where there was greatest labor opportunity. By the late nineteenth century, Jamaicans and Barbadians comprised the majority of emigrants in the circum-Caribbean migratory movement to Latin America and the Hispanophone Caribbean. Smaller islanders from the Eastern Caribbean also made a sizeable contribution to the number of emigrants during this period.

Seeking a life from landlessness, decreased employment opportunities, and repressive class tensions, Afro-Caribbean migrants left their homeland and found employment in the railroad projects in Panama, Costa Rica, and Brazil; sugar plantations in Cuba and the Dominican Republic; as banana and other tropical fruit laborers in Costa Rica and Nicaragua; and women often worked as domestics, sex workers, and sold meals and confections. For West Indian migrants, Latin America was an attractive labor site as it offered comforts, such as free

²² The Leeward Islands are the United States Virgin islands, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, St. Martin, Saint-Barthélemy; Saba; St. Eustatius; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Antigua and Barbuda; Montserrat; and Guadeloupe were so named after the prevailing trades winds of the region, flowing from Northeast to Southwest. The Windward Islands (St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica, Martinique, and the Grenadines) were named as being more windward to the sailing ships.

lodging, food, and financial incentives.²³ But, upon arrival to work on these various projects, West Indians met a highly racialized environment, modeled off of the United States' Jim Crow segregation, where they were placed at the bottom of the social order and regarded as foreigners; their children were without country, as they were not considered West Indian and were not given citizenship.

The most notable example of West Indian mass migration in the colonial era was during the Panama railroad and canal projects. With more than 200,000 West Indian migrants, Panama set the tone for subsequent movement to other Latin American countries and the United States. At the Canal completion in 1914, no longer needed for their labor, West Indians constituted a “social problem” because they were neither citizens nor subjects, but foreign Black labor. West Indian emigrants had two choices: Remain in Panama or continue moving in search of a better life. Many West Indian migrants traveled to such countries as Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Cuba. The weak, centralized Latin American governments granted foreign companies, like the United Fruit Company of Boston (UFCO), sovereign status where they would build and manage their own public works and systems of control. Throughout Latin America, in the decade before the Great Depression, the dependence on foreign companies for protection, coupled with their manipulation of ethnic and racial divisions, racial segregation, nativist, nationalist pressure,

²³ For more information on West Indian immigration in Latin America, see Sidney Greenfield, “Barbadians in the Brazilian Amazon,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1983); Bonham Richardson, *Panama Money in Barbados, 1900-1920* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985); Aviva Chomsky, *West Indian Workers and the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica, 1870-1940* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1996); Ronald N. Harpelle, *The West Indians of Costa Rica: Race, Class, and the Integration of an Ethnic Minority* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001); Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Frederick Douglass Opie, *Black Labor Migration in Caribbean Guatemala, 1882-1923* (Gainesville: University press of Florida, 2009); Glenn Chambers, *Race, Nation, and West Indian Migration to Honduras, 1890-1940* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana, 2010); Robert Whitney and Graciela Challoux Laffita, *Subjects or Citizens: British Caribbean Workers in Cuba, 1900-1960* (Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 2013); and Philip A. Howard, *Black Labor, White Sugar: Caribbean Braceros and Their Struggle for Power in the Cuban Sugar Industry* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2015).

mass deportation, and exploitation — produced the conditions wherein the West Indian community was in a state of continuous adaptation, which later led to community assimilation or, for many, migration into the United States.

For migrants from the Eastern Caribbean, such as St. Eustatius, St. Kitts, and Nevis, labor migration to Central America was limited. A few men did travel to Panama via Jamaica, but of the nearly 200,000 British West Indians who migrated to the Panama Canal Zone, only 112 were from St. Kitts and Nevis. Bypassing Panama, West Indians from the Eastern Caribbean utilized the path of the maritime shipping routes from St. Kitts and Nevis to Bermuda's dockyards and Cuban and Dominican Republican cane lands.²⁴ Statians emigrated to Aruba and Curacao for work on the oil refineries. As it was with their Cape Verdean counterparts, American interests in whaling also provided the means for emigration. In the early twentieth century, "whalers on their way to Cape Hatteras began to call on Statia in order to take in supplies. Young Statians enlisted to work on such ships. In 1917, 57 young men left the island, and 20 others did so in 1918."²⁵ Aboard the ships, West Indians interacted with Cape Verdeans, St. Helenians, and African Americans, creating the site of the overlapping diaspora as they met and converged in New England.

²⁴ Bonham C. Richardson, *Caribbean Migrants: Environmental and Human Survival on St. Kitts and Nevis* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983) 110-111

²⁵ These numbers were significant as the island of St. Eustatius was very small with only 1600 people inhabitants in 1884. Only 50 of those inhabitants were white. Norman F. Barka, "Time Lines: Changing Settlement Patterns in St. Eustatius," in *Island Lives: Historical Archaeologies of the Caribbean* edited by Paul Farnsworth (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 138.

Convergence in New England

Between 1900 and 1920, more than 230,000 West Indians migrated to the United States, moving to areas along the East Coast, concentrating in the major port cities of New York, Boston, and Miami. Cape Verdean immigrants also tended to congregate on the East Coast in the seaport communities of Boston, New Bedford, Providence, Brooklyn, Nantucket Islands, and other towns. Historian Marilyn Halter estimates that 1,200 to 1,500 Cape Verdeans, from all islands, immigrated annually to New Bedford, Massachusetts.²⁶ This need for labor aboard whaling vessels, coupled with the intense pressures facilitating migration from Cape Verde and the West Indies, positioned these groups to collide in an overlapping diaspora converging in New England's urban scape.

Massachusetts was a pioneer of racial equality in the late eighteenth century and occupied a special place in the minds of African Americans through its history of inter-racialism, abolitionist agitation, and community providing civil rights to Blacks early in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Founded in 1787 after separating from Dartmouth throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, New Bedford was a wealthy city, the site for a bustling maritime industry powered by whaling and shipbuilding. It's wealth was noted by Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick*, who stated, "Nowhere in all America will you find more patrician-like houses, parks and gardens more opulent, than in New Bedford."²⁷ The whaling industry developed other industries, crafts, and professions in the area, including oil refineries, candle works, caulkers, bakers of ship bread — specialty bread for extended whaling expeditions — rope makers, ship carpenters, coopers, and others. As the whaling industry declined in the late

²⁶ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 44.

²⁷ Zephaniah Walter Pease, *History of New Bedford*. Vol. 1. (New York: The Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1918), 99.

nineteenth century, New Bedford turned from whaling to manufacturing. Early twentieth-century New Bedford boasted cotton mills, glass manufacturing, shoe manufacturing, textile manufacturing, and carriage building.²⁸ The cotton mills provided year-round, consistent labor and high wages for mechanics and laborers.

In addition to being a site of industry, “New Bedford established a noble record as a city of refuge for the runaway slave and as a station on the ‘Underground Railroad.’”²⁹ Despite New Bedford’s rich history of abolitionist sentiment, people of African descent still faced de facto segregation and racism in employment and social activities in the city. New Bedford’s Black community created multiple institutions and also had a rich multi-ethnic population of Blacks — Cape Verdeans, West Indians, African Americans freed prior to the abolition of slavery, freedmen, and those who stole themselves. New Bedford’s Black communities resided largely in the West End, a neighborhood where the third, fourth, and fifth wards intersected, housing their places of worship; the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches were located there.

While Massachusetts stood as a beacon of racial equality, its neighboring state, Rhode Island, did not share this fame. Historian Robert J. Cottrol, noting the connections between New Bedford and Providence, cites their major differences “... Blacks in New Bedford were involved in an enterprise central to their town’s economy. They were not part of that social and economic marginalization experienced by blacks in industrializing cities like Providence.”³⁰ The Black community in Providence constituted a subgroup within the larger society, living in low-income

²⁸ Ibid, 210-211.

²⁹ Ibid, 12.

³⁰ Robert J. Cottrol, *The Afro-Yankees: Providence’s Black Community in the Antebellum Era* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), 154.

areas called Hardscrabble and on Olney Street, sites of two anti-Black race riots in the early nineteenth century. In these neighborhoods, they devised group strategies to address their circumstances that included creating social organizations, such as churches, schools, and militia groups. Providence's nineteenth- and twentieth-century Black community was composed of Cape Verdeans, native-born African Americans and Great Migrationers, and a small number of West Indians. The Cape Verdean community settled in Fox Point, a poor region of the city near the docks and textile mills. Providence's local economy was very similar to New Bedford's and its Black population, despite facing occupational discrimination, was employed in various jobs as mariners, seamen, dockside laborers, and in the textile mills.

Black immigrants arrived to face New England's de facto segregation and United States-style racism where, "Northern blacks lived as second-class citizens, unencumbered by the most blatant of southern-style Jim Crow laws but still trapped in an economic, political, and legal regime that seldom recognized them as equals. In nearly every arena, blacks and whites lived separate but unequal lives."³¹ They were confined to declining neighborhoods and met with a system of informal Jim Crow that excluded Black people from restaurants, hotels, parks, and recreation; limited employment opportunities; and created obstacles to economic security and equitable education. Segregated in racial enclaves, Cape Verdeans and West Indians lived among African Americans and found their destinies interwoven. In both Cape Verde and throughout the West Indies, class and color were intertwined categories of identity. In their class-conscious societies with majority Black populations, color rather than race was a determinant of social standing. In the United States, raced as Black, they were offered menial jobs. and as a result, "Their place in the economy of southeastern New England was not very different than that of

³¹ Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House Trade, 2008), xv.

African Americans.”³² Living in close proximity, Afro-Caribbean, Cape Verdean, and native-born African Americans fashioned social and cultural spaces for themselves that both overlapped and reinforced ethnic separation.

Cape Verdeans faced segregation on two fronts — racial and cultural. Color, racial identity, language, and religion, as Roman Catholics, did not allow Cape Verdeans to easily assimilate into the United States and African-American community. Their shared connection to Portuguese by virtue of language, religion, and culture was disrupted in the United States. In New Bedford and Providence, white Portuguese mainlanders and Azoreans excluded them from social clubs, parishes, and neighborhoods. Furthering their segregation was Cape Verdeans’ self-imposed distance from African-descended people. Cape Verde was a color- and phenotype-conscious society whereby status was based on color and assumed proximity, racially, to Africans and Europeans. Beginning in the fifteenth century, slavery contributed to a hierarchy based on race, color, and class in a three-class structure — whites, mixed-race natives, and enslaved persons. Enslaved Africans were at the bottom of the social, political, and economic hierarchy. Though white Portuguese were small in number, they were at the top of the hierarchy, and the *mestiços* were in the middle, considered natives. Color was an increasingly important factor in the day-to-day lives of Cape Verdeans in the archipelago, but it was contextually fluid. Money, occupation, and political office could change one’s status from *Africano* or *prêto* (African or dark) to becoming *branco* (white). While whiteness was ideal for color identity, “The

³² Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 8.

innate culture of Cape Verde is not a borrowed European or ‘white’ garment,” it was decidedly *Kriolu* (Creole).³³

Cape Verdeans brought this color-consciousness with them to the United States, and it was met with the knowledge that, as non-white *Kriolus* living in a Black-White racial dichotomy, they would be read and understood as Black. As immigrants who left their homes to attain better economic conditions for themselves and their families, they understood that accepting a “social identity of Negro” would limit their access to resources and social mobility.³⁴ Instead, Cape Verdeans opted for an ethnic identity rather than a racial one. The linguistic and religious separation from African Americans and racialized segregation from whites aided in the development of a distinctive Cape Verdean ethnic identity and community built on “their group spirit and principles of self-help in order to survive and to lessen the shock of social rejection.”³⁵

Unlike their Cape Verdean counterparts, West Indians in New Bedford resided in the West End, the historically African-American neighborhood, and joined in the local social and religious institutions. They did not self-segregate; instead, they settled among native-born African Americans, bought and rented homes in the enclave, and intermarried into African-American families. They joined the African-American institutions, notably the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Despite their integration into African-American families and social spaces, West Indians did not readily

³³ Dulce Amanda Duarte and Jose C. Curto, “The Cultural Dimension in the Strategy for National Liberation: The Cultural Bases of the Unification between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau,” *Latin American Perspectives* Vol. 11, No. 2. (Spring 1984), 58-59.

³⁴ Sidney M. Greenfield, “In Search of Social Identity: Strategies of Ethnic Identity Management Among Cape Verdeans in Southeastern MA,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 13, No. 1 (Summer 1976), 5.

³⁵ Carreira, 47.

assimilate, creating an enclave within an enclave, supported by chain migration and familial social networks.

Chapter Summary

Both groups' experiences in southeastern New England taken together are the subject of this microhistory. This community-level exploration into the streets and institutions of West Indian and Cape Verdean immigrants living in New Bedford and Providence reveals the nuanced ways each group operationalized its networks, facilitated ethnic and cultural maintenance, and demonstrated varying levels of social integration. To explore the formation of Black immigrant communities' networks and their institutional framework, this dissertation is composed of five chapters that are organized in two sections, with focus on West Indians and Cape Verdean communities treated separately as case studies. Rather than a comparative model, these two sections, presented as case studies, allow for a side-by-side reading of Black immigrants' community-development process. Further, the case study model allows for more insight into how these groups' differences manifested.

Despite living in close proximity with some interactions, West Indians and Cape Verdeans maintained separate yet constellating communities in Southeastern New England. Though these Black immigrants arrived in New Bedford and Providence as laborers on the same whaling ships, upon disembarking the ships their trajectories split as they created separate communities based on race, ethnicity, language, and culture. The two-section organization of this dissertation is emblematic of their different trajectories. Reading the sections as case studies rather than as a comparative model enables readers to examine the groups as they lived, see the choices they made, and appreciate the differences in their approaches to adaptation and assimilation to their Southeastern New England residences. Each section provides a view into the everyday lives of Black immigrants as they organized various societies, attended churches,

settled down and had a family, and maintained transnational relations with their homeland for endured periods of time.

The first section, “‘Your Father and Me... We Are All One’: West Indian Community Building in New Bedford,” engages the social, familial, and organizational networks of West Indians living in New Bedford’s West End. The chapters in this section explore their quotidian lives as they slowly became integrated in the African-American residential neighborhood. “*Para O Bem Da Nação*” is the second section of this dissertation. It shifts from the West Indian community narrative to the Cape Verdean emigrants in New Bedford’s South End and Providence’s Fox Point. It stands side by side with the West Indian chapters, not as a comparison but as an analysis of different outcomes in similar settings. New Bedford’s South End and Providence’s Fox Point were considered the centers of the Cape Verde colony in the United States. Though these chapters employ social network analysis, they do not look at individual and family social networks; instead, organizations are the central nodes within the Cape Verdean community. Within each organization, leaders of the Cape Verdean community in both cities overlapped. Through their overlapping memberships, the organizations they formed constituted a transnational social field that connected New England to the Cape Verde Islands.

Through the narrative of immigration from the Eastern Caribbean islands of Barbados, Bequia, and St. Eustatius, chapter one, “The Inner Workings of An Emergent Community,” examines their pre-emigration histories in the Caribbean and their settlement in New Bedford. This chapter also explored the settlement of West Indians in the West End through their intentional residential clustering. Though West End was a 40-square-block area, West Indians self-consciously created an enclave within the enclave, with their homes and boarding houses clustered around five streets — Mill, Middle, Elm, Ash, and Kempton streets — and the two

African-American churches, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, at the center. This chapter specifically looks at the lives they made in the West End through their employment, residential clustering, and propensity to practice endogamy. These choices demonstrate that while they were in the community, they were not of it, fashioning out small spaces for an emergent West Indian contingent in the African-American community.

The second chapter, “Like I Said, ‘Everybody is a Cousin’: New Bedford’s West Indian Familial Social Networks,” builds on the spatial context of the West End, noted in the previous chapter, to explore the burgeoning social network of the community. Through an examination of five families — the Draytons, the Coblins, the Kydds, the Timbers, and the Fabios — this chapter employed social network analysis to demonstrate the ways West Indians were interconnected within the community. The central nodes of these families, all men, were prominent in the community as pioneering West Indian immigrants, as leaders in social and religious organizations, and as businessmen. The chapter looks at their social networks and analyzes the nodes of the families, connecting them to other families, businesses, religious organizations, and non-ethnic social clubs. Within the West End enclave, they represented the core nuclei of the “West Indian family” made in the Caribbean and recreated in New Bedford.

The last chapter of the section, “‘As One Neighborhood’: West Indians Informal Organizing,” specifically engages New Bedford West Indians’ organizational networks. Due to the small size of the emigrant community, ethnic or homeland societies were largely useless in the space, friends and relatives prevailed in providing emotional, social, and economic support. Though West Indians did not form any ethnic or homeland societies within the city, they joined local, traditional African-American social institutions, such as the Bethel AME and AMEZ

churches. As they climbed the ladder of leadership in these organizations, West Indians effectively transformed them into pseudo-homeland institutions. West Indians energized their familial and neighborhood networks to supplant the necessity for ethnic societies. Everything they needed was provided in their residential enclave, through the church, musical club, familial and neighborly support, boarding, and residential practices.

The first chapter of the “*Para O Bem Da Nação*” section, chapter four, “The Cape Verdean Colonies in the Americas: Emigration, Community Development, and Homeland Societies,” provides the historical context for Cape Verdean emigration to Providence and New Bedford. Cape Verdean emigrants lived in ethnic enclaves in crowded tenement buildings in Fox Point and the South End. The enclaves were the sites of a clash of Cape Verdean islanders from Brava, Fogo, and São Tiago, allowing for island identities to give way to pan-Cape Verdean or Cape Verdean-American identities. Their shared ethnicity, language of *Kriolu*, and culture enabled Cape Verdeans to retain an ethnicity rather than adopting a Black racial identity. The shared sense of ethnicity and culture provided Cape Verdean Americans with the tools to establish their own churches, form labor advocacy groups for longshoremen, preserve Cape Verdean culture through music and dance, and provide aid and assistance for Cape Verdeans in the archipelago and in New Bedford and Providence. These associations and their work for the homeland maintained Cape Verdean-American’s prolonged attachment to home. Their attachment resulted in enduring feelings of *sodadi* (or longing).

“‘Travel on the Highways of the Broad Atlantic’: An Exploration of the Brava Packet Trade and Transnational Relationships” is the fifth and final chapter of the dissertation. This chapter suggests that *sodadi* energized the development of a transnational shipping fleet, known as the Brava Packet Trade, which was owned and operated by Cape Verdeans. It was the first of

its kind among African diasporan emigrants, and its utility was two-fold — providing Cape Verdeans a mode of personal and labor migration to and from the islands and enabling the transport of goods and monies to flow. The constant flow of people, foodstuffs, goods, and money, and also the flow of ideas, maintained a sense of Cape Verdeanness in New England while simultaneously Americanizing the islands through products. The Cape Verdeans' shipping fleet disrupted exile and the promise of return, common tropes in African diaspora scholarship. As owners and captains, Cape Verdeans were in control of their destiny and their path to emigration. This resulted in a high level of mobility but a low degree of anchorage to the host land.

Taken together, this study of the West Indian and Cape Verdean organizational and institutional structures elucidates their varied commitment to the United States and to their respective homelands. While the whaling ships upon which they emigrated were sites of overlapping diasporas with West Indians and Cape Verdeans in New Bedford and Providence, these communities did not intersect. West Indians in the West End were able to integrate into the African-American community by virtue of race. Cape Verdeans, on the other hand, prided themselves on their *Kriolu* identity and retained cultural heritage, and as such were not easily integrated into the African-American community.

Despite their slow integration into becoming African American, their story is part of African-American history. Sociologist Roy-Bryce Simon Laporte's suggestion that Black immigrants suffered invisibility as a result of their racial and national identities also suggests that they lived at the nexus, simultaneously belonging in multiple spaces as African American, as immigrants, and as diasporans. Their history is part of the African-American history of New England. Their institutions and familial networks were grounded both in their enclaves and in

their homelands. West Indian and Cape Verdean immigrants in southeastern New England had the perspective of Janus with one face directed toward the host land and the other toward their kith and kin in the homeland. Though these communities did not intersect, they still constituted an overlapping diaspora and a sense of being with two loyalties — to home and to their new lives in the United States.

Section One:
“Your Father and Me... We Are All One:”
West Indian Community-Building in New Bedford

In 1902, after a strenuous four-month expedition on the whaling ship, the *William A. Grozier*, William Lydney Kydd, a 19-year-old boatsteerer from the small Caribbean island of Bequia in the Grenadines, disembarked in the Port of New Bedford. The young man, far from home, descended from his first whaling voyage on the ship to the bustling American city where he encountered a small, thriving community of British and Dutch West Indians. There, in the West End of the city, he met the Draytons, the Coblins, and other West Indian families that would be his friends and neighbors. Together these families knit an intricate network that transcended the city’s boundaries and extended into the West Indies. They were homeowners and business people serving the newer members of the community, helping them to settle and providing job opportunities. They established themselves as leaders in the local churches and formed their own cultural organization. They treated each other as kin and regarded their small cluster as one big house, a self-conscious community that laid an indelible footprint for generations to come.

This section focuses on the daily lives and social inner-workings of New Bedford’s West Indian¹ community. In their church auxiliaries, at community-based events, and in their West End neighborhood, West Indians constituted an overlapping diasporic community within their enclave within an enclave, building relationships with other West Indians and with New Bedford’s other Black ethnic groups — native-born African Americans and Cape Verdeans.

¹ For the purposes of this analysis, I identify West Indian as people of African descent born in or with ancestry in the Windward and Leeward Islands, the North Atlantic island of Bermuda, and the mainland colonies of British Honduras, British, French, and Dutch Guianas (Guyanas). Frequently, I will use the terms Afro-Caribbean and Caribbean as well as ethnic specific terms such as Stadian, Barbadian, Vincentian, and Jamaican.

They formed familial social networks that crisscrossed neighborhood streets and were rooted in the core of pre-established community institutions. As leaders within these respective organizations and in their tightly knit familial social network, this small group of West Indians supplanted the need for formal ethnic homeland societies, thus transforming their enclave into a space where emigrants could find financial and social support and a site for the maintenance of their common cultural identities. Exploring the social milieu of New Bedford's West Indian emigrant network, this section relies on oral histories and primary source documents, including the *Boston Chronicle*, census data, city directories, land deeds, and marriage and death records, in order to discern the ways West Indians developed into a community from the 1890s to 1940.

This section also explores how West Indians in New Bedford usurped the traditional expectation of immigrant social relations as they formed no ethnic coalitions. To be sure, West Indians demonstrated a self-conscious residential clustering through their ethnic identification. This clustering also lent itself to a Pan-Caribbean identity formation that made room to acknowledge distinctions and, at times, separate social spaces. Despite years of settlement without specific ethnic societies, New Bedford's West Indians were not easily subsumed into becoming African American. Within their small enclave, they were self-aware of their West Indian heritage; their homes, streets, and businesses insulated them and encouraged the maintenance of their West Indian identity. Their semi-permeable enclave was not an exclusive one, as they shared their space with native-born African Americans — migrants from the South and New England residents, South Atlantic Islanders from St. Helena, and a small number of Cape Verdeans. In this diasporic milieu, they were highly visible and self-conscious as they clustered, joined, and dominated pre-existing spaces. They made their community a large-scale social organizational network punctuated with family and organizational nodes.

With attention to social networks and community development, the following chapters explore the experiences of West Indians living in New Bedford's West End neighborhood. With humble origins in the 1870s, a small grouping of islanders from the Eastern Caribbean formed a small, highly interconnected, self-conscious community. They differed from their counterparts in nearby Boston, New York, and other East coast cities in that, though they were organized, they did not organize homeland societies and other ethnic-based social clubs. Without these spaces, they effectively transformed the small spaces they held in the neighborhood into one interconnected social network punctuated by their densely clustered homes in the West End, bookended by the local Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Douglass African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and with the various formal and informal businesses. The West End neighborhood served as a site for community organization, social networking, homo- and heterosocial interactions, and local businesses, and offered leadership opportunities within the aforementioned churches.

In addition to offering an alternative form of ethnic-based organizing, New Bedford's West Indians deviated from the traditional historiography. Circumventing the railroad and fruit company projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, they emigrated through the maritime network powered by the whaling industry. As seamen, sailors, and common laborers on ships, they settled in the New Bedford port of call and gradually ingratiated themselves in the Black social fabric. Though the first documented record of a West Indian settler in the city was in 1832, the community as it would later be understood emerged in the 1870s and was slow growing. The early nineteenth-century settlers were in limited numbers. The residential patterns suggested no self-conscious clustering or identity as a group. The community that took root in the 1870s demonstrated a cohesive identity through their residential practices and clustering. They used

their ethnic and national origins and previous relationships to build their community enclave. Many were related by blood and by marriage. Through their quotidian lives — on the streets, in their living rooms and kitchens, within the West End neighborhood — West Indians established an enclave within the historically African-American segregated enclave and maintained their ethnic and national cultural identities for several generations.

To that end, these chapters explore the quotidian lives of this small community as they created a space that was both separate and part of the larger African-American neighborhood. Through their self-conscious choices, New Bedford's West Indians created a social network constitutive of family, friends, and neighbors that extended to the Caribbean and the American East Coast. Many immigrated to New Bedford with pre-existing connections from their homeland and as friends and family. Once they arrived, they established a chain migration and a residential cluster that allowed them, one family at a time, to spread and grow in the neighborhood.

Through an examination of their choices in residency, employment, and marriage, as well as their leadership in such community institutions as the churches and affiliation with local organizations, this work engages the inner workings of the small cluster with an analysis of their pre-migration experiences and lives in the context of the West End. This section also provides a multi-generational snapshot of five families in the West End. This discussion of five male West Indian heads of household and their families offers a specific view of the ways West Indians created and maintained social networks with other West Indians, Southern migrants and Massachusetts-born African Americans, and Cape Verdeans. Further, this snapshot provides a history from the bottom view of the neighborhood and social and familial networks. Finally, though West Indians in New Bedford differed from their counterparts in other cities on an

organizational level, fundamentally the local West Indian community provided the same supportive networks as large-scale organizations. On individual levels and through the established church institutions and its affiliates, New Bedford's West Indians took care of each other, offering financial support and immigration aid. They also used these institutions to gain a sense of prominence within the greater New Bedford area as leaders and organizers.

This section consists of three chapters. The first chapter, "The Inner Workings of an Emergent Community," provides the historical context of West Indian migration to New Bedford, the origins of the enclave in the city's West End, and a demographic analysis of West Indian social lives with attention to marriage patterns and employment. This chapter provides the context for the pre-migration condition and the urban context of New Bedford's West End. Chapter two, "Like I said, 'Everybody is a Cousin': New Bedford's West Indian Familial *Social Networks*" explores five prominent families — the Draytons, Coblins, Timbers, Kydds, and the Fabios — over the course of three generations to examine their interlocking connections forged in the West Indies and in New Bedford. "As One Neighborhood': West Indians' Informal Organizing," the final chapter of this section, explores how New Bedford's West Indian organizing differed with respect to their counterparts in other cities. Despite these differences, they imbued previously established African-American spaces with new meanings that allowed them to institutionalize their cultural identity through the participation in social events, and membership and leadership within. The chapters in this section provide insight into the quotidian ways this small West Indian community maintained its sense of ethnic identity over several generations. As their grandchildren in their 70s and 80s remember their West Indian heritage and display them with pride, New Bedford's West Indians demonstrate the alternative strategies for cultural identity maintenance.

Chapter One: The Inner Workings of an Emergent Community

As early as 1836, New Bedford was a site of a multi-ethnic community of African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, South Atlantic Islanders, and Cape Verdeans fed by the maritime industry. Throughout the early nineteenth century, these groups remained scattered in the city's third, fourth, and fifth wards, forming small pockets within predominantly white spaces. The city's West End neighborhood was a historical enclave for people of African descent, and it was within this small 40-block radius that these diaspora groups converged, making a new community punctuated by businesses, churches, and the social institution of the street. For West Indians, the West End provided the space to establish new networks that cross the city's streets and boundaries to form a transnational social field that drew in neighbors and family from the homeland to maintain older networks. From a small unsystematic clustering of Barbadian immigrants and their families, newly arrived West Indians settled into the neighborhood, brought together by a chain of migration facilitated by familial relations and friendships. The West End was a semi-porous space where West Indians constituted an enclave within an enclave that was not separated geographically from the New England-born and Southern-migrant populations of African Americans, but also was a flexible boundary allowing intermarriages between the ethnic groups.

Though numerically small, the significance of the community lies in its self-conscious conspicuous settlement and the highly integrated network punctuated by small businesses, shops, and local Black churches — Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, the Douglass Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) church, and later the St. Ambrose African Orthodox church. The West Indian community operationalized these networks, making long-

term connections within the city, and used sites to create political, economic, and social networks.

The West End neighborhood was a multi-racial and multi-ethnic Black community. Accordingly, there were frequent interactions between the ethnic groups as neighbors, church congregants, club members, and Elks and other masons. In that social milieu in the early twentieth century, there was also frequent intermarriage between West Indian immigrants and native-born African Americans, and to a lesser extent Cape Verdeans. By the 1940s, second- and third-generation West Indians as long-time residents began to practice monogamy, intermarrying with other west Indians, Dutch, and British alike.¹ As the community began to reproduce itself through marriage and retrenched residential patterns, the lines of ethnic descent began to blur.

Through a demographic and historical analysis, this chapter situates New Bedford in its urban context, exploring the West Indian population living in the city's West End, a long-term African-American enclave as the meeting place for Black ethnic groups. The demographic snapshot of the small community lays the groundwork for the later analysis of the family and community social network they developed over the course of 50 years. By providing this snapshot, this chapter turns the view of West Indians to the street level. New Bedford, here, becomes an important site for West Indians in New England as it constituted the second-largest grouping of the ethnic group after Boston. Emigrating in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, New Bedford's West Indians bypassed the traditional migration route laid by previous generations of Caribbean migrants. These small islanders did not follow their Jamaican, Barbadian, and other islander counterparts to Latin America; they used the maritime routes to

¹ Notably, New Bedford-born Frances Hazell, daughter of Statian Charles Hazell and granddaughter of Statian Robert Coblins married New Bedford-born Williston Houtman, the son of Statian Robert Houtman. Richard Haddocks Jr. married Olivia Busby, both second generation Statians

forge a direct path to the northeastern region of the United States. New Bedford's West Indian community seemingly began before Boston's and even before New York's larger, self-conscious grouping in Harlem. Their migration trajectory and subsequent experiences in New Bedford make this group a unique case study for alternative forms of community creation, social networks, and institution-building, as they did not follow the normative examples of their peers in other, larger cities. Through an analysis of their convergence in New Bedford, the chapter demonstrates that the West End neighborhood provided a space for the small group to flourish as highly self-conscious, and allowed for a community sense of closeness through residential clustering, marriage, and group memberships.

Using census data, city directories, immigration records, and marriage and birth registers, this chapter shows the growth of the community and its spread from four families in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to more than 30 families with 150 first-, second-, and third-generation West Indians in 1910. This slow growth, enacted by chain migration and the replenishment of labor through the maritime industry, constituted the bulk of the emergent community. The early residential practices of the emergent community in the West End demonstrate their self-aware clustering in the neighborhood. West Indian West Enders lived within walking distance to each other, established boarding houses, rented out rooms in their homes, and purchased various properties within the neighborhood. They settled in this space and created a tightly knit community that was not apart from, but constitutive of, the larger African-American neighborhood. It was in the quiet, quotidian spaces that they forged a community that persisted for generations, linked together by shared culture and tight-knit social bonds.

Though this chapter draws most of its content from New Bedford's vibrant Afro-Caribbean community, West Indians also settled in other southeastern New England cities in

Boston, Massachusetts, New London, Connecticut, and Providence, Rhode Island.² The largest of these was in Boston, with a population of more than 500 during the early twentieth century.³ Between 1880 and 1910, New London and Providence had small, transient populations: 17 first- and second-generation West Indians settled in New London; in Providence, there were only 25 African-descended families with at least one person either born in the West Indies or who had West Indian parentage.⁴ Unlike the enclaves in New Bedford and Boston, no unified West Indian community developed in Providence or New London. Due to its proximity, Providence provides an interesting comparative example to New Bedford. The city's West Indians were mainly boarders and lodgers who did not form long-term residence in the city to the same extent as New Bedford. A few, such as the Rahming family of the Bahamas and the Ramsey family of Barbadian and Stadian descent, moved between New Bedford and Providence.⁵ While Providence demonstrated a number of Afro-Caribbeans settling in the early twentieth century, they did not form an enclave and mainly live among native-born African Americans from New England and migrants from the Southern states, namely Virginia and Maryland, and whites. It is likely that due to their small numbers and the transient nature of boarding, West Indians in the city did not foster the necessary organization to develop into the tightly knit network that

² Though Providence is featured in the experiences of Cape Verdean immigrants, it is mentioned here as an anecdotal reference.

³ Violet Showers Johnson, *The Other Black Bostonians: West Indians in Boston, 1900-1950* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 25.

⁴ Between 1850 and 1910, according to census data, the city boasted a population of only 33 first generation and 25 second-generation West Indians.

⁵ James Rahming, National Archives at Boston. *Rhode Island, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1802-1945*. Accessed December 21, 2016. Ancestry.com; Minnie Rahming, National Archives and Records Administration. *Thirteenth Census of the United States. 1910*. Accessed December 21, 2016. Ancestry.com (hereafter referred to as 1910 United States Federal Census); Edrick F. Ramsey, National Archives and Records Administration. *Fourteenth Census of the United States. 1920*. Accessed August 16, 2016. Ancestry.com (hereafter referred to as 1920 United States Federal Census)

characterized New Bedford and Boston's emergent community. Additionally, the Providence census enumerators did not keep ethnic- or nation-specific entries for Black immigrants. There were 38 Black immigrants from England enumerated between 1860 and 1930. The designation of imperial England as their ethnic homeland creates a challenge for identifying specific regions of origin for Black immigrants, as opposed to their colonial affiliation. For example, among these individuals, some, such as Sarah Turville, were from St. Helena, a small island in the South Atlantic; many others had either no corresponding national or ethnic affiliation. This proves challenging for this study to determine ethnic background.

Despite those challenges, there were, however, few discernable West Indians who settled in Providence long-term. Cruzans Andrew Johnson and John Williams were among these few long-term city residents. Johnson immigrated to Mobile, Alabama from St. Croix in 1870 at 16 years of age. By 1880, he was living in Providence, married to his first wife, Elizabeth, a Virginian, and was a conductor on the railroad. After his wife's death, Johnson remarried native-born Floridian Parthena Talbot in 1899 and lived in a multi-family residence with John Williams, a native of St. Croix. Williams immigrated to the United States in 1879 and maintained residence in Providence through the 1940s.⁶ Williams's wife, Mary E. Talbot, was the stepdaughter of Cruzan Andrew Johnson. The two families lived at 158 Gallup Street in 1900, but they shared no other West Indian neighbors. Though both Williams and Johnson married and settled in Providence for the duration of their lives, neither resided in a neighborhood or ward that had other West Indians. These families were anomalous among the city's West Indian residents but

⁶ John A. Williams, National Archives and Records Administration. *Twelfth Census of the United States. 1900*. Accessed March 29, 2017. Ancestry.com (hereafter referred to as 1900 United States Federal Census)

demonstrate that the self-conscious settlement, by proximity and national origin, was not enough to commence in the process of making a viable, cohesive enclave.

Most of Providence's West Indians in the city were white Dutch West Indians. They were Dutch West Indians from Saba, and British West Indians, mainly from Barbados and Jamaica. They were attracted to the factories, the marine industry, and the burgeoning jewelry manufacturing industry. Abraham Hassell of Saba was a schooner captain, and buyer and seller of ships.⁷ White Barbadians Alfred Wells and William Perkins worked as a jeweler and a bookkeeper in a jewelry manufacturing company, respectively. Perkins' daughter Winifred also worked in jewelry manufacturing as a trimmer.⁸ Generally, white West Indians lived among white American and European immigrants in the city. The presence of this group of West Indians presents a unique under-researched area of Caribbean regional immigration history. Between 1897 and 1912, the Victoria Emigration Society assisted more than 1,000 poor women to leave Barbados to the United States and Canada. Most of the women who received emigration assistance were white. Rosa and Isabelle Allamby were two women assisted by the Society to immigrate to the United States.⁹ Though many United States-bound emigrants went to New York, such as the Allambys, immigrated to Providence. For white West Indians, it is likely their whiteness¹⁰, close proximity to American and European white neighbors, and access to non-

⁷ Abraham Hassell, 1900 United States Federal Census; "Capt. Abraham Hassell," <https://thesabaislander.com/2013/10/31/capt-abraham-hassell/> Accessed March 29, 2017.

⁸ Alfred Wells, William Perkins, 1910 United States Federal Census; Winifred Perkins, National Archives and Records Administration. *Fifteenth Census of the United States. 1930*. Accessed March 29, 2017. Ancestry.com (hereafter referred to as 1930 United States Federal Census)

⁹ *Victoria Emigration Society, 1896-1913*. Barbados National Archive.

¹⁰ Defined as a public and psychological wage garnered by assimilation into the white race whereby participants derive pleasure and social gains from aligning themselves with whiteness and thereby gain

manual labor usually restricted to Black laborers that allowed them to assimilate into white American society, where their Black counterparts faced what Royce Simon Laporte called “double invisibility” as Blacks and as foreigners.¹¹

This brief discussion on white and Black West Indians in Providence offers a snapshot of the challenges to studying this small, underdeveloped West Indian community. As Black West Indians were scattered throughout the city, many of them were living among white residents and not in densely populated Black neighborhoods. This lack of community cohesion among Black West Indians and the preponderance of white West Indians in Providence are atypical characteristics of the West Indian immigration historiography. Providence features strongly in the analysis of Cape Verdeans in New England; for West Indians, it does not provide a clear picture of the larger community in the region other than as an anecdotal comparison to New Bedford’s more established networks. To that end, this chapter focuses exclusively on the unique context of West Indians in New Bedford from their migration experiences to settlement in the West End.

West Indian Diaspora Convergence in New Bedford

The migration of Statians and other Leeward Islanders to New Bedford departs from the traditional historiography, bypassing Panama and Central American projects to other intra-Caribbean islands, Bermuda, or to the United States. The traditional historiography traces Caribbean migration from abolition to the early twentieth century along the path of various labor

access to resources and other social capital, advanced by W.E.B. Du Bois in his 1935 text, *Black Reconstruction*. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Free Press, 1995 [first edition 1935]), 700–701.

¹¹ Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte “Black Immigrants: The Experience of Invisibility and Inequality,” *Journal of Black Studies* 3, No. 1 (Sep., 1972), 31.

projects spanning the entire region. Following the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, when the British government abolished slavery in the British colonies, newly emancipated men and women enacted their freedom in mobility from the plantation lands to the urban centers of the colonies and to nearby islands and mainland British colonies. Emancipation did not confer access to resources, land, and wage employment; thus as a strategy, migration provided the means by which West Indians coped with their country's externally influenced financial troubles and circumvented landlessness. Lacking access to land and jobs, West Indian laborers looked outside the bounds of their islands to find opportunities and seek a better life for themselves and their families. "Between the 1870s and the 1920s, the banana industry in Costa Rica, lumber in British Honduras, railroad construction and bananas in Nicaragua, canal construction in Panama, oil and cacao production in Venezuela and Colombia, and sugar production in Cuba and the Dominican Republic attracted British Caribbean migrants and their families."¹²

At the end of each project, West Indian migrants sought out newer opportunities, often moving farther and farther from home, but maintaining a transnational social field through remittances, correspondences, and at times return migration. Returning home often meant a return to joblessness, limited social mobility, poverty, and landlessness. With more than 200,000 West Indian migrants, the largest labor migration out of the Caribbean was to Panama for its railroad project from 1850 to 1855 and construction of Panama Canal (both French and United States control) from 1891 to 1914.¹³ The Spanish-American War of 1898 also provided avenues for West Indian immigration through Central America into the United States via the banana

¹² Robert Whitney and Graciela Challoux Laffita, *Subjects or Citizens: British Caribbean Workers in Cuba, 1900-1960* (Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 2013), 7.

¹³ Michael Conniff, *Black Labor on a White Canal: Panama, 1904-1981* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 3.

industry.¹⁴ At the close of the Panama Canal project, many traveled to work for the United Fruit Company and Standard Fruit Company plantations in Costa Rica and Honduras, and other Central American labor zones. The companies' and the United States' imperial reach created the paths to early twentieth-century Afro-Caribbean emigration to the United States' North. This is especially true for Jamaicans, Barbadians, and other Western Caribbean and large islanders.

The historiography of migration in the Eastern Caribbean of Dutch and Danish West Indies in the post-abolition period diverges from its British counterparts. In 1863, nearly three decades after their British counterparts and two decades after the French, the Dutch abolished slavery in the Antilles and South America. Unlike the internal pressures and protests to the institution in the United Kingdom, the Dutch government faced no public opposition to slavery. Concerned primarily with slavery in the West Indies, British abolitionists "urged their sympathizers to boycott slave-grown produce in favor of the free-grown produce of India," which included sugar, its byproducts, and cotton.¹⁵ The abolition in the British colonies affected those in the neighboring Dutch West Indian colonies. Maritime marronage was a frequent occurrence before Dutch colonial emancipation in the nearby British colonies of St. Kitts, Anguilla, Nevis, Montserrat, and Antigua. Between 1834 and 1863, shared language and culture facilitated easy movement allowing Statians and other Dutch West Indians to cross colonial boundaries to enact freedom through mobility. Between British abolition and Dutch abolition, the enslaved in the Dutch Antilles crossed empires, freeing themselves and their families through maritime marronage. Enslaved West Indians used the maritime network and changing political

¹⁴ Suzanne Model, *West Indian Immigrants: A Black Success Story?* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), 13.

¹⁵ Eric E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1994 [first edition: 1944]), 183-184.

conditions in the Caribbean to cross through multiple empires, using their knowledge to make a stake for freedom.

Regionally, shipping routes between the Leewards and Central America were limited in the early twentieth century. While other Barbadians and Jamaicans provided the majority of laborers in the Panama Canal and following projects, the Leeward islanders were largely limited to intra-Caribbean projects in nearby islands. Similarly, the same limits to routes to Panama also restricted emigration to Costa Rica's banana plantations. Utilizing the path of the shipping routes, Black laborers were directed from St. Kitts and Nevis to Bermuda, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.¹⁶ Similarly, Statians emigrated to Aruba and Curacao for work on the oil refineries. In the early twentieth century, "whalers on their way to Cape Hatteras began to call on Statia in order to take in supplies. Young Statians enlisted to work on such ships. In 1917, 57 young men left the island, and 20 others did so in 1918."¹⁷ These numbers were significant as the island of St. Eustatius was very small, with only 1,600 people inhabitants in 1884.

After decades of crisscrossing empires through British, Spanish, Dutch, French, and Danish territories, West Indians met in New Bedford with a wealth of knowledge about each other and formed what Bonham Richardson refers to as an "incipient Pan-Caribbean identity"¹⁸, forged in diaspora through migration and interactions of coloniality. The maritime tradition and the proximity of the islands maintained a network of West Indians crisscrossing empires to create secondary and tertiary diasporas during slavery and the post-abolition period. This period of

¹⁶ Bonham C. Richardson, *Caribbean Migrants: Environmental and Human Survival on St. Kitts and Nevis* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983) 110-111.

¹⁷ Norman F. Barka, "Time Lines: Changing Settlement Patterns in St. Eustatius," in *Island Lives: Historical Archaeologies of the Caribbean* edited by Paul Farnsworth (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 138.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

crossing empires established the foundation for the maritime network interconnecting the West Indies, Cape Verde islands, and the United States. The majority settled in New York City, Boston, and Miami, but as demonstrated by this chapter, West Indians made homes in small cities like New Bedford.

Living in the West End: Demography, Occupation, and Residential Settling

Early West Indian settlers in the late nineteenth century mainly lived in the South End of New Bedford in Ward 5, which historically held the largest concentration of Black people, but by the late 1890s, they began to occupy a small segment of the city overlapping the third and fourth wards.¹⁹ For the purposes of this study, the demographical sketch focuses on the densely populated third, fourth, and fifth wards in the census years 1900 and 1910.

In 1900, New Bedford had 1,587 people of African descent. It was a diverse population of African Americans, West Indians, Cape Verdeans, and Afro-Canadians, and a small group from the South Atlantic islands of Georgetown and St. Helena. Most of them resided in the third, fourth, and fifth city wards. Compared to 519 African Americans and Cape Verdeans, there were only 18 first-generation West Indians and 21 second-generation West Indians in the fourth ward. At 564, the fifth ward had the largest number of Black people in the city, but the West Indian community was only 14 people. Ward 3 had 370 people of African descent, but only five were of West Indian descent.

New Bedford had a total population of African-descended people of 2,327 in 1910. Unlike the previous schedule, the 1910 census designated places of birth largely by colonial rulership. This census also introduced “mulatto” as a racial category. Roughly 1,523 people of

¹⁹ National Archives and Records Administration. *Tenth Census of the United States*. 1880. Ancestry.com (Accessed November 13, 2016).

African descent were categorized as mulatto in this census, and of this number, 48 West Indians were designated as mulatto. A number of those categorized as mulatto in this census had been recorded as Black in other records. Thus, I include those considered mulatto in this analysis of Black immigrants as their immigration records and additional census data designate them as African-descended or Black. Even with the additional racial category, the pattern of residential density within the wards as demonstrated in 1900 continued in the 1910s with increasing numbers of first-, second-, and third-generation West Indians living in Ward 4. Of the 405 “Black” and “Mulatto” people living in Ward 4, 93 were West Indians. In Ward 5, there were 26 West Indians in a Black community of 836. Ward 3 community had 466 Black members and 31 West Indians.

This small sample is interesting for two reasons. First, the West Indian population was relatively small compared to the larger Black community, and they tended to cluster around one small area in the city. In the growing community, some rented in the same multi-family residence as other West Indians, and many more lived as direct neighbors and as boarders. The clustering represents the maritime, familial, and ethnic networks they created in the whaling city. The second reasoning for this clustering could relate to restrictive covenants in the area and nearby cities.²⁰ The fact that the majority of Black citizens of New Bedford are concentrated in the three wards demonstrates that, in addition to their ability to choose, they were confined to

²⁰ In 2010, the New Bedford Standard Times newspaper published an advertisement for a foreclosure auction in nearby Fairhaven with a clause that specified it was not for sale, rent, or lease to any person who was not Caucasian; 223; “Foreclosure Ad Sparks Racial Bias Probe,” *The New Bedford-Standard Times* (May 29, 2010) <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20100529/NEWS/5290321?start=2>; “Deeds Hold Painful Reminder of Racism,” *The New Bedford-Standard Times* (June 25, 2010) <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20100725/NEWS/7250327>; Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination Resolves Restrictive Covenant Cases, press release, January 2012 <http://www.mass.gov/mcad/docs/press-releases/2012-01-01-pr-us-bank.pdf>

those neighborhoods. This confinement might have also contributed to the jobs they were able to acquire.

In nearby Boston, Black migrants, both Southerners and immigrants, had a markedly different experience of social mobility than their white counterparts from Europe. For most European immigrants, “The burden of adjustment, the trials of finding a job in a foreign country, and the difficulty in learning customs and a new language were no more than temporary difficulties.”²¹ Within six years, white immigrants who lived in Boston started small business, worked in factories, or practiced a craft. In Boston, Northern-born Black laborers were twice as likely to be employed in menial jobs than second-generation Irish descendants. Black women were one and a half times more likely to be domestics than their American-born Irish counterparts. Black West Indians faced the double hardship as Blacks and as foreigners. In addition to occupational segregation, “Most black Bostonians were virtually shut out of the market for single family homes.”²² They encountered de facto segregation and restrictive covenants that restricted them to the “Nigger Hill” area of Beacon Hill, the Charles River, and the West End.²³

Similarly, New Bedford’s Black residents were largely restricted to two enclaves — the area south of the Mansion district around South Sixth St and Bedford Street and the West End. Called “New Guinea” in the late eighteenth century, the West End had long been a residential enclave for African Americans. As West Indians moved to the city, they faced challenges by virtue of their race and immigrant status. Despite those occupational challenges and residential

²¹ Elizabeth Hafkin Pleck, *Black Migration and Poverty: Boston 1865-1900* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 126

²² Ibid., 37

²³ Ibid., 33

segregation, they demonstrated high levels of social mobility through increased home ownership and, in subsequent generations, access to higher education.

In their developing community, facing the “insidious interplay between race and spatial organizations,” West Indians used their networks in the small city to access housing, acquire skilled and semi-skilled occupations, and set up businesses.²⁴ They maximized their transnational social network in the city and in their homeland to gain a modicum of financial success. Immigrant enclaves “provide an avenue for upward economic mobility to immigrants who are disadvantaged in the labor market of the larger society by promoting positive returns on their human capital that may not otherwise be effectively used outside the enclave economy due to limitations imposed by the host society.”²⁵ Thus, within the enclave, they were upwardly mobile, but it would seem that West Indians faced discrimination in jobs and housing, rendering their upward mobility slow and, at times, stagnant.

As early as 1836, there was a small West Indian presence in New Bedford. In the city of transient mariners and laborers, West Indians were scattered throughout the third, fourth, and fifth wards. In this early period, no cohesive community yet existed. Bermudian²⁶ Charles Simmons was an early settler in the city. For more than 40 years between 1836 and his death in 1872, Simmons and his wife, Amy, a Rhode Island native, resided at 205 Middle Street, a few

²⁴ Johnson, 39.

²⁵ Kazuko Suzuki, “Ethnic Enclaves,” in *Race and Racism in the United States: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic*. Ed. Charles A. Gallagher and Cameron D. Lippard. Vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2014), 413.

²⁶ In this study, Bermuda is considered a part of the wider reach of the West Indies, beyond the geographical boundaries of the region. Through a history of migration, labor, and shared culture by virtue of their proximity to the Caribbean and British colonial administration, Bermudians here are considered West Indians. In 1910, there were only four people of Bermudian descent, which demonstrates that New Bedford did not represent a likely location for Bermudian migrants.

short blocks away from what would become the city's West Indian enclave.²⁷ Though the couple had children, no records of the family remained in New Bedford after Amy Simmons' death in 1883. Another early emigrant was Cruzan James M. Ross, who emigrated in 1862 and remained until his death in 1900.²⁸ In 1880, Ross, his wife Margaret, and their two sons lived in the fourth ward on Kempton Street. By 1900, he lived alone and resided in Ward 2 on 198 Smith Street. He was a local fisherman and sold fish at 210 Middle Street, directly across the street from Amy Simmons, the widow of Charles Simmons.²⁹ As with Simmons, no records of the family remained in New Bedford after Ross's death. Similarly, Barbadian Richard Sanford arrived to New Bedford as a mariner in 1874 aboard the bark vessel the *Osprey*. As with Simmons and Ross before him, Sanford married in the city and raised a family. After resigning from the maritime trade, between 1889 and his death in 1900, Sanford worked as a fruit and confectionary merchant and operated a boarding residence at 127 S. Water Street, the house next to his home at 129 S. Water Street in the fifth ward. After his death, there is no record that the family remained in the city or surrounding area. It is unclear where the Simmons, Ross, and Sanford families went after their deaths.

Few West Indian women were early settlers in New Bedford. Jamaican Nancy Clark and Dominican Rosanna Warfield-Roshur lived in New Bedford in the mid-twentieth century. Not

²⁷ Charles Simmons, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995. *1836 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 14, 2017); National Archives and Records Administration. *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870; New England Historic Genealogical Society, *Massachusetts Vital Records, 1840-1911*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 14, 2017).

²⁸ James Ross, 1880 Federal Census; James Ross, National Archives at Boston, *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950*. Ancestry.com (April 14, 2017); James Ross, New England Historic Genealogical Society, *Massachusetts Vital Records, 1840-1911*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 14, 2017).

²⁹ James Ross, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995. *1879 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 14, 2017).

much is known about Clark and her husband, Archibald, a native-born African American born in Washington D.C. Their record emerges in 1850 in New Bedford, while they were in their 70s living in Ward 6.³⁰ Nancy Clark died prior to Archibald, in 1859, at 81 years old. With no record of either until 1850, it is unclear how they met and chose to live in the Whaling City, but they were likely born into slavery. Despite their early history in the city, the couple did not seem to have any connections with other West Indians, but instead had connections with persons in the maritime trade and local businesses.

In 1858, at 10 years old, Rosanna Warfield-Roshur emigrated from Dominica to the United States. She worked as a servant in Edgartown, Massachusetts, in Martha's Vineyard before marrying New Bedford barber Frank Roshur in 1876. The couple had three children — Sarah, Frank Jr., and George, but only George remained in New Bedford until his death in 1955.³¹ Despite their long-time residence, the Roshurs remained in Ward 5 removed from and with very little connection to the West Indians neighborhood.³² Rosanna Warfield Roshur's age at the time of her emigration might have contributed to her separation from the West Indian community, as the family was unknown to their contemporaries. She might not have seen herself as West Indian, despite her birthplace. This demonstrates that West Indian identity was possibly not as strong for immigrants considered to be part of the 1.5-generation.³³

³⁰ Nancy Clark, Nation Archives and Records Administration. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 15, 2017); New England Historic Genealogical Society. *1855–1865 Massachusetts State Census*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 15, 2017).

³¹ George Roshur, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995. *1952 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 17, 2017).

³² Rosa Roshur, 1900 Federal Census; New England Historic Genealogical Society. *Massachusetts Marriage Records, 1840-1915*, 1876.

³³ The 1.5 generation refers to foreign-born persons that emigrated to the United States prior to the age of 12; Rubén Rumbaut, "Ages, Life Stages, and Generational Cohorts: Decomposing the Immigrant First

As these examples demonstrate, though New Bedford shows evidence of Afro-Caribbean settlers prior to the turn of the century, there was no cohesion to the emergent community. They lived scattered throughout the city, in small numbers, with little opportunity for interaction. Even with the lack of interaction and social networks with other West Indians, through their quotidian lives they foreshadowed and overlapped with the emerging community in their local businesses as fish dealers, confectioners, and boarding house keepers. It was this self-conscious organizing within the fifth ward that created the structure for the subsequent generation of West Indian settlers.

The West Indian community began to take shape with the emigration of 17-year-old Barbadian mariner James Drayton in 1871. Through chain migration and emigration support, marriage networks, and community social interactions, the Drayton family grounded West Indians into the city. Connecting West Indians, Cape Verdeans, and native-born African Americans, Drayton and his family provided the crucial component to the foundation of what would become the city's thriving Afro-Caribbean enclave in the West End of the city for the next century. He joined a small grouping of other Barbadian families — the Sandfords, Wells, Fields, and Carters — in the city's fifth ward, just outside of the West End.³⁴ This small clustering of Barbadians in the fifth ward constituted the first iteration of the enclave that developed at the turn of the century. By the 1890s, moving from the fifth ward to the West End's Ward 4, West

and Second Generations in the United States,” *International Migration Review* Vol. 32, No. 2 (Fall 2004), 1162.

³⁴ The Carter and Fields Family resided in a multi-family unit 9 Cannon St. Josephine Wells and her daughter, Rhoda Wells, and grandson, Joseph Fields, resided at 164 S. Second St. Rhoda Wells and Connor Fields had a son, Joseph who resided with Rhoda and her mother Josephine; 1900 Federal Census.

Indians began to permanently settle, buy homes, join community institutions, and form the tight-knit residential cluster.

The West End's Afro-Caribbean neighborhood of British and Dutch West Indians was mainly bordered by Mill Street to the north, Ash Street to the east, County Street to the west, and Elm Street to the south. It was in this space that West Indians began to develop their immigrant identities and as part of the New Bedford social and racial milieu. By 1900, from the relatively insignificant number of West Indians at the turn of the century, New Bedford grew to 30 first-generation West Indians born and 37 second-generation West Indians. This population grew exponentially in the intercensal period to 150 people of West Indian descent (78 first-generation West Indians, 58 second-generation West Indians, and 14 third generation) in 1910. They represented a small percentage within New Bedford's Black community. In 1900 and 1910, they were only 4% and 6% of the Black population, respectively. Their clustering in the West End (primarily constitutive in Ward 4) demonstrate a much larger percentage amongst people of African descent. In 1900, nearly two-thirds of West Indians lived in the densely populated in the fourth ward and all lived within five city blocks of each other. Similarly, in 1910, 93 West Indians lived in the fourth ward in the residential enclave. Some were zoned in Ward 3 and 5 but the hearth of the community was in that aforementioned boundary. Between 1900 and 1910, the group grew exponentially from 7.5% to 23% of the fourth ward's Black population. The community was divided between Dutch and British West Indians with the highest island concentration coming from the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Eustatius. While most lived within these boundaries, many others lived within walking distance of the neighborhood in surrounding streets.

Though ethnic enclaves are usually understood as part of a stepping stone to assimilation, the residential clustering in their densely packed settlement on Middle, Elm, Kempton, and Ash Streets and self-conscious membership into African-American spaces demonstrate the ways West Indians straddled the line between African American and Afro-Caribbean. The city's relationship with the maritime trade, particularly whaling, kept the culture fresh with the movement of West Indians in and out of the port city. At the kitchen table, they reunited with friends and told tales of "back home" and life on the sea. They shared stories while their children listened. It was in the quotidian spaces, in their homes and on the streets, that the West Indian community formed — a community that was part of Greater New Bedford and the West Indian diaspora but regarded the neighborhood as "one big house."³⁵

Employment and Social Mobility

At the turn of the century, many emigrants were attracted to the whaling and mill manufacturing industries in New Bedford. They worked as seamen, rope makers in the New Bedford Cordage Factory buttressed up against Ash Street, and spinners and mill operators in the local textile factories. Due to the proximity to the wharves, docks, and mills of wards three, four, and five, it is unsurprising that many first- and second-generation West Indians were attracted to these industries. In 1900, six Afro-Caribbeans were employed in skilled and professional trades. Among them were a baker, barber, carpenter, moulder, preacher, nurse, and mill operator. Others³⁶ held semi-skilled trades as domestics, rope makers, dressmakers, spinners, janitors, teamsters, and porters. The remaining jobs were maritime trades and unskilled laborers, a blanket

³⁵ Linda Whyte Burrell *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, in discussion with interviewer Laura Orleans, January 21, 1999 Tape 1 Side B.

³⁶ In 1900, there were 6 domestics, 2 porters, 2 rope makers, 2 spinners, 2 janitors, 1 dressmaker, 1 teamster and 1 waiter among the first- and second- West Indians.

term for a variety of low-skilled jobs. There were 10 unskilled laborers, five of whom were sailors/seamen. Seamen were common among first-generation immigrants, but the trend did not extend to the second or third generation. For the immigrants, whaling was part of the culture as “a matter of almost daily life,” and many gained access to a better life outside of their islands through whale ships.³⁷ Though none in the second generation were seamen, they may have been involved as cooks or porters on ships and shore-side.

There were more skilled and professional laborers among the first generation than the second. In 1900, more first-generation immigrants were of employable age, which might account for the difference, but in 1910 the trend remained, even as the second generation aged. By avoiding maritime work, it would seem that second-generation West Indians were afforded different opportunities than their parents, but they might have come into contact with the racial milieu of the United States and New Bedford, forcing them into unskilled labor. This discrepancy could also be accounted for by the selective nature of migration whereby the highly skilled had more access to emigration opportunities than those who remained.

Caribbean teachers and doctors, clerks and accountants, dressmakers and seamstresses, tailors and carpenters, emigrated to the United States in disproportionately large numbers compared to their unskilled compatriots. Between 1899 and 1931, 37.9 percent of the black immigrants with occupations were skilled (averaging 35.6 percent from 1899 to 1905, rising to 52.4 percent from 1927 to 1931). These figures should not be surprising, since the immigration laws, especially before 1965, have always favored the highly skilled.³⁸

This is further substantiated by colonial correspondences in the Leeward Islands. In response to J. Sturge of the Montserrat Company’s concern with the number of emigrants leaving the island,

³⁷ William Kydd Jr., *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, in discussion with William L. Kydd Jr., Catherine Kydd, and Vivian Kydd, 1968, Tape 1, Side 1: Transcript pg. pg.4

³⁸ Winston James, “Explaining Afro-Caribbean Social Mobility in the United States: Beyond the Sowell Thesis,” *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* (2002), 226-227

T.A.V. Best, acting governor of Montserrat stated, “Only the lettered class, i.e., those who consider themselves above manual labour, go to America. This number is small.”³⁹

The whaling industry declined from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1920s and was mainly supported by the sale of whalebones for corsets. The city shifted to industrial works in textile manufacturing and other types of factory work. The city’s largest ropeworks company, New Bedford Cordage Company, lined the western side of the West End but did not begin hiring people of color until the turn of the twentieth century. Black people were largely kept out of the textile mills and factories as laborers but often served in janitorial work.⁴⁰ In 1900, only four West Indians worked in the cotton mills and ropeworks company, but by 1910, 10 were employed in a variety of different factories and mills in the city. Though there was a general increase in factory laborers in the intercensal period, most Blacks were largely restricted from employment. Despite restrictions from the factories, in 1910, first- and second-generation West Indians showed an increase of employment in professional, skilled, and semi-skilled labor. Though 17 were classified as laborers, with the 1910 census implementation of the categories of “Industry” in addition to “Occupation,” it was easier to discern, with greater accuracy, the kinds of employment citizens were engaged in, as well as skill-set. Among the first generation’s skilled and professional workers, there were two barbers, carpenters, and masons, as well as a physician, dentist apprentice, stationary engineer, and three bakers. Of these 17 laborers, 10 worked “odd jobs” and in “private homes,” while the others demonstrated increased diversity in their fields.

³⁹ T.A.V. Best, Acting Governor of Montserrat to J. Sturge of the Montserrat Company, May 20, 1915. British National Archive CO 152/346/5

⁴⁰ Kathryn Grover, “Part Two: African American, West Indian, and St. Helenian Whalemen and Whaling Tradespeople in New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1825-1925” (New Bedford: National Park Service, n.d.), 209.

As the less dangerous, steady work in cotton mills and shoe factories opened in New Bedford and Providence, white laborers abandoned whaling, leaving opportunities for African Americans, West Indians, and Cape Verdeans. These opportunities were exploitative, dangerous and low paying. On average, two-thirds of the whaling voyage profits went to the owners, and the other third was divided among the crew. The boatsteerers, ship carpenters, cooks, and stewards, typically the whalemens in the lower ranks, were paid considerably less than their skilled seamen counterparts.⁴¹ Cooks and carpenters were often positions occupied by Blacks.⁴² Barbadian James Drayton emigrated as a mariner, but in his early years in New Bedford he worked as a carpenter. Due to his previous work on the ships, it is likely that he served on the shore-side as a ship carpenter. He maintained this job for 20 years between 1880 and 1900. He later worked a series of odd jobs as a laborer and eventually worked in the oil factory as a steamer.⁴³ In 1959, William Lydney Kydd reflected on his life as a mariner on the ship the *William A. Grozier*. After four months of labor and the prorated deductions for a pair of heavy boots and “two suits of underwear and two shirts, and a big heavy coat,”⁴⁴ William Lydney Kydd, a boatsteerer from Bequia, only made \$74.⁴⁵

In 1910, the number of West Indians involved with the maritime industry increased to 15, which included a captain of a barge, 11 seamen and sailors, a fisherman, a longshoreman, and one ubiquitously working in “whaling.” In addition to maritime work, four laborers worked on

⁴¹ Boatsteerers reportedly earned 60 percent of shore-side skilled wages while carpenters, cooks, and stewards earned less than half of those wages; Grover, 168.

⁴² Grover, 168, 180.

⁴³ 1920 United States Federal Census.

⁴⁴ William L. Kydd, Sr., *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, in discussion with William L. Kydd Jr., Catherine Kydd, and Vivian Kydd, 1968, Tape 1, Side 2: Transcript pg.12

⁴⁵ Ibid.

the shore-side on docks, coal packets, and in a steamboat company. Only two of the 19 mariners and shore-side laborers were second-generation West Indians. Second-generation Barbadian James Drayton Jr. and Samuel Burgland from the “Holland West Indies” worked as laborers on a coal packet, a transport ship. Burgland lived with his brother in law, Kittian Robert Woodley, a teamster for the coal company. Drayton and Burgland retained ties to the maritime industry and likely worked for the same coal company as Woodley. Others, like Sargin Griggs, William A. Henwood, and Frank Houtman, were cooks on ships, and Frank Roshur, a second-generation Dominican, was a steward at “sea.”

Despite the diversity and the maintenance of maritime work, by 1910, it was largely restricted to the first-generation. West Indians continued to dominate service work in private homes, boarding houses, and laundry services. Women capitalized on their labor in the domestic sphere. As opposed to the previous decade, by 1910 more West Indian women worked from home or operated their own businesses. At 21 years old, second-generation St. Kittian Ethel Coblins was a milliner with her own shop. Sarah Houtman Irons was a dressmaker operating out of her own home; she later was the keeper of a boarding home. Anna Drayton Hazell also operated a boarding home in her family residence. Laundresses like second-generation Dominican Sarah Roshur and Barbadian Josephine Wells did laundry services in their homes. These various economic activities took place within the home, allowing women to gain a sense of employment and economic freedom within their households. These establishments required someone to keep the home in order, cook, clean, perform laundry services, collect rent, and if necessary provide childcare. Boarders provided necessary additional income for low-income Black families. Overall, most women did not report an occupation to census enumerators, but by virtue of the

frequency of boarding and lodging, women were employed providing the food and laundry services for their tenants.

At the turn of the twentieth century, home ownership in the West End among West Indians was low. In 1900, only two West Indian heads of household, Statians Robert Coblins and George Winfield, owned homes. In the intercensal period, the number doubled to five to include Statians William Fabio, Peter Houtman, and George Miggins. Though they did not own homes in the enclave, many West Indians rented and boarded. In 1900, 17 were listed as boarders and lodgers; within a decade, the number nearly doubled to 32.⁴⁶ It is possible that the low homeownership rates among West Indians in the first decade of the twentieth century can be attributed to the types of employment they had access. As noted above, most were employed in unskilled and semi-skilled labor; however, access to lucrative employment was not the only factor contributing to homeownership rates in New Bedford. Boarding allowed flexibility to move and take up new residence without major repercussions. The transient nature of boarding might have been desirable for West Indians who might have been using the port city as a primary point before emigrating elsewhere. Low homeownership in the first decade of 1900 could also be attributed to the need to build capital after emigrating.

Recalling his first voyage, Kydd explained that boardinghouses exploited seaman with high rental fees. His friend informed him that most whalers should not settle on land until they had a lot of money. The network West Indians created in the West End mitigated much of the exploitation, as those who boarded once returned the favor to new residents. Boarding arrangements were economically advantageous for the boarder as well as the hosts. In periods of unemployment, the host family deferred rent and/or accepted services in exchange for room and

⁴⁶ Limited to boarders over the age of 14.

board. In harsh economic times, boarders pooled their income with other members of the household and provided household and childcare services that freed mothers to take jobs important for supporting their family.

Boarding also demonstrated the networks provided within the West Indian enclave. In 1900, 10 of the 16 West Indian boarders and lodgers resided in the same house; similarly, in 1910, 21 of the 29 West Indians boarders and lodgers resided with other West Indians boarders. Frequently, they boarded in the homes of native-born African Americans and other West Indians. By the 1910s, several West Indians operated boarding homes in the West End. It was well known that Robert Coblins ran a boarding house for West Indian men in the 1910s and 1920s that acted as a way station until they could get on their feet. Sarah Irons, a Houtman sister from St. Eustatius, operated a boarding home out of her home on 10 West High Street, which she shared with her African-American husband and children. In 1920, 11 men, mainly from St. Eustatius and a few from St. Kitts and Antigua, boarded with the Irons family. For West Indian women like Sarah Irons and Anna Hazell, managing boarding homes was an economic necessity, altering the premise of women staying at home to include the labor of domestic affairs.

Boarding provided a gateway to permanent settlement in the city. George Harris Miggins, a St. Kittian baker boarded in the home of African American Hugh Coles in 1900. By 1910, Miggins owned a home on Maxfield Street in the third ward. Similarly, physician Edward Osborne emigrated from Montserrat in 1898 and initially boarded at 37 S. 2nd Street in 1910. By 1921, he owned 259 Acushnet Avenue, where he lived and ran his private medical practice.⁴⁷ Others had familial connections that grounded them to the city. For example, St. Kittian Charles Timber was one of the few West Indians who boarded in a boarding house at 428 Kempton

⁴⁷ 1910 United States Federal Census; 1920 United States Federal Census; Edward D. Osborne, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *1921 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com. (Accessed December 2, 2016).

Street. His brother, Aaron Timber, also lived in New Bedford and emigrated a few years prior. Both John W. Houtman and his brother Robert Houtman lodged in the same home in 1900 and later settled into the city, marrying and purchasing homes in the fourth ward. Many others continued to rent indefinitely. As in the case of Miggins, Dr. Osborne, Timber, and the Houtmans, boarding often provided avenues for permanent settlement in the city.

By the second decade of the twentieth century, first- and second-generation immigrants acquired land and homes. Within the enclave, West Indians were able to access increased levels of economic stability that was denied to them in the larger community by virtue of their jobs and residential segregation. Though they were restricted from jobs and relegated to semi-skilled and unskilled labor, the enclave provided access to affordable housing, tenants, and economic upward mobility. Many owned multiple properties in the West End. William Kydd co-owned the Clover Leaf building, a bright green multi-use property on the southeast corner of Kempton and Ash Streets, where he and two other owners, Xenophon Thomas and William W. Nelson, rented the top floors and operated the first floor as a meeting space.⁴⁸ The Clover Leaf Building hosted dances and frequently hosted meetings of the UNIA, of which Kydd, Edward Osborne, and others were members. Statian George Groebe, living at 310 Ash Street referred to as “the homestead,” owned many tenement houses in the enclave, including 311 Ash Street and three houses on Middle Street — 268 Middle Street, 270 Middle Street, and 272 Middle Street. Groebe owned a soda shop on the lower floor of the property at 268 Middle Street.⁴⁹ Dutch West Indian

⁴⁸ Yvonne Drayton (granddaughter of William L. Kydd) in discussion with the author, New Bedford, April 11, 2017 and April 16, 2017 (hereafter referred to as Yvonne Drayton Interview A and B, respectively).

⁴⁹ Linda Whyte Burrell (granddaughter of William L. Kydd) in discussion with the author, New Bedford April 18, 2017; Dr. Henry Groebe (grandson of George Groebe), in discussion with the author, May 11, 2017 (hereafter referred to as Dr. Henry Groebe Interview).

Aubrey Bennett had his own barbershop and ran a billiards room.⁵⁰ With small resources, within the enclave West Indians were able to maximize their holdings and develop the thriving neighborhood that lasted until 1973.

In her study on West Indians in Boston, Violet Showers Johnson states, “Unlike most European immigrants arriving in the same period, West Indians seldom entered Boston in family units.”⁵¹ The same is true for New Bedford. The marriage records, city directories, and the 1900 and 1910 census data reveal that most West Indian men and women emigrated as single, unmarried people without children. Many reconnected with families through chain migration and re-established homeland familial relationships in the city.

The 1900 census reflects that 20 people of West Indian descent were married. Of this group: 16 were first generation and four were second-generation; 18 were men. Of the 18 married men, 12 married native-born African-American women, and two of these men married women who had at least one parent who was a non-West Indian Black immigrant⁵², one married a white woman of Scottish and Canadian descent, two married second-generation West Indian women, and three married women of unknown ethnic background. Among the West Indian women, two second-generation West Indian women were married; one of whom married a first-generation West Indian man. In 1900, no West Indian woman was married to a native-born African American nor any man who was not of African-descent. There were five widowed first- and second-generation West Indians living in New Bedford, two of whose records were recoverable — Jane Newton Drayton and Rosa Wordfield/Warfield Roshur. Mrs. Drayton of

⁵⁰ Aubrey Bennett, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *W.A. Greenbough Co.'s 1931 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com. (Accessed April 13, 2017)

⁵¹ Johnson, 49.

⁵² St. Helena and Canada.

Barbados was previously married in Barbados to James Drayton, the father of the New Bedford pioneer settler of the same name. Dominican Rosa Wordfield/Warfield Roshur married New Bedford-born Frank Roshur in 1876.

In the 1910 census, the marriage pattern begins to reflect the changing demography of the West Indian community. The increase in first-generation West Indians also corresponded with the increase in endogamous marriages among the first- and second-generation inhabitants. With the increase of first-generation women emigrating to New Bedford, there also was a marked increase of West Indian women marrying first- and second-generation men. The number of first-generation marriages increased from zero to six in the intercensal period. There was also an increase in cross-generational marriages from zero to four. Despite the increase in endogamous marriages, the numbers of West Indian women continued to lag behind West Indian men, thus most married West Indian men opted to marry native-born African-American women.

This sample is small but provides two valuable insights. As the table below demonstrates, though their numbers were smaller, first- and second- generation West Indian women were far more likely to marry first- or second-generation men than they were to marry New Bedford's native-born African-American majority. One could imply from the data that the increase of first-generation and cross-generation marriages among the men demonstrates that if West Indian women's numbers were higher, they might also choose to practice endogamy. These insights demonstrate that there might be cultural and social reasoning behind marriage choices in the West Indian community. The family economy was a valuable part of immigrants' experiences in the United States. It "stood as the broker between the immigrants and the larger ... American society" and served to aid in "the retention and practice of homeland cultures."⁵³ The imagined

⁵³ Johnson, 54.

retention of homeland is demonstrated via marriage but also through the grouping of the enclave, as well as shared participation in community-organized events.

Yvonne Drayton, the granddaughter of William L. Kydd, suggested that the preponderance of endogamous marriage among West Indian women had less to do with cultural retention and more to do with the available choices in the segmented community. In her recollection, West Indian women married West Indian men because of prevailing racial and ethnic strictures that kept everyone in their particular place. She noted that most native-born African Americans claimed partial Native American/indigenous heritage and often did not want to be married to Black women, and that Cape Verdeans tended to marry within their ethnic groups. Cape Verdeans had a much larger population and were densely clustered in the South End, so choosing a partner within their enclave did not prove as difficult. Drayton claims that it was only in her generation that there was more intermixing between Cape Verdeans and West Indians. Her childhood neighbor and long-term friend, Dr. Henry Groebe, was of mixed West Indian and Cape Verdean parentage.

There is also the possibility that marriage served an economic and social function in the chain migration enacted by West Indians. The second-generation daughters might have been conscripted into these marriages as part of an emigration scheme. The fictional account in *Brown Girl, Brownstones* exposes the ways Barbadian women, and presumably others, saw marriage as a critical part of the social reproduction of Caribbean culture, but also as part of a central economic component in emigration schemes. ‘Gatha Steed, a first-generation Barbadian-New Yorker, forced her daughter into marrying a Barbadian man to ensure his immigration.’⁵⁴ It is possible that the second generation of West Indian women was conscripted into marrying first-

⁵⁴ Paule Marshall, *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (New York: Random House, 1959), 60, 116-118.

generation men. For whichever reason, endogamous marriages committed by Afro-Caribbean women persisted for multiple generations. For example, one of William L. Kydd's daughters, Leonora Kydd, married Barbadian-Panamanian emigrant Darcey Whyte. Their daughter, Yvonne Whyte married Fall River resident of Barbadian descent, Joseph Drayton. In addition to shoring up their community via marriage, immigrants extended their networks to facilitate the reunification of their families through chain migration.

From early on, West Indian men aided in the migration of loved ones. On passenger list records, new migrants told examining officials that they were joining siblings, parents, and friends. The chain migration pattern suggests, "Reunification more often than not was also worked into the plan."⁵⁵ For example, within seven years of his emigration, James Drayton's mother joined him and his family in 1878. By 1880, the family consisted of James and Ada Drayton with their four children and two mothers-in-law. The short time between his emigration and his mother's suggests that there was a plan to support his mother's emigration. She lived with the family until her death in 1900. Siblings, parents, and cousins joined friends and family from the home country. In addition to his brothers, Kittian/Statian Aaron Timber's cousin Alvin May joined him in 1917. Robert Coblins welcomed his sister and brother, as well as his niece and nephew, to New Bedford. After William Kydd emigrated, his sister Jane and brother Lawrence joined him in the city. All of them indelibly wove themselves into the community fabric as they settled in the city, joined clubs and associations, and married.

As West Indians embarked on the city, they were immersed in a diverse ethnic Black community serviced by the AME and AMEZ churches. They also found themselves among other West Indians of Dutch, British, Spanish, and French colonial backgrounds. West Indians,

⁵⁵ Johnson, 50.

through the purchase of their homes, boarding, rentals, and businesses, surrounded the churches and made the neighborhood their own. These network connections formed the basis of the New Bedford West Indian community. From the level of the street, this small community developed within the confines of the West End. They forged bonds through marriage and a shared cultural and ethnic connection. Their experiences as emigrants with a long chain of migration fueled by the maritime industry served as a route for friends and family in the West Indies. As they reconnected in New Bedford, they used their networks to establish a strong community that was constitutive of and separate from the native-born African-American community.

Demographically, they represented a small portion of the Black community, but within the fourth ward, they grew exponentially and demonstrated an increasing sense of cohesion among members. Unlike their cohorts in other cities, New Bedford's West Indians used their local neighborhood and family connections to reform institutionalized social and cultural organizations into new social networks. The next chapter discusses five families, the Draytons, Coblins, Timbers, Kydds, and Fabios, to examine the inner workings of these family networks as they replaced formal organizations. Within these families, the heads of households often served as central nodes, connecting individual members to the greater community and entrenching the family into the social fabric of the West Indian community for several generations.

Chapter Two: “Like I Said, ‘Everybody Is a Cousin’¹: New Bedford’s West Indian Familial *Social Networks*

“There wasn’t a day that went by that there weren’t West Indians in my grandfather’s home.”² In recalling his childhood in the West End, third-generation New Bedford resident of mixed West Indian-Cape Verdean descent Dr. Henry Groebe remembered his Statian grandparents’ home as a central hub in the West Indian community. They sat in the parlor and on the porch, spoke *Papiamentu*³ in hushed tones, smoked cigarettes, and shared stories of the homeland over drinks while he quietly listened in the room. Like his friends and neighbors, the Kydds, he regarded the neighborhood as one large home whereby he stated, “Everybody is a cousin.” In noting their relationship, Groebe demonstrates that there were multiple layered connections in their families, in their homes, and in the street that intersected and overlapped in the small community.

New Bedford’s West Indians were bound by ties of blood and proximity, and were replenished by a consistent stream of migration that kept their families and friends connected. They were largely from the Eastern Caribbean, namely St. Eustatius, Barbados, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. United through their work as seamen and their familial connections, they converged in New Bedford. From a small clustering of four Barbadian families in the 1880s, the community came to fruition in the 1930s with more than 30 families living in the densely packed West End neighborhood. Many of them were familiar with each other in their homeland,

¹ Dr. Henry Groebe (grandson of George Groebe), in discussion with the author, New Bedford, May 11, 2017.

² Ibid.

³ Papiamentu is a Creole language of Indigenous, West African, Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese languages spoken in the Caribbean, most notably in the Netherlands Antilles.

maintaining these relationships across the distance and in New Bedford. At the street level and in their homes, the West Indian kith and kin established long-term links that insulated and maintained a sense of community for more than three generations. These relationships supplanted the need for formal organizations and, therefore, unlike other West Indian settlements in the diaspora, they did not create ethnic homeland societies or sports teams as many did in nearby New York City and Boston.

Instead, New Bedford's West Indians became leaders and members in older, established organizations, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. They created small, ephemeral music clubs, cricket clubs, and traveled to New York's Orange Benevolent Society's annual balls. It was through the neighborhood associations that New Bedford's West Indians transformed conventional forms of social networks in homeland societies and ethnic-based institutions to encompass local, familial units. Traditionally, homeland societies organized around ethnic or national origin and offered their members several social, economic, and cultural benefits. Within these organizations, West Indians and other Black immigrants maintained their ethnic and cultural solidarity, as well as provided mutual aid for new immigrants.

Scholars have determined that immigrants' organizations serve several purposes for newly arrived immigrants, settled immigrants, and the second and third generations. Sociologist Ira de A. Reid suggested that Black immigrant form organizations with three main purposes — providing “economic and political adjustment in the United States, mutual benefit organizations, and organizations to foster and perpetuate desirable conditions in and relations with the homeland.”⁴ In his estimation, these organizations were utilitarian, offering services for

⁴ Ira de A. Reid, *The Negro Immigrant: His Background, Characteristics, and Social Adjustment, 1899-1937* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 159-160.

emigrants and their families across a diasporic field with attention to conditions abroad and in the homeland. Rather than focusing on cultural retention for first and subsequent generations, these organizations serve a specific purpose toward settlement and assimilation. In her study on early twentieth century West Indians in Boston, historian Violet Showers Johnson advanced Reid's suggestions and offered other units as part of the social organization formed by Black immigrants, such as family economies and the churches. Family economies here expand beyond the boundaries of the city and include the homeland in a web of social and economic relations. Boston's West Indians pooled income for survival, but a portion was always dedicated to "other expenses like sending remittances to relatives still living in the West Indies, paying passages for family members to emigrate to Boston or some other destination, and footing the initial cost of helping the new arrivals adjust."⁵ Through collective resources, Black immigrants created institutions like churches, voluntary organizations, and mutual aid and ethnic-homeland societies through which individuals pooled their resources to purchase items for the benefit of their communities. In this context, the family and neighborhood institutions prove to be important parts of the social network created by immigrants in diaspora. For Johnson, the associations could be further separated into country/island, pan-West Indian, and by affinity group, specifically sports clubs. Thus, Black immigrant organizations provided more than utilitarian services and offered a wide range of services for every day, quotidian socialization and heterosocial relations among countrymen.

With specificity to Caribbean Americans, Bert Thomas argued that their benevolent societies served three main functions — maintaining strong ethnic-specific solidarity, securing such economic benefits as jobs and social welfare for each other, and establishing links with the

⁵ Violet Showers Johnson, *The Other Black Bostonians: West Indians in Boston, 1900-1950* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 54.

surrounding African-American community.⁶ Similar to Thomas' discussion on the role of benevolent associations, Irma Watkins-Owens argued that on the local level, the ethnic-based benevolent societies nurtured ethnic identities and provided economic stability and support for their members. For both scholars, West Indians institutionalized their ethnic presence through their work as credit and loan unions, collecting money to help people purchase homes, and funding scholarships. Caribbean homeland associations regularly brought older and more recent immigrants together for social, educational, and charitable functions.

Studies conducted on New York and Boston's Black immigrant populations demonstrate the multitude of ways they structured their social networks, both for cultural means and for mutual aid. Both New York and Boston had diverse West Indian ethnic populations from the British, Dutch, French, and Spanish Caribbean islands, as well as British-held North Atlantic Island, Bermuda. Within these large cities, spread out across neighborhoods, Black immigrants might have felt compelled to organize to maintain a sense of cultural and ethnic identity and seen their membership in these organizations as part of a means to give back to their homeland.

For the West Indians in New Bedford, as a much smaller community in a smaller city, concentrated in an enclave, the local network supplanted the necessity of formal, structured organizations. Though they did not establish formal ethnic associations, on the street level, as neighbors and kin, they came together and supported each other. Several members of the community housed new emigrants and aided in securing jobs for them. They sponsored each other's naturalization paperwork and helped with contracts. Though scholars previously disaggregated homeland societies from the neighborhood and individual level, this study seeks to

⁶ Bert J. Thomas. "Historical Functions of Caribbean-American Benevolent/Progressive Associations." *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 12 no. 2 (July 1988) http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:bsc:&rft_dat=xri:bsc:ft:iibp:00299047 (Accessed 4/20/2014): n.p.

engage this dialogue by expanding the idea of ethnic-based institutions to include the family and street level. As Johnson demonstrated, families represented economies that extended to the homeland, in this study familial social networks do the similar work of homeland societies in their preservation of culture, mutual aid, assistance to new emigrants, financial assistance to family that remained at home, and establishing spaces for new and long-term emigrants to engage in heterosocial interactions.

By reviewing New Bedford's West Indians as constituting a network rather than through the deficit that they did not have social units, this study suggests that their family, local institutions, and homes within the West End neighborhood were operationalized to enact the specific goals of the homeland society without the need for formalized organizations. Though they did not form any organizations with ethnic specificity, West Indians demonstrated a high sense of ethnic solidarity as demonstrated through their housing practices, as well as their willingness to travel to maintain connections with distant homeland societies, such as the Orange Benevolent Society. It is telling that though they were aware of neighboring cities' homeland societies, they chose not to form their own. With their proximity and ethnic homogeneity, West Indians in the West End used their neighborhood and familial connections to replace homeland societies and operationalize them on the quotidian level. The West End was one big neighborhood, reconnecting families and friends. These reconnections formed the basis of the social network that supplanted the need for formal homeland societies as their primary social institution.

In the small quotidian spaces, in their homes and in the streets, West Indian families provided the services of homeland societies. In this way, the neighborhood itself acted as an institution for these familial units. These homosocial spaces opened opportunities for first-,

second-, and third-generation West Indians to interact and engage, leading to membership in several organizations, intermarriage, ethnic solidarity, and mutual aid for newly arrived immigrants. On the streets of New Bedford and in their homes, they maintained their connections over the course of generations within the enclave.

To illustrate these connections over the course of three generations, in this chapter I examine five British and Dutch West Indian families — the Draytons, Coblinses, Timbers, Kydds, and Fabios. This examination of these selected families demonstrates that the West Indian network connection was indeed family-based and expanded through their proximity to each other, familial relationships, endogamous marriages, and various memberships in local churches. Further, this examination provides a direct, street-level view into the lives and connections these families established in the West End. Through featuring their work, oral history, family trees, and recollections from their relatives and loved ones, this chapter seeks to provide a glimpse into the inner lives and narratives of this unique Black immigrant group. It is through the intimate spaces of their familial network that they formed the basis of the long-standing generational connections that are maintained today.

Draytons

It is important to begin with James Drayton, one of the pioneers of New Bedford's West Indian families. Though West Indians had a small presence in the city since the early nineteenth century, there was no cohesion among the individual families until James Drayton settled in the city. Drayton emigrated from Barbados to New Bedford in 1871, and in 1874 he married Ada Blackburn, an African-American woman from Washington D.C. The family lived among a small cluster of Barbadian emigrant families. Unlike West Indian families that settled later, in the early

twentieth century, the Draytons lived in Ward 5 at the edge of the South End, rather than Ward 4's West End. Between 1881 and 1917, they rented homes at 8 Cannon Street, 104 S. Water Street, 2 Coffin Street, and 199 S. Water Street. The family was well known among the newly arrived West Indian immigrants as a central location for temporary boarding and help with settling. Though the Ward 5 settlement was not a comparable neighborhood community to its twentieth century successor, this was the initial area where West Indians settled. Drayton may have been drawn to the site as a result of his connection with other early settlers, such as his countryman and fellow mariner Richard Sanford.

At the turn of the twentieth century, James and Ada's children, Charles H., Anna, James Jr., and Albertina, joined other West Indians in the West End. As discussed previously, Drayton initially emigrated as a mariner but in later years held an assortment of occupations, including a carpenter, watchman, and steamer for an oil company. Unlike his West Indian friends, like William Kydd, and neighbors in the city, James Drayton never owned property. His lack of formal education and inability to read and write likely contributed to his seeming lack of social mobility.⁷ Though Drayton himself did not procure property, his children were able to buy homes and settle in the developing West End neighborhood. His son, Charles Drayton, was the first of the family to leave the fifth ward when he lived in the King residence at 67 Ash Street in 1902. James Jr. quickly followed, taking up residence at 80 Cedar Street. Anna and Albertina Drayton relocated to the fourth ward in the 1910s after they were married.

When Charles was boarding in the King home, he met his second wife, Emma King. His parents-in-law, the Kings, were native-born African Americans. Isaiah King was a Civil War veteran born in Washington D.C., and Sarah Brown King, his wife, was the first of her family

⁷ 1880 United States Federal Census.

born in in New Bedford, all others were from Anacostia, Maryland. Charles Drayton's previous wife, Edith Hull, was a native-born African American from Rhode Island. In 1898, she died shortly after they married. Charles and Edith's child, Lucy, remained living with her grandfather, James Drayton, until his death in 1931. In 1902, Charles married Emma King and the couple had five children — Charles Clifton "Cliff," Elton, Althea, Lawrence, and Lester. The family remained at the King residence until 1913 when they purchased a home in the center of the West End at 344 Middle Street.

By the time they moved to the Middle Street property, the West Indian enclave was fully developed. Their neighbors, the Coblins, had long lived at 310 Middle Street, and many others rented and boarded within the small neighborhood. In addition to proximity, West Indians were building familial connections via marriage. The Draytons were already familiar with the Kydd family because Jane Ethelin Kydd boarded at their home, but in 1908, the Draytons and Kydds became related by marriage. Vincentian William L. Kydd married Charles's sister in law, Clara King. That year, Charles invited William to a picnic hosted by the Drayton and Kydd families. William Kydd recalls, "... We arrived down to Drayton, you know Jim Drayton, he was the man who used to live down there. ... So, we all went out there, had like a picnic at night and went out. ... Drayton's father, this Cliff Drayton's father (Charles Drayton), was going with my wife's sister see, her name was Emma. So, we all knew each other, ... so we all went there one night, ... and that's when I met Clara."⁸

The West End provided a space for West Indian families to converge and interact in the first decade of the twentieth century. Other members of the Drayton household served as important nodes in the community. After moving to the West End, in 1904, James Drayton Jr.

⁸ William L. Kydd, Sr., *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, in discussion with William L. Kydd Jr., Catherine Kydd, and Vivian Kydd, 1968, Tape 1, Side 2: Transcript pg.15

married into a mixed West Indian-African American family. Both of his wife Margaret Carter's sisters, Helen and Clara, married West Indian men. First, in 1899, Massachusetts-born Helen Carter married Cyril Armstrong, a mariner from Barbados. After Armstrong died in 1904 from pulmonary tuberculosis, she remarried William Henwood, a Stadian emigrant, in 1908. Her other sister, Clara Carter, married Richard Haddocks, a Stadian sailor, in 1900. James Jr. and Margaret Drayton moved around the fourth ward — and briefly in Ward 3 — until they purchased their home at 334 Middle Street in 1927, two doors away from his brother.

Though the Drayton men married African-American women, Anna and Albertina Drayton both married first-generation West Indian men. Anna Drayton married Charles Hazell, a Stadian mariner, in 1902. Hazell emigrated from St. Eustatius in 1880, but it is unclear where he first settled. In addition to his work as a mariner, Hazell was a carpenter, likely affiliated with the maritime industry in the offseason. Presumably, he worked the trade with his father-in-law, James Drayton, with whom the Hazells resided until 1917. Though Charles and Anna Hazell purchased their home at 280 Elm Street in 1911, the growing family did not reside in their home until 1918. Like the Drayton brothers, the Hazells lived in the center of the West Indian neighborhood. Anna's father James Drayton lived with the family in 1919. James Sr. might have moved in with his daughter to support her after Charles Hazell's ship, the *Ellen A. Swift*, was lost at sea that same year.⁹ After Hazell's death, Anna began working as a domestic. After her death in 1922, James Drayton became the primary caregiver of her children — Henry, James, Frances, and Annette — and of his granddaughter, Lucy. He remained in the home until his death in

⁹ Kathryn Grover, "Part Two: African American, West Indian, and St. Helenian Whalemen and Whaling Tradespeople in New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1825-1925" (New Bedford: National Park Service, n.d.), 222.

1931.¹⁰ After his death, Lucy moved in with her niece Frances (Hazell) Houtman and her husband Williston, a second-generation Statian. In 1917, Albertina Drayton married Cardinal Ollivierre from Bequia. Ollivierre arrived in the United States in 1912. It is possible that he was related to or knew of the Kydd family, as two of the Kydd sisters, Jane and Lydia, married into the Ollivierre family in Bequia. They had four children: Cardinal M. Jr., Claudine, Shadrack, Verona, and Darrel. The family moved around the West End until settling in their 157 Emerson Street rental home. When they first married, the Ollivierres lived at 6 Chestnut Street in the home of second-generation Statian Ethel (Coblins Mars) Kydd and her husband, Lawrence Kydd, from Bequia.¹¹ They later rented from the Kydds while they lived at the former Coblins house at 310 Middle Street.

The Draytons were already established in the city and had multiple connections with West Indian families within it. Their home served as a gateway for new emigrants and connected the emerging community through familial relations. When Jane Ethelin Kydd emigrated in 1904 to join her brother, William L. Kydd, she stayed at the Draytons' home at 199 S. Water Street. At the time, William was an unmarried boatsteerer, frequently out of town on the William A. Grozier ship, and was a boarder in the city and on the ship. It's likely that Kydd made contact with Drayton through their maritime work and established a relationship that facilitated Jane's boarding in his home. After her arrival, Jane Kydd married Newton Ollivierre and the couple

¹⁰ James Drayton, New England Historic Genealogical Society, *Massachusetts Vital Records Index to Deaths [1916–1970]*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 16, 2016).

¹¹ Cardinal M. Ollivierre, United States Selective Service System, *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918* (hereafter referred to as WWI Draft Registration). Ancestry.com (Accessed December 20, 2016).

moved to Perth Amboy, New Jersey, before returning to Bequia shortly after.¹² The couple probably met at the Drayton home where Ollivierre held residence as late as 1906.¹³

Additionally, James Drayton served as a character witness in the naturalization application for his friends, Statians Robert Coblins and George Miggins.¹⁴ Both men emigrated prior to the turn of the century and had been residents in the West End neighborhood that would become West Indian central since their arrival to the city. Though Drayton did not live there, his willingness to act as witness demonstrates a high level of recognition among West Indians in the city, despite separation.

The neighborhood was small, each West Indian within a short walking distance of another. This connectedness via proximity facilitated the development of familial relations and a network of intra-community dependency. In lieu of mutual aid societies, individual community members gave to others through financial contributions, providing housing to family and friends, and serving as a witness for naturalization applications.

Coblins

Robert Henry Coblins arrived in New Bedford shortly after Drayton and was instrumental to concretizing the West Indian presence in the city through his acquisition of property, service to the Zion church, and membership in other organizations. His American-born daughters also

¹² Linda Whyte-Burrell (granddaughter of William L. Kydd), in discussion with author, New Bedford, April 18, 2017; National Archives and Records Administration. *Thirteenth Census of the United States. 1910*. (hereafter referred to as 1910 United States Federal Census).

¹³ William Lydney Kydd, National Archives at Boston, *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 25, 2016)

¹⁴ George Miggins, National Archives at Boston, *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 25, 2016); Robert Coblins, National Archives at Boston, *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 8, 2016)

aided in the making of New Bedford's West Indian community through their various marriages to first-generation West Indian men. Where the Draytons were pioneers as early emigrants, the Coblins family formed one of the central nuclei of the West Indian community. As a 16-year-old mariner, Robert Coblins emigrated from St. Eustatius in 1879. Shortly after he arrived, he married Elizabeth Hall from Washington D.C., in New Bedford in 1884. Hall was the first in her family to be born free of slavery, and married Robert under the condition that he would change his name from Coblentz.¹⁵ The couple had four daughters — Florence, Ethel, Christina, and (Mariah) Louise. The family home at 310 Middle Street was an important central space in the developing neighborhood. Lenora Kydd Whyte remembers the Coblins home when she was growing up as “just a house that people or former neighbors, or friends could... find refuge in.”¹⁶ The home also backed the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The Coblins's role in the church will be explored in a later section of this chapter, but it is safe to say that the family, in addition to other Dutch West Indians, gave the church the moniker of being the “West Indian” church.

Coblins was financially frugal and acquisitive. His great-granddaughter, Andrea Garr-Barnes, commented that it was well known in the family that he purchased multiple properties in the city and provided his daughters with land and business of their own.¹⁷ Between 1905 and 1909, Coblins purchased 18 properties and plots of land at auction for \$192.50.¹⁸ As early as

¹⁵ Andrea Garr Barnes (great-granddaughter of Robert Coblins) in discussion with author, New Bedford, April 20, 2017 (hereafter referred to as Andrea Garr-Barnes interview).

¹⁶ Lenora Kydd Whyte, *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, in discussion with interviewer Laura Orleans, January 21, 1999 Tape 1 Side A, Transcript pg. 1.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Bristol County, Massachusetts Land Records* 240: 293 and 296, Robert Coblins, 1904; The Bristol County South Registry of Deeds, New Bedford (hereafter referred to as Bristol County Land Records);

1901, he also operated a boarding house for West Indian seaman at 292 Middle Street.¹⁹ It was through that business that Coblins was able to arrange his daughters' marriages to West Indian men.²⁰ As was common among second-generation West Indian women, each of his daughters married first-generation West Indian men, but only two of the four maintained residence in the city after marriage. Each of their husbands stayed at either the boarding house at 292 Middle Street or in the family home at 310 Middle Street.²¹ It would seem that, with at least these women's marriages, they were part of an emigration scheme facilitated by their father.

In 1904, Florence married Edric Ramsey, a Barbadian barge captain, and the couple lived between New Bedford and Providence for most of their marriage. With the deed in her name, Florence bought their home at 150 Mill Street in 1928, but the family moved to 59 Camp Street in Providence full time after Edric Ramsey's death in 1933. In 1930, they rented their Mill Street home to Williston and Francis (Hazell) Houtman, a mixed West Indian family. Francis Hazell Houtman is the granddaughter of James Drayton and daughter of second-generation Barbadian American Anna Drayton and first generation Station Charles Hazell. The Ramseys had several children — Cleone, Robert, Averie, Edna, Irma, Edrick, Aloyse, and Inez. Only Edna and Inez remained in New Bedford, but the family remained close. In the early 1930s, both Edna and

1905 *Bristol County Land Records* 254: 305, 308, 310, 312, 314, 317; 1906 *Bristol County Land Records* 267: 95, 97, 99, 100, 102, 104; 1907 *Bristol County Land Records* 285: 130, 208; April 23, 1909 *Bristol County Land Records* 301: 174; April 23, 1909 *Bristol County Land Records* 304: 111.

¹⁹ Robert Coblins, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *1901 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 28, 2017); Robert Coblins, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *1905 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 28, 2017).

²⁰ Leon Decosta Dash (great-grandson of Robert Coblins), in discussion with author, phone call, May 5, 2017 (hereafter known as Leon Decosta Dash Interview).

²⁰ 1930 United States Federal Census.

²¹ Leon Decosta Dash Interview.

Averie visited the parents in Providence, with Averie coming in from North Carolina with her husband, Edward Bates.²² None of the children married West Indians, but Edna married second-generation Cape Verdean Joseph Barboza. Further, the family maintained familial relations with the New Bedford community. In 1941, Irma Ramsey Foster served as maid of honor at her cousin Ruth Kydd's New York City wedding to Leon Decosta Dash. It is likely that due to the small, scattered population of West Indians in Providence, the Ramsey children were not inclined to marry endogamously. Further, without the guiding hand and vetting of the family patriarch, Robert Coblins, the youth chose their own partners.

Robert Coblins' second daughter, Ethel, was twice married to West Indian men. Prior to her first marriage, Ethel was a business owner in her own right. She was the sole proprietor of a millinery shop. Her first marriage in 1913 was to John Mars of St. Eustatius. Mars held a series of odd jobs as cook and yardman until his death in 1916. They owned their home at 6 Chestnut Street, where Ethel continued to live until 1955. Her last marriage was to mariner Lawrence Kydd, William Kydd's brother from Bequia. After Coblins' death, much to the chagrin of her sisters, they inherited the family home at 310 Middle Street and the boarding house at 292 Middle Street.²³ The third Coblins' daughter, Christina, married Dominican seaman Edward Evelyn in 1914 and the couple moved to New London, Connecticut in 1923.²⁴ They had six children — Prescott, Donald, Ivy, Edith, Edwina, and Edward. During the Great Depression, the

²² "Providence, Rhode Island Section: Social Notes," *Boston Chronicle* (Boston, MA), January 9, 1932; "Providence, Rhode Island Section: Social Brevities," *Boston Chronicle* (Boston, MA), January 23, 1932.

²³ 1910 *United States Federal Census*; January 25, 1922 *New Bedford Register of Deeds* 550: 404; Leon Decosta Dash Interview.

²⁴ Christine Coblins and Edward Evelyn, New England Historic Genealogical Society.

Massachusetts, Marriage Records, 1840-1915 Ancestry.com (Accessed January 5, 2017); Edward Evelyn, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, 1923 New Bedford City Directory, Ancestry.com. (Accessed January 5, 2017)

family of eight moved to Harlem, New York. In the summers, the family lived on Edward Evelyn's barge in Long Island, New York, but during the rest of the year, the children were enrolled in Harlem's schools. In Harlem, Edith and Edwina formed a singing/dancing group called "The Evelyn Sisters." Edwina became a very popular stepper in 1940s Harlem and toured the country as part of the tap dance troupe "Salt and Pepper."²⁵

Louise Coblins was the youngest of the Coblins girls. Defying the preceding order, while still a teenager Louise married merchant marine Thomas "Tenny" Watkins, a native-born African American from Tennessee. While Tenny was away at sea, Louise began a relationship with John Gibbs, a Statian whom she might have met while he boarded at her father's home in 1920.²⁶ It's unclear whether Robert Coblins set this marriage up as well. Louise and Tenny had three daughters — Vera, Eunice, and Roberta. Upon Tenny's return, the couple divorced, and she quickly remarried Gibbs; though new couple subsequently separated, they had several children: Myrtle, Ellsworth, David, Loretta, Millicent, and Dolores. In the late 1930s, Gibbs abandoned his family and moved to New York. Louise remained in the city as a single mother.

Like other West Indians, Coblins was the first link in a chain of migration as his brother George and sister Louisa joined him in New Bedford in 1899. His siblings first lived next to his family at 302 Middle Street in the home of Statian George Winfield and his wife Alnora Winfield. In 1907, Louisa married William Clark, a West Indian mariner. They remained in the West End but removed from the densest part of the West Indian neighborhood. In 1910, George Coblins lived with the Clarks.²⁷ The Merkmans were other members of the Coblins family to

²⁵ Cheryl M. Willis, *Tappin 'at the Apollo: The African American Female Tap Dance Duo Salt and Pepper*. (Jefferson: McFarland, 2016), 12-13.

²⁶ Leon Decosta Dash Interview.

²⁷ 1910 United States Federal Census.

settle into New Bedford. Rebecca Merkman and John Merkman were Robert Coblins' niece and nephew via his sister Mariah, a Statian homelander. Both Merkman siblings emigrated in the mid-1890s likely residing in their uncle's home. In 1901, John Merkman married Azenas/Lana Spicer, an adopted native-born African American. In 1907 and 1908, his uncle George Coblins resided in their home on 63 Spruce Street. By 1914, the Merkmans purchased 312 Middle Street, directly next door to Robert Coblins. Coblins died in January 1921 in a train accident in Providence. After his death, his daughter Ethel inherited many of his properties, including the boarding home where her son Tasker collected rent.²⁸

Over several generations, the Coblins grounded themselves in New Bedford and Providence. The family expanded from one central member, Robert Coblins, to crisscross the neighborhood, supported by multiple properties, mixed first- and second-generation marriages, residential patterns, and business ventures. Through the guiding hand of Robert Coblins, the family became an integral part of the larger West Indian network, as their home was well known as a resting place for West Indian newcomers. The family maintained such strong connections and family bonds that persist today through the biennial family reunions in New Bedford.

Timbers

Robert Coblins' niece, Rebecca Merkman, married fellow Statian Charles Timber in 1910. The Merkman-Timber family lived around the West End on West High Street, Cedar Street, and for a short time they, too, lived next door to Robert Coblins at 308 Middle Street before moving to Harlem, New York in the 1930s.²⁹ They had one child together, Valerie

²⁸ Leon Decosta Dash Interview.

²⁹ 1930 United States Federal Census.

Therese Timber, and were joined by Rebecca's son, William Menter.³⁰ In 1930, Robert Deshong, likely the son of New Bedford Vincentian Thomas Deshong, roomed with the Timbers in Harlem.³¹ Rebecca eventually returned to the Dutch West Indies but settled in Curacao, where she died in 1983.³²

By marriage, chain migration, and membership in various social groups, the Timbers were a well-networked New Bedford West Indian family. Between 1882 and 1899, the Timber brothers — Aaron, Charles, and George — emigrated from St. Eustatius to the United States. Unlike his brothers, as the eldest Aaron was born in St. Kitts like their mother, but it is likely he was raised in St. Eustatius where he emigrated from in 1882.³³ As a young man of 16 years old, Aaron arrived in Brunswick, Georgia. The first evidence of his residence in New Bedford was 1890 as a mariner boarding at 153 Elm Street with Robert Coblins. In 1901, he married Massachusetts-born African American Sarah Oliver. Aaron and Sarah had three children, George, Everett, and Florence. The family rented several homes between their marriage in 1901 and 1917, mostly in Ward 3, still within the West End but at the outskirts of the West Indian enclave. In 1918, they purchased a home at 340 Middle Street, in the center of the West Indian neighborhood. From the time of his arrival in the United States, Aaron worked a series of jobs as a choreman, janitor, and at the end of his life as a mill operator.

³⁰ 1920 United States Federal Census.

³¹ 1930 United States Federal Census.

³² Rebecca Timber, United States Social Security Administration, *U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014*. Ancestry.com (Accessed April 27, 2017).

³³ Aaron Timber, National Archives at Boston, *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950*. Ancestry.com (Accessed November 2, 2016).

Aaron's younger brothers, Charles and George, joined him in New Bedford in the late 1890s. All three Timber bBrothers boarded together in 7 West High Street and 56 Cedar Street in 1898 and 1899, respectively.³⁴ In 1900, the men began to settle and rent in the city. The youngest brother, George, did not remain in New Bedford for long. From 1910 to 1922, George Timber resided in Boston on Northampton Street and worked on the railroad as a Pullman porter.³⁵ In 1922, he petitioned for a passport to return to the West Indies for his health. He left in July on the S.S. *Guiana* and never returned; in December 1922 he died in St. Eustatius at 48 years old.³⁶ Charles Timber moved around Ward 4 on Cedar Street and Kempton Street until his marriage to fellow Statian Rebecca Merkman in 1910.

The Timbers, like their relatives the Coblins, wove themselves into the fabric of New Bedford, mainly through their membership in local activities, such as the Zion church and later the band club. Unlike their friends and neighbors — the Kydds, Draytons, Coblins, and Haddocks — the family name did not remain long in New Bedford as the family moved from the area, leaving their trace only in the memories of the city's remaining West Indians.

³⁴ U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *1898 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 10, 2016); U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *1899 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 10, 2016).

³⁵ U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *1918 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 4, 2016); George W. Timber, National Archives and Records Administration

U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925, July 11, 1922. (Ancestry.com) Accessed (November 4, 2016)

³⁶ George W. Timber, *Nederlandse Antillen: BS Overlijden*, December 21, 1922, Netherlands National Archives. <https://www.wiewaswie.nl/en/detail/23338553> (Accessed November 4, 2016).

Fabios

For nearly a decade, before Aaron and Sarah Timber bought their home on Middle Street, they were the neighbors of the Fabios, a Statian-American family.³⁷ William Fabio, a Statian mariner, emigrated to the United States in 1890 and married his wife, native-born Afro-Virginian, Mary F. Walker, shortly after in 1892. Between 1895 and 1906, the couple had five children — Alice, Everett, Nellie, William H., and Charles. Early on in their marriage, the Fabios moved around and rented in Ward 4 but they chose to buy a home at 248 Chancery Street in Ward 3, an uncommon occurrence for New Bedford's West Indians. Though they were in a different ward than other West Indians, they still remained within the residential cluster of the West End. Typically, as demonstrated earlier, West Indians settled in the small, six-block neighborhood in Ward 4, near the two churches. It is surprising that the Fabios purchased a home outside of the neighborhood.

In the 1920s, Fabio and his son, William H., owned "William Fabio and Son," a furniture moving company, out of their home on Chancery. William H. took over his father's business by 1930 and changed the company name to "William H. Fabio," moving the company to 308 Mill Street, and later to 209 Park Street and 323 Maxfield Street. He and his wife Kate continued to run the company well into the 1950s.³⁸ The company remained in the family as brothers Charles and James worked as the chauffeur and driver until the 1940s when both Charles and James left the family moving business.

³⁷1920 United States Federal Census.

³⁸ William H. Fabio, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *1955 Manning's New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (January 9, 2017).

Surprisingly, Everett Fabio was the only brother who did not work in moving and trucking. Instead, he worked as a gardener, porter at the bank, and later as an engineer.³⁹ He married Lois Pierce, an African-American woman, in 1925. The couple divorced in the 1930s, and Lois remarried George Timber, Aaron Timber's son. After their divorce in 1943, Everett briefly lived in New York City working at Radio Frank's Restaurant on 55th Street. Two years later, he returned to New Bedford to the Fabio family home.

The records on Fabio's daughters were scant. Like other first- and second-generation West Indian women, Alice Fabio married a first-generation West Indian man, Charles Rose, a Stationer.⁴⁰ He worked as a seaman when they were first married in 1914, but later worked in the Beacon Mills factory and at the gas company. They owned a home at 212 Smith Street, also in the city's Ward 3. Nellie Fabio disappears from the record after 1920. Then, she was a married chambermaid with the name Nellie Hunt working at the New Bedford Tuberculosis Sanatorium.⁴¹

In 1905, William Fabio's sister, Maria Adriana, and his niece, Anna, emigrated to live with him and his family. In less than a year, Maria married Joseph Delvalle, an immigrant from the Dutch Antilles Island of Curaçao. Delvalle was born in Venezuela but was raised in Curaçao, as his parents were from there. Maria was a dressmaker, and Joseph worked first as a fireman for the gas company and later as a rope maker at a rope factory. Though William Fabio's family remained on the outskirts of the central West Indian neighborhood, the Delvalle's bought a home

³⁹ Everett M. Fabio, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *W.A. Greenbough's 1926 New Bedford City Directory*, Ancestry.com (January 12, 2017); 1930 United States Federal Census; *1945 New Bedford City Directory*, Ancestry.com (January 12, 2017).

⁴⁰ Alice Fabio and Charles Rose, New England Historic Genealogical Society, *Massachusetts, Marriage Records, 1840-1915*. Ancestry.com (January 9, 2017).

⁴¹ 1920 United States Federal Census.

and lived in the center of the enclave among the other West Indians.⁴² Between 1910 and 1940, even after Joseph Delvalle's death, they frequently housed West Indians, such as mariners George Timmer and Greuties Harris.

As with the Timber family, the Fabios no longer have a large presence in the city, and those who remain do not have much knowledge of their West Indian heritage. Having no daughters, their lack of presence in contemporary New Bedford might point to the ways second-generation women were integral to the maintenance of West Indian cultural heritage despite being born in the United States. Despite this, the Fabios were an influential family, owning business in the area and establishing other family members into the New Bedford West Indian matrix.

Kydd

William L. Kydd left Bequia on the whaling ship *William A. Grozier* in 1902, a few months before the Soufriere Volcano eruption that killed more than 1600 people. Between 1902 and 1908, Kydd worked as a mariner and had no formal address in New Bedford. He boarded on the ship during the off season, making trips into town for provisions and other resources. He was the first of his family to emigrate and therefore became the first link in their chain migration that included five brothers and one sister. His brother, Lawrence (known as Lawry), emigrated from Bequia to Boston in 1908 on the vessel the *Halifax*. He initially settled with the second-eldest brother, James, in Perth Amboy.⁴³ The earliest record of Lawrence Kydd's residence in New

⁴² 1910 United States Federal Census; 1920 United States Federal Census; 1930 United States Federal Census; National Archives and Records Administration. *Sixteenth Census of the United States. 1940* (hereafter referred to as the 1940 United States Federal Census).

⁴³ National Archives and Record Administration. *U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1825-1960*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 10, 2016).

Bedford was as a seaman in 1915 aboard the ships *William A. Grozier* and *Ellen A. Swift*.⁴⁴ By 1918, he married second-generation Statian and widow Ethel Coblins Mars. They lived together in her home at 6 Chestnut Street with her son, Tasker Mars, and their children Ruth and Collins Kydd. The couple divorced by 1940 and “Lawry” remarried Leah Bolden shortly thereafter. He continued working as a seaman on a barge into the late 1940s. Though he and William were the only Kydd brothers to settle in New Bedford, they both spent some time in Perth Amboy. Very briefly, in 1918, Ernest Kydd lived with William at 322 Ash Street. His time in New Bedford was short. By 1919, he was a resident of Perth Amboy. While in Perth Amboy, he married Emmeline Rogers, an Anguillan immigrant. By 1935, the couple settled in New London, Connecticut, with their five children — Molly, Ernest Jr., Harold, Henry, and Carlton. At the time, New London was beginning to develop its own West Indian community, some of whom moved from New Bedford, such as Christina and Edward Evelyn.

Three of the brothers — Henry, James, and Randolph — did not have a temporary stay in New Bedford. In the 1940s, Henry Kydd and his wife, Anguillan Clotilda Druephenia Rogers Kydd, lived with Ernest and his family in New London.⁴⁵ Emmeline Rogers and Clotilda Rogers were sisters. Ernest, Emmeline, and Clotilda all arrived in St John, New Brunswick, Canada, aboard the *Chaudiere* in 1923.⁴⁶ Ernest and Emmeline married in October 1923, just three months after meeting on the ship.⁴⁷ Clotilda married Henry Kydd on January 13, 1924. She was likely introduced to the Kydds via Ernest and Emmeline’s marriage. Though James spent some

⁴⁴ *New Bedford, Massachusetts, Whaling Crew Lists Index, 1809-1927*. Ancestry.com (Accessed May 12, 2017).

⁴⁵ 1940 United States Federal Census.

⁴⁶ *U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895-1960*. Ancestry.com (Accessed March 2, 2018).

⁴⁷ *Connecticut, Federal Naturalization Records, 1790-1996*. Ancestry.com (Accessed March 2, 2018).

time in Providence, Rhode Island, he spent considerable time in Perth Amboy with his brothers, Henry, James and Randolph.⁴⁸ James and his first wife, Barbadian Daisy Branch, married in Perth Amboy before moving to Brooklyn, New York.⁴⁹ He remarried another first-generation West Indian, Doris Rogers, after Daisy's death. The youngest brother, Randolph, emigrated from Bequia in 1923 on the ship the *S.S. Francis* with his cousin, Cyprion Hanson. The two men initially stayed with Henry and his family in Perth Amboy.⁵⁰

William was the eldest and the first of his brothers to emigrate. In his early years in New Bedford, Kydd remained on the ship the *William A. Grozier* but would frequently make trips into town for supplies and likely some of its social institutions. On one of his jaunts off the ship to a picnic hosted by the Drayton and King families, Kydd met his future wife, Clara King. At the time of their marriage, Kydd was still a mariner and boarded in the Coblins home at 310 Middle Street.⁵¹ After they married, the couple briefly lived in Perth Amboy, but Clara did not like the city, and they moved back to New Bedford within a few months.⁵²

Kydd, in his quiet dignified manner, was quite different from his brothers who were known as “verbose, very opinionated, [and] quite raucous.”⁵³ He served as a surrogate parent to his younger siblings in the United States as they came to him for things that were “important in

⁴⁸ 1930 United States Federal Census.

⁴⁹ New York State Archives. *New York, State Census, 1915*. Ancestry.com (Accessed May 11, 2017).

⁵⁰ Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Archives and Record Administration. *New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957*. Ancestry.com (Accessed May 11, 2017).

⁵¹ U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *1908 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 9, 2017).

⁵² William L. Kydd, Sr., *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, Tape 1, Side 2: Transcript pg.15-16.

⁵³ Leonora Kydd Whyte *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, in discussion with interviewer Laura Orleans, January 21, 1999 Tape 1 Side B.

their lives that they needed some wisdom, ..." such as a new job, marriage, and buying homes.⁵⁴ He continued to work as a mariner until 1911 when his first child, Vivian, was born. After resigning from whaling, he began his lifelong career as a janitor at the *New Bedford Standard Times*. William and Clara Kydd had three children — Vivian, Leonora, and William Jr. The Kydds did not stray from the West End neighborhood. They lived at 72 Ash Street then 78 Ash Street near the Kings for several years until buying their first home on 322 Ash Street in 1915. In 1928, the family purchased a second home a few homes away, at 307 Ash Street. West Indian mariners would frequent the Kydd residence and tell stories of their whaling days. Leonora Kydd Whyte remembers her father and Uncle "Lawry," Nathan Lewis, Jim George, and Jim Hazell over as frequent guests. They called Hazell "the Patriotic man" due to his red hair, fair skin, and blue eyes. The home also was a respite area for whaling men coming into town on their way home to New York or New Jersey.⁵⁵

As with other West Indian women, Leonora married a man of West Indian descent, Barbadian-Panamanian Darcey Whyte, a Golden Gloves boxer. The couple purchased 307 Ash Street from her father and, there, they raised their children — Yvonne, Russell, Linda, and Geoffrey. In the small but expanding West Indian neighborhood, the Whytes were deeply entrenched in the community and were participants in all the local activities, including membership in the Bethel Church. Yvonne (Whyte) Drayton had fond memories of growing up in the neighborhood. Though she was clear to emphasize that it was not just a West Indian neighborhood, as it had native-born African Americans, a few Cape Verdeans and Helenians, as well as some whites. As she drove me through the old neighborhood, she pointed out where

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

everyone lived and the connections between them. Mr. Lammers was the neighborhood runners' runner; he would come into their home and take the money and the slip with the number from the window and leave quietly. She remembered Mr. Aubrey "Obrey" Bennett's barbershop as a place where the men would gather. Though the neighborhood was not only West Indian, their presence punctuated every street corner as many would stand, meet, have conversations, and reconnect, keeping the community spirit strong.

Having two parents of West Indian descent in a neighborhood where Dutch and British West Indians established homes, families, and livelihoods, Yvonne's sister, Linda Whyte Burrell, identifies strongly as West Indian. In her rural Rhode Island home, multiple flags hang — Barbadian, Vincentian, Panamanian — paying homage to her multi-ethnic upbringing in New Bedford as it intersected with the broader historiography of West Indian immigration. For her, the two houses at 307 Ash Street and 322 Ash Street made the neighborhood "like one house."⁵⁶

As demonstrated by these five families, New Bedford's West Indian network was vast and interconnected, supplanting the necessity of a formal homeland society. In the small enclave, they provided a space for welcoming new immigrants; facilitated marriages between first-, second-, and third- generation West Indians; and aided in citizenship petitions; as well as enacted a quotidian sense of organization on the street level and in previously established institutions. Though it is unusual that they formed no homeland society of their own, as demonstrated by the overlapping relationships in the aforementioned sample of five families, it is clear that New Bedford's West Indians did not need the same forms of organizations as their counterparts in larger cities. Their small size, national- and ethnic-specificity, and close proximity within the neighborhood made the conditions of the tight-knit community and the space itself act as an

⁵⁶ Linda Whyte Burrell, *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, January 21, 1999 Tape 2 Side A, Transcript pg. 7.

institution. They bonded by blood and ethnicity, but also by the ties that bind in the neighborhood enclave itself. They were members of pre-established institutions, went to schools together, owned businesses, and formed musical and cricket clubs.

Beginning with James Drayton as a pioneering West Indian in the 1870s, the community grew from a small clustering of five families to a flourishing, well-established network that lasted for one century. One by one, they formed connections strengthened by their shared culture and high level of ethnic consciousness that led to the residential clustering of the West End's enclave within an enclave. In his work on diasporas of the imagination, David Scott stated, "When the last eyes to see a slave brought from Africa closed forever, the problem of the African past in the Caribbean present became, inexorably, one of diasporic imagination and vision and memory."⁵⁷ Likewise, in New Bedford, West Indians constructed an imagined diaspora community bounded by memories of old and their new lives in the United States, fraught with its racial realities. In the enclave, they made their lives, purchasing and renting homes, creating businesses, welcoming newcomers, and later encouraging their children and grandchildren to marry within their constructed community; they expanded their network reach while remaining in the confines of their space.

It was in these choices that the Draytons, Coblinses, Timbers, Fabios, Kydds and other families operationalized their neighborhood and the institutions within it to supplant the conventional homeland societies endemic to their counterparts in other cities. Their identities and histories have been constructed, resisted, and in conversation with other diaspora groups through the "powers of displacement (geopolitical, ideological, aesthetic)" in the Caribbean and in the

⁵⁷ David Scott, "Preface: The Diasporas of the Imagination," *small axe* 29 (July 2009): ix

United States.⁵⁸ The next chapter will examine the ways first-, second-, and third-generation West Indians participated in local pre-established institutions. It will examine the local organizations they did join and how they reshaped them to further supplant the necessity of formal, ethnic-based organizations. As “cousins” they leaned into their familial and ethnic connections to establish themselves within the neighborhood and its long-standing institutions.

⁵⁸ Ibid, x.

Chapter Three: “As One Neighborhood:” West Indians Informal Organizing

As discussed in the previous chapter, interconnected ties of familial and ethnic relations in the West End bound New Bedford’s West Indians. For such a robust, well-developed and organized community, New Bedford’s West Indian immigrants formed no large-scale social institutions based on national origin or ethnic ties. They differed from their counterparts in other cities, such as nearby Boston and New York, due to their lack of homeland societies and ethnic-based organizations. Though they did not form homeland societies, it was clear through the organizations they joined that these Dutch and British West Indians were very conscious of their ethnic and national connections. The British and Dutch West Indian population utilized the space of the West End neighborhood to create a self-aware enclave energized by the community’s familial networks. These networks replaced the need for institutionalized, formal social clubs. Due to their small size, the mutual benevolence shared among community members, and their intertwined relations by national and colonial origin, marriage, proximity, and faith, they likely felt they had no need to institutionalize their community networks.

Organizing was still important to West Indians in the West End, and particularly so for the largest of the West Indian ethnic groups, the Dutch West Indians. While their neighbors in Boston formed pan-West Indian and ethnic-specific organizations, such as the West India Aid Society founded in 1915, Jamaica Associates founded in 1932, and the Montserrat Progressive Society and Barbados Union both founded in 1937, New Bedford’s small community of West Indians preferred to join well-established institutions and their influence and numbers to entrench themselves into leadership positions and into its social milieu for generations. The small size of the community did not make ethnic-based social organizations viable in New Bedford. West Indians opted into these previously established organizations as opposed to forming new

institutions as a means to tap into the social networks and community links within the city's Black population in the West End. They turned their small numbers into significant influence and leadership within their community as lay members of the churches, organizers in civil rights and Pan-African associations, and as members of the West End's musical club.

This chapter turns the focus to the formal organizations that West Indians joined, and investigates their involvement within them. The choices West Indians made joining these pre-established networks open up new questions about their behavior, as it is clear that as a community they did not oppose organizing or creating ethnic associations. As demonstrated by their self-conscious settlement, neighborhood businesses catering to their needs, and the ways they interacted at the street level as friends and family, New Bedford's West Indians welcomed organization. This chapter further examines the divisions between British and Dutch West Indians in their choices of organizations to join. Though Leonora Kydd Whyte and her daughter Linda Whyte Burrell offer that the neighborhood and its people were as one, the two main West Indian groups gave each other a wide berth in churches, neighborhood celebrations, and to some extent, marriage. This is further demonstrated by New Bedford's Statians organizing annual trips to New York City to the Orange Benevolent Society Ball. Despite their separation at the organizational level, and to some extent the social level, community was united by proximity, shared experiences in migration, and cultural similarities.

In addition to living in close proximity and a shared national origin, on the street level, these familial relationships developed in the community were maintained through churches and membership in social organizations. The local African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the Sumner Club, Casino Band, and other recreational associations might have served as proxies for the homeland societies that

are typical of immigrant groups. Within these institutions, their family and community connections solidified West Indians' place in the neighborhood. Through engaging the multiple institutions in which they were members and leaders, this chapter explores West Indians' roles in these institutions as they ingratiated themselves in the neighborhood they regarded as one large house, which facilitated bonds that remained into the twenty-first century.

The “West Indian” Churches

The key social networks of New Bedford's West Indians were the local churches — African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Black churches in the area were the strongest networks within the African-American community. The pioneering West Indians' leadership within the church ushered in the participation of other West Indian family, friends, and community members. The long-lasting engagement of the Coblins and Kydd families left a lasting impact on the churches as central organizing factors within the West Indian community. The proximity of the churches within the West End to the West Indian community cluster enabled this small group to access the membership, serving as leaders within the institution and solidifying their leadership within the community as pioneers, business persons, and organizers.

In the early nineteenth century, the AME, AMEZ, and African Christian Group churches were among the earliest founded for Black people. They offered refuge to Black Christians, whereas other local churches segregated them from whites. The New Bedford Black church community supported a diverse population of Blacks that included fugitive slaves and Black immigrants. For fugitives from slavery, the churches proved their commitment to protect them from the “hunters of men.” In *My Bondage, My Freedom*, New Bedford resident Frederick Douglass describes a story whereby a free colored man and a fugitive slave had a quarrel when

the free man threatened the other man with recapture. The only colored church in the city, at the time the African Christian Group,¹ noted the incident and held a meeting. During which time the pastor of the church declared that the congregants should kill the betrayer. Douglass then stated,

With this, a large body of the congregation, who well understood the business they had come there to transact, made a rush at the villain, and doubtless would have killed him, had he not availed himself of an open sash, and made good his escape. He has never shown his head in New Bedford since that time. This little incident is perfectly characteristic of the spirit of the colored people in New Bedford. A slave could not be taken from that town seventeen years ago, any more than he could be so taken away now. The reason is, that the colored people in that city are educated up to the point of fighting for their freedom, as well as speaking for it.²

The story of the meeting affirmed Douglass and assuaged his fears of recapture. Though New Bedford, like other cities in Massachusetts, was known for anti-slavery and equality between the races, racism still permeated in the social and economic structures of the city, particularly in the Elm St. Methodist Church, where Black parishioners were separated from the white congregants. Upon discovering this, Douglass left the church, tried other churches, and met the same treatment. He then joined “a small body of colored Methodists, known as the Zion Methodists.”³

At the turn of the century, the AMEZ church gained significance among the Dutch West Indians, such as the Coblins, whereby the AME church captured the membership of the British West Indians, such as the Kydds. These churches were popular among West Indians by virtue of their leadership and multi-generational membership. In 1899, West Indian Israel Derricks was pastor of the AME church, later Vincentian D. Ormonde Walker served for five consecutive years as the church pastor between 1916 and 1920. In 1909, Bermudian George Bell served as

¹ “*Urban Renewal Claims Bethel AME*,” newspaper clipping, Yvonne Drayton Private Collection.

² Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and Freedom* (New York and Auburn: Miller, Orton, and Mulligan, 1855), 348.

³ Douglass, 353.

pastor of the AMEZ. Later, from 1916 to 1919 and again from 1934 to 1936, Jamaican Sailsman Weller was church pastor. The overlap between Walker and Weller's service to the community coincided with the growth of first- and second-generation West Indians in the West End. Most West Indians were members of the AMEZ and AME churches, but others remained attached to the local Episcopal and Catholic Churches, and to a much lesser extent to the nondenominational Seaman's Bethel Church.

With at least five decades of participation over generations in the church, the Coblins family was at the forefront of leadership in the AMEZ church.⁴ Very early in his time in New Bedford, Robert Coblins was a member and trustee of the church. The family participated in every facet of the church in marriage, leadership, and auxiliary organizations. In 1884, he and his wife, Elizabeth, were married in the church by Reverend J.C. Lodge. He was a trustee in the church from 1889 to 1895, and their home at 310 Middle Street backed the church. In addition to his marriage, three of Coblins's four daughters — Florence, Ethel, and Christina — were married in the church. His granddaughter, Edna Ramsey, was a participant in the church's Zenith Athletic Club, which was primarily organized by and consisted of members of West Indian descent. In addition to Coblins, fellow Stationer Aaron Timber was also a leader in the church. From 1905 to 1915, he served as the clerk of the trustees of the church and was in that position at the time of the church's incorporation in 1915, making him instrumental to the church's growth and development. Though Timber and his wife, Sarah Oliver, did not marry in the AMEZ church, his

⁴ To be clear, not all Coblins married in or were members of the church. This is noted by the marriage of Robert Coblins's sister Louise Coblins to William Clark which was officiated by Rev. Percy Gordon, clergyman of Grace Episcopal Church; New England Historic Genealogical Society, *Massachusetts, Marriage Records, 1840-1915*, Ancestry.com (Accessed December 11, 2016).

brother Charles did.⁵ In 1910, his Coblins' niece Rebecca Merkman married Charles Timber in the church presided over by Dennis Scott.

In 1924, the congregation was renamed Frederick Douglass Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church after the famed abolitionist, one-time New Bedford resident, and member of the Zion church. Several second- and third-generation West Indians participated in the church's auxiliary group, Zenith Athletic Club. In 1932, Louise Busby, a second-generation Stadian, hosted a gathering of the Club.⁶ The attendees represented a who's who of the city's West Indian community that included Barbadian James Drayton's grandchildren, James Hazell and Bernard Drayton, and Robert Coblins granddaughter, Edna Ramsey. Other second-generation Stadian participants were Richard Haddocks Jr., Effie Sprott, Alfred and Edgar Henwood, and Frank Houtman Jr. In addition to being participants, the members were often family related. The Haddockses, Henwoods, and Draytons were all cousins, and the interactions in the neighborhood and in church clubs facilitated love connections among the second and third generations. This is noted through the 1934 marriage of second-generation Stadians, Olivia Busby and Richard Haddocks Jr. Though Olivia was not an attendee at this event, she was likely a member, as her sister, Louise, organized the event. The group created homosocial interactions whereby the West Indian community was edified through proximity. The Dutch West Indians created a community within the AMEZ church through their overlapping relationships in leadership, marriage, and club membership. As the Dutch West Indians continued to attend the church, it became known as the "West Indian" church.

⁵ New England Historic Genealogical Society, *Massachusetts, Marriage Records, 1840-1915*, Ancestry.com (December 11, 2016)

⁶ "New Bedford," *Boston Chronicle* (Boston, MA), January 9, 1932.

Generally, Dutch West Indians joined the AMEZ church, whereas the British West Indians were members of the AME church. Though in walking distance from each other, the church membership demonstrates the separate spaces West Indians maintained despite the proximity and overlap in the spaces they did share. New Bedford's British West Indians were much smaller in number than their Dutch counterparts and used the church, local West Indian businesses, and individual membership in national organizations to organize themselves and other West Indians.

For the British West Indians, as a smaller cluster within the West End, the Bethel AME church served as a central hub for their activities and connections. The Kydd family and others were leaders in the Bethel AME church. William Kydds' engagement with the church began with his and Clara King's marriage in 1908. The Kings had long been members of the church. Clara Kydd's parents, Isaiah and Sarah King, were members as early as 1873.⁷ William L. Kydd was raised in the Anglican church, as was common among British West Indians, but once he married Clara King he converted to the Methodist church and served it faithfully as clerk for 56 years.⁸ Ruth Jourdain, a second-generation West Indian whose mother was from St. Kitts, third-generation Barbadian Clifton C. Drayton, and second-generation Dominican Huntington Vidal, among others, represented some of the other West Indian members of the church.

To be sure, membership in any of the churches based on ethnic descent was not a hard and fast rule among New Bedford's West Indians; many moved between the AMEZ and Bethel AME church and other churches in the city. Though William Kydd was a dedicated member, his brothers attended the nearby Episcopal Church. Other members of the extended Coblins family

⁷ *Account of the History of The Bethel A.M.E. Church of New Bedford, MA 1842-1921*, Yvonne Drayton Private Collection

⁸ Linda Whyte Burrell, *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, Tape 2 Side A, Transcript pg. 8

were affiliated with the Bethel AME church as well. The Groebes attended St. Lawrence Catholic Church. Unlike the Zion church, which was a small congregation and largely regarded as the West Indian church, the larger, more established Bethel AME church served mostly native-born African Americans and the city's small group of the British West Indians.

In the 1940s, St Ambrose African Orthodox Church captured the interest of some Dutch West Indian families. Influenced by the happenings in New York, the Haddocks and the Bulgars established the small storefront church. It was affiliated with New York's African Orthodox Church, founded by Antiguan George Alexander McGuire in 1921. As an ordained Protestant priest, Garveyite, and the chaplain general of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), "McGuire became convinced of the necessity for an independent national church for Black people" organized in the Catholic tradition.⁹ The congregation was very small and is barely remembered by remaining West Indian community members. Despite that, the newly created church did serve as an additional place of worship and community for some West Indian community members. Dr. Henry Groebe reflected on the small congregation and its ephemeral membership. The poverty of the congregants caused the collection plate to be sent around numerous times, and his grandfather, George Groebe, always put extra money. Though Dr. Groebe claims neither his parents nor grandparents were religious, George Groebe and Sarah deGeneste Groebe, as members of the church, were funeralized in the church.¹⁰

New Bedford's West Indians used the church and other spaces to host and network in other organizations. The local New Bedford UNIA held its meetings in the AMEZ church and in

⁹ Byron Rushing, "A Note on the Origin of the African Orthodox Church," *The Journal of Negro History* 57, no. 1 (1972), 38.

¹⁰ Dr. Henry Groebe (grandson of George Groebe), in discussion with the author, New Bedford, May 11, 2017 (hereafter referred to as Dr. Henry Groebe Interview).

the Clover Leaf building, owned by William L. Kydd and native-born African Americans Dr. Xenophon Thomas and William N. Nelson. Between 1921 and 1933, Massachusetts hosted 12 UNIA chapters. William H. Farris, editor of the UNIA's *Negro World*, noted, "The Garvey movement organized West Indians in Boston, New Bedford, Hartford, New Haven, Brooklyn, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Washington, Miami, Key West, New Orleans, and other places; ... marshaling the West Indians en masse made manifest the characteristics in which the West Indians differed from the American Negroes."¹¹ On recalling the West End neighborhood's West Indians, Linda Whyte Burrell stated, "These folks were fervently involved [in the UNIA]," and that the organizers were almost completely West Indians.¹² The short list of members included Vincentians Albert Barbour and James George, William Kydd, Dr. Edward Osborne of Montserrat, and Statians John Bulgar, Alexander Haddocks, and George Groebe.¹³ It is likely through their connection with the UNIA that the Bulgars, Haddocks, and Groebe founded the St. Ambrose Church. Though Marcus Garvey, the founder of the UNIA, never traveled to New Bedford, the significance of the UNIA to the West Indian community and the city's African-American community cannot be downplayed. Upon her return from Liberia, on December 21, 1924, Henrietta Vinson Davis, the fourth assistant president general of the UNIA, spoke in New Bedford. Davis was invited to speak at the Bethel A.M.E. Church's annual Women's Day program. In addition to the Women's Day event, she spoke to a large audience at the AMEZ church.¹⁴ The depth of New Bedford's West Indians' participation in the UNIA is unknown, but

¹¹ *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume XI: The Caribbean Diaspora, 1910–1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), lxx.

¹² Linda Whyte Burrell Interview.

¹³ *Short list of UNIA members*, Linda Whyte Burrell Private Collection.

it is clear that the members organized within the organization on the social and community levels.

New Bedford's Black citizens also organized a local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1918.¹⁵ Starting with 66 members in May 1918, the membership grew to 252 by June 1 of that year.¹⁶ The chapter was reorganized in 1937, and by 1942 it boasted a membership of 350.¹⁷ Among the members of the NAACP, second-generation West Indian John Vidal served as president of the city's recently formed Youth Council in 1939. In addition to having St. Ambrose African Orthodox Church and chapters of the NAACP and UNIA, New Bedford was the home of Elizabeth Carter Brooks, the vice president of the National Association for Colored Women, and Black abolitionists Paul Cuffee and Frederick Douglass. Despite these prominent figures and organizational membership, there is little evidence to suggest that, in the early twentieth century, the city's West Indian citizens were inclined to national and international political and social activism.

Intra-ethnic Organizing

Among the West Indians there were clear differences between the British West Indians and the Dutch West Indians. The two groups acknowledged their differences, despite living among each other with a high degree of sociability. Statian-Cape Verdean American Dr. Groebe said of his childhood, "I never paid much attention to the English side."¹⁸ As a larger group

¹⁴ "New Bedford" *The Pittsburgh Courier* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) Dec 27, 1924; Organizers were Mrs. Margaret Dade, Mrs. Sadie Alston, Mrs. Alcora Williams, and Mrs. Josephine C. Smith.

¹⁵ "The Moorfield Storey Drive," *The Crisis* Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 1918)

¹⁶ "Partial Results of the Moorfield Storey Drive," *The Crisis* Vol. 16, No. 3 (July 1918)

¹⁷ "Branch News," *The Crisis* Vol. 50, No. 11 (November 1942)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

within the West End, the Dutch West Indians created an insulated network of friends and family that was aware of, but did not always include, their British West Indian counterparts. According to Leonora Kydd Whyte and her daughter, Linda Whyte Burrell, the Dutch West Indians were more “very festival-minded” in their organizing, social gatherings, and holiday festivities. Though the Dutch West Indians were larger, as mentioned before they did not establish formalized organizations but were organized at the social level.

Every year, New Bedford’s local Dutch West Indians would travel to New York City’s Orange Benevolent Society’s (OBS) “Orange Ball.” In 1933, OBS hosted their 23rd annual ball in honor of the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands.¹⁹ Incorporated in 1923 but active for more than a decade prior, the OBS was one of many West Indian organizations in Harlem, New York.²⁰ They frequently supported other West Indian organizations, such as the Jamaican Benevolent Association, and remained dedicated to civic duty through a range of activities, such as participating in forums on protecting children during wartime.²¹ That New Bedford’s Dutch West Indians traveled to New York City to celebrate in Dutch colonial events demonstrates a strong sense of cultural adherence. Though there was no formal organization, through the 1940s and 1950s they continued to make connections with other Dutch Antilleans in the diaspora.

Dr. Henry Groebe recalls his grandfather’s home was always a bustling thoroughfare for New Bedford and New York’s Dutch West Indians, with new immigrants and neighbors coming

¹⁹ *The New York Age* (New York, NY) September 9, 1933; *The New York Amsterdam News* (New York, NY) August 24, 1932

²⁰ *The New York Age* (New York, NY), March 31, 1928

²¹ “British Jamaican Assn. Dedicates New Home,” *The New York Amsterdam News* (New York, NY), April 29, 1950; “Big Fraternal Parley Called in N.Y. Dec 12,” *The Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), December 5, 1942.

in and out, sharing drinks and stories in *Papiamentu*.²² Kydd-Whyte and Whyte-Burrell also described Dutch West Indians as congenial and spirited in their year-end celebrations, gatherings over food and music, and caroling during the holidays.²³ Due to their size, overlapping familial relations, and collective identity, the Dutch West Indians formed a strong core community within the larger West Indian section of the West End. Kydd-Whyte emphasized that the community members saw themselves as part of one, pan-Caribbean community.

The sense of pan-Caribbean community is best demonstrated in the Casino Band founded in the 1920s. The band consisted of Statians, Vincentians, Kittians, and a few African Americans.²⁴ The band was a veritable who's who of the West Indian community. The purpose of the club was less about social mobility or community improvement and more about social organizing and entertainment. The West Indian members of the band included George Sprott (St. Eustatius), Robert Bennett (St. Eustatius), Henry Groebe (second generation, St. Eustatius), Albert Houtman (second generation, St. Eustatius), Everett Timber (second generation, St. Kitts/St. Eustatius), Edgar Henwood (second generation, St. Eustatius), Oswald Cuviljo (St. Eustatius), Alvin May (St. Eustatius), Edward Brown (St. Eustatius), John Gibbs (St. Eustatius), Oliver Conward (St. Eustatius), George Miggins (St. Eustatius), Edwin Deshonge (second generation; St. Vincent), and George Groebe (St. Eustatius).

The significance that the band was comprised mostly of West Indians suggests strong bonds between the members, ethnic solidarity, and underlines intimate relationships. Each of

²² Dr. Henry Groebe Interview.

²³ Lenora Kydd Whyte and Linda Whyte-Burrell, *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, Tape 1 side A, Transcript pg. 4.

²⁴ Joseph D. Thomas, Alfred H. Saulniers, Natalie A. White, Marsha L. McCabe, and Jay Avila (eds), *A Picture History of New Bedford Volume Two: 1925-1980* (New Bedford: Spinner Publications, Inc., 2016), 128.

these men was well connected to the nucleus of the West Indian community through marriage and familial relations. For example, in 1940, when Charles Timber and his family lived in Harlem, second-generation Vincentian Edwin Deshonge boarded with them. Alvin May and Everett Timber are first cousins once removed via Aaron Timber. The intimate relations span beyond the confines of the group. John Gibbs was Louise Coblins Watkins' second husband. West Indians were members of other musical groups, as well. According to Yvonne Drayton, Walter Bonner, a Philippines-born African-American teacher at New Bedford High School, formed the Unity Men's Chorus with mostly West Indian singers. The group performed at several local events, including NAACP meetings in the late 1930s and 1940s.²⁵

In New Bedford, Cape Verdeans also formed ethnic-specific band clubs — the Ultramarine Band Club and the State Band Club. As will be discussed in the next section, in the early twentieth century, Cape Verdeans in New Bedford created several homeland societies — *Associação Beneficente Caboverdeano*, the Cape Verdean Famine Relief Club, Cape Verdean American Women's Club, and others — as well as a church, Our Lady of Assumption. Unlike Cape Verdeans, West Indians did not form any ethnic societies, but they traveled to participate in New York's vibrant Caribbean scene. It is likely that with such close proximity in the city, with intimate familial relationships and national bonds, New Bedford's West Indians did not require homeland societies to the same extent as cities with more ethnically diverse and physically spread out groups of West Indians. The city's relative homogeneity of ethnicity as a Pan-Caribbean community and the small size of the population likely rendered formal homeland societies irrelevant. The musical groups, membership in church auxiliaries, and frequent cricket

²⁵ Yvonne Drayton Interview A; "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Vol. 45, No. 12 (December 1938); "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Vol. 46, No. 5 (May 1939); "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May 1940); "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Vol. 47, No. 11 (December 1940)

matches may have served as a proxy for formal organizations for social gatherings and camaraderie.

Homeland Giving

It is telling that New Bedford's Dutch West Indians began participating in New York's scene during the Great Depression. Dr. Henry Groebe recalls the buses filled with the city's Statians, dressed up to attend the Orange Ball.²⁶ The event, in addition to being a scene where local Statians could flaunt their fancy dress, was just one way for Statians to demonstrate concern and attentiveness to the conditions at "home" and their relatives who remained through fundraising. The event raised money for New York's Statians and those remaining in the homeland. For those who emigrated, the purpose of migration was to attain better wages to provide for themselves and their families and build up their capital at "home." West Indian immigrants' remittances, gifts, and other financial contributions created an influx of millions of dollars into the West Indies during the period from 1870 to 1930. In Boston, West Indians pooled income for survival, but a portion was always dedicated to "other expenses like sending remittances to relatives still living in the West Indies, paying passages for family members to emigrate to Boston or some other destination, and footing the initial cost of helping the new arrivals adjust."²⁷ Similarly, New Bedford's West Indians also enacted remittances and performed familial tasks around chain migration and other forms of support.

When asked what he did with the \$74 he earned for his first four-month whaling voyage, William L. Kydd stated, "The first thing I did with it, I got back on shore and I get the pay, I sent

²⁶ Dr. Henry Groebe Interview.

²⁷ Violet Showers Johnson, *The Other Black Bostonians: West Indians in Boston, 1900-1950* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 54.

home. I forget how much I did send. I sent for the old lady, ... and the old man and I got to keep a bit myself.”²⁸ Kydd was keenly aware that his wage was low for the danger of the work. He further stated, “[They] know you’re green. ... They’re just going to tell you the voyage is so much and the pay is. When I got seventy-four dollars, he didn’t tell me how much the oil was worth anyhow, but I got seventy-four dollars cash.”²⁹ The fact that Kydd, knowing he was being exploited and that the wage was too low to board a room in the city, still sent remittance monies to take care of his parents reveals a clear connection and responsibility to the homeland.

In the United States, Kydd acted as a surrogate parent to his younger siblings and would offer advice and loan money. Linda Whyte Burrell and Yvonne Drayton recall that their grandfather, William L. Kydd, frequently and discreetly loaned money to people and to the AME church, but also sent money home to his sisters, Lydia and Jane. Of all the homelander siblings, one brother stayed in St. Vincent, and after Jane married Newton Ollivierre, a fishing boat owner, she returned to Bequia and built a comfortable life there. In fact, Samuel Kydd, the patriarch of the Kydd Family, granted the Ollivierre family a parcel of his land.³⁰ Despite her comfortable life, William Kydd continued to send her money until his death and then his daughter, Vivian, sent monies and parcels of clothing.³¹ Kydd’s other sister, Lydia, married Norman Ollivierre, who went off fishing and never returned. Despite the remittances sent by the brothers, she lived in a state of distressing poverty.³² This responsibility to family who remained

²⁸ William L. Kydd, Sr., *Faces of Whaling Oral History Project*, Tape 1, Side 2: Transcript pg. 12

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Yvonne Drayton private collection.

³¹ Letter from Jane Ollivierre to Vivian Kydd, January 2, 1962, Private Collection; Letter from Jane Ollivierre to Vivian Kydd, January 8, 1968, Yvonne Drayton Private Collection

³² Linda Whyte-Burrell (granddaughter of William L. Kydd) in conversation with author, New Bedford, April 18, 2017.

in the home islands was also demonstrated in World War I draft records. Cardinal Ollivierre noted that he supported his wife, Alberta Drayton, in New Bedford and parents in Bequia, St. Vincent.³³ Ernest Ferdinand Kydd, one of William Kydd's brothers, also noted that he supported his parents in St. Vincent.³⁴

Each West Indian family analyzed in the chapter participated in chains of migration that interconnected the entire New Bedford West Indian network. As a service, they also provided housing for newcomers. Stationers Robert Coblins, George Groebe, and Sarah Houtman Irons operated boarding houses both in their homes and in separate tenement buildings. Their homes were known as social gathering places for several members of the community in the early twentieth century. After her husband died, Anna Drayton-Hazell rented part of her home to a large family from St. Eustatius and St. Barthélemy, the Conwards — including John (St. Eustatius) and Nellie (St. Barthélemy), and John's brothers, Oliver and John L. (St. Eustatius).³⁵ These acts of housing and service to the greater West Indian community demonstrated a felt sense of solidarity among West Indians across the first and second generations. Generally, homeland societies provide these forms of welcoming and boarding services for newcomers. In New Bedford's tight community, neighbors provided their homes to accommodate new emigrants and community members. For example, though neither Cardinal Ollivierre nor his wife, Albertina Drayton, were city newcomers, they were able to rely on the community network for housing until they were able to move on their own. This suggests that despite the lack of homeland societies and any ethnic-specific clubs, New Bedford's West Indians were attuned to

³³ "Cardinal Ollivierre, WWI Draft Registration.

³⁴ "Ernest Ferdinand Kydd, WWI Draft Registration.

³⁵ National Archives and Records Administration. *Fourteenth Census of the United States. 1920.* (hereafter referred to as 1920 United States Federal Census).

their cultural identity and the responsibilities of solidarity through their residential patterns, church membership, and social organizations.

New Bedford in a Broader Context

The lack of homeland societies seems to be unique to New Bedford's West Indians. The formation of homeland societies harkens back to older community organizing in the Caribbean under meeting turns and friendly societies. In Barbados, Black Barbadians created community-level banking systems referred to as "meetings" or "meeting turns," through which they would make regular deposits of cash to a trusted friend or neighbor, the "banker." Though they were informal institutions, they enforced a "code of individual reliability and interdependence" to reinforce "community cohesion."³⁶ Likewise, friendly societies were community-sharing organizations institutionalized through church-based associations. But unlike meeting turns, friendly societies were formalized institutions registered with the Barbadian government. These short-term saving institutions were derived from the West African Esusu traditions transplanted to the Caribbean during slavery.³⁷ West Indians in diaspora built off of these micro-lending and credit-sharing institutions to facilitate transnational relationships with their homeland and a continuous stream of diaspora.

Throughout the major West Indian settlements in the United States, specifically New York, Boston, and Miami, West Indians encountered conditions that facilitated the creation of homeland societies. Facing the racial realities of the United States' black-white binary, as well as their double invisibility as Blacks and as foreigners, West Indians recreated social and cultural

³⁶ Bonham Richardson, *Panama Money in Barbados, 1900-1920* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 89.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

institutions as a means to help stabilize the emerging community in its adjustment to changing conditions.³⁸ Though absorbed into a dominant Black identity, the markers of foreignness allowed for more mobility and flexibility of identity for Afro-Caribbeans. It was possible to distinguish West Indians among native-born African Americans through clothing, accent, and religious affiliation. Domingo states that in the early twentieth century, West Indians, “accustomed to wearing cool, light-colored garments in the tropics, ... would stroll along Lenox Avenue on a hot day resplendent in white shoes and flannel pants, the butt of many a jest from his American brothers. ...”³⁹ In New Bedford, emigrants arrived dressed similarly. In 1945, more than 200 Jamaican men brought in to work at Firestone Textiles were given winter clothing but rejected it, preferring to wear their own “tropical” styling of straw hats, white duck trousers, and brown or white shoes.⁴⁰ Sartorial style aside, West Indians employed their status as foreign subjects in ways that benefitted their immediate situations. The development of ethnic societies is one primary example of how West Indians distinguished themselves in the social milieu in port cities.

New York, as a hub of both the Great Migration and Caribbean migration, boasted the most homeland societies. With some 40,000 immigrants of African-descent immigrating into Harlem, homeland societies were an important component in helping to institutionalize their presence in Harlem, and served as welcoming societies for new arrivals. New York’s social milieu of thousands of West Indians in Harlem was a perfect ground for the establishment of

³⁸ Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 65.

³⁹ W.A. Domingo, “Gift of the Tropics,” in *The New Negro*, edited by Alain Locke (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014 [1925]), 345.

⁴⁰ Johnson, 65.

mutual aid homeland societies. “As early as the 1880s, native New Yorkers formed societies to solidify members’ social position and perceived advantages against the intrusions of talented newcomers. In response to the limitations, migrating southerners of the ‘better class of Negroes’ formed their own associations specifically excluding native New Yorkers. Caribbean immigrants formed similar groups, which promoted adjustment to New York and advancement in the class structure.”⁴¹ Early West Indian organizations formed under the umbrella of a pan-Caribbean and colonial West Indian identity, and by 1907 they formed the West Indian Federated Benevolent Societies.⁴² In the introduction to *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume XI: The Caribbean Diaspora*, Robert Hill describes the presence of homeland societies as so vast that:

...There was a friendly society or benevolent association for every Caribbean island and entity — British Virgin Islands Benevolent Association, British Jamaica Benevolent Association, Bermuda Benevolent Association, The Sons and Daughters of Barbados, B.W.I., St. Vincent Benevolent Society, St. Vincent Benevolent Association, Nevis Benevolent Society, Sons and Daughters of St. Christopher, British Guiana Benevolent Association, Antigua Progressive Society, Dominica Benevolent Society, Grenada Mutual Association, Jamaica Benevolent Association, Jamaica Benevolent Society, St. Lucia United Association, Tobago Benevolent Association, and Trinidad Benevolent Association of New York.⁴³

It is estimated that there were 60 homeland societies New York between 1894 and 1940. It is likely that many were ephemeral or did not choose to incorporate. Without exact numbers, Irma Watkins-Owens emphasizes that social organizations and secret societies in Harlem were

⁴¹ Watkins-Owens, 7.

⁴² “Third Annual Picnic of the West Indian Federation Societies of New York,” *The New York Age* (New York, NY), October 7, 1909; The members of the Federation were the West Indian Benevolent Association (1884), the West Indian Benevolent and Social League of Brooklyn (1893), Bermuda Benevolent Association (1898), Danish West Indian Society (1900), and British Colonial Society of New York (Unknown date).

⁴³ Hill, ed., lxxxiv.

legion.⁴⁴ Organized around ethnic identity and homeland responsibilities, these societies filled economic and social voids in the United States and at “home.” Serving as social and cultural linkages, Caribbean homeland associations regularly brought older and more recent immigrants together for social, educational, and charitable functions.

On a transnational level, these organizations were instrumental to sending remittances and other necessary monies and goods to their families and institutions in their homelands. For example, while the St. Vincent Benevolent Association formed in 1920 in New York City “was created to help migrants, there was a built-in understanding that they should also help people at home.”⁴⁵ And in so doing, the British Administrator of the island acknowledged their giving. As the Association members became more financially solvent, their giving increased to shipping barrels of clothing, school supplies, and some goods specifically earmarked for St. Vincentian organizations.⁴⁶ Generally, West Indians, regardless of organizational affiliation, sent home remittances through the local post offices in New York. In 1936, with 30,000 depositors and more than \$4 million in savings, four Harlem post offices had more savings depositors than any other city — and most states — in the United States.⁴⁷

In addition to serving the homeland, these organizations served as a means to mitigate racial and intra-racial conflict. They allowed Afro-Caribbeans to avoid the harsher realities of Jim Crow accommodations and segregation in the United States through ethnic-exclusive social

⁴⁴ Watkins-Owens, 56.

⁴⁵ Joyce Toney, “The Perpetuation of a Culture of Migration: West Indian American Ties with Home; 1900-1979.” *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 13, no. 1 (1989), n.p.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ira de A. Reid, *The Negro Immigrant: His Background, Characteristics, and Social Adjustment, 1899-1937* (New York: Arno Press, 1939), 119.

networking and socialization. That is not to say that West Indians saw themselves as wholly separate from their native-born African-American counterparts. Many subscribed to the belief of a shared destiny and aligned themselves, racially, with African Americans. Historian Winston James argued, “Because of the greater salience of race in America compared to the Caribbean, Afro-Americans have historically been more ‘race conscious’ than Caribbeans.”⁴⁸ It was in the United States that many Caribbeans became “self-consciously ‘Black’ and thus ‘race conscious’ to a greater degree.”⁴⁹ He argued that the longer they lived in America, the more race conscious they became. In the black-white binary of the United States, it is unsurprising that West Indians would align themselves with their neighbors. This solidarity is demonstrated through the actions of their homeland societies and its members. For example, the American West Indian Ladies Aid Society provided financial support for the International Labor Defense fund in support of the Scotsboro Boys’ case.⁵⁰ The Bermuda Benevolent Association purchased lifetime membership in the NAACP.⁵¹ The Montserrat Progressive Society, during its biweekly meetings, often discussed local news pertaining to the concerns of their African-American counterparts.

Concerned with the conditions in their homeland and host land, New York West Indians were also at the fore of mass political movements. Historian Minkah Makalani concluded that the experiences of racialized Black immigrants in the United States deeply enriched discussions on the nuances and depth of race in different contextual settings. He stated, “Drawing on their

⁴⁸ Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1998), 185.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Receipt #14772 of the International Labor Defense for “Scottsboro,” *American West Indian Ladies Aid Society records 1915-1965*, Box 1, Folder 14: Financial Reports. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

⁵¹ Watkins-Owens, 69.

experience of race in two societies, with dissonant racial formations and varying dominant forms of social control, these radicals stressed the political character of race; they described it as a power relationship that was both affected by and informed [the] process of capital, labor organization, and national citizenship.”⁵² Faced with American-style racism, segregation, and discriminatory practices, Caribbean immigrants were drawn to movements of solidarity and counter-hegemonic organization. West Indians held leadership positions within socialist and Black nationalist movements. Through these organizations, their contributions expanded way beyond their ethnic-based coalitions and the borders of the United States and expanded internationally. In his analysis of Caribbean radicalism, James traces its beginnings with United States Virgin Islander Hubert Harrison. Called the Father of Harlem Radicalism by A.P. Randolph, African-American leader of the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters, Harrison was the first to give Jamaican Marcus Garvey, leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, a public platform in 1916 in New York City. Marcus Garvey and other Caribbean radicals, like Nevisian Cyril Briggs and his organization The African Blood Brotherhood, flourished in New York because of its well-developed network of Caribbean societies. The UNIA, in particular, was modeled after friendly societies.⁵³

In Boston and Miami, other hubs of Caribbean migration in the early twentieth century, homeland societies had differing levels of importance. The formation of ethnic societies likely flourished in New York because of the close-proximity to African Americans, but also in the midst of their ethnic diversity. Their island specificity indicates a high sense of group cohesion and identity. In Boston, much of the same was true. Though it was a direct conduit from the

⁵² Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 17.

⁵³ Hill, ed., lxxxiv.

West Indies via the United Fruit Company of Boston steamships, the Massachusetts city had a much smaller population of West Indians than New York. Boston was a secondary home in the United States with New York being the first location to which many emigrated. Settling in Boston after finding employment or “hooking up” with family in the city, West Indians, mainly of Jamaican, Barbadian, and Montserratian descent, were five percent of the city’s 11,000 African Americans.⁵⁴ Despite its small population and relative homogeneity of nationality, the population was much more diffuse than its Harlem counterpart, residing in different neighborhoods, such as the South End, Roxbury, and an area called the Hill around Humboldt Avenue, Walnut Avenue, and side streets.⁵⁵ But like their Harlem counterparts, they were racially segregated into these neighborhoods with little hope of homeownership.⁵⁶ By proximity in housing and in occupation as domestics and porters, they found themselves eclipsed into the hegemonic identity of African-American identity with some notable differences.

As in New York, their Blackness defines them under the United States’ black-white racial binary. Though their cultural difference was unperceivable to outsiders, West Indians constructed a cultural enclave within the neighborhood enclave through their use of social and recreational clubs and the press. Historian Violet Showers Johnson claims, “...within [Boston’s] maze of multiple ethnicities, West Indians found their favorite pockets. They clustered along Massachusetts Avenue (starting roughly from Huntington Avenue, southward to Harrison Avenue), Columbus Avenue, and Tremont Street. They also lived on the side streets of these main streets, on streets like Northampton Avenue, Shawmut Avenue, Windsor Street,

⁵⁴ Johnson, 25

⁵⁵ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 39.

Worcester Street, Yarmouth Street, and Dartmouth Street.”⁵⁷ This clustering of West Indians on these particular streets within a dense African-American community lent itself to the development of West Indian social clubs and homeland societies.

This was quite the opposite of New York’s large numbers of West Indians spread out throughout Harlem and other parts of New York City, such as Brooklyn. It would seem that New York’s West Indians formed their organizations in response to their large numbers, whereas Boston’s early West Indian community gathered around a central idea of a pan-Caribbean solidarity. This is demonstrated by the lack of island specificity in Boston’s first West Indian social club, the West India Aid Society. The Society was organized in 1915 when the community was still in development, and was “designed to help immigrants from various parts of the West Indies.”⁵⁸ The club boasted membership from West Indians from all over the city for the common purpose of solidarity and aid for West Indians from any island. Only in the 1930s did Boston’s West Indians develop the need for island-specific homeland societies. Following the West India Aid Society, the Jamaica Associates and the Boston branch of the Montserrat Progressive Society were founded in 1934. The Barbados Union was founded in 1937, and later the Bermuda Associates formed in 1943.⁵⁹

The connections between New York and Boston are elucidated through the Montserrat Progressive Society (MPS). The first branch of MPS was founded in Harlem, New York, in 1914. The chapter in New York attracted Montserratians living in Boston to its events and

⁵⁷ Ibid., 38

⁵⁸ Ibid., 59

⁵⁹ Ibid., 90; *Montserrat Progressive Society Papers, 1916-1999*, Box 4, Minute Books, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

encouraged its founder, Eliza Beach-Francis, to develop the Boston branch. New York's MPS branch created a strong intergenerational program that included a juvenile group organized in 1923 to support first- and second-generation youth under 18 years of age. As with other homeland societies, they offered a financial credit union to members, and through membership dues, they purchased their headquarters on West 137 Street in 1924. The MPS of New York also maintained contact with the Montserrat Cricket Club in New York and Montserratian United Society in Colon, the Republic of Panama.⁶⁰ By the time Beach-Francis founded the Boston branch, the New York branch was a highly specialized, widely networked homeland society.

The creation of one of New York's earliest West Indian ethnic associations, West Indian Benevolent Association, in 1883 and the rapid development of island-specific associations demonstrates a high need among New York's West Indians to specify and provide particular forms of aid to their countrymen in the United States and at home. Boston demonstrates the opposite impetus. The marked delay between the founding of New York's West Indian Benevolent Association and Boston's counterpart in 1915, coupled with their small numbers comparatively, demonstrates that the city's West Indians might not have reached a critical mass to institutionalize the aid they provided for their homeland. To be sure, the West Indian family units provided financial aid and resources to their families and others in their homeland. Showers Johnson stated, "The Boston West Indian subculture, which for many during that period had to be ferreted out from a more visible Black community, was rightfully an ethnic enclave with the classic components of family, religious center, and associations."⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Montserrat Progressive Society Papers, 1916-1999*, Box 4, Minute Books.

⁶¹ Johnson, 61.

In the early twentieth century, West Indians created that vibrant subculture within African-American culture that included St. Cyprians Episcopal Church⁶², six recreational cricket clubs — the Windsors, Windsor Minors, West India A, West India B, Standards, and Wanderers — and the *Boston Chronicle* newspaper, widely regarded as the other African-American newspaper of its time but which was founded by West Indians in 1915 and focused on the concerns of New England's West Indian community and the homeland affairs.⁶³ It is likely that once their community created those sustainable organizations and reached the numbers where a benevolent society could flourish, only then they felt the need to create their homeland societies. Further, the delayed development of island-specific homeland societies demonstrates that there was a need for social clubs to be homeland specific, but that need likely was not pressing where ethnic solidarity, as opposed to island solidarity, might have been more desirous.

Regardless of the reason for the delayed development of a community organization structure, the clubs were designed to preserve their West Indian cultures. Johnson argues, "The associations, by their very existence, conferred and confirmed the foreignness of the West Indian subculture."⁶⁴ The 20-year time difference between the founding of the West India Aid Society and the homeland-specific organizations reveals two things: (1) There was a growing conscious effort among Boston's West Indians to provide for their particular homeland and countrymen, and (2) these clubs provided cultural education for the city's growing second generation. Like

⁶² In 1924, Jamaicans and Barbadians in Boston founded St. Cyprians Church. The early iteration of the church began in 1910 at the home of Jamaican immigrant Isa Cross. By 1920, the congregation had grown to large to be accommodated in a home and they began to attend services in the Church of the Ascension. The racism they encountered from the white parishioners impelled the nascent congregation to construct their own church edifice.

⁶³ Johnson, 57-64.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 65.

their West Indian counterparts in New York, the Jamaica Associates created the Sons and Daughters of the Associates as a means to inculcate their children into their cultural heritage.⁶⁵

The social context of Miami facilitated a different response among West Indian immigrants. Between 1880 and 1920, while other West Indians were migrating to labor projects throughout Latin America, Bahamians pursued labor opportunities in the nearby state of Florida. There were two waves of Bahamian labor migration to Florida — first to Key West between the 1870s and the early 1900s and then to Miami from 1905 to 1924. The extension of the Henry Flager Railroad from Jacksonville and Miami in 1896 opened up new labor opportunities and led to the development of that area. Bahamians took the opportunity to work in construction and agriculture. Miami's emergent tourist industry proved attractive to Bahamians who had experience within in their islands' tourist industry.⁶⁶ The Miami construction boom required labor for the newly developed large-scale farms in South Dade, and there was also a demand for women for domestic service in the new tourist industry. The wages offered in Miami were higher than the Bahamas could offer. Bahamian laborers came from two fronts — directly from the islands and from Key West, where the cigar industry was declining. In addition to the high wages and the perilous economic conditions on the islands, the effects of droughts and hurricanes also created conditions for emigration.

In the early twentieth century, Bahamians totaled 4,815, which was 52% of all Miami's Black population and 15% of the entire city's population.⁶⁷ While this figure seems remarkable,

⁶⁵ Ibid., 67.

⁶⁶ Cindy Hahamovitch, *No Man's Land: Jamaican Guestworkers in America and the Global History of Deportable Labor* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁶⁷ Raymond A. Mohl, "Black Immigrants: Bahamians in Early Twentieth-Century Miami," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (1987), 271.

on the islands' side, between 1900 and 1920, about one-fifth of the total population of the Bahamas migrated to Florida. The earlier migration to Key West involved family units, but migration to Miami closely resembled the other patterns of Caribbean migration in the same time period whereas men would emigrate, leaving their children and wives behind. Emigration was temporary and consisted of young men leaving their families at home for a six-month term then returning before emigrating again. The proximity to Florida made this pattern of migration and return possible. By 1910, the migration became more permanent, with a large population settling in towns along the railroad lines in Coconut Grove, Dania, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, and Daytona. Bahamians were not new to migration, as many of them participated as porters in Panama, Nicaragua, and Guatemala then returned to their islands for additional dock work transporting bananas and other products to the Florida ports.

Though labor projects facilitated the emigration of Bahamians to Florida, they were emigrating to the Jim Crow South and faced racism and racially motivated violence at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan and the local police. Denigrated by the Florida press as lazy, shiftless "Nassau niggers," Mohl cites a Bahamian living in "Colored Town" who paid \$2.00 weekly for an unpainted, poorly ventilated house. This Bahamian stated, "Colored Miami certainly was not the Miami of which I had heard so much. It was a filthy backyard to the Magic City."⁶⁸ Colored Town was the residential manifestation of Jim Crow segregation and residential restrictive clauses where Black folks were forced into Miami's northwest sector. Though the town was described as impoverished and congested, its residence created a business community, vice district, other forms of entertainment, and several churches. In this residential enclave, West Indians, Bahamians, Jamaicans, and Haitians, created clubs and homeland societies. The center

⁶⁸ Ibid., 287.

of Colored Town's community was on Avenue G where street parades and other social events were held. Like their West Indian counterparts in Boston and New York City, Florida Bahamians celebrated British cultural traditions, such as the coronation of King George V, and West Indian traditions, such as Emancipation Day. The business sector of Colored Town boasted Black-owned hotels; a grocery and general store; an ice cream parlor; a Black newspaper, *The Industrial Reporter*; and other commercial, food, and entertainment establishments.

Within this residential segregated enclave, Black Miamians were still plagued by the overt racism of the KKK and subject to brutality from local police. Despite their British subjecthood, Bahamians were also victim of racial violence. The *Miami Daily Metropolis* and *Miami Herald* reported being pleased that "Nassau Negroes, who upon their arrival here consider themselves the social equal to white people," changed their opinions about their status over time.⁶⁹ Between 1921 and 1925, the KKK grew from 200 men at a welcoming parade to 1,500 members. Klansmen kidnapped Bahamian minister and president of the local Universal Negro Improvement Association, H.H. Higgs. Higgs was released only after promising his immediate return to the Bahamas, and his kidnappers were never found. George stated, "On one occasion, several prominent Bahamian blacks received letters warning them to leave Miami immediately or face punishment similar to that suffered by Higgs. ..."⁷⁰

Faced with the black-white racial binary, Bahamians also encountered discrimination due to their immigrant status. Bahamians showed reluctance to seek American citizenship. As British subjects, they were unaccustomed to race-based ill treatment and frequently advocated for racial equality. They found the benefits to remaining British subjects outweighed what American

⁶⁹ Paul S. George, "Colored Town: Miami's Black Community, 1896-1930," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol. 56, No. 4 (Apr., 1978), 444.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 447.

citizenship offered, mainly on the front of race. They learned, however, as many other British colonial subjects learned in diaspora, there was disinterest from the British Consul in supporting them. In 1911, Miami's Bahamians petitioned Bahamas Governor W. Grey-Wilson for greater protection in the form of an appointment of a British vice-consul for Florida. Their request was dismissed, as the nearby British Consul General stationed in New Orleans commented, "A British vice consul at Miami would have practically nothing else to do but investigate the complaints and grievances of the coloured Bahamians."⁷¹

Despite this disinterest, overt racism, and the increased limitations as a result of the United States' 1924 Immigration Act, they continued to emigrate throughout the 1940s, but from the early 1930s onward, fewer sought permanent residence in South Florida. Those who did seek permanent residence in the mid-twentieth century met a stable Bahamian American community. Mohl argues, "The permanence and stability of their neighborhoods, along with strong links to the islands, contributed to cultural maintenance and a strong sense of nationality... The Bahamian presence made the city's black population distinctly different from that in most southern cities. The Bahamians had an impact on food ways, cultural patterns, work habits, educational aspirations, musical and artistic activities, and other social characteristics."⁷² Further, they established churches and fraternal organizations that facilitated a sense of ethnic cohesion and community.

The details on the everyday, quotidian lives of Miami's West Indians have not yet been fully explored in academic study. Though secondary sources demonstrate that the community was stable and established institutions, none make specific references to the organizations. It is

⁷¹ Mohl, 289.

⁷² Ibid., 295.

likely that homeland societies in Florida did not require the same level of institutionalization as in New York and Boston. Their choice to remain British subjects says a lot about their allegiance to the country of their residence, and elucidates much about their relationship to native-born African Americans.

The large-scale emigration of men created a remittance-dependent society. The women and children who remained on the islands were relied upon to maintain provision grounds, but in many cases the land deteriorated during the men's absence. In a dialectical relationship, the remittance funds to care for the upkeep of the subsistence plots were generally used to purchase imported food items, such as eggs and fresh vegetables. The development of the remittance societies made the labor force and general community increasingly vulnerable to fluctuations in Florida's labor demands. In the context of the racial conditions in Florida, its proximity to the islands, the development of remittance societies, and Bahamian reluctance to naturalize meant that Bahamians were largely beholden to their homeland societies rather than Miami. These conditions likely did not facilitate a great need for the development of homeland societies as it was in the northern cities. Bahamians had continuous access to their homeland and culture as their migration traditions continued to the contemporary moment. If homeland societies were developed to maintain cultural ties and aid the homeland, Bahamians likely did not require such organizations. The "racial hostility directed at blacks also created a context that was conducive to saving."⁷³ Remittances were then about sending monies home to ensure a future outside of the racial hostility in the country where emigrants labored.

Considering the conditions in these three cities, the lack of homeland societies in New Bedford is unusual but unsurprising. Like New York and Boston, West Indians were far from

⁷³ Johnson, 100.

their homelands, thus individual family units provided support via remittances and other financial gifts. New Bedford, unlike these other port cities, did not have what it seems to be the requisite community structure to facilitate homeland society networks. For one, the community was small, with less than 200 members in the early twentieth century. Also, the community was densely packed within the city's fourth ward. They lived as neighbors and boarders and were family. New Bedford's West Indians also largely hailed from the same island and region of the Caribbean. In the West End, they attended the same two churches that were also in the same neighborhood and a short walk away.

As demonstrated by the Dutch West Indians' excursions to the Orange Benevolent Society's balls in New York City, the community also had access to West Indian groups in other nearby cities. After moving to New York City in the 1940s, Mary Jane Bulgar Andrews, second-generation Stadian, joined OBS.⁷⁴ It is likely she and her family traveled on the annual bus trip to the Ball and kept correspondences with friends and kinsmen in New York City. Her prior knowledge of the organization, coupled with her status as a newcomer to the much larger city, likely led her to join the Society, thus demonstrating a clear sense of cultural solidarity and identity. Note that only when Bulgar left New Bedford did she join a homeland society, and that despite the continual movement between cities, no sister chapter of the OBS formed in New Bedford. This implies that the need for homeland societies in the city was nil. That is likely because the small size of the community and the high socialization as neighbors and relatives rendered them useless.

The lack of island-specific social clubs reveals much about the community dynamic in the city. Lenora Kydd Whyte cites that the Dutch and British West Indians, as well as the

⁷⁴ Mary Jane (Bulgar) Andrews Obituary, *The Standard Times* (New Bedford, MA), June 19, 2002, <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20020619/NEWS03/306199998> (Accessed January 15, 2017).

African Americans and Cape Verdeans, had a strong relationship. The West End neighborhood of West Indians forged strong bonds between the West Indians, thus likely rendering the need for homeland societies negligible. They still found ways to organize along ethnic bonds, but unlike other cities, such as Boston, Miami, and New York, where Black immigrants were spread out and loosely connected, New Bedford's West Indians saw themselves as one community. This is substantiated by Leonora Kydd Whyte's anecdote that by virtue of her West Indian heritage, she and the other community members "are one."

Section Two: *Para O Bem Da Nação*: Cape Verdean Identity and Institution-Building

Nearly 60 years after emigrating from Cape Verde, local Cape Cod Civil Rights activist Eugenia Fortes recounted:

In 1920, my mother and I came to find my father in New Bedford. We came on one of those three-masted schooners. It took us 31 days to cross, ...and we came to New Bedford and lived there for about two and a half years. ... At that time, [Cape Verdeans] were all coming to the New World, the islands weren't supportive, you couldn't live there. There wasn't no jobs, ... so we came to find a better life.¹

Emigration, like marriage and childbearing, was a normal part of life for Cape Verdeans. The islands' deleterious and precarious ecological conditions contributed to the islanders' migratory ethos. The resultant longing *for return* or *to return* shaped Cape Verdean experiences in and out of the archipelago. At nearly 80 years of age, Fortes captured the essence of the typical migration narrative for Cape Verdean emigrants. She and her mother rejoined her father in diaspora; using the New Bedford port as their first port of entry, they moved into other parts of the southeastern New England region, finally settling in the Cape Cod cranberry region where she and her parents worked.

The size of the Cape Verdean emigrant community in New England constituted the largest immigrant group in the region.² Cape Verdeans mostly settled in New Bedford and Providence and were attracted by the proximity to the ports where most found employment. In New Bedford's South End and Providence's Fox Point, Cape Verdeans formed ethnic enclaves and organized homeland societies. Their residential clustering, cultural association, and infrequent interaction with their neighbors made their world a Cape Verdean one. New Bedford

¹ Eugenia Fortes, interview with Frank Rudd, *Tale of Cape Cod*, July 20, 1978. <http://www.talesofcapecod.org/node/1078> (Accessed February 25, 2018).

² Paul Wayne Barrows, *The Historical Roots of Cape Verdean Dependency, 1460-1990* (PhD diss.: University of Minnesota, 1990), 48.

and Fox Point served as the center of the Cape Verdean “colonies” in the United States. They were the sites of the first Cape Verdean Roman Catholic Church in the Americas, the first Cape Verdean Protestant Church in the Americas, and the first of its kind transnational shipping fleet owned and operated by African diasporan emigrants. Through their living and organizing, Cape Verdean-Americans’ attention and focus were directed to the homeland, ensuring their actions were always *para o bem da nação* (translated as “for the good of the nation”).

Accordingly, this section focuses on Cape Verdean immigration and Cape Verdean organizational lives in diaspora. As Cape Verdean emigrants exited the three- and four-masted schooners of the Brava Packet Trade, they entered the South End and Fox Point residential enclaves, the heart of the Cape Verdean American diaspora settlement. There, they were surrounded by a familiar culture, listened to *Kriolu* in the streets and in their homes, and lived in neighborhoods that were truly their own, punctuated by churches, stores, social clubs, bars, and tenement homes full of Cape Verdean immigrants and boarders. The churches in the Cape Verdean communities in both cities gave life to various social and economic homeland societies. Though turn-of-the-century Cape Verdean emigrants never envisioned permanent settlement in the United States, their institutions demonstrated their commitment to Cape Verdeans in the homeland and in diaspora. Through the various organizations, emigrants shed their island-specific identities and formed a nascent Pan-Cape Verdean or Cape Verdean American identity that bound them together by language, custom, diet, religion, and their longing for home.

Centering on Cape Verdean institutions and organizations, this section relies on primary source documents, including immigration records, city directories, personal narratives, organizational minutes and event pamphlets, local newspapers, and Cape Verdean-national newspapers and national bulletins to analyze the ways Cape Verdeans operationalized their

social and maritime network connectedness to homeland. These institutions negotiated Cape Verdean emigrant's responsibilities to their kith and kin in the homeland, their desire to return, and the need to preserve language, folklore, music, religion, and traditions.

This section also offers that the Cape Verdean feeling of *sodadi* or longing/homesickness was a motivating factor for organizing. Cape Verdean social and economic institutions were heavily influenced by a desire to maintain their cultural distinctiveness. Protecting culture is not uncommon among first- and second-generation immigrant groups, but this chapter suggests that Cape Verdeans maintained their intensity for longer than other groups, notably their West Indian counterparts in the West End of New Bedford. *Sodadi*, related to the Portuguese word *saudade*, strongly influenced Cape Verdean-American decision-making, as return was an ever-present possibility. In New Bedford and Providence, a small leadership contingent emerged among Cape Verdean-Americans. This small group of first- and second-generation immigrants crisscrossed membership in organizations and in so doing, formed a well-regarded, highly engaged network that extended throughout New England and Cape Verde. They were founders of organizations, leaders in the local Cape Verdean churches, and investors in the Brava Packet Trade — the Cape Verdean-operated shipping fleet. They also served as advocates for newly arrived emigrants and were mediators between New England Cape Verdeans and the Portuguese government in providing aid for Cape Verdean homelander. Coupled with their densely packed ethnic enclaves, the institutions acted as barriers to the outside world, slowing down their integration into the larger American society and the nearby African-American community.

Anthropologist Richard A. Lobban Jr. stated, “The most enduring resource and export of Cape Verde has been its people.”³ Migration was a central component in cultivating Cape

³ Richard A. Lobban Jr., *Cape Verde: Crioulo Colony to Independent Nation*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 8.

Verdean identity. As early as the eighteenth century, United States maritime interests brought whaling ships to Cape Verde for resupply and picked up Cape Verdean men willing to work aboard the ships. Cape Verdean men used whaling as a form of escape and a passport to travel for free to the United States. The main port of call was in New Bedford, the capital of whaling in the United States. As whaling declined, Cape Verdeans maintained the maritime routes to Cape Verde through the purchase of old windjammer schooners. Migration facilitated by the schooners allowed for the permanent settling of Cape Verdeans emigrating to South End and Fox Point, and enacted a chain migration, reuniting families and friends. Cape Verdean emigrants' ability to traverse the Atlantic through self-directed transportation via schooner subverted the normative narrative of exile in African diaspora scholarship. At the turn of the twentieth century, it was the ability to return that distinguished Cape Verdean from other immigrant and African diaspora groups in the United States. The constant contact with the homeland might have allowed Cape Verdeans to remain distant from their African diaspora counterparts and to claim a *Kriolu* identity.

Like migration, race and ethnic identity also shaped Cape Verdean experiences in the homeland and in diaspora. Beginning with Portuguese claiming the uninhabited islands of the Cape Verdean archipelago in 1460, by 1510, each of the nine inhabited islands was populated with the forced migration of enslaved West Africans and the migration of Portuguese traders. Lusotropicalism, advanced by Brazilian scholar Gilberto Freyre, was promoted as a benign feature of colonialism manifest through the promotion of Catholicism, incorporation of the Portuguese language, and the Portuguese people's long history of sexual, intimate racial contact. Their language, *Kriolu* (creole), as a language of mixed Portuguese and West African

languages,⁴ symbolized their hybridity.⁵ Borrowing from Stuart Hall's cultural studies analysis on creolization, Cape Verdeans constituted a color-conscious hybridized people identified by their cultural and racial mixing of West Africans and Portuguese.⁶ According to Hall, the mixing does not lose the original cultural origins. They "remain left-over, so to speak, in lack or excess, and which constantly then return to trouble any effort to achieve total cultural closure." Though they are left over, they are unable to be returned to their original state. The creolized identity shaped something new.⁷ For Cape Verdeans, their cultural identity was neither wholly Portuguese nor West African.

Phenotype was the main determinant of social position with fair-skinned, mostly European Cape Verdeans at the top of the hierarchy and darker-skinned, African Cape Verdeans remaining at the bottom as the common people. The *mestiços* were in the middle. According to Historian Basil Davidson, color consciousness and prejudice in Cape Verde reached an "almost pathological condition" in the mid nineteenth century.⁸ Though whiteness was ideal for color, "the innate culture of Cape Verde is not a borrowed European or 'white' garment."⁹ White

⁴ The main borrowed West African words are Mandinga, Temne, Wolof and from the Brame family of languages: Manjaco, Pepel, and Mancanha.

⁵ Tobias Green. "The Evolution of a Creole Identity in Cape Verde," in *The Creolization Reader: Studies in Mixed Identities and Cultures*, eds. Robin Cohen and Paola Toninato. (New York: Routledge, 2010): 162.

⁶ Stuart Hall. "Creolité and the Process of Creolization," in *The Creolization Reader: Studies in Mixed Identities and Cultures*, eds. Robin Cohen and Paola Toninato. (New York: Routledge, 2010).

⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁸ Basil Davidson, *The Fortunate Isles: A Study in African Transformation* (Sydney: Hutchinson Education, 1989), 30.

⁹ Dulce Amanda Duarte and Jose C. Curto, "The Cultural Dimension in the Strategy for National Liberation: The Cultural Bases of the Unification between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau." *Latin American Perspectives* 11, no. 2. (Spring 1984), 58-59.

European culture could not serve as a model for Cape Verdeans whose identities consisted of a large grouping of African descendants. In the color-conscious society, the *Kriolus*¹⁰ created an identity in relation to conflicted concepts of self-worth and value practiced by Portuguese colonialists. In the archipelago, “many Cape Verdeans, who were African in appearance, but were middle to upper class in economic status, were identified as white by the [native Cape Verdean] people. An interesting twist to this paradigm occurred when Cape Verdeans migrated to North America and interacted in a society where they became racial and linguistic minorities.”¹¹ In New England, Cape Verdeans retained their notions of color status but were met with a conflicting social paradigm, one based on race in a black-white racial dyad. United States census enumerators frequently misidentified Cape Verdeans’ race and nationality as white, Black, or mulatto with national origins reflecting Portuguese, Black Portuguese, African Portuguese, Atlantic Islanders, Bravas, and Western Islanders.

Within their ethnic enclave and the transnational social field, Cape Verdeans articulated a distinct type of Cape Verdean diaspora identity in the United States. Cape Verdean-American identity was formed on multiple fronts — race, ethnicity, and the fight for self-identification. In her groundbreaking study on Cape Verdeans in America, historian Marilyn Halter concluded, “For the Cape Verdean, social identity can never be assumed and is never a given. Rather, the issue is continually being reformulated, sometimes at critical personal cost.”¹² This quote effectively captures the shifting, altering, and continuous development of a Cape Verdean identity in the homeland but also in diaspora.

¹⁰ *Kriolu*, here, is the identity of Cape Verdeans as creole people.

¹¹ Barrows, 24.

¹² Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 174.

For the purposes of this study, Cape Verdeans are identified in both racial and ethnic terms with attention to their geographic and social realities. They will be identified using the ethnic language of “Cape Verdean” and the racial and political language of “Black” to put them in conversation with other African-descended groups, particularly nearby West Indians. By virtue of the difficulty of ascertaining Cape Verdean racial identity through the lens of the United States’ racial constructions, the records are inconclusive on the exact numbers of Cape Verdean settlers who would be consistently racialized as “Black.”

Though this study does employ census data records of “Black” or “mulatto” Cape Verdeans in 1900 and 1910 to offer perspectives on housing conditions and employment, it is not reliant on these numbers as definitive determinants to account for the full community of Cape Verdeans who might be identified or identify as white. The inconsistency of Cape Verdeans’ racial and national designation is further demonstrated by the change from one census year to the next. For example, Francisco da Cruz Nereu, a Cape Verdean-born leader in New Bedford, was classified as “colored” in the 1913 marriage record to his wife Margarida Oliveira, then classified as Black in the 1918 World War I draft registration, and finally the Nereu family (Francisco, Margarida, and their three children) was classified as white in the 1920 Federal Census.¹³ In addition to the shifting racial classification, naming was also a significant challenge

¹³ Francisco da Cruz Nereu, *Massachusetts Marriage Records, 1840-1915*, 1913. Ancestry.com (November 17, 2015); United States Selective Service System, *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918* (hereafter referred to as WWI Draft Registration). Ancestry.com (Accessed November 17, 2015); National Archives and Records Administration. *Fourteenth Census of the United States. 1920*. Accessed November 17, 2015. Ancestry.com (hereafter referred to as 1920 United States Federal Census).

in tracking Cape Verdean identities and people in the New England region; Nereu's name also changed in multiple documents, appearing as Neraw, Nerew, and the aforementioned Nereu.¹⁴

This section is composed of two chapters that offer an analysis of the organizations that shaped Cape Verdean-Americans' experiences in New Bedford and Providence. The subjects of chapter four, "The Cape Verdean Colonies in the Americas," are the residential ethnic enclaves in South End of New Bedford and Fox Point of Providence. This chapter places particular focus on the religious, social, and economic organizations Cape Verdean-Americans formed in the cities. Representing the Cape Verdean colonies of the United States, Cape Verdeans in New England sought to recreate and retain their cultural heritage through their various institutions. In the residential enclaves, they were able to be in an exclusively Cape Verdean space with churches, surrounded by the music of *mornas* and residents speaking *Kriolu*, eating imported foods from the islands, and supported by social orders committed to providing aid and sites for community gatherings. In this way, their local institutions reinforced a Cape Verdean-American identity in the making, allowing Cape Verdeans to live in the nexus of race, ethnicity, and colonial status. The transnational social fleet, the Brava Packet Trade, facilitated the movement of returnees and emigrants, goods and products, monies and foodstuffs, and further reinforced their Cape Verdeanness even in diaspora.

The Brava Packet Trade is the focus of chapter five. At the turn of the twentieth century, the fleet of windjammer ships was owned and operated by Cape Verdeans and allowed the free movement of Cape Verdeans to traverse the Atlantic. This free movement assisted Cape Verdeans in America to preserve relationships with other Cape Verdean communities up and

¹⁴ Francisco da Cruz Nereu, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Archives and Record Administration. *New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957*. Ancestry.com (Accessed November 17, 2015).

down the New England seaports and in the homeland. The transnational social field made Cape Verde, more than 3,000 miles away, accessible in one month's voyage, unencumbered by the exorbitant expense of travel. Cape Verdeans had direct routes to reconnect with their families. It solved the issue, for them, on how to be in America with commitments to those who remained on their home islands. The Brava Packet Trade also solved the problem of *sodadi* (the Cape Verdean *Kriolu* word for homesickness and longing). These intense feelings from Cape Verdeans were part and parcel of their national imaginary and ethos of migration, and energized Cape Verdeans in diaspora to operate and own their own mode of transportation, accomplishing what no other African diaspora group at the time was able to. Powered by meeting the dual interests of Cape Verdeans seeking emigration and the Cranberry bog owners looking for cheap labor, the Brava Packet Trade took on a life of its own and became the main source of transnational communication between the diaspora and the homeland. Their lives on both sides of the transnational social field were filled with hope and a longing for reunification.

Considering the Brava Packet Trade and the local institutions together, Cape Verdeans in diaspora were able to attend to the needs of their kith and kin through direct support and from afar. In that way, Cape Verdean-Americans were living parallel to their host land communities in New Bedford and Providence, hovering between both spaces with the promise of return but without the intention to stay.

Chapter Four: The Cape Verdean Colonies in the Americas: Emigration, Community Development, and Homeland Societies

Cape Verdean historian Antonio Carreira stated, “It can be asserted without fear of contradiction that all of the African territories in the former Portuguese empire in the archipelago of Cape Verde was the pioneer of free emigration.”¹ The migration of people in and out of the Cape Verdean archipelago has been integral to its national imagination and the dispersion of Cape Verdean people throughout the world. The myth that “even on the moon there is a Cape Verdean” is evidence of this imagination.² Emigration shaped the population in the Cape Verde islands, identities of the people, and their post-emigration trajectories as transnational settlers in the United States. This chapter examines the development of Cape Verdean-ethnic societies.

Cape Verdean emigration was pushed by the constant specter of drought and famine that plagued the archipelago. Cape Verdean migrants took off on whaling ships, using their labor on the boats as a form of passport to enter to Southeastern New England cities New Bedford and Providence. They emigrated en masse: “For the period 1900 to 1952, over 44,689 Cape Verdeans voluntary emigrated from Cape Verde. Of this group, some 20,578 emigrated to the United States. ...”³ Upon arriving to New Bedford and Providence, they began to shape their social world, interconnecting the local Cape Verdean community to their homeland through their various social clubs and economic institutions. Through their social organizing, Cape Verdeans were part of a large social network that sought to maintain their ethnic identity and create a new

¹ Antonio Carreira, *The People of the Cape Verde Islands: Exploitation and Emigration* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1982), 42.

² Lisa Åkesson, *Making a Life: Meanings of Migration in Cape Verde* (Göteborg: Göteborg University, 2004), 46.

³ Paul Wayne Barrows, *The Historical Roots of Cape Verdean Dependency, 1460-1990* (PhD diss.: University of Minnesota, 1990), 122.

one in diaspora. The various leaders of the Cape Verdean-American communities in New Bedford and Providence maintained the social world that was exclusively Cape Verdean as they overlapped memberships in clubs, maintained boarders and lodgers of Cape Verdean descent, and labored side by side on the docks, cranberry bogs, and in the factories. This chapter presents the quotidian ways that Cape Verdean American organizers sought to retain cultural, social, and real linkages to their homelands through their transnational ethnic societies. It was through their everyday actions and commitment to sustaining kith and kin on the islands that they exemplified Antonio Carreira's quote that "... Cape Verdeans are like a horse with wings: We don't have our feet on the ground, nor do we reach the sky. We live, and it's good that we live, in idealism — a characteristic of the islands."⁴

Colonial History and the Antecedent to Emigration

Since the Portuguese occupation of the archipelago in 1460, migration made the uninhabited islands a special economic hub in the early Atlantic world. It is this history of migration that turned Cape Verde into a slave entrepôt at the center of trade, where the "bush slave" could be acclimatized.⁵ The nine inhabited islands of the archipelago are geographically separated into two regions — the Sotavento Group, which consists of the islands of Brava, Fogo, São Tiago, and Maio, and the Barlovento Group, which consists of the islands of Santo Antão, Sao Vicente, Sao Nicolau, Sal, and Boa Vista. According to historian Toby Green, "The islands

⁴ Carreira, vi.

⁵ Ibid., 6.

represented not only the last physical outpost of the Old World, they were also the first step towards the social realities of the New.”⁶

As a hub between Europe, Western Africa, and the Atlantic world of the Americas and the Caribbean, trade was an important feature of the islands and led to its rapid colonization between 1460 and the first decade of the sixteenth century. The Portuguese styled the Cape Verde economy after the plantation system developed in the Canary Islands and Madeira. Land was cleared to plant sugarcane and cotton, and enslaved West Africans were imported and assigned to weave, gather indigo, or labor in the salt flats of Maio and Sal. The Portuguese were disappointed when the islands failed to match the economic success of the Canary Islands. They reshaped the archipelago to serve as the Portuguese command center whereby the Cape Verde islands oversaw the West African maritime trade in enslaved Africans and goods, such as ivory, gold, animal hides, spices, wood, grains, and dyes. In its demand for accessible cheap labor, Portugal subjected Cape Verde to exploitation and poor colonial management, and did little to develop the islands’ infrastructure.

In addition to social, political, and economic exploitation, the ecological conditions on the islands were adversely affected by the overexploitation of land from salt mining and cotton development that destroyed the islands’ delicate ecosystem and facilitated drought and famine.⁷ The poor agricultural practices, historical export economy, and implementation of inappropriate

⁶ Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade in Western Africa, 1300–1589* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 104.

⁷ Between 1875 and 1921, there were five major droughts resulting in famine; Alexander Keese, “Managing the Prospect of Famine: Cape Verdean Officials, Subsistence Emergencies, and the Change of Elite Attitudes during Portugal’s Late Colonial Phase” *Itinerario* 36 (2012), 49.

crops for the local ecology contributed to food shortages and widespread hunger in the islands.⁸ The Portuguese increasingly turned their attention to their more lucrative colonies and often ignored the deleterious conditions in Cape Verde. During the famine of 1830 to 1833, “as usual, Portugal had sent no aid, nor had the English, despite their long history of trading contacts with Cape Verde and their favored status in all of Portugal’s colonies.”⁹ One notable famine, beginning in 1866, resulted in the death of nearly one-third of the Cape Verdean population of 97,000.¹⁰ According to Richard Lobban, “The recurrent cycles of drought, famine, and mass starvation in islands left the population vulnerable to exploitation and primed for emigration.”¹¹ Migration was an escape from the Malthusian trap in which given land becomes so overcrowded that only meager subsistence can be attained.¹²

Famine, drought, and the prospect of conscripted labor in West Central African plantations provided the mitigating factors to enable mass Cape Verdean emigration. The conditions of drought and subsequent famine affected the islands differently and resulted in different numbers and patterns of migration. For example, Santo Antão, São Vicente, São Nicolau, Sal, and Boa Vista contributed fewer out-migrants, as they were less populated and generally faced hardship as a result of famine. The push-and-pull factors of emigration for the

⁸ Katherine Carter and Judy Aulette, *Cape Verdean Women and Globalization: The Politics of Gender, Culture, and Resistance* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 31.

⁹ Deirdre Meintel, *Race, Culture, and Portuguese Colonialism in Cabo Verde* (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1984), 59-60.

¹⁰ Carreira, 16.

¹¹ Richard A. Lobban, *Cape Verde: Crioulo Colony to Independent Nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 42.

¹² Anababette Wils, “Emigration and Demography in Cape Verde: Escaping the Malthusian Trap,” in *Small Worlds, Global Lives: Islands and Migration*, edited by Russell King and John Connell (London: Pinter, 1999).

Cape Verde Islanders, mainly drought and famine, were more pronounced in the Sotavento islands than the Barlovento. For the islands of Brava, Fogo, São Tiago, and Maio, migration acted as a safety valve to the conditions on the islands and further demonstrates that emigration was a necessary means of survival for those abroad and on the islands. Barlovento islanders contributed three-quarters of the total emigrants to the United States and constituted two-thirds of those entering New Bedford, a popular destination among emigrants. Similar to their West Indian counterparts, Cape Verdeans developed a migratory ethos as an adaptation to their conditions on the individual islands. Historian Paul Barrows stated, “To seek an escape from the misery and death associated with famine, the people looked to emigration for their salvation.”¹³ For others, imminent starvation was not the motivating factor, rather it was the desire to escape poverty and seek a better lifestyle, obtain comforts afforded to them from higher wages, and provide monies and goods to sustain the archipelago’s homestay population. Anthropologist Deirdre Meintel captured this sentiment from a Brava islander who had first emigrated to the United States in 1906: “We didn’t lack for food, but we didn’t have shoes.”¹⁴

The majority of the emigrants to the New England region of the United States were from the islands of Brava and Fogo.¹⁵ Though the island of São Tiago was the largest and boasted the highest population, it’s darker-complected residents were more likely to be conscripted into labor on the cocoa plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe than their lighter, more *mestiço* counterparts in Brava and Fogo and, therefore, less likely to voluntarily emigrate to the United States. The

¹³ Barrows, 121.

¹⁴ Deirdre Meintel, “Cape Verdean Transnationalism, Old and New,” *Anthropologia* 44, no. 1. (2002), 29.

¹⁵ Marilyn Halter, “Cape Verdeans in the U.S,” in *Transnational Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*, ed. Luis Batalha and Jørgen Carling (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 39.

imbalance between those who were United States-bound emigrants and those “emigrants” conscripted to labor in São Tome could be accounted for by the geographical proximity of Brava and Fogo as the westernmost islands to the United States and São Tiago as the southernmost island to the Western coast of Africa. Class-based color and racial consciousness attributed to the social and economic hierarchy developed on the islands.

Beginning in the fifteenth century, identities based on phenotype (skin color, hair texture, lip form, nose shape, etc.) and ancestry contributed to a three-tier hierarchy. The popular class, consisting mainly of formerly enslaved Africans and their descendants, were at the bottom of the social, political, and economic hierarchy. African features were seen as ugly and culturally inferior. The terms *preta/o* and *negra/o*, meaning dark and black, more than descriptors of color and complexion, were considered insults. Though persons with “pure” European Portuguese of *gente branco* were small in number, they were at the top of the hierarchy as landowners with ties to the old plantocracy. The mixed-race African and European *mestiço/ mulatos/ mixtos*, born on the archipelago, were in the middle and considered the islands’ autochthonous population.¹⁶ With no codified legal system establishing firm boundaries on race and color, Cape Verdeans on the island of Brava identified 140 different words to describe phenotypes. People were identified with color and a modifying term, such as *branco di cabelo crespo* [white with frizzy hair]. Ancestry with relation to landholding (European), slavery (African), wealth, and community affiliation affected status. According to wealth or access to social capital, someone could be *branco di dinheiro* (white by money).

¹⁶ Meintel, *Race, Culture, and Portuguese Colonialism*, 108.

White and black operated as social and economic categories with multiple meanings extending beyond color; white did not inherently mean wealth and black did not mean poor.¹⁷ These factors might have contributed to the emigration of more of the lighter-skinned Brava and Fogo islanders to the United States, but there were poor in all the islands, and emigration was a necessary safety valve. Poverty and opportunity met as the American whaling interests facilitated migration to the United States. The social order in Cape Verde is important to consider, as Cape Verdeans emigrated from the loosely constructed tripartite system of classification to the rigid black-white dyad in the United States.

American captains of whaling ships from New Bedford and Nantucket began to recruit Cape Verdean laborers from the islands in the 1830s.¹⁸ Their needs for whale oil for curing skins and lighting made the waters of Cape Verde and the Azores attractive places for whaling and other maritime trades. The 1860s were a high time in the whaling industry, with ships making frequent stops to the island of Brava. At the time, Cape Verdean immigration to the United States averaged 28 persons emigrating annually between 1860 and 1887.¹⁹ Gaining access through these established maritime connections, Brava Islanders were considered the “pioneering emigrants to the United States,” specifically New England.²⁰ As such, due to the high influx of Brava-islanders, in the United States, Cape Verdeans regardless of island-origin were generally referred to as “Bravas.” Between 1889 and 1899, the numbers of emigrants exponentially

¹⁷ Meintel, *Race, Culture, and Portuguese Colonialism*, 95 – 99; Briton Cooper-Busch, “Cape Verdeans in the American Whaling and Sealing Industry, 1850-1900,” *The American Neptune* Vol. 45 (1985), 105-106.

¹⁸ Carreira, 43.

¹⁹ Marilyn Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity: Cape Verdean American Immigrants, 1860-1965* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 43.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

increased to 204.4, with a rate of between five to nine boats disembarking annually.²¹ These maritime routes made the ports of southeastern New England the preferred place for Cape Verdean and Caribbean migration into the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1920, 18,122 Cape Verdeans migrated to New Bedford.²² The Port of New Bedford, at the time the whaling capital of the United States and currently still known as “The Whaling City,” was a desirable site of disembarkation and subsequent settlement. The high rate of emigration and settlement dubbed the city as the Capital of the Cape Verdean Colony in the Americas.²³ Though New Bedford was the site of disembarkation, several Cape Verdeans’ final destination was nearby Providence, where there was another thriving Cape Verdean community fueled by industry.

Living and Laboring in Southeastern New England

New Bedford and Providence had a strong economy driven by the whaling industry, jewelry and textile factories, and mills. The industrial revolution in New England in the 1790s provided alternate means of labor to replace the declining whaling industry in the early twentieth century. “The availability of water power, the skills of the local craftsmen, and the diversion of capital from maritime ventures” contributed to the development of textile manufacturing.²⁴ New England became the center of cloth manufacturing, shoe and boot manufacturing, flax spinning, and other industries. In the 1840s, most of New England’s production was concentrated between

²¹ Ibid, 37

²² Ibid.

²³ The language of colony regarding the Cape Verdean community is featured in the following documents: “Escuna ‘Bradford E. Jones,” *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (Praia, Republica de Cabo Verde), July 11, 1931; Sidney M. Greenfield, “In Search of Social Identity: Strategies of Ethnic Identity Management Among Cape Verdeans in Southeastern MA,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 13, No. 1 (Summer 1976), 5.

²⁴ John S. Hekman, “The Product Cycle and New England Textiles,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 94, No. 4 (Jun., 1980), 700.

20 and 60 miles from Boston with ready access to the railroad lines. Rhode Island was the center of the American Industrial Revolution. The textile manufacturing industry exploded in the post-Revolutionary period with the investment in “negro cloth” or kersey, a cheap cotton-wool blend material manufactured to reduce the cost of clothing enslaved African Americans. In the mid-nineteenth century, “more than eighty ‘negro cloth’ mills opened in Rhode Island. ... Twenty-two Rhode Island towns and cities manufactured kersey for over sixty years; more than eighty Rhode Island families owned part of a ‘negro cloth’ mill at some point in the nineteenth century.”²⁵ After gradual abolition was enacted in 1784, business owners shifted their industry to the mills that produced the kersey. In 1793, English-immigrant Samuel Slater established the United States’ first Arkwright²⁶ spinning mill in Pawtucket, a village on the Rhode Island-Massachusetts border. After the building of Slater Mill, several white local business owners built mills in the village, and by the 1820s there were eight mills supported by the village’s 3,000 inhabitants. The development of the industry made Pawtucket “the most important industrial village in the United States.”²⁷ The textile manufacturing industry and the whaling industry were prosperous industries, reaching their peak at the same time. In 1854, New Bedford imported “\$10,802,594 worth of whale and sperm oil and whalebone,” and at the same time the city’s first textile mill, the Wamsutta, operated 30,000 spindled and 600 looms.²⁸ The two largest mills in

²⁵ Christy Clark-Pujara, *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 90.

²⁶ A type of spinning wheel developed by English inventor Richard Arkwright.

²⁷ Gary Kulik, “Pawtucket Village and the Strike of 1824: The Origins of Class Conflict in Rhode Island,” *Radical History Review* Vol. 17 (1978), 7.

²⁸ Allen, 82.

New Bedford were Wamsutta Mills, which covered a large portion of the northern area of the city, and the Potomska Mills in the south.

Migration to New Bedford and Providence in the boom of industry presented Cape Verdeans with the opportunity to improve their access to financial resources and uplift their families out of poverty. Whaling was still the main form of employment for Cape Verdeans at the turn of the century. On the whaling vessels, Cape Verdeans, mainly men, left the islands in search of a better life for themselves and their families that remained in the way of remittances, goods, up-building property on the islands, and maintaining hope for eventual return migration. In 1917, 58 Cape Verdean men as young as 14 years old requested permission from the Cape Verdean colonial government to emigrate from Brava to the United States for the sole purpose of making money “to sustain their families.”²⁹

Overwhelmingly, Cape Verdeans were mariners, seaman, and fisherman. It was a logical career choice in New Bedford and Providence, but also in the Cape Verde islands that had a long history of recruiting islanders as low-wage laborers to work on the whaling ships. Aboard the whaling ships, Cape Verdeans encountered many difficulties on account of race and color. They were looked down upon and given the most difficult work. Discrimination was high and affected the employment options of Black and mixed-race seaman: “The promotion of an energetic young man, however, is rapid, since a large proportion of the foremast hands are ignorant blacks and men of mixed blood who have no ambition to rise.”³⁰ Here “energetic” was a metonym for

²⁹ Requests for License to Emigrate to Foreign Countries, 1917, S.G.G. Box 582 Correspondencia reciba da administração do conselho da Brava remetendo requerimentos de individuos que pediram licenças para emigrar para o estrangeiro [Correspondences from the Brava council and administration regarding the requests from individuals who are seeking licenses to immigrate to foreign countries], Arquivo Nacional de Cabo Verde, Praia [Cape Verdean National Archive, Praia].

³⁰ Everett S. Allen, *Children of the Light: The Rise and Fall of New Bedford Whaling and the Death of the Arctic Fleet* (Orleans: Parnassus Imprints, 1973), 126.

“white.” Cape Verdeans and other African-descended seamen, on account of race and color, were barred from advancing professionally. When white men left the whaling industry for the more prosperous, less dangerous, and somewhat cleaner conditions in the factories and the mills, Cape Verdeans, West Indians, and African Americans began to dominate the whaling ships, and even a few Cape Verdeans served as captains.³¹ It was interest convergence;³² as white men left the dangerous industry, employers required cheap labor and Cape Verdeans, and others filled that gap, looking for opportunities to improve their conditions via emigration and nearly desperate to make monies to support their families back home.

The relationship between the whalers and Cape Verdean employees was exploitative. Ship captains offered low wages and often hired those willing to work for food rather than wages.³³ Captains of whaling ships earned 1/14 of the total profits, but Cape Verdeans — often working as inexperienced deckhands, cooks, and seamen — were paid 1/190, 1/130, and 1/80 of the profits, respectively.³⁴ For example, the *Samuel Robertson*’s 1856-1858 voyage brought in \$48,000 in profit. Cape Verdean Jose Silva received 1/120 of the profits (or \$281.83), but after deductions for clothing, medicine, and food he was left with \$163.91 (or 22 cents a day) for two years of labor.³⁵ Facing discrimination, isolation, and exploitation, Cape Verdeans treated

³¹ Memory Holloway, “Making Waves: Cape Verdeans, Whaling, and the Uses of Photography” in *Transnational Archipelago and Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), eds. Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling, 125.

³² In his study on the *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) decision, Derrick Bell argues that the “principle of ‘interest convergence’ provides: The interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites,” Derrick Bell, Jr. “Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma,” *Harvard Law Review* Vol. 93, No. 3 (January 1980), 523.

³³ Holloway, 123.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 125.

³⁵ Busch, 111.

whaling as a means for migration and access to greater opportunities than in the archipelago. Historian Marilyn Halter cited Cape Verdean Joseph Ramos, who stated, “We didn’t make any money whaling because they discounted everything — food, clothing, ... it was a form of passport.”³⁶ Former seaman Rafael Almeida absconded from the ship the *Fannie Belle Atwood* in 1924 and began working in New Bedford until his arrest for desertion in 1929.³⁷ Acknowledging the limitations as well as the opportunities granted by employment in whaling and maritime labor, Cape Verdeans used the industry to get them in the United States. Their connections within the enclaves supported them once arriving.

As whaling dried up due to unregulated predation, cheaper materials, and the lack of whales in the area, some Cape Verdean seaman transitioned their maritime skills and dominated the dockside jobs and others moved to other industries. Those who remained in the maritime field worked offshore for oil companies, such as Shell and Standard. They also worked as longshoremen, coal boat shovelers, riggers, coopers, on merchant vessels, and in the ropework factories and other jobs requiring heavy manual labor. Despite their skills in whaling, Cape Verdeans were barred from the commercial fishing industry, dominated by immigrants from Scandinavia and the Canadian Maritime Provinces.

Other Cape Verdeans left the docks and gained access to manufacturing in the mills.³⁸ They were mill operators, and some did specialized work as spinners, speeder tenders, combers, and other specialty laborers. In 1880, two textile mills in New Bedford employed 2,700 Cape

³⁶ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 103.

³⁷ “Desertor que será deportado” *Diário de Notícias* (June 11, 1929).

³⁸ Though the industry retained a long-distance relationship to slavery and its owners denouncing the institution, white men and women did not want to work with Blacks. Racism was still prevalent in the factories as African Americans were shut out of the manufacturing industries.

Verdeans; by 1905, there were 15 mills employing more than 15,000 Cape Verdeans.³⁹ In the factories and mills, Cape Verdeans were offered opportunities that other people of African descent were denied, and they remained at the forefront of the laborers until the textile industry declined due to outsourcing to the United States' South in the 1920s, resulting in a 10% wage cut. Cape Verdeans were also prominent in the ropework factories, specifically the New Bedford Cordage Company that backed the West End. "The New Bedford Cordage Company employed so many of the newcomers that it was nicknamed 'Brava College.'"⁴⁰

The recruitment of Cape Verdean laborers was part of the "kin- and friendship-based networks" serving as the dominant means to share information and assistance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴¹ Owing to this networked connection, Cape Verdeans in the archipelago knew of the city and its opportunities, though they had never seen it. New Bedford's Cape Verdean local historian Manuel Costa noted, "The natives in the Cape Verdean islands talk about the city, create poems, and sing songs about 'going to work in New Bedford.'"⁴² The small, nascent Cape Verdean community settled in New Bedford's South End in the city's fourth and fifth wards. The neighborhood covered South Water Street eastward to the waterfront then, later expanded west to South Second Street. "... Newcomers gravitated to the streets of the South End not only because of ethnic identification, but also because of the proximity of these streets to the

³⁹ Claire H. Firth, "Creating Tools for Cultural Survival in a Transnational Context: Cape Verdean-American Communities in Providence, RI and New Bedford, MA," in *Migrations in a Global Context: Transition and Transformations Emerging from International Human Mobility*, edited by Claire H. Firth and Aitor Iborrola-Armendariz (Bilbao: University of Deusto, 2007), 218.

⁴⁰ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 137.

⁴¹ Joshua Rosenbloom, *Looking for Work, Searching for Workers: American Labor Markets During Industrialization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 46.

⁴² Manuel Costa, edited by Jeanne M. Costa, *The Making of the Cape Verdean* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2011) 62.

waterfront and the mills, the most likely workplaces of the arriving islanders.”⁴³ Migrants moved immediately into the enclave, joining friends and family. Costa claimed, “For all intents and purposes, Acushnet Avenue is the Main Street of the Cape Verdean throughout the world. ... To walk along this avenue was the epitome of social life.”⁴⁴ Acushnet Avenue was the central zone where Cape Verdeans reconstructed their social lives in diaspora. With one-third of the emigrants listing New Bedford as their intended destination, the Whaling City was also dubbed “the Cape Verdean capital of the New World.”⁴⁵

Like many other immigrant groups, ties of ethnicity, nationalism, and a shared sense of culture as a result of their creole identity, language, and religion bound Cape Verdeans to each other in their dense residential community. For outsiders, the South End was like entering into a separate territory in New Bedford. No one spoke English, preferring to speak in the Portuguese-West African syncretic language, *Kriolu*.⁴⁶ The often harsh, jarring migration transition was softened aboard the Brava Packet Trade, the transnational shipping fleet, and in the enclave where they were met with a familiar culture and available work.

In nearby Rhode Island, the small Cape Verdeans gave Fox Point the designation of being “the cultural heart of the Cape Verdean community in Rhode Island.”⁴⁷ The first Cape Verdean settlement in Rhode Island was on Chicken Foot Alley, a street between James Street and Transit Street in the Fox Point neighborhood. Fox Point was an ethnically and racially

⁴³ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 133.

⁴⁴ Costa, 67.

⁴⁵ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 131.

⁴⁶ Yvonne Drayton, private communication.

⁴⁷ Waltraud Berger Coli and Richard Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island: Rhode Island Heritage Pamphlet Series* (Providence: The Rhode Island Heritage Commission and The Rhode Island Publication Society, 1990) Rhode Island Historical Society Library [Hereafter referred to as RIHS]8.

diverse neighborhood with its Irish, Portuguese from the Azores and the mainland, Syrian-Lebanese, native-born African Americans, some European and African-descended West Indian residents.⁴⁸ Some Cape Verdeans married native-born African Americans, boarded in homes of non-Cape Verdeans, and lived as neighbors in the dense neighborhood. Despite the intermixing between Fox Point's ethnic and racial groups, Cape Verdeans still maintained a sense of ethnic-isolation as they established a network of social clubs, religious groups, mutual aid societies, and more often than not, married other Cape Verdeans.

As in New Bedford, Fox Pointers lived near where they worked — the water and the textile factories. It was a poor area, abandoned by the city's richer residents who fled to the east side. The east side held Providence's seats of political and economic power, whereas Fox Point became its working-class counterpart.⁴⁹ The neighborhood consisted of three-story, wooden-framed homes. About a quarter of the homes had a rear home that housed an average of three families. It was a densely crowded area that shared the common problems of big city tenements — overcrowding, sanitation issues, inadequate light, ventilation concerns, and cramped and unsafe conditions.⁵⁰ The local Rhode Island ports shifted from the trade of enslaved people in the eighteenth century to the manufacturing and transport of such goods as kersey in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, maintaining its relevancy because Fox Point's proximity to the waterfront was ideal for immigrants like Cape Verdeans, whose main occupation was tied to the maritime trades. Many were dockside laborers, while others ventured to local factories.

⁴⁸ Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 9-10.

⁴⁹ Sam Beck, *Manny Almeida's Ringside Lounge: The Cape Verdeans' Struggle for Their Neighborhood* (Providence: Gávea-Brown Publications, 1992), 36.

⁵⁰ Alyssa Qualls, "Community Building: The Azorean, Cape Verdean, and Continental Portuguese in Fox Point Rhode Island, 1900-1940." (Undergraduate Thesis: Brown University, 1993), 75.

Providence was a prominent manufacturing city with a textile and jewelry industry. Very few Cape Verdeans worked in manufacturing and factories, as these jobs were largely reserved for white residents. As such, Cape Verdeans did the difficult, dangerous work on the waterfront as longshoremen and seamen/sailors.

The decline of the textile industry and the end of whaling buttressed the Great Depression. Cape Verdeans found work outside of the maritime trade in factories, cranberry picking in Cape Cod and Nantucket, and some as private business owners. The cranberry bog industry in nearby Nantucket, Falmouth, and Cape Cod was an alternative to the often-dangerous factory work in New Bedford and Providence. Cranberry harvesting was a family practice and often required that children begin school later than their peers so they could complete the harvest. Every member of the family, from the elderly to the young children, was involved. It was seasonal work but lasted nearly year round. They worked in the strawberry fields in June and July, picked cranberries from Labor Day until October 1, and then worked on blueberry harvests. Cape Verdeans would complete the harvest in the fall, return to the islands or New Bedford in the winter, and then return to the United States in the warmer months to start the harvest season again. It was backbreaking, low-wage labor, often negatively associated with picking cotton in the American South.⁵¹ They were mostly Fogo-islanders who transferred their agricultural skills in the homeland to seasonal fruit harvesting in Plymouth and Barnstable Counties.⁵²

⁵¹ Marilyn Halter, "Working the Cranberry Bogs: Cape Verdeans in Southeastern Massachusetts," in *People and Culture in Southeastern Massachusetts* Vol. III, ed. Joseph Thomas (New Bedford: Spinner Publications, 1984), 72.

⁵² Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 101-102

In the 1930s, the fruit industry insulated Cape Verdean families from the hardships associated with unemployment. Cranberry picking was a lucrative trade for both the Cape Verdean laborers and the employers. Joseph Ramos stated that working on the bogs was more financially advantageous than on the whaling ships: In one year-long trip on the *Wanderer* he made \$14, and on the *Margarett* he made \$16 in six months. On the bogs, however, he earned \$130 for six weeks of labor, with a net gain of \$100 once housing costs were deducted.⁵³ They were able to save thousands of dollars per harvest season. Halter cites that, “At the end of the cranberry harvest, the bank paid out over twenty thousand dollars in savings to Cape Verdeans.”⁵⁴ The ability to save was based on the very low standard of living. Single men lived in overcrowded, inadequately built shanties. Despite their financial frugality, very few Cape Verdeans owned and managed their own bogs. The money they saved was reserved for remittances and up-building on the islands, not for ownership or permanent residence. In 1926, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported the effects of this small community’s labor on the United States’ social fabric, stating, “Little do people dream when they prepare their Thanksgiving dinners that these same gentle, simple people have picked their cranberries for them in the bogs around Cape Cod and New Bedford, Mass.”⁵⁵

In the bogs, women worked alongside the men, often bringing their infants and children with them. Halter suggested that cranberry picking resulted in less infant mortality as women could be closer to their children to nurse or care for them, rather than the working conditions in

⁵³ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Jean Piper, “Portuguese Colony Flourishes Here; 300,000 in America,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (February 14, 1926).

the cities in the unhealthy factories.⁵⁶ In urban centers, some Cape Verdean women worked domestic service as housekeepers, laundresses, and servants. In Providence, women worked as cleaners in the jewelry factories and sometimes at Brown University.⁵⁷ Most women were single or widowed, though a few married women also worked outside of the home. In the South End, 43 of 146 (24.5%) Black Cape Verdean-descended females older than the age of 14 were employed, the majority of whom (32) were single or widowed. Fifteen of the employed women were domestic laborers. Twenty-two others worked in the factories in the ropework and cotton mills. In Fox Point, 12 women of the 52 (23%) Black Cape Verdean-descended females of similar age were employed. Most were domestic servants working as housekeepers, laundresses, and servants. In both enclaves, very few women held professional jobs. Fox Pointer Maude Silva worked as a typist and five South Ender Cape Verdean women were employed professionally as clerks, a quilt maker, a tailor, and one manager of a boarding house.

A greater number of women were employed in the informal economy, maintaining boarding homes, cooking and selling meals, and some on the bogs canned cranberries for sale. Many women worked within the home maintaining boarders. They are underrepresented in the census, but hosting boarders was a major feature in Cape Verdean communities and within Cape Verdean families. Lucille Lima said, “The old Cape Verdeans were very protective of their own. They didn’t want ever to have one of their own walking the streets or denied a place to sleep or food. It was a way of life and it was a means of money for a lot of poor people.”⁵⁸ Women working within their homes provided meals, laundry, and cleaning services, and supported new

⁵⁶ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 104.

⁵⁷ Claire Andrade Watkins, “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*”: *A Cape Verdean Story*, directed by Claire Andrade Watkins (2006; SPIA Media Productions, Inc), DVD.

⁵⁸ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 133.

emigrants, mostly Cape Verdean mariners, as they got on their feet in the new country.⁵⁹ These informal boarding houses were mainly operated by women and were always crowded. “A family of four or five might have four or five boarders. The cooking, washing, cleaning, laundry, bed making, and marketing were all done by the woman of the house. She also provided the care and feeding of small children, cooking three meals a day for a household of ten to twelve, seven days a week, never off duty.”⁶⁰ Some of the cooking services extended to the delivery of hot meals for men and women working in the mills.⁶¹ To some, it seemed as though the women in the house simply stayed at home.⁶² Women also handled the financial matters of boarders through the management of boarders’ wills and insurance.⁶³ Boarding houses provided extra economic power for women and their families in uncertain economic times. Keeping boarding homes placed Cape Verdean women at the center of the chain migration process and established new community networks as they aided in new emigrants’ transitions. Their roles in domestic service were instrumental in shaping the nascent community and the development of a transnational service.

The act of boarding created social networks of real and fictive kinship, and also ingratiated new emigrants to the emerging community. Boarding houses enabled an informal network institution among newly arrived Cape Verdeans in South End and Fox Point. Living in close proximity to each other facilitated the insular nature of the enclaves and aided in the creation of a pan-Cape Verdean identity that dropped island origin, focusing on a Cape Verdean

⁵⁹ In New Bedford, 22 of the 181 (12%) Cape Verdean boarders were female.

⁶⁰ Costa, 65.

⁶¹ Lucille Lima, “Lembrança: Crioulo Memories,” in *People and Culture in Southeastern Massachusetts*, ed. Joseph Thomas (New Bedford: Spinner Publications, 1981), 93

⁶² Beck, *Manny Almeida's Ringside Lounge*, 40-41; “Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican”.

⁶³ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 134.

ethnic identity and skirting United States racial confines. They energized the enclave through the grounded ethnic relations.

In the South End in 1900, only two Cape Verdeans were documented as boarding house keepers. One of whom, a 23-year-old Cape Verdean man named Manuel Pena, kept a boarding house and hosted three Cape Verdean men — Manuel Marks, John Sylvia, and Mike Gomes, a farmer, day laborer, and mill doffer, respectively. The other was “Mrs. Joseph Antone,” who managed a boarding home in her house and provided services for four Cape Verdean sailors. She was the only wage earner in her household and, on the census, she was listed as wife and her husband, Joseph, was not considered the head, but as her husband. This could indicate the social role she maintained in her household as the sole wage earner. The family rented at 221 Water Street in the same home as the Hurleys, a Barbadian family, and an African-American family. Boarders and families with five or more members lived under crowded conditions, renting rooms, and sharing space in homes with their countrymen and others. Both Pena and Antone were boarding house keepers on the census records, but their surrounding neighbors all had boarders living in their homes, most of whom were Cape Verdean. For example, the Viera family at 436 Water Street had 10 Cape Verdean boarders — combers, speeder tenders, fishermen, and servants. Most Cape Verdean boarders resided in the homes of their countrymen, but a few stayed with African Americans.

Though there were no formal boarding homes run by Black Cape Verdeans, boarders and lodgers were strong components in the Fox Point neighborhood. Unlike New Bedford, in Providence men were the primary keepers of boarders in their boarding homes.⁶⁴ Of the 275 Black Cape Verdean residents in Fox Point, 60 were boarders: 59 were male boarders and the

⁶⁴ In Providence, of the 21 Cape Verdean families that housed Cape Verdeans, 14 Cape Verdean male heads of households with no female companions kept boarders.

remaining one was a six-year-old girl. The preponderance of unattached, single men settling in the city and the relationships developed on the job sites contributed to the propensity of male boarding house keepers. The docks connected some longshoremen, like Manuel Carey and Julius Gomes, to board with other longshoremen and dockside laborers. Most boarders resided with other Cape Verdeans' families and other boarders. Only seven of the 59 Cape Verdean boarders resided in homes as the only boarder.⁶⁵ Gender imbalances in the city, caused by the migration of men from the islands seeking out employment and other opportunities in diaspora, also resulted in the high numbers of male boarding house keepers. Generally, there were few women emigrating from the islands. Between 1900 and 1920, only about 17% of Cape Verdean emigrants were women.⁶⁶ In Providence, there were 183 "Black" Cape Verdean men and 92 women (66% to 34%). Of this, 140 male and 57 female Cape Verdeans were 16 and older. New Bedford's Cape Verdean community had a less significant gender imbalance. The "Black" Portuguese population was 237 male to 180 female, representing 57% and 43%. Among the 308 first- and second-generation Black Cape Verdean-Americans older than 16 years of age, there were 180 men and 128 women. Over time, these numbers adjusted due to women emigrants and the birth of second-generation Cape Verdean-Americans.

Despite the gender imbalance, Cape Verdean men remained committed to practicing endogamy. Cape Verdeans in New England enacted a self-imposed segregation from other African-descended immigrants and were rebuffed by Portuguese emigrants. They chose to marry within the ethnic group, at first retaining island associations and then extending to inter-island marriages. Unlike other ethnic groups, in which endogamy would be extremely difficult, Cape

⁶⁵ National Archives and Records Administration. *Twelfth Census of the United States. 1900*. Accessed November 3, 2017. Ancestry.com (hereafter referred to as 1900 United States Federal Census).

⁶⁶ Carreira, 83.

Verdean men and women maintained long-distance courtships via the transnational shipping fleet, the Brava Packet Trade. The packet ships also facilitated romantic encounters. Some of the single men in diaspora married Cape Verdean women through long-distance courtship facilitated by the Brava Packet Trade. Often, they would be introduced to a woman via a photograph and begin a courtship via letters and *mantenhas* (well-wishes or greetings). When these men would return to the islands via packet vessels, they often married their long-distance sweethearts and returned with their new brides. But there were some who did not return to the United States with their new wives.

On the docks, in the mills, in boarding homes, and in the streets of the South End and Fox Point, Cape Verdeans developed a network of ethnic relations that was often insular, and Cape Verdeans living within it had little interaction with non-Cape Verdeans. The two enclaves had easy access to each other and other small Cape Verdean communities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, such as East Providence and Brockton. Their shared history of migration, close proximity, and their ethnic/island identities strengthened bonds and developed new connections in diaspora. Their tight-knit community formed the basis of what would become the Cape Verdean-American identity, developed in self-imposed isolation. The consistent flow of emigrants as a result of the maritime industry, the Brava island port of call, and the entrepreneurial efforts of Cape Verdeans in both the archipelago and southeastern New England enabled the development of a distinctive Cape Verdean identity. The sea connected Cape Verdean settlers in Southeastern New England to their countrypeople on the Cape Verde islands.

Race, Identity, and Organizing in the Cape Verdean Colonies in New England

The densely clustered neighborhoods with people from their same cultural and ethnic backgrounds resulted in a robust social life for Cape Verdeans in Fox Point and the South End.

These two areas were commonly referred to as the Cape Verdean colonies in the United States. The reference name was prevalent among Cape Verdean homestayors, as they made sense of the transnational social field that connected the two parts of the world. In the growing communities in the South End of New Bedford and in Fox Point in Providence, Cape Verdean-Americans leaned into their ethnic identity to develop social networks built on informal structures, such as island origin, housing, and gender, and formal institutions, such as familial relations, employment unions, mutual aid and benevolent societies, Catholic and Protestant churches, and the transnational shipping fleet, the Brava Packet Trade, to be discussed in the following chapter.

These societies were important to Cape Verdeans in the United States, as well as in the homeland. Under the leadership of Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio de Oliveira Salazar's *Estado Novo*, all cultural and economic activities were managed by the state.⁶⁷ It was assumed that the colonial government or the Catholic Church would provide the activities necessary for social, cultural, and economic support.⁶⁸ As a result, Cape Verdeans were not allowed to form mutual aid societies. In the United States, free to form their own ethnic societies, Cape Verdean-Americans' associations facilitated the links between New England and the archipelago. After centuries of Portuguese control and neglect, these associations were some of the first of their kind. Through their existence, they were revolutionary in their orientation, picking up the mantle from Portugal to support Cape Verdeans in the homeland and diaspora. The associations provided mutual aid for those in need but were not overtly political. Cape Verdean-Americans did not use their associations to foment political discord, as Salazar was a despotic, fascist leader. Fox Point Cape Verdean-American Manuel Mendes noted that Cape Verdeans in Fox Point

⁶⁷ Meintel, *Race, Culture, and Portuguese Colonialism*, 128.

⁶⁸ Waltraud Berger Coli, *Cape Verdean Ethnicity* (MA Thesis: Rhode Island College, 1987), 141.

never uttered a bad word about Portugal or Salazar for fear of the consequences it would have to their family on the islands.⁶⁹ The various Cape Verdean social associations, community practices, and economic institutions served multiple purposes, which included new emigrant assistance, cultural and social activities, and as a liaison between the immigrant homeland and those in the host land.⁷⁰ Principally, among the organizations there was a shared sense of identity as Cape Verdeans and/or Cape Verde islanders.

Between the 1890s and World War II, members of the Cape Verdean colony maintained consistent relationships to their homeland, suggesting cultural adherence and a desire to retain relationships with the homeland. Nearly all the societies they formed bore national or island identifiers. Cape Verdeans in Southeastern New England occupied a space in the nexus of race and ethnicity. As African-descended emigrants living in the United States black-white dyad, Cape Verdeans were met with racial challenges that enabled the formation of their enclaves, and within the enclave they established an ethnic identity that stood outside of the United States' racial confines. Identifying as *Kriolu* (or Creole), they acknowledged their African and European racial identities and demonstrated in their language, *Kriolu*, a West African and Portuguese language developed on the islands.

Kriolu language has a major role in Cape Verdean identity and is a national symbol of pride. It demonstrated a national identity and has two functions — to maintain Cape Verdean culture and a means for subverting their spaces. It was a requirement to remember the homeland and Cape Verdean traditions. Further, in the face of rejection from the white Portuguese in New England, *Kriolu* reminded Cape Verdean immigrants of their own identity and self-worth,

⁶⁹ “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*”.

⁷⁰ Hector R. Cordero-Guzman, “Community-Based Organisations and Migration in New York City” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* Vol. 31, No. 5 (2005).

grounding them to a community in diaspora and in the homeland. “*Kriolu* has embodied the shameful, the vulgar, and the primitive, as well as the impenetrably intimate, the communal, the pleasurable. It is the language of joke, satire, and irony, of romantic friendships and strong emotions.”⁷¹ In his study of Cape Verdean hip-hop artists in Lisbon, Derek Purdue suggested that their use of *Kriolu* was a statement on their space or positionality as Cape Verdeans in the former metropole and about their former subjectivity/colonial status in the postcolonial era.⁷² In that case, *Kriolu* operated as “both a diasporic reminder of Cape Verde and an intended signature on urban Portugal.”⁷³

The *Notícias de Cabo Verde* declared “Stop Talking Against *Kriolu*! No Cape Verdean who prides themselves on being Cape Verdean, a lover of everything that is Cape Verdean, is capable of despising *Kriolu*. Nothing will make the *morna*, that sweet song that expresses the sensibilities of our race and that rhythm that pulses in the Cape Verdean soul.”⁷⁴ They linked this sentiment to being Cape Verdean of nationality, of the heart, of sentiment, declaring “We will never stop speaking *Kriolu*, singing and dancing to the *mornas* ... to honor the name of Pedro Cardoso, to glorify the memory of the Great Eugenio Tavares.”⁷⁵ Both Cardoso and Tavares used *Kriolu* in their poems and other writings.

⁷¹ Márcia Rego, “Cape Verdean Tongues: Speaking of Nation at Home and Abroad,” *Transnational Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*, eds. Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 154.

⁷² Derek Purdue, “Housing and Identity in Postcolonial Portugal,” in *Urban Ills: Twenty-first-Century Complexities of Urban Living in Global Contexts Volume II*, eds. Carol Camp Yeakey, Vetta L. Sanders Thompson, and Anjanette Wells (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014) 240.

⁷³ Purdue, 249.

⁷⁴ “O Crioulo” *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (August 5, 1933).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Kriolu was the language of the street, spoken in everyday discussions and in households, but it was not taught in a systemic way. Each of the nine inhabited islands spoke a variant of the same *Kriolu*. In the 1930s, pride in the *Kriolu* language and of Cape Verdean cultural heritage was evident in the concerted efforts and pleas to get the language taught in primary schools and at the University of Lisbon.⁷⁶ The assertion that *Kriolu* was a language worthy of study and incorporation in the national and international educational system is further demonstrated during the decolonization of Cape Verde in 1974. The *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (African Independence Party of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde) called for the adaptation of *Kriolu* as the country's official language, instead of Portuguese.⁷⁷ This was coupled with the strident argument that *Kriolu* is a language, not a dialect of Portuguese. Presently, there is a call for the standardization of *Kriolu* with the introduction of the Cape Verdean-English dictionary (2016) written by New England Cape Verdean Manuel Da Luz Gonçalves.

As Cape Verdeans traversed the Atlantic Ocean, they brought with them notions of a creole identity formed in the homeland and the conflicts of race and belonging that were immediately challenged upon settling. They were "Portuguese by blood, by aspirations, by ideas, ... but also Cape Verdean by birth, by heart, by sentiment." Many identified by their island of birth, such as "Bravas" or "Fogos."⁷⁸ Halter noted the "easy association among compatriots in New Bedford was sometimes by an overruling identification with one's particular island

⁷⁶ "Dialecto Crioulo," *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (February 4, 1933); "O Crioulo," *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (August 5, 1933).

⁷⁷ Craig N. Murphy, "Cape Verde," *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in ECOWAS*, eds. Timothy M. Shaw and Julius Emeka Okolo (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1994), 25.

⁷⁸ Meintel, "Cape Verdean Transnationalism," 33, 41.

homeland. By and large, prior to emigration, Cape Verdeans rarely had dealings with the inhabitants of islands other than their own.”⁷⁹

Despite their own self-identification by island or as *Kriolus*, in the United States during the early twentieth century, many were racialized as Black. In response, Cape Verdeans purposefully and meaningfully separated themselves from other African-descended people. As African people from a slavery entrepôt, they were all too familiar with slavery and the lived conditions of African Americans in the Southern states.⁸⁰ They knew that *associating with* Blackness and being *identified as* Black would have immediate consequences for their social and economic mobility.

The association with Blackness was always perilous. After decades of honing a Cape Verdean ethnic identity, resisting the stigma of Blackness, they were exclusively regarded as Cape Verdean or Cape Verdean-Americans in their enclaves in New Bedford and Providence. Once they left the enclave, they faced the racial realities of their skin color. They often faced de jure racial segregation and overt prejudice. Benjamin and Inez Fernandes moved from Massachusetts to Baltimore for better work. In Maryland, they encountered signs that said “whites only” and “colored,” but because of their Cape Verdean identities cultivated in their neighborhoods, “it did not occur to them how two ‘Black Portuguese’ might fare in segregated Baltimore.”⁸¹ Though they saw themselves as different than *Americanos de cor* (Black Americans), they encountered the racial realities of being Black in the United States in ways they

⁷⁹ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 144.

⁸⁰ “Miscellanea: Emigração,” *O Progresso* (Praia, Republica de Cabo Verde), no date, 1912.

⁸¹ Aminah Fernandes Pilgrim, “The Cape Verdean legacy of Nantucket, Martha’s Vineyard and Environs,” in *Nantucket’s People of Color: Essays on History, Politics, and Community*, ed. Robert Johnson Jr. (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 2006), 193.

were isolated from in their Cape Verdean communities in New England. Others faced pervasive stereotypes of hypersexuality that haunted African-American women and men since the nineteenth century.⁸² In 1921, Black “Bravas” John Dies, Benjamin Gomez, and Joseph Andrews were accused of assaulting a white woman, Gertrude Butler, in Wareham and incarcerated in the local jail in nearby Barnstable. While in jail, the men almost suffered at the hands of a 200-person lynch mob. The police hid them and protected them from the mob by hiding them and moving them to other jails for the duration of the trial. After weeks convening a Grand Jury and hearing testimony, despite he himself deeming Butler and her male companion as unreliable witnesses, Judge Frederick Swift still found probable cause, holding Andrews on bail for \$7,500 for the assault and robbery.⁸³

Anecdotes like that served as warnings for local Cape Verdean-Americans against the adoption of “Black” as a racial signifier. As emigrants, their main reason for leaving their home was to make a better life for themselves and those who remained on the islands. Upon emigrating to the United States, Cape Verdeans self-segregated from Black people and maintained a

⁸² For more readings on rape, hypersexuality discourse, and criminalization, see: Darlene Clark Hine, “Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance,” *Signs*, 14, No. 4, (Summer 1989): 912-920; Martha Hodes, “The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics: White women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, no. 3 (1993): 402-417; Diane Miller Sommerville, “The Rape Myth in the Old South Reconsidered,” *The Journal of Southern History* 61, no. 3 (1995): 481-518; Sandra Gunning, *Race, Rape, and Lynching: The Red Record of American Literature, 1890-1912* (Oxford University 1996); Hannah Rosen, “‘Not That Sort of Women’: Race, Gender, and Sexual Violence during the Memphis Riot of 1866,” in *Sex, Love, and Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, ed. Martha Hodes (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 267-293; Lisa Lindquist Dorr, “Black-on-White Rape and Retribution in Twentieth-Century Virginia: ‘Men, Even Negroes, Must Have Some Protection,’” *The Journal of Southern History* 66, no. 4 (2000): 711-748; Danielle McGuire, “‘It Was like All of Us Had Been Raped’: Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (December 2004): 906-931.

⁸³ “Furious Woman Curses, Attacks Boy in Court,” *The Chicago Defender* (Sep 17, 1921); “Lynching Threat Of Northern Mob Is Soon Quelled” *The Atlanta Constitution* (Aug 20, 1921); and, “Noble Officials of the Law Prevent Lynching Attempt,” *Washington Bee* (Washington, D.C., August 21, 1921)

separate ethnic identity, which required that they reject the “social identity of Negro” so they could gain access to resources and other rewards.⁸⁴

As Portuguese colonial subjects, Cape Verdeans upheld a notion of being part of the Portuguese imperial world. They identified as Portuguese, spoke Portuguese instead of *Kriolu* in public spaces, and recognized and deferred to the Portuguese flag. Cape Verdeans thought Portuguese cultural actions and disassociation with other African-descended people would garner their access to resources and increase their social capital; they found that despite those actions, they were doubly segregated from white Portuguese, Azorean, and Madeiran circles, such as the local catholic churches and social clubs, and Blacks with whom they shared some racial, African heritage. The United States’ Black-white racial binary trumped the notions of lusotropicalism,⁸⁵ as Portuguese and Azorean immigrants were raced as white and earned the psychological wage of whiteness as social capital; they excluded the African Cape Verdeans.

In South End and Fox Point, they adjusted to their new conditions and created a social network as a strategy for survival and maintaining their distinctive Cape Verdean identity.

Facing the United States’ racial realities and the debunked racial harmony among Portuguese

⁸⁴ Greenfield, 5.

⁸⁵ Lusotropicalism is concept advanced by Brazilian scholar Gilberto Freyre and others that suggests that Portuguese colonialism was less harsh than other European colonialisms as it was flexible and accommodating in incorporating other cultures and races. In Brazil, the racial and cultural mixing among West African, Indigenous, and Portuguese people was evidence of Portuguese adaptability in colonialism as “immediate miscegenation... was for the Portuguese an advantage in the conquest and colonization of the tropics.” (Freyre, 18) Lusotropicalism is a form of assimilation based on miscegenation, cultural integration, and the idea of the absence of racial bias and prejudice. Though Freyre’s study was contained to Brazil, the myth of lusotropicalism as a shared Portuguese culture extends to the other Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia. See Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: The Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: The University of California Press, 1986 [1934]); José R. Pimenta, J. Sarmiento, and Ana F. de Azevedo, “Lusotropicalism: Tropical geography under dictatorship, 1926–1974,” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* Vol. 32 (2011) 220–235; Bernd Reiter, “Portugal: National Pride and Imperial Neurosis,” *Race & Class* Vol. 47, No. 1 (July 2005): 79–91; Jorge Vala, Diniz Lopes, and Marcus Lima, “Black Immigrants in Portugal: Luso-Tropicalism and Prejudice,” *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (2008): 287- 302.

peoples, their use of *Kriolu* and Portuguese languages created a barrier for their full integration into the dominant United States society and the African-American community, but they energized that barrier to enrich their own cultural identity and create a social network as a strategy for local and transnational survival, which included their ethnic-associated social and economic institutions.

Borrowing from Kim D. Butler's examination of cultural identity and self-determination in Salvador and São Paulo, Cape Verdeans articulated a "cultural ethnic identity" within their residential enclaves.⁸⁶ Where West Indians in the West End were small in number and were grouped together as Blacks, in Cape Verdean's enclaves, they formed parallel institutions and were separate from the dominant society, which was comprised of family, friends, and neighbors in such great numbers that they did not need to integrate into the dominant African-American/Black identity. Through this practice, they established Cape Verdean as an ethnic identity. To that end, considering their homeland and racial, color, and island identities, and the ways Cape Verdeans saw themselves, is integral to investigating their social and cultural institutions. Cape Verdeans' ethnic adherence in their enclaves helped to circumvent the challenges presented by racial documentation in the census. It is in that context that this chapter now explores the social institutions within the Cape Verdean enclaves.

Cape Verdean Churches

In response to the racial separation from the Portuguese and their self-imposed ethnic separation from other people of African descent, Cape Verdeans established their own ethnic societies and institutions, which included the church. Borrowing from the "bottom up and the

⁸⁶ Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 58 – 64.

inside out” perspective advanced by historian James R. Barrett, Cape Verdean churches in the Fox Point and South End residential enclaves served as organizational fixtures that were both influential in the community and at the center of individual people’s lives.⁸⁷ Their ethnic-based churches were grounding features in the communities, acting as a springboard for the development of new organizations, and were at the center of a social network. At the turn of the twentieth century in Providence, Maio-native Manuel Ricardo Martins established the first Cape Verdean ethnic-specific church in the Americas, the Bethel Christian Mission, in 1886, at his tenement home on Chicken Foot Alley. Though Catholicism was common practice in the archipelago, Mission was actually Protestant. Known as the “kerosene church,” the congregants were ridiculed for its locations in tenement homes and above a blacksmith’s shop with a kerosene lamp in the window. For the first six years, the church operated independently, with informal summaries of sermons in *Kriolu*.

After being hired by the Central Congregational Church, within his church, Martins was only regarded as a missionary and not allowed to officiate a service, as he “never assumed a Minister’s function.”⁸⁸ Prior to joining with the Central Congregational Church, Martins attempted to unify his Mission with the Olivet Congregational Church, which primarily served “colored people.”⁸⁹ The church went through a series of leadership and nomenclatorial changes.

In 1892, it was renamed the Portuguese Mission; later, in 1902 whilst being housed in a new

⁸⁷ James R. Barrett, *History From the Bottom Up and the Inside Out: Ethnicity, Race, and Identity in Working-Class History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 27.

⁸⁸ *Manuel Ricardo Martin: In Memoriam, 1837-1905* (Providence, RI: Central Congregational Church, 1907) Cape Verdean Collection Special Collections, Rhode Island College [Hereafter known as RIC Cape Verdean Collection]

⁸⁹ This coalition is interesting to note. In New Bedford, intra-racial coalition building was frowned upon, but in Providence, it seemed to be encouraged. The Fox Point area, like New Bedford’s West End, had multi-ethnic African descended people, which included native-born African Americans, Cape Verdeans, and a very small number of West Indians.

brick building, it was called the Portuguese Chapel. In 1949, the church was again renamed as Sheldon Street Congregational Church, and its final name change came in 1967 when the church partnered with the Union Baptist Church. Despite the turnover and name changes, the church retained its services to the local Cape Verdean community. Before his death in 1905, Martins established an industrial school for women, an Americanization class, bible study, and basic adult education courses.

Most Cape Verdeans were Catholic and were members in Rhode Island's local Catholic churches. Some of the churches with large Cape Verdean memberships in Providence included Holy Rosary, Saint Patrick, Saint Joseph, Holy Name of Jesus, and Saint Michael. Though there were Catholic churches with Cape Verdean members, they established no ethnic-specific Catholic religious institution until the 1979 establishment of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Pawtucket.⁹⁰ Fox Pointers turned to the Portuguese Chapel for help after being turned away from the local Catholic churches: "The mistreatment of Black Catholics was notorious."⁹¹ Third-generation Cape Verdean-American Sylvia Ann Soares recalled that her father was brown-skinned and frequently sent to the back of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church.⁹² It was after this frequent mistreatment that the Soares family, and likely many others, fled the Catholic church to the Cape Verdean-founded Portuguese Chapel.

Nearly two decades after the founding of the Mission Church in Providence, in 1905 New Bedford's Cape Verdean community founded the *Nossa Senhora de Assunção* — Our Lady of Assumption (OLOA) Church — in the South End. In 1905, Bishop Stang wrote a letter to Father

⁹⁰ Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 20-23.

⁹¹ "Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?"

⁹² Sylvia Ann Soares, interviewed by Gabrielle Fuentes, March 6, 2008, Brown University, transcript, pg. 3.

Stanislaus Bernard stating that he had a responsibility for the spiritual care of the Cape Verdeans in the city.⁹³ That year, the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts acquired the Feast of Our Lady church and renamed it Our Lady of Assumption. The church was located in the heart of the South End on the corner of Leonard and South Water Streets, flanked by a local grocery store and a lumber firm. At first, Cape Verdeans were slow to join the new congregation. The church had five parishioners, as many Cape Verdeans continued to attend St. John the Baptist and other churches in the city. Soon after, St. John the Baptist refused to christen Cape Verdean children and began to turn their Cape Verdeans parishioners away toward OLOA. At first, the women of the church offered catechism lessons in Portuguese and English at their homes; when the parishioners grew, they moved the classes to the church. The church also held youth functions, such as the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts.⁹⁴

Whereas accounts of the Mission attributed the founding to Martins' calling as a Christian to spread the mission, OLOA was borne out of racism and segregation. When they first emigrated to the United States, Cape Verdeans — as people who saw themselves as Portuguese first and Cape Verdean second — attempted to join the local Portuguese Catholic churches and clubs but were rejected. Cape Verdeans were unwelcomed at St. John the Baptist, a local Catholic church made up of white Portuguese and Azoreans. Third-generation, of mixed Cape Verdean and West Indian descent, Dr. Henry Groebe recalled that Cape Verdeans were

⁹³ Our Lady of Assumption 75th Anniversary Booklet, 1905-1980, RIC Cape Verdean Collection.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

frequently turned away from St. Lawrence Church, another Catholic church, as well.⁹⁵ In that way, as “Black” Catholics, Cape Verdeans “bore the brunt of racism in their own church.”⁹⁶

Both of the churches were in the heart of the Cape Verdean colony in the two cities, and both churches provided services for the community to aid in their integration and adaptation to their new communities. The communities had overlapping relationships through their church community and the close proximity of the neighborhoods, as some Cape Verdeans in Providence traveled to New Bedford to participate in the services at Our Lady of Assumption. The adherence to Catholicism likely appealed to Cape Verdeans as they attempted to retain their cultural heritage in the United States. Their cultural identities — being immigrant, *Kriolu*, Lusophone, and Catholic — contributed to their placement on the periphery of, and thus separated from, the native-born, English-speaking, Protestant African-American community. In the periphery, however, Cape Verdeans were able to resist racial and cultural integration. OLOA in particular offered services and organizational support that Cape Verdeans would not have otherwise had access to. Historian Glenn Chambers argued that the Catholic Church in Louisiana was preoccupied with Americanizing white French Catholics and not the spiritual lives of their Black congregants. Creoles used the church as a site for promoting and preserving their culture. Similarly, OLOA and the other Providence Catholic churches became the center of Cape Verdean *Kriolus*’s cultural and religious foundation.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Dr. Henry Groebe (grandson of George Groebe), in discussion with the author, New Bedford, May 11, 2017 (hereafter referred to as Dr. Henry Groebe Interview).

⁹⁶ Matthew J. Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 8.

⁹⁷ Glenn Chambers, “Goodbye, God, I’m going to Texas”: The Migration of Louisiana Creoles of Color and the Preservation of Black Catholic and Creole Conditions in Southeast Texas,” *The Journal of Religious and Popular Culture* 26, No. 1 (Spring 2014), 137.

Outside of the traditional Protestant and Catholic churches with Cape Verdean membership, one Cape Verdean man established his own denomination in New Bedford. In 1902, Brava-born Marceline Manuel da Graça, his parents, Manuel and Gertrude, and his siblings Benventura, Eugenia, and Sylvia, arrived in New Bedford. The da Graça family was raised in the Catholic Church, as were many other Cape Verdeans. Until the founding of the church, Marceline da Graça had typical experience as a laborer in New Bedford and in the cranberry bogs in Cape Cod. Changing and Anglicizing his name to Charles Manuel Grace, “Sweet Daddy” Grace defied the traditional routes of his countrypeople through his acceptance of Black cultural identity and formation of a church at the nexus of the Holiness church movement, Pentecostalism, and the Nazarene church.⁹⁸ Upon arriving to the United States, Grace determined that he had “the freedom to pursue different kinds of Christian belief and practice.”⁹⁹ He was “disenchanted with the limited options available to him as a non-white immigrant” and “turned outside of his community for support and to the pulpit for his calling.”¹⁰⁰

In 1921, Grace founded the United House of Prayer for All People. He established his church at 357 Kempton Street in New Bedford’s West End, a primarily African-American neighborhood, near the two African-American churches — Bethel African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion — and the Church of the Nazarene, popular among Cape Verdean divorcees.¹⁰¹ When he stood at the pulpit, “undoubtedly he was the perfect picture of a

⁹⁸ Marie Dallam, *Daddy Grace: A Celebrity Preacher and His House of Prayer* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 40.

⁹⁹ Dallam, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Danielle Brune Sigler, “Daddy Grace: An Immigrant’s Story,” in *Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religious Life in America*, ed. Karen Isaksen Leonard and Manuel A. Vasquez (Lanham: Rowman AltaMira, 2006), 68.

¹⁰¹ Dallam, 40.

typical 1920's black evangelical preacher. Yet within the walls of his church, his speech, dress, worship style and traditional Protestant values reflecting 'the black church.'"¹⁰² It was through his preaching style that Grace embraced Black culture, much to the disdain of the Cape Verdean community in New Bedford. There was nothing inherently Cape Verdean about the church other than its preacher. In the early twentieth century, by and large, Cape Verdeans were reticent to accept an African-American or Black identity. Grace was unique in his early adoption of a Black/African-American cultural identity. It was not until the 1960s, during the African decolonization movement and the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements that second- and third-generation Cape Verdean Americans began to identify as "Black" and with Black liberation. Historian Aminah Pilgrim argues, "It is probably for this reason that Daddy Grace's decision to associate more with blacks and with the black church tradition, rather than with his fellow Cape Verdeans, the majority Catholic, led him to be somewhat ostracized within Cape Verdean circles."¹⁰³ The location of his church, coupled with his style of preaching and denominational choices, separate Sweet Daddy Grace and his congregation from his countrypeople.

It is important to note that the United House of Prayer was founded by a Cape Verdean and expanded to many cities in the United States South. Though it lacked a Cape Verdean cultural base, it still remained part of the larger network of Cape Verdean institutions, but it departs from the scope of this study, as they did not attract Cape Verdean congregants. Unlike the other Cape Verdean religious institutions, Daddy Grace's church did not socially reproduce ethnicity or create an important institution for Cape Verdean fellowship and interaction. Neither

¹⁰² Pilgrim (2006), 132.

¹⁰³ Pilgrim (2006), 133.

Grace, despite being a Cape Verdean emigrant, nor his church fully integrated into the Cape Verdean social and cultural milieu. Despite evidence of racial discrimination toward its Black congregants, the Catholic Church offered Cape Verdeans a familial cultural home to which they could return. Retaining their own Catholic Church home, they transformed it into another Cape Verdean social space where they spoke in *Kriolu* and built ethnic societies with overlapping memberships. In the social milieu of the churches, homeland societies, and on the streets, they were offered reprieve from dueling notions of how they were to identify and where they belong, and were able to simply be Cape Verdean.

Religious Associations

The Cape Verdean churches ushered in the development of mutual aid and homeland societies. These societies served multiple functions in the community, including cultural maintenance, education, financial, and social benefits. For example, in response to the low numbers of parishioners attending OLOA, dedicated members formed a small group for recruitment. In 1925, at the home of Theodore Almeida, Eugenia (Jenny) Martin, Francisco da Cruz Nereu, Frank Germanho, Joseph Santos, and Julio Guininho met to form the OLOA Club. Mrs. Theodore Almeida was elected president, with Jenny Martin as secretary and Theodore Almeida as financial secretary. Members canvassed the neighborhoods, talked to their neighbors and strangers in the South End, and raised money via dances and other events. The Club worked to support one “another spiritually, mentally and physically. If a church member did not attend mass, they checked in to see if there was illness in the family or other hardship.”¹⁰⁴

Southeastern New England’s Cape Verdean enclaves were densely packed areas that encouraged communal support from the residents. Through their spatial orientation and

¹⁰⁴ Our Lady of Assumption 75th Anniversary Booklet, 1905-1980, RIC Cape Verdean Collection.

geographic proximity, Cape Verdeans, as neighbors and friends, founded ethnic homeland societies that were transnational in their scope, with their attention always attuned to the conditions of their homeland. The first and oldest Cape Verdean-American society was the Cape Verdean Christian Brotherhood and Mutual Benefit Association, founded in Providence in 1914. Affiliated with Manuel Martins' congregation, the Portuguese Mission, the church had nearly 300 members at its peak. In the 1920s, the club was led by its secretary, Sebastian Jose Soares, and had Joseph Andrews, the first Cape Verdean deacon, as one of its members.

Sao Vicente-native Sebastian J. Soares arrived on the ship *Charles G. Rice* in the port of New Bedford in 1910. Around 1913, Soares, known as Bud, moved to Providence and lived with his wife, a Brava-native named Izoura, and their two sons, Edwin (Edward) and Arthur.¹⁰⁵ Sebastian, Edwin, and Arthur were all musicians. Sylvia Ann Soares remembered that her grandfather formed his own band and handcrafted violins and mandolins. Her father, Arthur, was a trumpet player and a member of a local Cape Verdean band.¹⁰⁶ He started a small band in the army, but when he returned from serving in World War II, Arthur became a longshoreman and served as president of Local 1329 of the International Longshoremen's Association, a predominately Cape Verdean union.¹⁰⁷ He was also president of the Pilot's Association. Both Sebastian and Arthur were performers in the Cape Verdean community, playing *mornas* and other Cape Verdean music. Edwin Soares was more recognizable in the jazz music scene and

¹⁰⁵ Sebastian J. Soares, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995. *1914 Samson & Murdock Company Providence City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 23, 2017).

¹⁰⁶ "A Neighborhood Unmoored: Harboring Cape Verde In Providence," <http://features.browndailyherald.com/2014/capeverde/> (Accessed December 15, 2017).

¹⁰⁷ Sylvia Ann Soares, interviewed by Gabrielle Fuentes, March 6, 2008, Brown University, transcript, pg. 11

was considered the Rhode Island Ambassador of Jazz. He was a pianist who performed more than 35 years with Tony Tomasso and the Jewels of Dixie band.¹⁰⁸

Sebastian Soares owned several barbershops along Wickenden and South Main Streets in Fox Point.¹⁰⁹ Between 1926 and 1944, Sebastian Soares and another Cape Verdean, Jose M. Ramos, co-owned and operated the Ramos and Soares Barbershop. The shop opened in 1926 on 38 Wickenden Street, and later moved to 301 Wickenden Street in 1943.¹¹⁰ At its new location, the shop was next to the *Clube Instutivo Recreativo Caboverdeano*, another Cape Verdean institution incorporated in 1938.¹¹¹ Briefly in 1932, Soares and Edwin ventured out to establish their own barbershop, S J Soares and Sons Barbershop, on 327 S. Main Street. Soares returned to his business with his partner Joseph Ramos shortly after.¹¹²

The Soares family, like other Cape Verdeans in the area, was a member of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church. But after facing racial discrimination in the church, the Soares left the Holy Rosary Catholic Church and joined the Portuguese Chapel.¹¹³ He was a member and leader

¹⁰⁸ “Eddie Soares: RI Ambassador Of Jazz,” <http://www.nklibrary.org/programs/eddie-soares-ri-ambassador-jazz> (Accessed February 21, 2018).

¹⁰⁹ “A Neighborhood Unmoored: Harboring Cape Verde In Providence,” <http://features.browndailyherald.com/2014/capeverde/> (Accessed December 15, 2017).

¹¹⁰ Sebastian J. Soares, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995. *1926 Samson & Murdock Company Providence City Directory* Ancestry.com (Accessed December 23, 2017); Rhode Island Secretary of State – Non-Business Incorporations, 1896-1959, sos.ri.gov/archon/?p=digitalibrary/getfile&id=176 (Accessed June 4, 2017).

¹¹¹ Ramos & Soares Barbershop, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995. *Polk’s 1943 Providence City Directory*, Ancestry.com (Accessed December 24, 2017).

¹¹² Ramos & Soares Barbershop, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995. *1932 Samson & Murdock Company City Directory*, Ancestry.com (Accessed December 23, 2017).

¹¹³ Sylvia Ann Soares, interviewed by Gabrielle Fuentes, March 6, 2008, Brown University, transcript, pg. 3.

in the Brotherhood in the 1920s. By 1940, Soares was installed as the church's sexton, taking the seat of Joseph D. Andrews.¹¹⁴

Originally Jose de Andrade, Andrews was born on the island of Brava in 1874 and migrated to Providence as a sailor in 1883. In 1901, he married Angelina Burgo, of Brava.¹¹⁵ Between 1910 and 1920, Andrews worked as a janitor in the Portuguese Chapel.¹¹⁶ In 1924, Andrews became the first Cape Verdean deacon and began his career as the church sexton, which he held until his death in 1934. It is likely that after Andrews' death, Soares worked in his stead in addition to maintaining his barbershop. As members of the club as well as leaders in the Portuguese Chapel Church, and with Soares as a local business owner, both members had a prominent and vital role in the Cape Verdean community. Both Sebastian and Joseph Anglicized their names, and Arthur and Edwin were given English names at birth. This nomenclatorial choice might have been an attempt to better integrate into the Providence society. Within Fox Point and even in New Bedford, having both a Portuguese and English name was well within the norm among Cape Verdean, Azorean, and Portuguese mainland immigrants. The aforementioned men's Anglicized names should not be read as an attempt to assimilate, erasing Cape Verdean culture. In fact, they each demonstrated commitment to retaining Cape Verdean culture through music, membership in their church, and up-building local business for Cape Verdean customers.

¹¹⁴ The Portuguese Chapel was the contemporary iteration of Manuel Martins "kerosene" church and was formed from a joint effort between the Portuguese Mission and the Central Congregational Church; National Archives and Records Administration. *Sixteenth Census of the United States. 1940* (hereafter referred to as 1940 United States Federal Census); Sebastian J. Soares Barbershop, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995. *Polk's 1942 Providence City Directory* Ancestry.com (Accessed December 23, 2017).

¹¹⁵ *Rhode Island, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1802-1945*, Ancestry.com (Accessed December 24, 2017).

¹¹⁶ National Archives and Records Administration. *Thirteenth Census of the United States. 1910*. (hereafter referred to as 1910 United States Federal Census); National Archives and Records Administration. *Fourteenth Census of the United States. 1920*. (hereafter referred to as 1920 United States Federal Census).

Though the Portuguese Mission was the first founded by Cape Verdeans, the Catholic churches in Providence still captured the religious practices of most Cape Verdean immigrants and their relatives. The most popular Catholic churches among Cape Verdeans in the area were the Holy Rosary, Saint Patrick, Saint Joseph, Holy Name of Jesus, and Saint Michael in Providence.¹¹⁷ As with the Portuguese Mission, Cape Verdean members of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church formed an affiliate club, the *Associação Cabo-Verdiana Holy Name Society*, on September 7, 1923. Though 90 percent of the membership was from the island of São Tiago, the Holy Name Society was open to all people of Cape Verdean descent between the ages of 15 and 50 years of age who were in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church. In adherence with their allegiance to Portugal, the meetings were exclusively held in Portuguese, not Kriolu or English. Its purposes were to provide mortuary bonuses to legal beneficiaries of members, as well as disability subsidies, and to “promote the religious, moral, social, and fraternal development of its component members.”¹¹⁸ The Society provided a morality clause to guide members’ behaviors. Temperance, piety, and purity were critical components, as members could be removed for excessive drinking, using obscene language, and impropriety. It expanded to eight chapters on the East Coast, including a Boston chapter affiliated with the Holy Name Portuguese Society on 435 Columbus Avenue, and a chapter in New Bedford.¹¹⁹ The Holy Name Society was much larger than the Brotherhood, and at its peak it had more than 900 members.

¹¹⁷ Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 20.

¹¹⁸ Coli, *Cape Verdean Ethnicity*, 143; *Associação Cabo-Verdeana Society Constitution and Bylaws*, RIC Cape Verdean Collection.

¹¹⁹ Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 18; *Our Lady of Assumption 75th Anniversary Booklet, 1905-1980*, RIC Cape Verdean Collection; Letter from the *Associação Cabo-Verdiana Holy Name Society da Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosario* of Providence RI, August 1, 1924, Box 11: Clubs and Organizations, Folder: Clubs and Organizations, Community Relations, 1924-1932, Grimshaw-Gudewicz Reading Room and Archives, New Bedford Whaling Museum [Hereafter referred to New Bedford Whaling Museum Papers].

On the Sunday before Labor Day, in celebration of their heritage, they attended the Mass at the Holy Rosary Catholic church before having a great procession through the streets of Fox Point with hundreds of Cape Verdeans from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, all dressed in their formal attire and top hats.¹²⁰

In 1924, the newest chapter in Boston sent a letter to Antonio de Madureira Castro, the Portuguese Consul, requesting his presence at an event that was to present the group to the city. They prompted Castro, “By accepting the invitation it will once again prove your love for our motherland and your dedication to its children overseas.”¹²¹ Their communication with the Portuguese consulate demonstrated commitment to their national identity, affirming that they were Portuguese first with relation to the motherland and Cape Verdean second, as the children overseas.

Homeland Associations

In 1928, the New Bedford *Associação Beneficente Caboverdiana* (Cape Verdean Beneficent Association) also invited Castro to a celebration “to promote the union of Cape Verdeans in this country” on the anniversary of the discovery of the islands. The event was billed as a demonstration of patriotism and love for the Portuguese family. The scope of the event suggests that, despite exclusion, they continued to seek acceptance as both Portuguese and Cape Verdean, leaning on their colonial relationship even in the United States. Celebrating Portuguese occupation and claiming the islands under the crown demonstrates Cape Verdeans’ commitment to maintaining the social and political clout of the Portuguese flag. The relationship seemed to be

¹²⁰ Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 18.

¹²¹ Letter from the *Associação Cabo-Verdiana Holy Name Society da Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosario* of Providence RI, August 1, 1924, New Bedford Whaling Museum Papers.

both patriotic and a strategic use of nationalism. In addition to social events, the Association sent aid requests to Castro to alleviate the conditions of famine, poverty, and drought in the homeland. Other local associations strategically leaned on patriotism for aid-relief efforts. In 1937, the Cape Verde Poor Relief Fund Committee of New Bedford¹²² — headed by Joaquim A. Santos, Alfred J. Gomes, Esq., James J. Bento, Esq., and Rosa Fermina — sent an invitation to Castro regarding a benefit event at Monte Pio Hall to aid the poor on the islands. Cape Verdeans in diaspora were in a strong strategic position to send and request aid for their homestayng family on the islands. Through their institutions in New England, they gained access to resources and were able to facilitate communication between Cape Verde, the United States, and Portugal, ensuring long-term aid for the people who remained.

In 1941, Rodolfo Azevedo wrote an impassioned letter addressed to Antonio Ascensão Azevedo of the *Gremio Social e Beneficente dos Caboverdeana* (Cape Verdean Social and Beneficent Guild) regarding the dire conditions on the island of Sao Nicolau. He stated that the island was facing the worst famine in the last 20 years, and that between six and seven people died daily. He suggested that the club’s board of directors start a fund to help the islanders, concluding the letter stating, “One dollar can save from starvation 24 persons in one day, and we have, at this moment, two thousands [sic] in the very need of food and cloth.”¹²³ The Gremio was actually the Cape Verdean Beneficent Association, one of New Bedford’s oldest Cape Verdean associations, and Azevedo served as its vice president. Established in 1916, the Association emerged from a small ad-hoc club called the Cape Verdean Famine Relief Club.

¹²² Also known as the *Comissão Central de Socorros aos Famintos de Cabo Verde* (Cape Verdean Central Aid Committee for the Hungry).

¹²³ Letter from Rodolfo Azevedo to Antonio Ascensão at 153 Whitman St in New Bedford of the Gremio Social e Beneficente dos Caboverdeana, Undated 1941, New Bedford Whaling Museum Papers.

Drought and famine were profound features in Cape Verde due to ecological mismanagement at the hands of the colonial government. Historian Sidney Greenfield argues that famine was a constant on the islands, repeating every 23 years.¹²⁴ Between 1894 and 1924, the drought and famine cycle repeated six times, and again between 1940 and 1942, in 1947 and 1948, and between 1956 and 1958.¹²⁵ Drought, famine, and persistent poverty conditions primed the archipelago's inhabitants to establish a migratory ethos. This ethos to migrate was similar to that of their counterparts in the Caribbean who faced similar ecological mismanagement, but who also dealt with landlessness as a result of settler colonialism. As a result, in March 1914, several men in the New Bedford's South End formed the short-lived Famine Relief Club.

Joaquim A. Santos of Santo Antão organized the club to fundraise among New Bedford's Cape Verdean community to buy foodstuffs and other supplies for the archipelago during famine crises. They met at Sao Nicolau islander Francisco "Frank" Ramos's home on 97 South Second Street in the heart of the South End. The famine of 1914 was a result of the third successive year of crops failing as a result of drought. In addition to the crop failure, the cattle on the islands of Sal and Boa Vista died. The famine was referred to as "the worst calamity since the great famine that swept all of St Iago [sic] some years ago, when the inhabitants died in hordes."¹²⁶ Members of the famine relief club represented each island — Manuel Enrique Torres (São Tiago), Ernesto Metrand (Fogo), Jose Pedro Duarte (São Vicente), Julio da Encarnacao Brito (Boa Vista), Carlos

¹²⁴ Greenfield, 3.

¹²⁵ Alexander Keese, "Managing the Prospect of Famine: Cape Verdean officials, Subsistence, Emergencies, and the Change of Elite Attitudes During Portugal's Late Colonial Phase," *Itinerario* 36 (2012), 49.

¹²⁶ "Famine Relief for Cape Verde Group," *Boston Daily Globe* (March 23, 1914).

Barros (Sal), Pedro Dos Santos (Maio), and Francisco Ramos (São Nicolau). In addition to the nine representatives, Francisco da Cruz Nereu (Brava), Boaventure Spencer (Santo Antão), and Benjamin J. Taber (Brava) were named officers of the club, and these 12 men represented the 4,000 Cape Verdeans living in the city. With the goal of continuing to provide services, the club set weekly meetings and opened subscriptions for the club relief effort.

New Bedford braced itself for a heavy influx of Cape Verdean emigrants as a result of the famine; in April 1914, the suspicions were confirmed as 487 emigrants arrived from the island of Fogo, following the 745 newly arrived on three packet ships. The city was expecting 2,500 more in the next weeks.¹²⁷ Adding to the 4,000 Cape Verdeans in New Bedford, the Famine Relief Club likely performed the double duty of providing support services for the newly arrived emigrants as well as for those who remained at home in the famine zone. This likely impelled the members of the club to found the Cape Verdean Beneficent Association two years later in 1916.

Sao Nicolau islander and local New Bedford businessman Felipe Nicolau Soares founded the Association to provide financial aid benefits for Cape Verdeans in the city, and to foster Cape Verdean heritage in the United States.¹²⁸ Located at the corner of Walnut and Acushnet Avenues, the Association was well known and highly regarded in the South End and Cape Verde, as its members reflected “some of the most respected people in the community.”¹²⁹ In 1921, the Association members elected Teofilo A. Brito (president), Miguel A. Teque (vice president), Jose Santos (corresponding secretary), Francisco da Cruz da Nereu (finance secretary), Joaquim

¹²⁷ “Influx of Nearly 500 Cape Verders,” *Boston Daily Globe* (Apr 15, 1914).

¹²⁸ Aminah Pilgrim, “Free Men Name Themselves”: Cape Verdeans in Massachusetts Negotiate Race, 1900-1980 (PhD diss.: Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 2008), 139; Felipe Nicolau Soares, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, *W.A. Greenough & Company 1916 New Bedford City Directory*. Ancestry.com (Accessed January 16, 2018).

¹²⁹ Costa, 137.

A. Santos (treasurer), Antonio S Almeida (secretary), Antonio Ramos (master of ceremony), Silvestre Duarte (internal guard), and Joaquim L. Barros (external guard), with Bernardo C. Barros, Antonio J. Lopes, and Nicolau Soares serving as finance officers. The following members served as directors — Jose C. Brito, Julio Fortes, Jose Spencer, Bartolomeu Silva, Joao Batista, Jose P. Gamboa, Julio Silva, Guilherme Soares, and Julio Brito.¹³⁰ Later, an undated photo identified Francisco da Cruz Nereu (president), Francisco Ramos (vice president), Joao Ricardo da Cruz (director), Antonio Lopes (director), Joao Miguel Almeida (director), Jose Nicolau da Silva (fiscal), Jose Damaio (secretary), Miguel Antonio Teque (secretary), Jose Dos Santos (secretary), Boaventura Barbosa (marshall), and Antonio Morais (unknown).¹³¹ The founders remained involved with the organization as leaders and as affiliated members for the next twenty years. In 1939, Teque was still secretary. In 1941, Nereu, Damaio, and Morais were affiliated members under the leadership of Jose de Brito.¹³² As noted above, the Association's founders and members were consistently involved in the leadership efforts of the club, this likely ensured that its purpose and direction remained consistent over the course of decades.

With its members easily identified by their black satin suits or satin sashes, the Association was “a classic example of immigrant societies in the period before the passage of social security legislation, providing its membership both companionship and emergency economic benefits, particularly in cases of sickness and death. In addition to affording mutual

¹³⁰ “Associação Beneficente Caboverdiana, Inc,” *Diário de Notícias* (March 1, 1921).

¹³¹ The names and officer positions are identified from a photograph provided by Mary Santos Barros in Ray Almeida, *Cape Verdeans in America: Our Story* (Boston: TCHUBA: The American Committee for Cape Verde Inc., 1978), 50.

¹³² New Bedford Whaling Museum Papers.

assistance in the form of financial as well as emotional support in time of need, it had an important social function.”¹³³ The founders built the Association on a collective ethnic and national identity rather than an island-specific one. Cape Verdean emigrants had a strong sense of island-specific connections, and those manifested in other forms of social organizations, but the Association shed its place of birth identification to provide services for the community, facilitating greater solidarity. The intra-island coalition building in diaspora was also significant considering the disapproval of inter-island marriage, dearth of interaction between islanders in the archipelago, and the differences in Kriolu.¹³⁴

Prior to the founding of the Association, around 1909, New Bedford Cape Verdeans established the Cape Verde Club. Between 1909 and 1911, John T. Williams (1909 treasurer and 1910 secretary), William H. White (1910 president), M. J. Caneca (1910 treasurer), and Manuel Gomes (1909 president) met on the last Thursday of every month at 277 South Water Street in the home of Manuel Gomes. John Teixeira Williams, a second-generation Cape Verdean-American, lived at 281 South Water Street in the home his mother, Mary Williams, owned. Its purpose is unclear, as the Club only existed a short time and its members were scattered in the cities surrounding New Bedford. Though its existence is only documented in the pages of the City Directory, it is likely to have influenced the founding of the Cape Verdean Famine Relief Club and the Cape Verdean Beneficent Society, which demonstrated equality in island representation. Among the Association’s leadership, however, the leaders were Brava and São Nicolau islanders. Their dominance in leadership more represented the community demographics than a self-conscious choice of exclusion.

¹³³ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 156.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 144.

The Association's services extended to previously settled emigrants, newly arrived emigrants, and those who would be deported. In June 1917, the Association stepped in to aid its countrypeople. After failing the newly imposed literacy test as part of the 1917 Immigration Law,¹³⁵ about 300 "dark skinned Portuguese Bravas" were detained at Long Wharf in New Bedford.¹³⁶ In Cape Verde, access to formal education was limited. Though emigrants would likely choose Portuguese as their language on which to be tested, Cape Verdeans spoke Kriolu, and their knowledge of the Portuguese written language was contingent on their educational attainment, thus resulting in more than 300 detained. The Long Wharf was not equipped for the long-term detention of more than 325 immigrants. After three weeks in the crowded station, 40 women and children were transferred to the Immigrants Home in East Boston.¹³⁷

The Association, recognizing their dual duty to new emigrants and to the homeland, petitioned the Department of Labor to have the detained stay and aid in the war effort. The Department of Labor refused and only allowed the detainees to remain temporarily if they agreed to work in agriculture for below-market rates. One hundred and forty detainees were offered six-month clemency to stay in America in exchange for work in the cranberry bogs. The Cape Verdean detainees declined, citing they emigrated in the hopes of receiving between \$2.50 and \$3.00 a day in the munitions factories: "Unless the \$2.00 or \$3.00 a day was forthcoming no

¹³⁵ The Literacy Act specified "that for the purposes of ascertaining whether aliens can read the immigrant inspectors shall be furnished with slips of uniform size prepared under the direction of the Secretary of Labor, each containing not less than thirty nor more than forty words in ordinary use, printed in plainly legible type in some one of the various languages or dialects of immigrants. Each alien may designate the particular languages or dialect in which he desires the examination to be made, and should be required to read the words printed on the slip in such language of dialect." H.R. 10384 "An Act To Regulate Immigration of Aliens, and the Residence of Aliens, in the United States" February 5, 1917.

¹³⁶ "Cape Verders Prefer Life at Long Wharf," *Boston Daily Globe*, Jun 18, 1917

¹³⁷ "Station Crowded with Immigrants: Detained Illiterates Fill Long Wharf House," *Boston Daily Globe* (Boston, MA), June 16, 1917.

work would they do.”¹³⁸ The prospect of working as unpaid laborers in the cranberry bogs for a limited stay did not rouse enthusiasm among the detainees. They preferred to be released to their friends and family in the city. The Association’s advocacy for new emigrants was in line with job placement and spoke to the needs of the United States during wartime as a form of interest convergence. Had their effort been successful, Cape Verdean detainees might have helped in the munitions factory or in the cotton mills, which were extremely popular during war for bandages and uniforms.

The Cape Verdean detainees demonstrated a shrewd understanding of the labor market in the United States and the difficulty Immigration officials would have in facilitating deportation. The threat of submarine attacks was very high, and deportation would be incredibly dangerous. As such, the Cape Verdeans at the wharf made themselves comfortable for a long stay. Fourteen were “deported” through a three-year whaling expedition, preferring this form of deportation, as they would earn income in the interim.¹³⁹ The astute knowledge of Cape Verdean detainees suggests knowledge of their labor value and acknowledging that there was not much the United States government could do. The Association’s intervention should be understood in the longer context of the local Cape Verdean associations and economic institutions. The overlapping memberships between the Cape Verdean associations reveals the ways they imbued meaning into their colonial relationship as part of a strategy to continue to care for homestayors.

In addition to being well-regarded members of the community, members of the Association had a tight social network within the group. The connections facilitated within the Association were family-oriented as well as ethnic-based. Francisco and Margarida Nereu’s

¹³⁸ “Cape Verders Prefer Life at Long Wharf,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Jun 18, 1917.

¹³⁹ “Waterfont News,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Aug 17, 1917.

daughter, Valentina (Nereu) Almeida, was a member of the Association and also held memberships in other New Bedford Cape Verdean social and cultural institutions, such as the Cape Verdean Women's Social Club, OLOA, among other affiliations.¹⁴⁰ Among the crossover members of the Famine Relief Fund and Association were Francisco Nereu, Francisco Ramos, and Joaquim A. Santos. Both Nereu and Ramos were founders of the Association. Nereu was also member of the OLOA Club and OLOA choir.

Joaquim A. Santos was also a noted leader in the community, and was affiliated with the Association and the Ultramarine Band Club. After founding the short-lived Famine Relief Club in 1914, he was again in a leadership role of the *Comissão Central de Socorros aos Famintos de Cabo Verde* (Cape Verdean Central Aid Committee for the Hungry), serving as a general member in the 1920s and as president in the 1930s. In 1921, the Committee raised \$5,226.33 and 1,000 bags of corn, 1,000 bags of flour, and 250 bags of beans from Cape Verdean and Portuguese associations in Hawaii, California, New Bedford, and Providence, including Fox Point's Cape Verdean Brotherhood. Members of the Relief Club in 1921 had overlapping membership with the Association, specifically Santos and Tiofilo (Teofilo) Brito.¹⁴¹ The vice president of the Committee was lawyer Alfred J. Gomes. The Committee proved necessary when a famine occurred on the islands between 1940 and 1942, during World War II, when Portugal could not provide aid. Between May 1942 and the end of fundraising in August 1942, the Committee raised \$11,075. Local Cape Verdean organizations, such as the Cape Verde Progressive Club and the Ultramarine Band Club, as well as the Slocum-Gibbs Cranberry

¹⁴⁰ Valentina N. Almeida Obituary www.currentobituary.com/obit/72740 (Accessed August 21, 2017).

¹⁴¹ Comissão Central de Socorros aos Famintos de Cabo Verde, New Bedford, Mass, Estados Unidos da America [Central Commission for Cape Verdean Hunger of New Bedford, Massachusetts, the United States of America]” *Diário de Notícias* (October 8, 1921).

Company in Wareham, donated to the cause. The Committee's reach extended to New York City's Cape Verde League Association, which donated \$75; Boston's Brava American Social Club, which donated \$479.50; and the Cape Verdean Social Club. Inc. of Waterbury, Connecticut, which donated \$1,000. New Bedford's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People contributed to the fund as well.

The Committee organized with the Portuguese consulate and the minister of Portugal, who served as a liaison between them, officials in Portugal, and the *Servicios Aquisação Generos Alimenticios* (SAGA), an organization in Cape Verde in charge of supervising delivery and distribution of goods, regarding the appropriation of the monies, foodstuffs, and other goods, as well as the issue of import duties and taxation at the Cape Verde border. In May 1942, Joao de Bianchi, the minister of Portugal in Washington, D.C., reported that Dr. Antonio Salazar, the Prime Minister of Portugal, had decreed that all goods sent in the relief effort would be free of tariffs.

The Commission operated under the auspices of the Association at 163 Walnut Street. It was likely formed as an ad hoc association that gained influence and official status as a result of the famine. Antonio S. Almeida, treasurer of the Commission and treasurer for the Association since 1923, managed the funds. Officers of the club included Gomes as executive-chairman, Jose C. de Brito as vice chairman, Almeida as treasurer, Mary de Brito as secretary, and Edwina Gomes as its clerk. The executive council was composed of Antonio Azevedo, Malvina Monteiro, Edward Sousa, Boaventure Spencer, and a group of unnamed "club delegates."¹⁴² The overlap between the Association and the Committee's members cannot be overstated; Mary de Brito, secretary of the Committee, was also the Association's secretary. The overlapping

¹⁴² New Bedford Whaling Museum Papers.

members of the various organization formed the core of the Cape Verdean-American public leadership in New Bedford and Providence.

Lawyer Alfred J. Gomes was at the center of the Cape Verdean public life in New Bedford. Gomes emigrated to New Bedford, as Alfred J. Jesus, from the island of Brava as a seven-year-old child in 1904.¹⁴³ He attended schools in New Bedford and, like many, worked in the factories as a mill operator.¹⁴⁴ In 1923, he was a full-time law student at Boston University living at 199 Water Street in the South End, the former residence of the Draytons, a Barbadian family. He was one of the first Cape Verdeans to obtain a jurisprudence degree and continued to serve the community, valuing education and guiding wayward youth, until his death in 1974. Massachusetts Governor Michael S. Dukakis stated, “Alfred Joseph Gomes was a man that did not hesitate to assume responsibility in the activities of the church, community and family life.”¹⁴⁵ Gomes was credited with founding the OLOA Basketball League and teaching its coach Peter Brito how to play ball.¹⁴⁶ He was known and exalted as an all-around Renaissance man with a deep passion for community uplift through sport, community services, and education.

Gomes’s works were particularly notable as the chairperson-treasurer of the Seaman’s Memorial Scholarship Fund. The scholarship was in memoriam of four Cape Verdeans and one St. Helenian who died on the Lightship Nantucket in an accident. Gomes founded the scholarship

¹⁴³ Alfred J. Jesus, National Archives at Boston, *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 11, 2017).

¹⁴⁴ Alfred J. Gomes, National Archives at Boston, *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950*. Ancestry.com (Accessed December 11, 2017).

¹⁴⁵ “1975 Alfred Joseph Gomes Day Proclamation,” Box: David Baxter Papers, Folder 13 On New Bedford, RIC Cape Verdean Collection.

¹⁴⁶ Our Lady of Assumption 75th Anniversary Booklet, 1905-1980, RIC Cape Verdean Collection

in 1935 and continued to guide it until his death.¹⁴⁷ The scholarship fund attracted the city's social elites "... [It] was a social extravaganza involving the best-looking young men and women in the community wearing tuxedos and gowns. This was what community people called a '400' affair because the 'cream' of the Cape Verdean society would turn out in all of their finery. These were all of the 'white' Cape Verdeans who always stayed to themselves and wouldn't dance with anyone but their own crowd."¹⁴⁸ The scholarship was the first of its kind in Southeastern New England to provide academic monies to students of Cape Verdean descent.

Providence's Labor Union

Outside of social, religious, and benevolent societies, Cape Verdeans in Providence organized a labor union. In 1933, dockside coal shoveler Manuel Q. Ledo, Fox Point funeral director John Lopes, and 11 others organized and combatted their poor treatment at the docks by forming the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA), AFL-CIO, Local 1329. Prior to organizing the ILA, Ledo had a history with trade unions and strikes in Providence: In 1922, he organized the Coal Trimmers Local, and in 1928, he organized hod carriers to strike at the Industrial National Bank. Due to the nature of the work and the chief organizers, the Local 1329 was mostly comprised of Cape Verdean members.¹⁴⁹ The ILA was between two American Federation of Labor craft affiliates that established separate locals for white and "colored"

¹⁴⁷ The deceased include four Cape Verdeans, John Fortes, Isaac J. Pina, Alfredo Monteiro, Matheus F. Rodrigues, and one St. Helenian, Ernest B. George. Box: David Baxter Papers, Folder 15 Seaman, RIC Cape Verdean Collection

¹⁴⁸ Costa 135-136.

¹⁴⁹ Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 25.

laborers.¹⁵⁰ Ledo is credited with “organizing the first Black union on the Eastern Seaboard.”¹⁵¹

The plight of the longshoremen was a central organizing force in Fox Point. Though John F. Lopes was an undertaker, he organized with Ledo and other longshoreman as a demonstration of solidarity. He stated, “These are my people. I’m working with them to help them.”¹⁵² Though focused on labor, the ILA was one of the many ethnic-related institutions that Cape Verdeans formed in diaspora.

In Sam Beck’s account of the International Longshoreman’s Association Local 1329, longshoreman John “Toy” Fernandes recounted that the work was difficult, but was “the only way we could survive. No one else wanted to do it — there was great discrimination at that time.”¹⁵³ They worked in all types of weather conditions and, according to Fernandes, the company did not honor their hours. In 1927, they earned \$0.50 per hour before 5 p.m., and they earned \$0.70 per hour after that. They worked 12 hours a day and walked 50 miles a day.¹⁵⁴ In Alabama, Mobile longshoremen worked eight hours but were paid for six. In addition to underpayment, they also worked long, arduous hours. “When a ship arrived, deck men scrambled on board to prepare the cargo for handling. Once the hatches were opened and the ship made ready, gangs worked around the clock to unload the contents.”¹⁵⁵ They could work up to 35

¹⁵⁰ The other craft affiliates allowing segregated unions were the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

¹⁵¹ “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*”.

¹⁵² Sam Beck, *From Cape Verde to Providence: The International Longshoremen’s Association, Local 1329*, (Providence: Local 1329 the International Longshoremen’s Association, 1983), 27, RIHS.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 27.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 33.

¹⁵⁵ Robert Woodrum, “The Past Has Taught Us a Lesson”: The International Longshoremen’s Association and Black Workers in Mobile, 1903–1913, *Alabama Review* (April 2012), 107.

hours, only taking breaks for meals. For longshoremen, organizing was as much about negotiating fair wages and working hours as it was about the “control over their labor.”¹⁵⁶ In Providence, Cape Verdean longshoremen and dockworkers established a union, institutionalizing Cape Verdean local political power. For example, in 1951, the ILA refused to unload the ship *SS Horace Irvine* and its 3,000,000 feet of cargo so as not to break a strike occurring on Boston ports.¹⁵⁷ As it was on the whaling ships, the docks were spaces where Cape Verdean, West Indian, and African-American workers intersected. Their support of the Boston strike demonstrates their connections up and down the Eastern seaboard with longshoremen outside of their city and state.

Members of the ILA Local 1329 also participated in local social gatherings and associations. “They were longshoremen by day, musicians by night” as they played music for various Cape Verdean clubs.¹⁵⁸ With connections to the New Bedford Cape Verdean community, members of the Local 1329 formed the *Sociedade Santiago* (Santiago Society).¹⁵⁹ At least two of the members of New Bedford’s *Associação Beneficente Caboverdiana*, Jose Nicolau da Silva and Anthony Morais, were affiliated with the Society.¹⁶⁰ It’s likely the elder organization served as advisors and/or used their close proximity and ethnic affiliation to host social events and gatherings.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 100.

¹⁵⁷ “Dockers Refuse to Unload Lumber Ship in Portsmouth,” *Newport Daily News* (October 31, 1951).

¹⁵⁸ “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*”.

¹⁵⁹ “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*”.

¹⁶⁰ The members of the *Associação Beneficente Caboverdiana* among the membership of the *Sociedade Santiago* were identified by photographic recognition of the following images: the *Sociedade Santiago* (1929) in Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 19; the Founding Members of the *Associação Beneficente Caboverdiana* (n.d.) in Almeida, 50; and in the documentary “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*”.

Social Clubs

In addition to the religious, labor, educational, and aid-based ethnic organizations, Cape Verdeans established associations that were almost exclusively social in orientation. They were organized to cultivate and maintain Cape Verdean culture, as well as provide a social space for gathering, encouraging homosocial relations, and facilitating intergenerational interaction. Both New Bedford and Providence had a series of incorporated and short-term associations organized around island identity, gender, trade unions, and mutual aid. In fact, between 1917 and 1950, Rhode Island's Cape Verdeans incorporated 22 ethnic organizations and an unknown number of unofficial organizations in Providence and East Providence.¹⁶¹ Regardless of their intention, as a social or as a capacity-building organization, there was significant overlap among members of the various Cape Verdean clubs. The overlap demonstrates the many ways that local leaders attempted to reach their constituents and counterparts, offering a variety of services — from mutual aid and death benefits to music for kitchen dance parties to a place where mothers can go.

¹⁶¹ According to the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Non-Business Incorporations, 1896-1959, these are the following Cape Verdean ethnic associations founded between 1917 and 1950: Cape De Verde Social Club Inc. Jan. 1917, Associação Cabo Verdeana Holy Name Society, Providence Inc. July 1927, Caboverdeans Social Club, Newport Inc. Feb. 1928, Associação Catolica Caboverdeana Santiago of Prov., RI Inc. June 1928, Cape Verdean Civic Democratic League of the State of RI, Providence Inc. July 1935, Cape Verdean Civic Democratic League of the State of RI – changed to Cape Verdean Civic Republican League of RI Am. Mar. 1936, Crusaders Club, Providence Inc. May 1937, Club Instrutivo e Recreativo Caboverdeano, Providence Inc. Oct. 1938, Cape Verdean Progressive Club, East Providence Inc. Feb. 1939, Cape Verdean Co Operative Association, East Providence Inc. July 1939, Cape Verdean, Associação Caboverdeana Santo Antonio, Providence Inc. Jan. 1940, Cape Verdean Progressive Club – changed to Portuguese American Civic Club Am. Nov. 1942, Cape Verdean Women's American Progressive Club, East Providence Inc. Nov. 1944, Cape Verdean Social Club, Inc., Newport Inc. Mar. 1944, Cape Verdean American Citizens Club, Providence Inc. Dec. 1945, American Cape Verdean Social Club, East Providence Inc. Aug. 1946, Royal Cape Verdean Brotherhood, East Providence Inc. Sept. 1947, RI, Association for Cape Verdean Improvement, East Providence Inc. Feb. 1948, First Ward Cape Verdean Voters Club Inc. Mar. 1949, Cape Verdean Athletic Club, East Providence Inc. Dec. 1949, Cape Verdean Citizen's & Veteran's Club, Newport Inc. May 1950, and RI Association for Cape Verdean Improvement – changed to RI Cape Verdean Am. Oct. 1950.

Shortly after the Cape Verdean Beneficent Association formed, Cape Verdean musicians founded the 17-member Cape Verdean Ultramarine Band Club in New Bedford. In 1917, Felipe N. Soares, then president and founder of the Cape Verdean Beneficent Association; Joaquim Braz Cardoza; Manuel Silva, a band master; and musician Jose Raymond Monteiro met at the home of Manuel Mendes to found the Club to “serve as a stepping stone to help gain recognition for the growing number of Cape Verdeans in the city.”¹⁶² The Ultramarine Band Club served as a cultural beacon in the community. It was borne out of the Cape Verdean kitchen dances. Kitchen dances served as both fundraisers and sites of celebration. The Club served about thirty communities in New England, providing music for weddings, baptisms, and funerals. Similar to the Harlem rent parties, Cape Verdeans pushed their furniture aside, called on some local musicians to play, danced with friends, and ate the Cape Verdean national dish, *cachupa*.¹⁶³ Through the 1930s, the Club provided “the jazz sound,” and was featured at local parades and performed around New England through the Ivy League for the college elite.¹⁶⁴ During this time, New Bedford was the “Cape Verdean Harlem”¹⁶⁵ with bands like Duke Oliver’s Band unit of the Club playing swing music in the same vein as his namesake Duke Ellington.¹⁶⁶ At the same time, other Cape Verdean-Americans in New England were organizing bands or performing with musicians. Notably, Brockton-born New Bedford resident Paul Gonçalves performed with Ellington in the 1950s. Cape Verdean-American bands like the Tavares Brothers from

¹⁶² “Cape Verdean Band Club is Coming Back Strong”
<http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20040801/News/308019983> (Accessed August 21, 2017).

¹⁶³ John Fass Morton, *Backstory in Blue: Ellington at Newport '56* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 135.

¹⁶⁴ Costa, 135.

¹⁶⁵ Founded by second-generation Cape Verdean American Isidore Oliveira.

¹⁶⁶ Morton, 136.

Providence gained some acclaim starring in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977). Providence and Brockton's music scene at the time did not have the same organizational growth as New Bedford.

Unlike their predecessors in the Famine Relief Club and Association, the Ultramarine Band Club "organized less for mutual aid and more for socializing, the club would host popular bands, hold weekly dances, sponsor beauty contests and fashion shows, and serve as a recreational facility and drinking establishment for its many members."¹⁶⁷ The Club created a space for intergenerational gatherings. Though not as service-oriented as their predecessor, the Ultramarine Band Club was influential and wealthy with overlapping connections with the other Cape Verdean clubs in the city. The Ultramarine Band Club also played with Statians George Miggins and Richard Haddocks of the mainly West Indian American "Casino Band Club."¹⁶⁸ Manuel Costa recalled that the Ultramarine Band Club "serves a purpose in the community: It is a place to go, a social place for the people, a source of musical instruction for youngsters, and parade band, and it does provide some employment."¹⁶⁹ . Antonio Azevedo, Jose Damaio, Francisco Nereu, and Francisco Ramos were among the Club's original members.¹⁷⁰ The Club

¹⁶⁷ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 156.

¹⁶⁸ Robert C. Hayden, *African Americans and Cape Verdean Americans in New Bedford: A History of Community and Achievement* (Boston: Select Publishers, 1993), 66.

¹⁶⁹ Costa, 140.

¹⁷⁰ Cape Verdean Ultramarine Band Club First Annual Scholarship Banquet, August 31, 1999. Box 4: Manuel A. Lopes and Henry J. Barros Cape Verdean American Organizations, Folder: Cape Verdean Ultramarine Band Club, RIC Cape Verdean Collection.

was extremely popular throughout the twentieth century, with a resurgence happening in 2011; in 2017 they celebrated their 100-year anniversary.¹⁷¹

In addition to the homeland societies with a pan-Cape Verdean identity or united Cape Verde national/colonial orientation, there were several small-scale, island-specific organizations. Island identification was prominent among Cape Verdean emigrants in the early twentieth century. The spatial separation of the islands, lack of intra-island communication, and cultural and linguistic differences in Kriolu enabled Cape Verdeans to retain island identities and provided the foundations by which the previously formed associations were primarily and solely Island-specific. In New Bedford, the most notable examples of island associations were the Brava Club and the São Vicente Sporting Club.”¹⁷² The São Vicente Sporting Club was likely comprised of Cricketeers. Though the British sport might seem an unusual pastime for the Portuguese colonists, cricket became popular on the island due to the British presence at the coaling station on the island. São Vicente islanders learned the game from British laborers. The matches were held in Buttonwood Park and in open fields in the South End.¹⁷³ They played against each other, and likely against their West Indian neighbors from the West End or the city’s other cricket clubs, such as the New Bedford Cricket Club, North End Cricket Club, and the Hathaway’s Portuguese Cricket Club located in the South End.¹⁷⁴ Local Cape Verdeans were

¹⁷¹ “Cape Verdean Ultramarine Band Club turns 100 on Saturday” <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/news/20170824/cape-verdean-ultramarine-band-club-turns-100-on-saturday> (Accessed August 21, 2017).

¹⁷² Marilyn Halter, “Cape Verdeans in the U.S,” in *Transnational Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*, edited by Luis Batalha and Jørgen Carling (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 41.

¹⁷³ Hayden, 124.

¹⁷⁴ 1904 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory; 1906 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory; 1907 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory; 1910 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory; 1913 W.A. Greenough & Company New

extremely proud of the cricket club, so much so that “when [Cape Verdean teams] would win, they would have parades throughout the Cape Verdean neighborhood.”¹⁷⁵

Even clubs with the nomenclature of “Cape Verdean” demonstrated high island identification in their leadership and membership. For example, the Cape Verdean Beneficent Association was primarily composed of men from Brava and São Nicolau and the Cape Verdean Women’s Social Club had a prominent São Nicolau membership. Similarly, during the Global Depression, Fox Pointers, mainly from the island of Santo Antão; members of the ILA Local 1329; Frank Freitas; Jancenio Mello; and others formed the *Associação Caboverdeana Santo Antonio*, referred to as San Antonio Society.¹⁷⁶ Founded in 1934 and incorporated in 1940, its main goals were to provide mutual aid and assistance to Cape Verdeans during the Depression.¹⁷⁷ In the 1930s, the club membership reached more than 100 persons, and it was still active in 1987. Though it was founded outside of the church institution, they performed religious and spiritual work to “bolster the spiritual side of life, in such activities, as annual masses, visiting the sick, comforting and giving solace to the bereaved, and in various ways promoting the virtues of understanding to its fullest extent.”¹⁷⁸ It was a traditional mutual aid society providing death benefits up to \$300.00 and sick benefits of \$8.00 weekly.

Bedford City Directory; 1916 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory; 1917 Henry M. Meek Publishing and Company; 1918 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory; 1919 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory; 1921 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory; and 1923 W.A. Greenough & Company New Bedford City Directory.

¹⁷⁵ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 157.

¹⁷⁶ “Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?”.

¹⁷⁷ Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 20; Rhode Island Secretary of State – Non-Business Incorporations, 1896-1959.

¹⁷⁸ Coli, *Cape Verdean Ethnicity*, 144-145.

Generally, Providence's Cape Verdean population demonstrated less connectedness to the homeland than their counterparts in New Bedford. Through their labor union and organizations, it seemed that they were more suited to attend to the needs of the local community than to homelander. But, as mentioned previously, the Society had connections with New Bedford's local associations. The Cape Verdean Brotherhood also sent monetary donations via New Bedford's hunger relief aid committees, in some part ensuring the livelihood of their homelander family.¹⁷⁹ Theirs was more of a sedentary transnational giving, using money and relationships to connect them to the social realities of the homeland.

Gender-Based Women's Clubs

According to Frank Monteiro, an advisor to the Cape Verdean Women's Social Club, gender discrimination was a mitigating factor, as women were not allowed in Cape Verdean clubs.¹⁸⁰ Gender-specific societies had long been a feature of the local organizational scene. Local Cape Verdean associations were almost exclusively male, barring women from participation unless as helpmates or auxiliary members. The men's societies refused to let women enter, and when they did, they often didn't allow women's leadership to rise beyond the position of secretary. Facing restrictions based on gender bias, in the 1930s Cape Verdean women formed their own clubs in Providence and New Bedford, catering to the unique concerns of community women. The Cape Verdean women's clubs served a variety of purposes — giving women dignified spaces to organize and gain social mobility within the community, honoring women's contributions to the community, providing services for the community, and sponsoring

¹⁷⁹ Comissão Central de Socorros aos Famintos de Cabo Verde, New Bedford, Mass, Estados Unidos da America [Central Commission for Cape Verdean Hunger of New Bedford, Massachusetts, the United States of America]” *Diário de Notícias* (October 8, 1921).

¹⁸⁰ Costa, 124.

cultural events.

In 1933 in Providence, several Cape Verdean women founded the United States' first Cape Verdean women's social club, the Smart Set.¹⁸¹ Their goals were to facilitate greater understanding among Providence's Portuguese and to encourage educational, recreational, and social activities. They represented the cream of the crop in the Rhode Island Cape Verdean community as "the first to have [their] mothers come to an affair in gowns. [They] had in 1934 a ball at the historic Edgewood Yacht Club" in Cranston, Rhode Island, which drew more than 300 participants.¹⁸² In addition to the elite events, they also provided aid by distributing canned goods to needy Cape Verdean community members during the holiday season.

The club had a mixed group of first- and second-generation Cape Verdean-Americans. Its leaders were Viola Lima (president), Anna Araujo (vice president), Isabel Lima (secretary), Mary Britto (treasurer), Mary Lopes (reporter), and Anna Gonsalves (chairman of the social committee). In February 1933, Smart Set members Anna Alves, Isabel Lima, Anna Babbitt, Lena Monteiro, Hortense, Inez, Alice Cabral, and Clara Babbitt held an event at the Providence Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Alves gave a formal presentation on Cape Verdean history, and other members did cultural presentations, such as performing recitations, folk dances, and singing.¹⁸³ Though the newspaper article referred to the Smart Set as "the Portuguese Cape Verdean Girls Club," the activities of the club suggest that the women were proud to be Cape Verdean and were invested in maintaining their cultural heritage. They sang songs and recited poems in Kriolu, presented the history of the archipelago, and wore "native costumes" rather

¹⁸¹ Cape Verdean Smart Set Entertains, *Boston Chronicle* (February 10, 1933).

¹⁸² Coli, *Cape Verdean Ethnicity*, 146; Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 26.

¹⁸³ Alice Cabral, *Rhode Island, State Censuses, 1865-1935*. Ancestry.com (Accessed January 17, 2018); Anna (Cabral) Araujo, 1940 United States Federal Census.

than a demonstration of Portuguese nationalism as some of their older, male counterparts might have done.¹⁸⁴ The Smart Set positioned their Cape Verdeanness first, at the forefront of their organizing.

Following Providence's Smart Set, the next popular Cape Verdean women's association was in New Bedford. Filling a necessary gap in the city's women's organizing, in 1937 Mrs. Maria L. Livramento invited her friends to her home, where they established the Cape Verdean Woman's Social Club. They elected Livramento as president, Maria de Brito as vice president, Josephine Gomes as secretary, Julia Rose as financial secretary, and Louise Freitas as treasurer. General founding members at the meeting were Gertrude Almeida, Nyha De Brito, Augusta Duarte, Julia Duarte, Anna Galvan, Anna Grace, Laura Gomes, Maria C. Gomes, Barbara Lopes, Archangela Silva, and Maria Tavares.¹⁸⁵ Women from São Nicolau made up the core membership of the Club. As mothers, they organized with the premise that stay-at-home mothers needed social interaction and a place to go "too."¹⁸⁶ They agreed to organize events, such as dances, formal dinners, and other functions, including house parties, Mother's Day Mass and Breakfast, and an annual New Year's Eve celebration. The type of organizing indicates a gendered sort of organizing in formal dances and dinner, but regardless of its gendered form of social organizing, the Club was a standalone institution, unlike the Ladies Auxiliary of the Cape Verdean American Veterans Association or the Cape Verdean Women's Auxiliary of Waterbury. The male-run Cape Verdean Social Club of Waterbury praised its ladies' auxiliary, stating

¹⁸⁴ Cape Verdean Smart Set Entertains, *Boston Chronicle* (February 10, 1933).

¹⁸⁵ "'Coo Coo' Club has become model of longevity"
<http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20040111/news/301119989> (Accessed August 21, 2017).

¹⁸⁶ Theresa (Livramento) Almeida made the statement that "mothers needed to go somewhere too." Almeida subtly juxtaposes the freedom in public life men with women's confinement to as day laborers and boarding home keepers in their homes and in other, wealthier homes. Forming the club was then taken as a "change of pace" for the women organizers in Hayden, 14.

“without whose help [the 50th Anniversary] celebration would not have been possible” in 1985.¹⁸⁷

Like their male counterparts, Club members were well integrated into the social milieu of New Bedford. For example, Livramento, Maria Gomes, and Maria de Brito were all executive board members of the Committee.¹⁸⁸ In addition to her vice presidency in the Women’s Social Club, Maria de Brito served as the secretary for both the Committee and the Association. As secretary of both organizations, she drafted letters for Portuguese governmental agents and was the main communicant for the correspondences between the archipelago, New Bedford, and Portugal. In so doing, she was at the center of transnational politics and community activism for the Cape Verdean diaspora in New Bedford. Theresa Almeida, daughter of Livramento, also served as president of the Women’s Club between 1985 and 1987, and as president of the Cape Verdean Americans Veteran’s Association Ladies Auxiliary in 1989. Similarly, Francisco da Cruz and Margarida Nereu’s daughter, Valentina (Nereu) Almeida, was Women’s Club president in 1968.¹⁸⁹ These women were able to use the network of the men in their lives to gain access to more resources and information about the conditions in their homeland, manage significant monies and correspondences, and maintain leadership roles within their own organizations.

¹⁸⁷ The Cape Verdean Social Club of Waterbury 50th Anniversary Booklet, 1935-1985, Box 4: Manuel A. Lopes and Henry J. Barros Cape Verdean American Organizations, Folder: Cape Verdean Social Club of Waterbury, CT. RIC Cape Verdean Collection. This event received financial support via advertisements from several Cape Verdean American associations including the Cape Verdeans of Southern California, New Bedford’s Cape Verdean American Veterans Association, Inc and the Cape Verdean Ladies Auxiliary, Cape Verdean Club of New Haven, and the Cape Verdean Women’s Club of Bridgeport, CT.

¹⁸⁸ “Comissão Executiva do “Cape Verde Relief Fund,” *Diario de Noticias* (July 23, 1943).

¹⁸⁹ Cape Verdean Women’s Social Club 50th Anniversary Celebration Booklet, 1937-1987, RIC Cape Verdean Collection; List of Cape Verdean American Veteran’s Association Inc Past Commander and Ladies Auxiliary Past Presidents. Box 4: Manuel A. Lopes and Henry J. Barros Cape Verdean American Organizations, Folder: Cape Verdean Veteran Association, RIC Cape Verdean Collection.

Local Cape Verdean men referred to the Club as the “Coo Coo Club,” as they believed that women were crazy or “coo coo,” incapable of running and organizing a club.¹⁹⁰ Though the women laughed off this teasing and eventually adopted the moniker as a nickname, they still enlisted well-established Cape Verdean community men — Peter Grace, Frank Monteiro, Joseph Santos, and Manuel Britto — to serve as advisors between its founding and 1959. Of the four advisors, Santos, a member of several Cape Verdean ethnic societies, served as the Club’s longest advisor, from 1939 to 1958. Despite enlisting the help of these clubmen, the “Coo Coo Club” had an all-woman leadership, mainly from the island of São Nicolau.¹⁹¹ It’s quite possible that by giving the men in their lives powerless positions within their organization, they were manipulating and usurping the gendered power dynamics.

Cape Verdean women in Providence advanced their social organizing in 1939 when 27 women of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Cape Verdean Social Club separated to found their independent Cape Verdean Women’s Club.¹⁹² The Women’s Club was maintained by the International Institute of Rhode Island, a branch of the YWCA that served to support immigrant women. The Institute was operating in Providence early as 1921, and it is likely, based on their services for immigrant women and commitment to encouraging “nationality” or ethnic-based groups, that they worked in collaboration with all of Providence’s Cape Verdean women’s associations, including the Smart Set, who held an event at the YWCA in 1933.¹⁹³ On September

¹⁹⁰ “‘Coo Coo’ Club has become model of longevity” <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20040111/news/301119989> (Accessed August 21, 2017).

¹⁹¹ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 156.

¹⁹² Coli and Lobban, *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, 27.

¹⁹³ Joan Retsinas, “The International Institute of Rhode Island,” *Rhode Island History* Vol. 54, No. 4 (November 1996), 126.

27, 1939, the Cape Verdean Women's Club held an anniversary event at the Institute House at 58 Jackson Street.¹⁹⁴

Under similar circumstances as their New Bedford counterparts, Cape Verdean men in Providence did not think it was appropriate for women to manage their own social club. In 1949, the Women's Club merged with the local Cape Verdean Men's Club, presumably the Social Club from which they previously separated, to form the Cape Verdean Progressive Club in East Providence. With their combined efforts, the Center served as a space and sponsored several Cape Verdean organizations, including the Verdettes, the Hangovers, the Ever Ready Verdette Bowlers, and many others. After the merger, the male leaders subsumed the women's leadership. Though there was a resurgence of independence in the 1964 establishment of the Cape Verdean Women's Guild within the Center, Elaine Gonsalves, the 2011 president, said it took more than 50 years to wrest the power back into the hands of women.¹⁹⁵

Cape Verdean female leaders faced a gendered reality that was supposed to limit their organizational abilities and continue to render them semi-dependent on the men in their lives. Through membership in auxiliaries as a helpmate feature of organizing, Cape Verdean women might have gained significant community clout by participating in multiple organizations as secretaries or auxiliary members. Instead, these women demonstrated a community feminist helpmate stance that should be read as a strategy that "focus[ed] their activism on assisting both the men and women in their lives. ... Their activism reveals an acknowledgement of oppressive power relations, shatters masculinist claims of women as intellectually inferior, and seeks to

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ "First Female President of Cape Verdean Progressive Club Recalls Challenges and Successes" <https://patch.com/rhode-island/eastprovidence/first-female-president-of-cape-verdean-progressive-cl8e5cd93f89>

empower women by expanding their roles and options.”¹⁹⁶ The women leaders in these groups linked their organizations to multiple networks, including the YWCA, the International Institute, local homeland societies, the Portuguese and Cape Verdean colonial government, and were involved in large-scale transnational giving in addition to the local community works they led in their respective cities. By teaming up with individual male leaders and men’s groups, Cape Verdean women had skillful understanding of the gendered relationships in their social world, and demonstrated their abilities to manage the rigors of public life.

In Fox Point and the South End, Cape Verdean organizations — regardless of gender, labor, social, or religious affiliation — provided Cape Verdeans in diaspora with a space and a site for community affiliation. They placed community members in conversation with each other and supported the maintenance of Cape Verdean-American identity. Between 1886 and 1939, Cape Verdean-American organizations represented the cultural needs of the community over generations — through their music in kitchen dances and at the Ultramarine Band Club, to their scholarships, and through their annual mother’s appreciation events. In addition to their local work, the organizations facilitated long-term connections with the homeland through financial giving, aid provisions, and thanks to the development of the Brava Packet Trade, movement between the two zones.

Focusing on emigration conditions, labor, and social cultural institutions, this chapter presented the social network at the organizational level of Southeast New England’s Cape Verdean community in New Bedford and Providence. In the enclaves, they founded social clubs that reified their Cape Verdean-American identity, and some strategically retained relationships with their homestayng loved ones back in the archipelago. The United States-based

¹⁹⁶ Ula Taylor, “Women in the Documents: Thoughts on Uncovering the Personal, Political, and Professional,” *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 1 (2008), 190.

organizations demonstrated high levels of interconnectedness as club members and leaders overlapped making a tight-knit community network. The associations were led formally and informally by the same cluster of people who had a sense to maintain the Cape Verdean culture. Their associations showed strategic allegiance to home and to Portugal as the mother country. Living in United States provided Cape Verdean-Americans the leverage and means to advocate for themselves and the homelander, to gain access to resources, and to gain social mobility for their own betterment and their relatives.

Cape Verdean-American churches were cornerstones in the South End and Fox Point neighborhoods. In them, Cape Verdeans demonstrated a religious diversity as Catholics, Protestants, and even those embracing a Southern Black preaching style. Several organizations sprung from the religious wellspring, tying community leaders together from one organization to the next, each providing unique services to the community. Some organizations provided aid for the islanders who remained. Other organizations provided a social space and promoted Cape Verdean cultural identity in music and organization. And even others operated as central hubs for community events and gatherings, and supported the poor and students' educational attainments. In all, no matter the scope, these Cape Verdean associations intended to serve Cape Verdeans whether in the residential enclaves or in the homelands. Through their networks, Cape Verdeans interacted more with other United States Cape Verde colonies than with their neighbors in New England. Cape Verdean-Americans shed island-specific identification and embraced a pan-Cape Verdean identity, adapting to their close proximity and shedding the separateness from the islands. In diaspora, they saw themselves as one community, different than their African-descended counterparts and excluded from the privileges and benefits of lusotropicalism. Their

ethnic-cultural identity was tied to return migration and supporting the families they left on the islands.

New Bedford's Cape Verdean community demonstrated higher levels of ethnic association than their counterparts in Providence. As South End homeland societies oriented their view to caring for the homeland, in Fox Point Cape Verdeans cared for those in diaspora. From the founding of the Mission church, Fox Pointers diverged from their homeland connections, establishing a Protestant church and creating organizations that primarily were concerned with sick and death benefits for its members, as well as labor institutions that cared for the members in Providence, not in Cape Verde. Despite their different orientation, the size of the Cape Verdean presence in both cities facilitated a strong ethnic connection that supplanted previous identities.

Their homeland societies fit traditional forms of immigrant organizing as sites of ethnic and cultural solidarity, social inclusion, and homosocial relationships. In non-traditional ways, Cape Verdeans used their economic powers, with their eyes trained on the homeland. They scrimped and saved to send monies, goods, and letters to their loved ones who remained in the islands. Keeping their eyes on the homeland enabled Cape Verdeans to funnel their economic power to transform diaspora and transnational relationships at the turn of the twentieth century. Providing resources to those who remained was seen as a commitment, a remembrance, and an obligation. They oriented their local associations to provide for Cape Verdeans in the United States and the homeland, and they mobilized their economic power to purchase refitted ships to relink the communities once fractured by diaspora, forming a transnational social field connecting the Cape Verdean colony to the Cape Verdean colony in the United States. Moving away from the tropes of isolation and exile, Cape Verdeans retained real community connections

to their homeland. In so doing, Cape Verdean-Americans continually hovered, like a horse with wings, between the archipelago and the United States.

Chapter Five: “Travel on the Highways of the Broad Atlantic:”¹ **An Exploration of the Brava Packet Trade and Homeland Transnationalism**

In the early twentieth century, as Cape Verdean-Americans began to settle in their newly formed ethnic enclaves in New Bedford and Providence, they simultaneously established social, financial, and political institutions that enabled cultural and economic connections that were centered around the desire to sustain Cape Verdean culture, as well as provide aid for their counterparts at “home.” These associations were transnational in orientation, maintained by a maritime network that nurtured the ethnic connections between Cape Verdeans in diaspora and their homeland, and supported the flow of people, goods, ideas, and communications.

With the Atlantic Ocean as their highway, Cape Verdeans flexed their economic power through the purchasing and refitting of a fleet of old whaling ships. The Brava (or Cape Verde) Packet Trade began modestly at the turn of the twentieth century, receiving its name from its port of call on the island of Brava and the generic name given to Cape Verdean-Americans, the majority of whom were from the island. As the fleet grew, the range of services expanded to other islands, particularly São Vicente, the island hosting the United States Consulate, and São Tiago, where the seat of colonial government lay. The ships were referred to as packets for their utility as cargo-carrying vessels. These vessels were privately owned ships providing regular and direct service between New England and the Cape Verde archipelago. It was a sizeable fleet, owned and operated by Cape Verdeans.²

¹ This excerpt comes from the chapter “The Bravas” in *The Sieve or Revelations of the Man Mill: Being the Truth about American Immigration* by Feri Felix Weiss (Boston: The Page Company, 1921), 287.

² Sidney Greenfield, “In Search of Social Identity: Strategies of Ethnic Management Among Cape Verdeans in Southeastern Massachusetts,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 13, No.1 (Summer 1976), 6.

Building on the previous chapter's discussion of Cape Verdean-American homeland societies, this chapter engages the operationalization of *sodadi*³ to establish tangible links between New England and the Cape Verde islands through the Brava Packet Trade. First, this chapter provides grounding in concepts of diaspora and transnationalism. The second part looks at the history of the Brava Packet Trade, beginning in 1892 with the purchase of the *Nellie May* and ending in 1968 with the docking of the *Ernestina* and its economic and social utility. The Packet Trade facilitated more than the trade of goods; it became a cultural part of the Cape Verdean-American and Cape Verdean Islanders' experiences. The ready availability of the transnational shipping fleet was the reason why for Cape Verdeans, New England, particularly New Bedford, was "America." The packet trade facilitated Cape Verdean homeland transnationalism whereby "people, ideas, and money located overseas strongly influence [homelanders'] everyday social relations and livelihood, as well as one's dreams for the future."⁴ Anthropologist Deirdre Meintel argued that the movement of the ships created a form of rhythm on the islands vis-a-vis in New Bedford and Providence.⁵ On both sides of the transnational social field, Cape Verdeans exerted significant influence on each other.

This chapter provides an overview of diaspora and transnational scholarship toward an analysis of the Brava Packet Trade to engage *sodadi* as a diasporic convention that inspired the instrumentalization of homeland societies and economic institutions toward supporting homelanders, Cape Verdeans in diaspora, and making the Cape Verdean-American ethnicity.

³ Sodadi is the Cape Verdean Kriolu word (from the Portuguese *saudade*) meaning longing or homesickness.

⁴ Lisa Åkesson, *Making a Life: Meanings of Migration in Cape Verde* (Göteborg: Göteborg University, 2004), 172.

⁵ Deirdre Meintel, "Cape Verdean Transnationalism: Old and New," *Anthropologia* 44, No. 1 (2002), 32.

This making of this ethnicity is important considering that “the majority of the people claiming a common nationality do not live in the very nation that is the focus of their sentimental and even political allegiance”⁶ This is especially true of Cape Verdeans for whom it is claimed that more Cape Verdeans live in diaspora than on the islands of the archipelago. Though this chapter focuses almost exclusively on the Brava Packet Trade out of New Bedford’s ports, the relationship facilitated by the ships certainly extends to the Providence Cape Verdean community through each city’s aforementioned networks. This chapter will address the following questions: What are Cape Verdean’s contributions to scholarship on the African Diaspora and transnationalism? What does this case study of the Brava Packet Trade say about the African contribution to the Diaspora?

Sodadi provides a view of the diaspora from both sides of the transnational social field. It is imbued with meaning from the homeland perspective as the ships’ cargo and people represented return, a reunification, and a promise of remembrance. *Sodadi* embedded in Cape Verdean culture through their *mornas* — songs and poems of sadness. In the documentary *Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*, Fox Point Cape Verdean-American Manuel Mendes captured a description of *mornas* and the resultant *sodadi* in an elegant recollection of his grandmother’s tears:

They would put their music on, that’s all they had, ... those hold records, scratched, ... and they’d smoke their pipes and be sitting there cryin’ for days about *sodadi* — a longing, a yearning for something or some place that you may never have again. And it was so touching. ... “Why are you crying again?” She’d say, “I’m crying for my mother, my father.”⁷

⁶ Richard A. Lobban Jr. *Cape Verde: Crioulo Colony to Independent Nation*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 3.

⁷ Claire Andrade Watkins, “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*” *A Cape Verdean Story*, directed by Claire Andrade Watkins (2006; SPIA Media Productions, Inc.) DVD.

His grandmother cried for the family she left on the islands when she escaped the great famine in the 1940s. The Brava Packet Trade as a transnational shipping and transportation fleet was the first space to experience *sodadi*.

The Brava Packet Trade, more than any other institution, was a transnational tool that enabled Cape Verdean-Americans to transcend the distance between them and their homeland. Historian Marilyn Halter argued, “Cape Verdeans may have held on longer than other newcomers to the dream of eventual return to their islands.”⁸ They carried with them a national imaginary of emigration, an ethos migration, and the longing for return, all captured in the feeling of *sodadi*. This continuous attachment to home is unsurprising, as the Cape Verdean gaze back to the homeland facilitated the creation of numerous ethnic societies and mutual aid groups. Similar to enslaved Brazilian’s religious and cultural retentions analyzed in historian James Sweet’s *Recreating Africa*, Cape Verdeans in diaspora engaged various strategies to shape their local environment, attempting to recreate the Cape Verde colony in New England.⁹ In particular, their residential enclaves, churches, usage of *Kriolu*, and local Cape Verdean specialty groceries were part of the attempt to recreate Cape Verde. The Brava Packet Trade was the crystallization of that attempt, actually drawing the Cape Verdean communities up and down the New England ports in close contact with each other and the Cape Verde islands, now only 30 days away.

Historian Marilyn Halter argued, “Once the packet trade got under way, their transatlantic system of support was greatly facilitated by the particular mode of transportation that carried the

⁸ Marilyn Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity: Cape Verdean American Immigrants, 1860-1965* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 47.

⁹ James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

newcomers to the United States.”¹⁰ The Brava Packet Trade made long-term connections possible. For Cape Verdeans in the United States, it added another layer to their transnational homeland institutions, tangibly allowing them to achieve a semblance of the homeland through the consistent replenishment of newcomers and familiar goods from the islands. They were able to transcend the symbolic return to the homeland to an actual physical return, a characterization of African diaspora theory, never losing sight of Cape Verde.¹¹ Whereas other diaspora groups proposed ideological and physical movement to Africa as an imagined homeland and enacted sedentary transnationalism, facilitated through letters, remittances, gifts, and monies sent, the transnational field created by Cape Verdean seamen on the maritime network was constantly in movement through the flow of people, goods, and ideas. These ships accomplished what other diasporans longed for — the ability to retain connections with loved ones and the promise of eventual return. The Brava Packet Trade held the hopes and dreams of the Cape Verdeans in the homeland and in diaspora.

Cape Verdean American’s social, cultural, and economic systems demonstrate the complex relationship between diaspora and transnationalism. As colonial subjects, Cape Verdeans troubled the idea of nation-state boundaries by making the Atlantic Ocean a transnational highway to traverse as they pleased. In addition to transporting passengers and cargo, packets increased communication between Southern New England and the Cape Verde archipelago. The movement of the packet ships created a transnational social field that rendered the distance between diasporans and the homelander surmountable. Anthropologist Sidney Greenfield claimed, “For most members of the community, it was no exaggeration to say that

¹⁰ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 69.

¹¹ Ruth Simms Hamilton, “Introduction,” in *Routes of Passage: Rethinking the African Diaspora* Volume 1, Part 1, edited by Ruth Simms Hamilton (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007), 21.

New England and the Cape Verde islands (and perhaps even other port cities in Europe and Africa which Cape Verdeans emigrated and settled) were geographical extremes of a single socio-economic universe.”¹² Anthropologist Lisa Åkesson referred to the dissolved border between the nation-states as the “Cape Verdean ethnoscape,” wherein a migration ethos became part of their group identity.¹³ The Brava Packet Trade was integral as a strategy for Cape Verdeans in diaspora to retain their ethnic associations.

Considering the depth of longing, coupled with the social and cultural institutions developed in the diaspora, *sodadi* provides a framework; it’s an alternate view of diaspora and transnationalism that looks to the free movement of Cape Verdeans as voluntary migrants during the islands’ colonial period.

Cape Verdeans in the homeland and diaspora both felt *sodadi*, which empowered them to maintain critical engagements with their kith and kin. More than a physical transportation, the Brava Trade was a symbolic tool nurturing Cape Verdean ethnic identity. It symbolized the promise of eventual return and the means for a better life. Cape Verdeans on both ends of the transnational social field planned their life events around the packet’s arrival and departure.

¹² Greenfield, 6.

¹³ Åkesson, *Making a Life*, 80-81.

Diaspora + Transnationalism

Since it's coining, the "African Diaspora" as a field of inquiry has undergone major interventions in scope, boundaries, and defining characteristics.¹⁴ In 1965, George Shepperson coined the discipline in relating African dispersal to the Jewish diaspora in his paper, titled "The African Abroad or the African diaspora." Shepperson defined the diaspora by three features — "an origin in the scattering and uprooting of communities, a history of 'traumatic and forced departure,' and also the sense of a real or imagined relationship to a 'homeland,' mediated through the dynamics of collective memory and the politics of 'return.'"¹⁵ Similarly, anthropologist James Clifford maintained that traditional views of diaspora suppose long-distance separation and conditions more like exile with a taboo for return or postponement to a "remote" future.¹⁶ Clifford further suggested that common and ongoing identification with displacement was just as significant as notions of return or exile. Concepts of trauma and imagined return are prominent tropes in Atlantic-African diaspora scholarship that is most often bookended by the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and post-colonial migration.¹⁷ As the field developed, the reasons for dispersal were given more attention and contextualized away from

¹⁴ George Shepperson, "The African abroad or the African diaspora." *Emerging Themes of African History: Proceedings of the International Congress of African Historians Held at University College, Dar Es Salaam, October 1965*, (Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House, 1968).

¹⁵ Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of Diaspora" *Social Text* 19, no. 1 (2001), 52.

¹⁶ James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* Vol. 9, No. 3. (August 1994), 304.

¹⁷ Historian Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Literary scholar Isidore Okpewho have advanced the exile trope in African diaspora studies to extend to the New African Diaspora movements as a result of decolonial movements in Africa. Zeleza characterized diasporas formed by colonialism, decolonization, and structural adjustment through the condition of crisis and exile. Okpewho asserted that postcolonial society has created factors, such as academic, intellectual, and journalistic repression and violent unrest that have forced/pushed/gently prodded many Africans to leave their homelands for new opportunities in the metropole and other sites. Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu, ed., *The New African Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic," *African Affairs* 104, no. 414 (January 2005),

trauma and exile to voluntary movements and secondary diasporas. This trend includes post-colonial movement and, in the case of this study, colonial era migration to labor-rich zones. Shepperson's contemporary, historian Joseph E. Harris, offered that African diaspora studies should include "the global dispersion (voluntary and involuntary) of Africans throughout history, the emergence of cultural identity abroad based on origin and social condition, and the psychological or physical return to the homeland, Africa."¹⁸ Harris's tripartite of interrelated features offered culture and orientation to the homeland-specified Africa. Later scholars would extend the African diaspora to diasporas emerging from the initial dispersion of African peoples as a result of the slave trade. Historian Kim D. Butler advances Harris's reasons for migration and includes an overlapping diaspora framework through five dimensions of diasporic study — "1, reasons for, and conditions of, the dispersal; 2, relationship with homeland; 3, relationship with host land(s); 4, interrelationships within diasporan group; and 5, comparative studies of different diasporas."¹⁹ The focus on the reasons for dispersal allow for African diaspora agency while simultaneously holding space for slavery, forced conscription, and indentured servitude. By offering different diasporas, Butler left room for analysis of multiple kinds of African diasporas.

Unhinging diaspora study from trauma but still linked to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, decolonial and post-colonial movements, African diaspora scholars found agreement on the notion of return, whether imagined or actual, as a prominent feature of diaspora scholarship. These scholars also placed emphasis on shared cultural identity. Historian Colin Palmer

¹⁸ Joseph E. Harris, "Introduction," in *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora: Second Edition*, edited by Joseph E. Harris (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1993), 3.

¹⁹ Kim D. Butler, "Black History to Diaspora History: Brazilian Abolition in an Afro-Atlantic Context," *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (2000): 127.

advanced a call for segmented diaspora studies, stating, “There is no single diasporic movement or monolithic diasporic community to be studied.”²⁰ From this framing, Butler makes a similar call when stating, “Even within single diasporas, simultaneous diasporan identities are possible.”²¹ Multi-context, secondary and tertiary diasporas, such as the West Indian and Cape Verdean diaspora, are the main features of this dissertation. They are discrete movements within the longer history of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The politics of return then are not exclusively for the ancestral continental homeland, but to a more recent one of their parents’ or grandparents’ homelands.

Sodadi is fitting then in the analysis of the Brava Packet Trade as it appropriates common identification and the longing for return. For Cape Verdeans, *Sodadi* was a major feature of a shared Cape Verdean cultural identity, found in music and poetry and related to Portuguese *saudade*. In many ways, Cape Verdean diaspora migration fits with historian Paul Tiyambe Zeleza’s assertion that diaspora is a “process, a condition, a space, and a discourse.”²² Aligning neatly with historian António Carreira’s characterization of Cape Verdeans as horses with wings,²³ always in flux, Zeleza argued that diaspora is ongoing as it is “simultaneously a state of being and the process of becoming because the voyage ... encompasses the possibility of never

²⁰ Colin A. Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora." *The Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 1 (Winter, 2000), 27.

²¹ Kim D. Butler, “Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* Vol. 10, No. 2 (2012), 193.

²² Zeleza, “Rewriting the African Diaspora,” 41.

²³ Antonio Carreira, *The People of the Cape Verde Islands: Exploitation and Emigration* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1982), vi.

arriving or returning, and navigation of multiple belongings, of networks of affiliation.”²⁴ As soon as Cape Verdeans arrived to southeastern New England, they created transnational tools for return. They were consistently in a state of movement with high mobility and low fixedness in their host land. The experiences of Cape Verdeans abroad suggest a collective movement in their purposeful creation of homeland societies, and the Brava Packet Trade demonstrates their relationship to the homeland, making physical returns transcending memories or symbolism.

According to Michel Bruneau, “The term ‘diaspora’ often plays more of a metaphorical than an instrumental role.”²⁵ The study of transnationalism can offer the instrumental analysis for the African diaspora, particularly in homeland and host land institutions, moving it from a descriptive category to an active process. Using the diaspora frameworks, the relationship with the homeland and host land are important components for understanding the utility of the Brava Packet Trade, its symbolic meaning, and its relevance as a socioeconomic institution.

The ships enabled Cape Verdeans in diaspora to retain their relationship with their homeland and limit the relationship with the host land. For Cape Verdean homelander, the Brava packets symbolized return, survival, gifts and luxury items, an increase in status via imported items, and the means for a better life in and out of the archipelago. The packet trade physically and culturally linked Cape Verdeans abroad and in the homeland’s relationship to each other in an unending chain, forging new diaspora identities with emphasis on the inherent transnationalism. These identities “reflect the sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes the homeland, not as something simply left behind, but as a place of

²⁴ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “Diaspora Dialogues: Engagements between Africa and Its Diaspora,” in *The New African Diaspora* edited by Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 622.

²⁵ Michel Bruneau, “Diasporas, Transnational Spaces and Communities,” in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, and Methods*, eds. Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, 36

attachment in a contrapuntal modernity.”²⁶ This emergent identity was subject to a variety of factors, including the social and cultural environment. As African, mixed-race, non-English-speaking Portuguese colonials, Cape Verdean-Americans chose to live in ethnic isolation, surrounded by other Cape Verdeans supported by the packets as resources to replenish the population and with easy access to return.

Cape Verdeans were trans-migrants “whose daily lives depend[ed] on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities [were] configured in relationship to more than one nation-state.”²⁷ In Fox Point and South End, Cape Verdean-Americans embodied the trans-migrant identity, supported by their ethnic institutions. The transnational orientation of these institutions is part of the process by which Cape Verdeans forged this identity in diaspora. In 1992, Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton defined transnationalism as “the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement.”²⁸ The fields of the African diaspora and transnationalism often intersect and overlap. Where diaspora is descriptive of the conditions of dispersal and the relationships with the homeland, transnationalism describes the operationalization of the relationships with the homeland using social, political, and cultural institutions. Transnational relationships also had the effect of transforming conditions on both sides of the transnational social field.

²⁶ Clifford, 311.

²⁷ Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, “From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration,” *Anthropological Quarterly* Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 1995), 48.

²⁸ Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, “Transnationalism: A new analytic framework for understanding migration.” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* Vol. 645, no. 1 (1992), 1.

The Brava Packet Trade facilitated multiple forms of transnationalism that extend from sending letters and remittances to physical movement of people and goods. Remittances, gift giving, and travel via the Brava Packet Trade should be seen as part of Janine Dahinden's transnational models — sedentary transnationalism and transnationalism through mobility characterized “by circulation and ... movement across borders” and “with simultaneously high levels of mobility and low levels of local anchorage in receiving and sending countries.”²⁹ In addition to the circulations of people and goods, the Brava Packet Trade filled the gap of *sodadi* Cape Verdeans in diaspora and the homeland felt as a result of their distance. In his study of the Ecuadorian immigrants living in Italy, Paolo Boccagni suggests that homesickness and nostalgia are “standard according to which one makes sense of values, habits, and life experiences in the context of immigration.”³⁰ This homesickness represents migrant self-identification with the homeland that is reproduced with repeated engagements with fellow migrants in diaspora.

Building off this, *sodadi* extends the reproduction of self-identification with repeated engagements in the ethnic enclaves and through the transnational fleet, the Brava Packet Trade. In the packet trade, it operated in the public sphere rather than the private sphere of interpersonal relationships developed in the South End and Fox Point neighborhoods. *Sodadi* captures a main element of diaspora, which is eventual return to the homeland.

²⁹ Thomas Faist, “Diaspora and Transnationalism: What Kind of Dance Partners,” in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, and Methods*, edited by Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 19; Janine Dahinden, “The Dynamics of Migrants’ Transnational Formations: Between Mobility and Locality,” in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, and Methods*, edited by Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 55.

³⁰ Paolo Boccagni, “Private, public or both? On the scope and impact of transnationalism in immigrants’ everyday lives,” in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, and Methods*, edited by Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 188.

Historian Edda Fields-Black queries, “Where does Africa end and the Diaspora begin?”³¹ This question was salient through the historical study of Cape Verdean migration. Cape Verdeans embody the liminal space between Africa and the diaspora, as they occupy two identities — as both African and African diasporan. On the unpopulated Portuguese colonized islands, the racially and culturally hybridized population that emerged from West Africans and Europeans was the autochthonous (or native) population, simultaneously African and Diasporan. Through their labor migration via whaling ships and the implementation of the Brava Packet Trade, their transnational engagement began as early as the eighteenth century. Cape Verdean migration circumvented the exile trope in diaspora through self-directed circular migration. What was once exile became a month-long journey between the islands and New England. The old windjammer whaling ships gave Cape Verdeans in the archipelago and New England the technology to overcome the distance. They were not fully integrated into the host land, instead using their social networks to recreate and maintain links to Cape Verde through their social, political, and economic societies. While other African diaspora and immigrant groups, like their West Indian counterparts in the West End of New Bedford, eventually became incorporated into African American, Cape Verdeans continued to replenish their communities via the packet trade, new immigrants, and symbolic goods from the homeland, retaining their identities and developing a trans-migrant ethos.

The Business of Travel: Aboard the Brava Packet Ships

The Brava Packet Trade emerged as a result of the declining whaling industry and the growth of the seasonal cranberry industry. Having learned the sailing practices as a result of their

³¹ Edda Fields-Black. *Deep Roots: Rice Farmers in West Africa and the African Diaspora*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 202.

long history of labor as whalers, Cape Verdean seamen and captains used their skills to purchase and operate the fishing boats and small coasters made affordable and obsolete by the widespread use of steamships. The typical vessels employed for the packet trade were barks, barkentines, brigs, and schooners. These ships were refit for cargo and long-term passenger use. These ships, originally built for 50 to 60 persons, carried hundreds of “legal” passengers and 40 crewmembers.³² For both sides of the Atlantic, the windjammers were an attractive means of transportation for Cape Verdean-Americans seeking to make the more than 3,000-mile return voyage to the islands, and for Cape Verde islanders who desired to emigrate to the United States. The packets were a main source of semiannual transportation between the zones. When the ships would load in the fall, the wharves in New Bedford and Providence bustled with the movements of seamen, cargo, ship administrators, immigration agents, and would-be passengers and their families.

With the ships in the background, local newspapers recount the busy ports as a throwback to the whaling days where “trucks from New Bedford, express shipments from New York, household effects from New Bedford and the Cape, piles of lumber, rows of oil drums, flour barrels, and trunks clutter up the wharf while somewhere in the background seaman find room to work on lifeboats.”³³ Cape Verdean seasonal laborers used the packet trade as a means of labor migration. They arrived in the early summer before the cranberry season began and would return after the harvest, with gifts of clothing, household goods, and other American-made products. This fleet enabled a new wave of Cape Verdean emigration that was not subject to the whims of whaling captains and exploitative labor, and was not necessarily contingent on the emergent

³² Meintel, “Cape Verdean Transnationalism,” 31.

³³ Daniel M. Rodrigues Packet Ships, Folder 3, 69 *RIC Cape Verdean American Collection*. [Hereafter known as Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers]

conditions on the islands. This new form of transportation was key to grounding Cape Verdeans in America as they aided in the emigration of women and children, signaling reunification and the development of the Cape Verdean diaspora community. Cape Verdeans maintained connections to home and forged a transnational network through a constant flow of people, items, and ideas.

There were three reasons for migration via the packet trade: First, the packets provided affordable transportation for temporary residence. The goal for many was to work a few years in the United States and return to the Islands to settle, usually in their old age, as financially solvent *Merkanos* (the colloquial term for Cape Verdean returnees from America). The second was for a return trip to the island to either marry or to arrange familial migration as a result of the decision to permanently relocate. The last reason was for the seasonal and temporary labor migration of cranberry and maritime workers.³⁴ The packets worked so that “the connection between the Cape Verdean-American community and the Cape Verdes [sic] was so strong and transportation back and forth so accessible that the typical emigrant, upon leaving for the United States, was not required to make a final commitment to resettlement.”³⁵

Credited as the first Cape Verdean-owned packet ship, Antonio Coelho’s *Nellie May*, set sail to Brava in 1892 and returned to Providence with 117 passengers and crew.³⁶ The 50 passengers paid \$15 each for the voyage, but the voyage was met with immediate challenges. After a few days at sea, the captain died of “heat seizure” and the ship went off course, overshooting the islands by 500 miles. The inaugural voyage took 45 days, but with a new

³⁴ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 75.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Waltraud Berger Coli, “Cape Verdean-Americans as Maritime Entrepreneurs: Whaling and the Packet Trade,” *Cimboa* 3, No. 2 (July 31, 1997), n.p.

captain for the return voyage, the trip-time was cut to 28 days.³⁷ Despite this initial challenge, Cape Verdeans continued to purchase and sail packet ships. By 1929, Cape Verdeans owned more than 15 ships, and a total of 254 packet ships were identified by 1997.³⁸ Between 1860 and 1965, there were 1,261 packet voyages, with a total of 27,278 documented passengers transported between the archipelago and New England. Between 1900 and 1921, 896 Cape Verdeans arrived annually to the port of New Bedford. This figure was up from an average of 204 Cape Verdeans annually in the previous decade. At the same time, the movement of ships increased from nine to 22 voyages per year.³⁹ The increase of the number of packets sailing to New Bedford is likely directly related to the increase of Cape Verdean emigrant arrivals. These figures do not account for clandestine emigration, but demonstrate the volume and frequency of transnational movement.

The last vessel as part of the employ of the packet trade was the *Ernestina*, owned by Fogo islander Henrique Mendes. Like many other Cape Verdeans, Mendes began his career on the whaling ships and the docks. Learning the pay was too little, he performed various odd jobs as a deckhand, a store clerk, and as a cranberry picker. On the cranberry bogs, he made an arrangement with the owner to bring Cape Verde laborers to the bog. He was advanced the money for this endeavor and purchased his first packet ship. Ray Almeida cites that Mendes owned 30 vessels, each old and dilapidated. World War II temporarily halted the movement of the packet ships. As soon as the conflict ended, Mendes purchased a ship, the *Effie Morrissey*, from New York, refit the ship in New Bedford, and renamed it after his daughter, Ernestina.

³⁷ Ray Almeida, *Cape Verdeans in America: Our Story* (Boston: TCHUBA The American Committee for Cape Verde, Inc., 1978), 31.

³⁸ Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers, 1; Coli, "Cape Verdean-Americans as Maritime Entrepreneurs, n.p.

³⁹ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 37.

Between 1948 and 1965, Mendes ran the ship for 55 Atlantic crossings.⁴⁰ The *Ernestina* was one of the longest-running ships in the packet trade fleet. In 1968, it was docked on Fogo, retiring with Mendes who died the following year. Nearly two decades later, in 1986, the ship was refitted in Cape Verde and sailed back to the United States “as a token of friendship between the two nations.”⁴¹ The ship is currently docked in New Bedford. The symbolism of the ship being docked in New Bedford represents not only friendship, but the enduring transnational relationship between the archipelago and New England. It represents the thousands of Cape Verdeans who travailed the Atlantic Ocean on ships just like the *Ernestina*, returning home to the Islands or making a new home in Providence, New Bedford, and nearby cities.

Many of the ships were old, refurbished, and had a long life on the sea before being acquired by Cape Verdean businessmen. More than 60% of the schooners employed in the fleet were between 10 and 40 years of age at the time of their first packet trade voyage.⁴² Ships in the packet trade began their lives in the late nineteenth century; some were resurrected to serve in World War I, in fishing and whaling expeditions, and in their final days, as packet ships in the 1920s and 1930s. For example, the schooner *Rebecca J. Evans* was built in 1870; after 22 years of fishing in ports between Barbados and Canada, in 1903 the schooner was purchased and commissioned into the Cape Verde Packet Trade after a lost rudder and other considerable repairs.⁴³ Though these ships enabled long-term connections, they were not safe or reliable forms

⁴⁰ Almeida, 38.

⁴¹ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 176.

⁴² Coli, “Cape Verdean-Americans as Maritime Entrepreneurs,” n.p.

⁴³ On the schooner the *Rebecca J. Evans*, <http://www.threeharbors.com/graphics/harwichhistoric/Harwich%20Vessels%201872-1900%20A-Z.pdf> Accessed January 28, 2018.

of transportation. There were frequent reports of damaged vessels, ships that ran aground, rudder failure, and other malfunctioning parts.

As wind-propelled ships, they were beholden to the airstreams and the seas. Ships encountered frequent delays due to weather; many were damaged and destroyed, and some voyages were deadly. In 1930, once called the “queen of the packet fleet,” a three-masted schooner, the *Blossom*, wrecked off the coast of Guinea. The ship was lost, but the crew was saved.⁴⁴ Other ships, like the *Valkyrie* and the *Matthew S. Greer*, wrecked mid-voyage, killing some crew; still others, like the *Fannie Atwood* and the *Marion L. Conrad*, were severely damaged, leaving the boat adrift and passengers starving after the ship was overdue to port. Though it was a convenient means of travel, it was a dangerous voyage for those who had the desire and means to return home. Notwithstanding, they provided Cape Verdeans with the tools to travel freely between their homes in diaspora and their homeland, operated for Cape Verdeans by Cape Verdeans.

Cape Verdean leaders on both sides of the Atlantic were involved with the packet trade. In May 1920, Felipe N. Soares, a New Bedford businessman and founder of the *Associação Beneficente Caboverdeana* and the Ultramarine Band Club, applied for a passport to return to Cape Verde after 18.5 years of uninterrupted residence in the United States. The application noted that he would be away for six months “to take charge of the American schooner, the *George Churchman*”⁴⁵ His commitment to institution-building in New Bedford and connecting the archipelago with New England demonstrates enduring connections to the homeland and his transnational global/local worldview. Soares was committed to Cape Verdeans in diaspora and at

⁴⁴ Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers, 11, 89.

⁴⁵ “Felipe Nicolau Soares,” Petition for Passport Application: Form for Naturalized Citizen, Ancestry.com. *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925* (Accessed November 29, 2017).

home as a businessman, but he also committed to maintaining Cape Verdean cultural identity. He was instrumental in forming local organizations to preserve music and provide social benefits and cultural activities. His engagement with the Brava Packet Trade was part and parcel of his commitment to home, investing in the shipping fleet that would transport people, goods, and monies, meeting his goals to preserve Cape Verde heritage.

In addition to single-owner packets, Cape Verdean men formed syndicates of joint ownership to purchase multiple ships. In 1929, Abilio Monteiro de Macédo (president) and Roy F. Teixeira (secretary) founded the Cape Verde and West Africa Trading Corporation. Macédo and Teixeira operated the only steamship line with direct service to Cape Verde in 1930.⁴⁶ The Corporation owned the bark *Coriolanus*, steamer *Arcturus*, and the two-masted schooner *Arthur James*. The following year, Azorean Joseph Medeiros and Cape Verdean Janueiro Fonseca founded the Azores and Cape Verde Transportation Company. It was a smaller company, only owning the *Burkland*. The fact that these syndicates formed during the global depression might elucidate the continuing necessity of the packet ships as a means to escape either the deleterious conditions in Cape Verde for work in the factories or cranberry bogs, or the high rates of unemployment in New England. As businesses and factories across New England collapsed under the stress of the global economic depression, these four men incorporated and purchased ships that transported people and goods. Their confidence to begin a business during a depression demonstrates that there was always a market for return, and that the maritime industry was still a semi-lucrative form of employment.

Abilio Monteiro de Macédo was a well-known, well-connected businessman in both New Bedford and Cape Verde. He was the son of João Monteiro de Macédo, a prominent merchant

⁴⁶ Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers 3; 1930 W.A. Greenough City Directory

from Fogo based in Portuguese Guinea.⁴⁷ While the family was considered the cream of the crop among whites in Fogo, in the United States, Abilio de Macédo was identified using various racial, ethnic, and color terms — African, Portuguese, and “dark.”⁴⁸ In July 1931, he purchased a schooner, the *Bradford E. Jones*. The Praia-based newspaper, *Notícias de Cabo Verde*, reported the purchase, lauding Macédo and the ship’s captain, João de Deus Lopes da Silva, for maintaining the link to “the Cape Verdean colony in the United States.”⁴⁹

In 1910, at the age of 17, Raul (Roy) Fernandes Teixeira immigrated to the United States from the island of Fogo. Before he began his career as a packet ship owner, Teixeira worked as a linen man for a Pullman company, as a typist, and as a grocer.⁵⁰ Prior to partnering with de Macédo, Teixeira owned two packets and was experienced in the operation of the fleet. In 1920, he bought the *Romance*, which only made three round trips to Cape Verde islands with 50 cranberry-bog laborers on each trip. He later bought the *Fairhaven*. Among the Cape Verdean packet ships, the *Fairhaven* was fairly new, having only been built in 1921 before her 1923 maiden voyage as a packet ship.⁵¹ In November 1928, he and his new wife Ida (Amado) Teixeira traveled to Fogo via the *Coriolanus* to fulfill a promise that he made to his mother to eventually

⁴⁷ Lumumba Hamilcar Shabaka, “Transformation of ‘Old’ Slavery into Atlantic Slavery: Cape Verde Islands, c. 1500-1879” (PhD Dissertation: Michigan State University, 2013), 247.

⁴⁸ *S.S. Arcturus* (December 9, 1929); *S.S. Patria* July 7, 1928; *S.S. Presidente Wilson* (July 23, 1927) *Massachusetts Crew Lists, 1917-1943* Ancestry.com (Accessed November 13, 2018).

⁴⁹ “Escuna ‘Bradford E. Jones,’ *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (Praia, Republica de Cabo Verde), July 11, 1931.

⁵⁰ Roy F. Teixeira “Declaration of Intent” *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950* Ancestry.com (Accessed January 3, 2018); *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*, Ancestry.com (Accessed January 3, 2018); Petition for Naturalization, *Massachusetts, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950* Ancestry.com (Accessed January 3, 2018).

⁵¹ Almeida, 35; Coli, “Cape Verdean-Americans as Maritime Entrepreneurs,” n.p.

return.⁵² This trip was billed to be a luxury experience with performances from a six-piece jazz orchestra, which included Anthony Barros, George Morris, and Manuel Santos of New Bedford and John Vincent and Daniel Lombard of Onset, Massachusetts, and a Spanish dance performance from professional dancers, Mary and Adelaide Madera. The orchestra and performers were scheduled to perform at Macédo's theaters in Praia and St. Vincent throughout the winter.

In contrast, the Azores and Cape Verde Transportation Company's *Burkland* offered no frills, so as to provide an affordable trip. When the Azores and Cape Verde Transportation Company purchased the *Burkland* in 1930, it was among the newer ships in the packet trade, having been built after World War II in Pensacola, Florida. The owners, Janueiro Fonseca and Joseph Medeiros, said, "New Bedford has been the pioneer of this trade [and] has shipped many thousands of dollars through its waterfront to the islands, and so we want to keep it up, and by offering better facilities, we will stimulate the trade and, at the same time, give our people the best of service."⁵³ In addition to providing good service aboard the ships and insuring the passengers' belongings and other cargo, the *Burkland* offered affordable trips of \$50 in steerage and \$60 in first class, about \$100 for a return trip from the islands. The price was right for Cape Verdeans working in the bogs and factories, saving to send monies and goods to their loved ones, who waited for their arrival on the docks.

São Vicente-born Janueiro Fonseca arrived to the United States in 1906 as a sailor.⁵⁴ He and his wife, Margarida, were part of the South End Cape Verdean neighborhood, living at 243

⁵² Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 1, 11, 16, and 18.

⁵³ David M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 4, 79.

⁵⁴ "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the U.S. Immigration at Port of Arrival," *New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957*. Ancestry.com (January 31, 2018).

Acushnet Avenue; they were members of the Our Lady of the Assumption Church and married in the church.⁵⁵ Fonseca maintained numerous jobs as a grocer, fireman, and engineer in mills.⁵⁶ His partner, Joseph Medeiros, was from the Azores and immigrated to the United States in 1917.⁵⁷ Medeiros worked as a chauffeur and as a doffer in a cotton mill. In the 1930s, Medeiros and his wife, Olivia (Vincent), lived at 45 Bobbitt Street with the Vincent Family. Fonseca and Medeiros purchased the ship in the summer of 1930 and refit it for service for its first trip in November 1930. Unlike his partner, there is no evidence to suggest Medeiros was engaged with the maritime network prior to purchasing the *Burkland*; both men were “old hands at handling the transportation problems of homesick cranberry workers,” suggesting that they have experience with customer service or working on the cranberry docks.⁵⁸

Aboard the ship, the packets had a social life of their own. Ships like the *Coriolanus* were luxurious, outfitted with two tiled bathrooms, facilities for drinking water, and washing water throughout the vessel, and the second-deck accommodations included wash stands and large mirrors. The bark also had a generator to provide power for electric lights. Further, passengers could do light shopping in the store in the steerage quarters and on the main deck, where there

⁵⁵ Janueiro J. Fonseca, *Massachusetts Marriage Records, 1840-1915*, Ancestry.com (Accessed December 27, 2017).

⁵⁶ Ibid. 1919 W.A. Greenough City Directory, *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995*. Ancestry.com (January 26, 2018); 1921 W.A. Greenough City Directory, *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995*. Ancestry.com (January 26, 2018); 1923 W.A. Greenough City Directory, *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995*. Ancestry.com (January 26, 2018); 1932 W.A. Greenough City Directory, *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995*. Ancestry.com (January 26, 2018); 1930 United States Federal Census. Ancestry.com (January 31, 2018) [Hereafter referred to as 1930 United States Federal Census]; *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. Ancestry.com (January 31, 2018).

⁵⁷ 1930 United States Federal Census.

⁵⁸ David M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 5, 81.

was a refreshment stand with sodas, sandwiches, cigarettes, cigars, and candies.⁵⁹ The *Coriolanus* provided cooked meals and various on-ship entertainment, including a six-piece orchestra and Spanish-style dancers.⁶⁰ On smaller ships, passengers spoke *Kriolu*, listened to *mornas* and *coladeiras*, and ate their traditional foods. The voyages typically lasted between 30 and 45 days, depending on weather conditions. The experiences in travel likely eased the transition from the islands to New England, as Cape Verdeans were surrounded with familiar customs, foods, and people.

For Cape Verdean homelanders, New Bedford represented the total of America to them: “To the Bravas, New Bedford is not as a strange land. Practically all who come have relatives or friends or persons they know about. There appears, therefore, to be no need of protection or direction at the docks. This was done by kinsmen or friends.”⁶¹ Through the packet trade, New Bedford-bound Cape Verdean emigrants bypassed the more notable Ellis Island in New York. Dr. Eleanor Pontes, a third-generation Cape Verdean-American, shared an anecdote about Cape Verdean emigration, “My grandmother came to New Bedford on one of those packet ships. She just got off and walked up the road to a house and dropped her bags. No one asked her questions or where she was from, who she was, or where she was going.”⁶² Similarly, Eugenia Fortes stated, “We just walked out of the boat, ... went into ... Merrill’s Wharf and gave your name and

⁵⁹ David M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 1, 17.

⁶⁰ David M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 1, 16.

⁶¹ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 71.

⁶² Dr. Eleanor Pontes in discussion with the author, New Bedford, April 28, 2017.

the whole thing and that was it.”⁶³ The ease of emigration became increasingly difficult as a result of the changing United States immigration laws enacted between 1917 and 1924.

On the islands, the United States Immigration Act of 1917, also known as the Literacy Act, was met with tension. Many viewed the emigration positively, stating that the emigration from the archipelago allowed young men to seek out a better life, resulting in an influx of monies and goods. Others saw emigration causing extreme annual population loss, especially that of the able-bodied young men. The lore that a Cape Verdean can be found on the moon is matched with the lore that there are more Cape Verdeans in diaspora than in the archipelago. Mass emigration, for some, was a brain and brawn strain. Responding to those who opposed the mass migration of peoples from islands and doubted the advantages of remittances and other economic gifts, poet and intellectual Eugenio Tavares listed:

“1st. The Cape Verdean does not merely go to America in search of food. 2nd. When the Cape Verdean returns (for he who loves his family and the land of his birth always returns), he brings not only dollars but enlightenment; and he displays not only outward civilization but ideas of society, which are often more right-minded than those he could possibly have picked up anywhere else. ... The Cape Verdean is numbered among those whose aspirations are not confined to chewing.”⁶⁴

This statement from Tavares advocated that the emigration of Cape Verdeans did not constitute a brain drain, rather it injected new thoughts and cultures into the archipelago, in addition to the monetary goods. He was clear to note that poverty and hunger are not the only conditions under which Cape Verdeans emigrate to the United States. Tavares effectively destabilized notions of migration under duress to allow other motivations for emigration that could include education, as well as providing financial support.

⁶³ “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*”.

⁶⁴ António Carreira. *The People of the Cape Verde Islands: Exploitation and Emigration*. (Hamden: Archon Books, 1982), 62-63, from Eugenio Tavares, *Noli me Tangere*,

In response to the 1917 Literacy Act, Cape Verdean educational director Fortura da Costa founded the first secondary school in the archipelago, and instituted an educational reform geared toward increasing literacy among children.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the educational reform was too late for teenagers and adults who were seeking permission to emigrate but were unable to read.⁶⁶ Most Cape Verdeans did not receive a formal education on the islands and, as a result, spoke *Kriolu* but could not read European Portuguese. Facing the literacy test, emigrants shared tips on how to get past the agents. Manuel Mendes accounts that when new emigrants, unable to read, saw the written test, they exclaimed, “*Ai Nha Mae!*”⁶⁷ The immigration agents also could not speak or read Portuguese, and thus confused the exclamation for an actual reading of the testing sheet. The inability for immigration agents to translate the text was an obvious flaw in the literacy test immigration gateway. Cape Verde emigrants began to spread the word to those planning to migrate, “Just say ‘*Ai Nha Mae*’ and you can come to America.”⁶⁸ Their mastery at playing the agents demonstrates the extent of the communication between newly arrived emigrants and their family and friends in preparation to migrate.

In 1924, the United States finalized its immigration legislation to institute a quota system, based on 2 percent of the number of immigrants in the 1890 census. This was amended from the 1921 National Origins Act that used 3 percent of the number of immigrants documented in the 1910 census. The act, called the Johnson-Reed act, severely impacted legal Cape Verdean

⁶⁵ Ibid., 62.

⁶⁶ Illiteracy persisted even after the 1917 education reforms. 102,209 (or 68%) citizens in the total population of 150,553, across the nine islands were illiterate in 1932. “Número Especial,” *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (June 1934); Deirdre Meintel, *Race, Culture, and Portuguese Colonialism in Cabo Verde* (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1984), 128.

⁶⁷ Translated as “Oh, my mother,” the phrase was an exasperation uttered by illiterate Cape Verdeans as they attempted to read the test in order to complete their emigration to the United States.

⁶⁸ “*Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?*”.

emigration and saw the increased policing of clandestine travel. People of color were disproportionately disadvantaged due to the new quota act. As non-white *colonial* subjects, their numbers were counted under the imperial nation, not their own homeland.⁶⁹ In her study of how the immigration acts impacted West Indian immigration and family reunification, historian Lara Putnam concluded, “Refusing to allocate quota visas to the islands, the US government cut off what had been a rapidly increasing flow of black immigrants without enunciating any racist intent.”⁷⁰ For Cape Verdean emigrants, their applications were placed in the same applicant pool as other Portuguese mainlanders and colonial subjects from the Azores, Madeira, and the African Portuguese colonies (Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé, and Príncipe).

The quota act immediately curtailed Cape Verdean immigration. By 1931, the *Hartford Courant* noted that the Brava Packet Trade was once the route by which many Cape Verdeans came to know New England, but after the implementation of the stringent laws, “Virtually the only passenger making the voyage are persons to visit relatives in the Cape Verdes [sic].”⁷¹ Cape Verdean petitions to emigrate required more documentation than previous years. Potential emigrants had to supply birth and baptism records, marriage documentation, and a statement of military service. Often these documents offered biographical data about the petitioner, including

⁶⁹ The law states, “In the case of a colony or dependency existing before 1890, but for which separate enumeration was not made in the census of 1890 and which was not included in the enumeration for the country to which such colony or dependency belonged, or in the case of territory administered under a protectorate, the number of individuals born in such colony, dependency, or territory and resident in continental United States in 1890, as estimated by such officials jointly, shall be considered for the purposes of subdivision (a) of section 11 as having being determined by the United States census of 1890 to have been born in the country to which such a colony or dependency belonged or which administers such protectorate.” *An Act to Limit the Immigration of Aliens into the United States, and for Other Purposes*, May 26, 1924.

⁷⁰ Lara Putnam, “The Ties Allowed to Bind: Kinship Legalities and Migration Restriction to the Interwar Americas,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 83 (Spring 2013), 192.

⁷¹ “Ancient Bark Forfeit for Crew Wages” *Hartford Courant* (March 27, 1931).

their parents' names and occupations, and required an official to certify the documents' veracity.⁷² This intensive process was exhaustive and likely expensive to procure each document and certification. As a result, several Cape Verdean packet ships facilitated the migration of undocumented immigrants.

In July 1929, immigration agents in New Bedford found nine men smuggling themselves aboard the ship, the *John R. Manta*. The original article reported that "the nine Bravas [were] deported after their failure to smuggle themselves ashore from the *John R. Manta*. They sold all their goods to buy passage to this country, so their deportation spells a real tragedy."⁷³ The ship was refitted for the purposes of clandestine emigration: "Her storage space for oil-casks been ripped out and remade into sleeping quarters ... for 11 passengers in the hold, which nobody had said anything about."⁷⁴ Later reports show that it was actually 11 clandestine immigrants. The men boarded the ship in the Port of Brava, each paying \$250 American dollars. The cost was prohibitive, and many borrowed or sold what they had to be smuggled aboard. Twenty-six-year-old Francisco Dissenedio borrowed money from his brother living in the US. "Most of the others sold what cattle they had — cows, donkeys, horses — or disposed of their humble household effects."⁷⁵ The men were brought before a judge and were considered guilty of illegal entry and ordered deported. Aboard the *Romance*, coast guards searched the ship and poked the straw at

⁷² S.G.G. Box 582 Correspondencia reciba da administração do conselho da Brava remetendo requerimentos de individuos que pediram licenças para emigrar para o estrangeiro [Correspondences from the Brava council and administration regarding the requests from individuals seeking licenses to immigrate to foreign countries], Arquivo Nacional de Cabo Verde, Praia [Cape Verdean National Archive, Praia]

⁷³ Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers, Folder 1, 11.

⁷⁴ Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers, Folder 4, 65.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 60

what they assumed were rats with their firearms, instead they uncovered a group of stowaway emigrants.⁷⁶

Rather than waiting for judgment, other undocumented emigrants fled, escaping the penalty of deportation or detention. On the *Fairhaven*, 16 emigrants were refused entry, but they “made their own court of appeal and vanished to hiding places in New Bedford and down Cape Cod one night, leaving Captain Oliveira to face heavy fines in federal court.”⁷⁷ Later, in 1926, *Fairhaven* had 22 Cape Verdeans aboard without papers. Though ordered to remain aboard the ship, the clandestine immigrants fled, leaving Teixeira to pay a \$22,000 fine.⁷⁸ Similarly, Captain Jose J. Perreira of the *Matthew S. Greer* was charged with smuggling aliens and charged a fine of \$43,000, which was lowered to \$1,800 later. The fine was likely so high because many escaped his custody.⁷⁹ These escaped emigrants followed the path of their kith and kin who had arrived earlier. They blended into the South End and Fox Point community, as they knew it via the correspondences they received and their songs about working in New Bedford. Even if they were not familiar with the urban landscape, it’s unlikely that anyone in the tight-knit ethnic enclave would have turned them over to authorities.

Toward *Sodadi* and Transnationalism

The importance of the packets was far more than commercial. It was these fragile vessels, above all else, that nurtured a ‘Cape Verdean-American connection,’ making it possible for new immigrants to resolve a dilemma that deeply concerned many of them: How to make a new life for oneself in America without abandoning those left behind on the homeland. For one thing, the packets made visits home a possibility and this kept alive

⁷⁶ Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers, Folder 3, 59.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Almeida, 35.

⁷⁹ Daniel M. Rodrigues Papers, Folder 3, 32.

the dream many held dear of returning one day to live in the Islands as prosperous *mercato* (American).⁸⁰

The arrival of the ships was a cause for celebration in the various ports on the archipelago and in New England. Cape Verdean-Americans flooded the wharves welcoming newcomers, eager for news or *mantenhas* (well-wishes) from the homeland. Travelers and their families held farewell parties and gatherings. On the departure of *the Bradford E. Jones* from New Bedford, World War I veteran Jack O. Alfama held a farewell reception for friends and family. On the same ship, the New Bedford Post One of the American Legion held a farewell party for member Joseph J. Monte and gave him a ring, which he wore aboard the ship.⁸¹

On the Cape Verde side of the transnational social field, the continuous presence of the vessels in and out of the islands created its own kind of rhythm. Life events, such as weddings and baptisms, were scheduled around the vessel's comings and goings. The packets' arrival came to symbolize reunification.⁸² Emigration was mostly a male action, making much of the scholarship on migration centered on their experiences. Among Cape Verdeans, very few women emigrated from the islands. Historically, nearly 17% of emigrants were women. In fact, between March 1920 and April 1921, of 400 passport petitioners, 123 Cape Verdean women applied for passports to immigrate to the United States. Only 37 of them reported they were married. Of the married women, only four claimed to be joining their husbands.⁸³ Though this figure is small,

⁸⁰ Almeida, 30.

⁸¹ David Rodrigues Papers, Folder 4, 72, 76.

⁸² Meintel, "Cape Verdean Transnationalism," 32.

⁸³ S.G.G. Box 582, Folder 7, Relações de passaportes e certificados concedidos a individuos que emigra para os Estados Unidos da America durante o periodo entre 1920 e 1923. [References to Passports and certificates granted to individuals who emigrated to the United States of America during the period between 1920 and 1923] Arquivo Nacional de Cabo Verde, Praia [Cape Verdean National Archive, Praia].

through the Brava Packet Trade, while bringing necessary monies, goods, and well-wishes, women emigrants and homelanders disrupted the idea of “America’s Widows” — women left abandoned by their husbands who left for the United States and never returned.

The Brava packet trade enabled men to return annually and offered the potential for reunification. Those male returnees did not return empty-handed, as the packet ships often had more cargo than passengers. Using these new items, women homelanders established *Kaza Merkana* (American house) with American furniture, clothing, toiletries, books, school materials and toys for children, and other wares. These items in the hands of wives and female relatives demonstrated the adaptation to living in a space where emigration was a way of life: “The ambition of young men was to go to America, for women it was to set up an American house with American furniture.”⁸⁴ Though women might eventually join their husbands and families in New Bedford or Providence, while they waited, remittances and goods from their husbands and partners maintained these women and their children.

Despite the ever-present potential for reunification, the departure of the ships from Cape Verde signaled an opposite response to the celebrations, another side of the rhythm of the ships — mourning. Cape Verdean poet Eugenio Tavares captured this in his poem, “*Morna de Despidida*” (*Morna* of Farewell), which begins with “hour of departure, hour of grief,” and includes, “If coming home is sweet, departing is bitter. Yet, if one doesn’t leave, one can never return. If we die saying a farewell, God, on our return, will give us our life.”⁸⁵ Tavares also refers to the migration of people from the Islands as “the destiny of man.”⁸⁶ Cape Verdean singer B.

⁸⁴ Deirdre Meintel Machado, “Cape Verdean Americans” in *Hidden Minorities: The Persistence of Ethnicity in America Life*, ed. Joan H. Collins (Washington, DC, University Press of America, 1981): 247.

⁸⁵ Almeida, 41.

⁸⁶ Almeida, 41.

Leza makes a reference to this line in a *morna*, “Look at me in the middle of the sea. I am following my destiny. On the road to America.”⁸⁷ At times, years would pass before homelanders received word from their loved ones abroad.

The packet trade closed the gap in communication and facilitated a constant stream of communication between migrants and homelanders. Cape Verdean-Americans returning home fulfilled diaspora promises, bringing with them letters, packages, and *mantenhas* (greetings). *Mantenhas* were mostly verbal greetings, since few Cape Verdeans could read or write Portuguese, and letters took months to send and receive a reply.⁸⁸ Sending *mantenhas* was a serious responsibility and was part of the transnational communication network because it represented the human iteration of a letter, greeting, or a means to share news sent from abroad. The interactions between the various ports in New England and Cape Verde allowed news to “travel as quickly from Wareham, Massachusetts, to Providence, Rhode Island, and on to Bridgeport, Connecticut, as it can among Cape Verdeans living in different neighborhoods within the same city.”⁸⁹ If a person was unable to travel, they tasked their friends aboard the packet ships to give money to their families. For those who could send letters, homelanders expected money. A letter sent from abroad without enclosed money was called a *karta seca*, or dry letter.

In the early twentieth century, remittance contributions to the archipelago averaged \$450,000 per year. As a result of the Great Depression, in 1929 this rate immediately dropped to \$355,000, and the supplies shipped by merchants declined from 1,346 units in 1929 to 939 the

⁸⁷ Translated in Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 23.

⁸⁸ Meintel, “Cape Verdean Transnationalism,” 31.

⁸⁹ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 81.

following year.⁹⁰ Cape Verdean factory workers lost jobs, and the Great Depression caused job losses in all industries. By 1933, it slumped to a quarter million.⁹¹ Though the sending of remittances was deeply affected by the global economic depression, Cape Verdean-Americans continued to send monies and goods to their kith and kin abroad. The main impetus for migration was to seek out a better standard of life for themselves and their family that remained. The loss of jobs and the loss of income contributed to fears and concerns on the islands. In *Notícias de Cabo Verde*, writers noted that the economic crisis resulted in lower remittances and the lessened chance of reunification. They worried, “many [would stay] and their descendants would only have the memory of their parents’ old home, but without the love that would hold them based in family tradition.”⁹² Their *sodadi* for the homeland and responsibility encouraged continually sending remittances as obligations, not gifts. While money was essential for survival and comfort for the homelander, it also held symbolic meaning. Åkesson stated, “Money sent by those who have left is a primary sign of not having been forgotten and the demonstration of transnational loyalty.”⁹³ Letters and other forms of communication acted as a tacit reminder that reunification was eminent.

Economically, the packet trade filled a niche in the marketplace. It served as a main form of transport for Cape Verdean seasonal laborers in the cranberry bogs in the Cape, and quelled feelings of *sodadi* by reconnecting with their families. It gave owners prestige and status among

⁹⁰ “A Situação Económica da Colónia de Cabo Verde,” *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (August 22, 1931).

⁹¹ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 81-84.

⁹² “Número Especial,” *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (June 1934)

⁹³ Lisa Åkesson, “‘They Are Ungrateful!’ Cape Verdean Notions of Transnational Obligations,” in *Comunidade(s) Cabo-Verdiana(s): As Múltiplas Faces Da Imigração Cabo-Verdiana* edited by Pedro Góis (Lisbon: Alto Comissariado Para A Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural, 2008), 254.

their fellow Cape Verdean citizens. After the maiden voyage of the *Nellie May* as a packet vessel, Antonio Coelho became an important figure in the Fox Point community. Men like Felipe Nicolau Soares likely gained more influence in the South End as a result of his ownership of the schooner, the *George Churchman*. Through his leadership in New Bedford, founding South Point's Cape Verdean cultural and social organizations, his influence appealed to people on both sides of the transnational social field. It's unclear whether Macédo lived in New Bedford or ever took residence in New England, but his business ventures exemplify the transnational connections between the Cape Verde Islands and New England. In Cape Verde, he served the editor of the newspaper, *A Voz de Cabo Verde*, owned several theaters in Cape Verde, and was a former mayor⁹⁴ and member of the Governor's Council of 12 of the general government of the islands. Macédo was among a secret society of Cape Verdeans that promoted Cape Verdean nationalism.⁹⁵ The current site of the United States Embassy in Praia is located on *Rua Abilio Macédo*. In addition to Macédo's acquisition of several ships for the packet trade, he owned several businesses on the island of Sao Tiago and São Vicente, including entertainment theaters. His involvement with the packet trade demonstrates strong economic links, as his ships transported cargo to the islands. On the 1930 voyage of *Coriolanus*, the ship held 55 automobiles, mainly new and second-hand "pleasure cars" and trucks. The first truck shipped to Cape Verde was aboard the *Coriolanus* in 1929. Two years later, Macédo's schooner, the *Bradford E. Jones*, shipped 24 used cars. In both instances, Morris Glaser was the New Bedford

⁹⁴ There's a discrepancy between David M. Rodrigues Papers and the *Hartford Courant* (March 27, 1931) with regards to where Abilio Monteiro de Macédo served as Mayor. Since de Macédo was born in the island of Fogo and his wife remained on the island while he pursued businesses in New Bedford, it is likely he was its mayor.

⁹⁵ Manuel Brito-Semedo, *A Construção da Identidade Nacional: Análise da Imprensa entre 1877 e 1975* [The Construction of National Identity: Analysis of the Press between 1877 and 1975] (Praia: Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro, 2006), 237.

merchant providing the automobiles for purchase.⁹⁶ Glaser was an Austrian immigrant and business owner in New Bedford.⁹⁷ Glaser and his business partner, Samuel Snyder, made frequent trips to the islands for business. Snyder and Isaac Adelson operated a mill-remnant store in New Bedford and a dry goods store managed by Antonio de Macédo, Abilio de Macédo's nephew. The transport of cars between 1929 and 1931, facilitated by Macédo's Cape Verde and West African Trading Corporation, were energizing a growing automobile trade in the islands and in West Africa.

This economic investment in the packet trade was also an economic investment into the archipelago. Cape Verde, yet again, became a trading hub, this time in reverse. Cape Verdean businessmen, descendants of the enslaved people "seasoned" on the island awaiting eventual transport, brought American-made supplies into the island. As New Bedford Cape Verdeans were recreating home through their institutions, they were also changing their world at home. Upon arriving, Cape Verdean-Americans took the opportunity to show off their American clothing and goods.

No Cape Verdean with a real love for his homeland would think of sailing without a bright blue suit and a pair of yellow shoes, topped off with a pearl grey fedora, and he would never dream of sailing without gifts. . . . The passengers, in a blaze of glory, find their nearest of kin and then, with their friends toting their luggage, walk proudly through the streets to show off the grand American finery.⁹⁸

The above quote begs the question: What meaning did the friends toting the luggage make of the American finery, pearl gray fedora, yellow shoes, and the unseasonable blue suit. By focusing on their meaning-making, the gaze is shifted from the perspective of those who left to those who

⁹⁶ David M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 1, 16; Folder 4, 68.

⁹⁷ <http://glaserglass.com/about-us/2647296> (January 30, 2018); <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20110306/News/103060335> (January 30, 2018).

⁹⁸ David M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 4, 79.

remained. In a contemporary study of Cape Verdean emigration and continuity, anthropologist Laurie Laporte argued, “Cape Verde is a country that in many respects is economically beholden to its emigrant populations. . . .”⁹⁹ She documented the experiences of Tcheka, a returned migrant who gave money simply because he had the ability to and remembered what it was like to have no money. For returnees and Cape Verdeans abroad, the pressure to play caregiver was unavoidable. Having access to American goods sent by a loved one abroad was a status symbol and provided some economic stability during times of drought and famine. The capital they brought to the islands in the form of money and supplies influenced the social and cultural lives of the homelander population, particularly that of the female majority. With the introduction of American items, homelander made meaning of the items they received.

Engaging homeland transnationalism in Cape Verde illuminates the perspectives and experiences of the women who remained in the homeland; the lens as gendered should reorient to the lives of the women who remained. In that way, for women homelander, “Migration was less about people leaving the island to live and work elsewhere than about extending the domestic unit to include people working abroad, in some cases thousands of miles away.”¹⁰⁰ From the homeland perspective, the items sent via the packet trade have both economic and symbolic meaning.

The cargo holds of the packet ships contained items to transform the homeland, creating *kazas merkanas* (American-style houses)¹⁰¹ and importing a variety of goods for cultural

⁹⁹ Laurie L. Laporte, *The Continuities of Modernity of Cape Verdean Identity and Emigration* (PhD Dissertation: Boston University, 2007), 57.

¹⁰⁰ Karen Fog Olwig, “The Migration Experience: Nevisian Women at Home & Abroad,” in *Women & Change in the Caribbean*, ed. Janet H. Momsen (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1993), 156.

¹⁰¹ Houses with American-made or foreign-made items, usually sent via post from Cape Verdeans in diaspora to loved ones back on the Islands.

institutions. In addition to the transport of cars and trucks, the packets also transported lumber for building homes, firewood, furniture, foods, and other goods. The *Coriolanus* was known to transport large cargo that included 19 “pleasure mobiles,” seven trucks, more than 1,000 barrels of flour, “many thousand feet” of lumber, sugar, kerosene, and “a great quantity” of furniture.¹⁰² The cargo hold was packed with the supplies from Cape Verdeans who scrimped and saved after working on the cranberry bogs in the Cape and factories in New Bedford and Providence. They returned to Cape Verde with gifts ranging from “gewgaws to lumber for houses.”¹⁰³

The monies and goods on the packet ships functioned to up-build homes, and assisted in supporting communities in Cape Verde. In his work on contemporary Cape Verdean *tabancas* (a social and cultural institution), social anthropologist Wilson Filho argued that the flow of monies and goods from emigrants sustains traditional village organizational structures. *Tabancas* served as mutual aid societies that were largely sustained by the monies and goods from emigrants. For ceremonies, Cape Verdeans in the diaspora provided *armamentos* (uniforms) and monetary assistance. They gifted their uniforms from their jobs as security officers and domestic and service workers, as well as flags from sports teams in the United States, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and other locations, to the *tabanca* ceremonies. Other gifts, such as musical instruments and such altar items as foods, jewelry, and clothing, demonstrated a level of high prestige unavailable to rural villagers. Filho stated, “These emblems of vitality and joy reflect the peculiar form that Cape Verdeans have found for the reproduction of their society, characterized by the ideology of emigration.”¹⁰⁴ The goods and financial gifts demonstrated the extreme devotion that binds Cape

¹⁰² David M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 1, 17.

¹⁰³ David M. Rodrigues Papers Folder 5, 80.

¹⁰⁴ Wilson Trajano Filho, “The Conservative Aspects of a Centripetal Diaspora: The Case of the Cape Verdean *Tabancas*,” *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 79, no. 4 (2009), 533.

Verdeans abroad with their homeland and kin.

Much like the ethnic enclaves and homeland societies in New England, *tabancas* acted as “a knot in a network of relationships. ... It integrates communities that are spatially separated and strengthens the existing relationships among them.”¹⁰⁵ Emigrants, with their gifts and monies, are part of this integrative knot. Their offerings fill in what the homelander could not, encouraging these community connections across spatial separations. Besides the material and economic purposes of the gifts, these items represented a long-term connectedness and had a symbolic meaning of remembrance with the promise of eventual reunification. In contemporary Cape Verdean society, still characterized by a majority of female homelander, the money and gifts received served as a promissory note and “powerful symbol of the eventual reunification of their family.”¹⁰⁶ On the other side of the transnational social field, goods sent from the archipelago also retained symbolic meaning.

The Brava packet ships encouraged both the movement of Cape Verdean emigrants and Cape Verdean items *to* America. On the docks, Cape Verdean-Americans awaited treasured items from their homeland, including “sugar cane, papayas, *manioc*, guava paste, *aguardiente*, and special desserts.”¹⁰⁷ Cape Verdean-Americans made meaning of these items as legitimization of their Cape Verdeanness from their kin at home. As an inversion to the luxury goods and American products sent from the diaspora, Cape Verdean-Americans often returned with nationalist, nostalgic items, such as “grog,” sugarcane liquor, tins of tuna fish, and a special type of dry biscuit. The local identity of the products mattered more than the financial value assigned.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 537

¹⁰⁶ Laporte, 11.

¹⁰⁷ Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity*, 72.

In the residential enclaves, the ability to purchase items in the South End's *Nho* Alfred's store likely added to the authenticity of their Cape Verdeanness and belonging to the trans-migrant group. For Cape Verdean homelanders and diasporic subjects, "emigration is not denationalizing."¹⁰⁸

In the New England enclaves, Cape Verdean-Americans' lives centered around an attempt to recreate Cape Verde and make meaning of their experiences in diaspora as they went from Cape Verdean to Cape Verdean-American. In New Bedford and Providence, Cape Verdeans opted for self-segregation as a psychic shield and strategy to distance from racialized stigma. Their segregation was isolationist and is captured here: "In the Cape Verdean community, one gets his hair cut by the Cape Verdean barber, is fed in a Cape Verdean restaurant with Cape Verdean foods, attends the Cape Verdean church, and attends Cape Verdean dances. There are those Cape Verdeans who came directly from the islands and have never ventured out of it."¹⁰⁹ Their access to traditional foods and goods via passengers and the cargo holds of the Brava Packet Trade helped to maintain the sense of *sodadi*, enabling Cape Verdeans to hold on to the notion of return for longer than their diaspora counterparts. *Sodadi*, coupled with their self-imposed separation from other African diasporan people, created the conditions by which the Brava Packet Trade could exist. The transnational connections forged a Cape Verdean ethnic identity that was built with the active contributions of Cape Verdean homelanders and diasporans.

This chapter built on the cursory discussion of life in the Southeastern New England enclaves and the Cape Verdean social institutions to engage the ways Cape Verdeans

¹⁰⁸ "A Situação Economica da Colonia de Cabo Verde," *Notícias de Cabo Verde* (August 22, 1931).

¹⁰⁹ Manuel E. Costa, *The Making of the Cape Verdean*, edited by Jeanne M. Costa (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2011), 62.

operationalized their feelings of *sodadi* (or longing) to maintain long-term connections with the homeland. The framework of *sodadi* as an operationalized mode of diasporic transnationalism offers a new perspective on the traditional understanding of diaspora homeland imagination. By keeping in physical and social contact, Cape Verdeans in diaspora consistently reinvigorated their cultural identity. The Brava Packet Trade, the manifestation of the longing, enabled a flow of goods and people to travel between the islands and southeastern New England.

Between 1892 and 1924, the residential enclaves of New Bedford and Providence were sites of overlapping Cape Verdean diasporas of old settlers meeting with new emigrants bringing with them a refreshment on Cape Verdean culture, foods, and speech. For Cape Verdean-Americans, suffering from *sodadi*, separated by the ocean, and clustered in residential enclaves, the packet trade enabled long-term sustained connections with their homeland in ways that differed from their African diasporic counterparts for whom return was an imaginary concept. Cape Verdean-American agency in their communities and their economic power energized their *sodadi* to recreate Cape Verde in New England. Employing the packet ships was part of the means by which Cape Verdeans in America retained a Cape Verdean ethnic identity. Their exclusive communities developed by self-imposed exclusion, racial segregation, and linguistic and cultural differences provided them with the tools to ground with each other.

Through remittances, gifts, and people, Cape Verdeans' social, cultural, and economic institutions enabled them to stay connected with the homeland, maintaining a high level of mobility but a low degree of anchorage to the host land. The packet trade provided Cape Verdeans in diaspora the necessary tools to dwell in displacement.¹¹⁰ Life in southeastern New England and Cape Verde was attuned to the movement of the packet ships. In Cape Verde, their

¹¹⁰ Gina Sanchez, "The Politics of Cape Verdean American Identity," *Transforming Anthropology*, Volume 6, Numbers 1 & 2 (1997), 61.

continuous presence created their own kind of rhythm, whereby life events, such as weddings and baptisms, were scheduled around ships' schedules, and the packets came to symbolize reunification and sustained connections over generations.¹¹¹

This chapter explored the relationship between diaspora and transnationalism and the Brava Packet Trade for Cape Verdeans in Southeastern New England and the Cape Verdean archipelago. It suggested that the Brava Packet Trade offers new insight into African diaspora scholarship, demonstrating how the field transnationalism might offer another lens to its analytical framework. For Cape Verdeans, the Brava Packet Trade allowed the diaspora to be an open space, not a closed loop characterized by exile or trauma. Cape Verdeans demonstrated agency in their travel, instrumentalizing their feelings of longing and employing their economic power to become trans-migrants with sustained relationships on both sides of the Atlantic.

Historian Kim D. Butler argued, "It quickly becomes clear that the choices of identity and integration vary within diaspora in groups and [are] affected by a host of factors."¹¹² For Cape Verdeans, the factors included racial discrimination in the host land; colorism and color consciousness in the homeland; cultural, religious, and linguistic differences; and the unfamiliarity of the Black-white binary. The packet ships allowed Cape Verdeans in diaspora to maintain their positions as sojourners, without needing to integrate into African-American communities as their West Indian counterparts often did. Their isolationism was both a strategy to rebuff the racial backlash in the United States and a result of their low degree of anchorage in the host land. The packet ships — transporting people, goods, ideas, hopes, dreams, and best wishes — contributed to the development of a transnational social field that "was no

¹¹¹ Meintel, *Cape Verdean Transnationalism*, 32.

¹¹² Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 226.

exaggeration to say that New England and the Cape Verde islands (and perhaps even other port cities in Europe and Africa to which Cape Verdeans emigrated and settled) were geographical extremes of a single socio-economic universe.”¹¹³ The sizeable fleet of ships “enabled the members of the Cape Verdean colony in New England to interact more with other Cape Verdeans in both the islands and in other port cities than they did with their fellow residents of New England. As a result, their social world remained a Cape Verdean one, separated by oceans but now connected by their ships.”¹¹⁴ As a result of their long-term association with the homeland, Cape Verdean-Americans maintained a distinctive ethnic group that is still present today in the Southeastern New England cities of New Bedford, Brockton, and Providence. Their organizational network, in both the homeland societies and the Brava Packet Trade, demonstrated that their eyes were trained on Cape Verde as home. The packet trade, like no other institution, enabled that gaze to remain uninterrupted.

¹¹³ Greenfield, 6.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

In the mid-nineteenth century, West Indians and Cape Verdeans met aboard the whaling ships heading toward the whaling capital of the United States. Facing similar conditions facilitating their migration, they left their homelands, pursuing a better life than what was destined for them on their respective homelands. Though the ships constituted their first site in their overlapping diaspora, in New Bedford and Providence the West Indian and Cape Verdean emigrants split into different neighborhoods, divided by racial and ethnic identity. West Indians living in the historic African-American neighborhood in the West End of New Bedford embraced a Black racial identity in addition to their ethnic identities. Cape Verdeans, though representing the majority of Black immigrants in both cities, did not self-identify as Black. They resisted identifying with Blackness and instead honed a Cape Verdean-American identity that was between race and ethnicity.

For generations, the separation manifested to racial and ethnic tensions that marred whatever relationships they could form in their southeastern New England community. Over the course of generations, the boundaries, in New Bedford in particular, became impenetrable, as Black immigrants became unwelcome in each other's neighborhoods. As Cape Verdean parents strongly discouraged their children from interacting with West End Blacks, "[West Enders] also participated in maintaining the territorial separation; 'County Street was the boundary — we wouldn't go South and they wouldn't come West.'"¹ For Cape Verdean-Americans with mixed-African-American, West Indian, or indigenous heritages living in the South End residential enclave, racial biases and taunting were commonplace occurrences. Jeanne Costa recalled:

¹ Marilyn Halter, *Between Race and Ethnicity: Cape Verdean American Immigrants, 1860-1965* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 152.

“As a teenager I can remember being taunted by a few of the kids I grew up with, especially one in particular, who I remember well. When I explained my mother’s heritage to my peers, as I felt the need to at the time, one particular person used to say, 'Yeah, sure your mother's Indian alright [sic]. North, East, South, **WEST** Indian;' she was implying that she was the same heritage as the people in the West End, which at the time was supposed to be an insult.”²

Intermarriages between West Indians and Cape Verdeans were rare and were subject to the collective disappointment from both groups. For the children, intermarriages resulted in complex questions of identity and belonging. Third-generation, mixed Cape Verdean-West Indian American Dr. Henry Groebe suggested that he made a choice, saying he was more attached to the West Indian half of his family and his sister was more Cape Verdean.³

The 1940s were the start of changing racial relations between the Black immigrant ethnic groups. During World War II, Cape Verdean men left the comforts and homogeneity of the enclave and larger New Bedford community, where they learned that self-identification can be in conflict with external identification. Outside of their neighborhoods, they were seen as Black; for many, it was a shock. This shock precluded a change in orientation and identification that was later supported in the following decade. The post-war period was a watershed moment for the Cape Verdean and West Indian communities. As a result of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the decolonial movements in Africa and the Caribbean, more and more Cape Verdeans began to identify as Black, styled their hair in afros, made Afrocentric sartorial choices, interacted with their neighbors in the West End, and some even joined the Black Panther

² Manuel Costa and Jeanne M. Costa (eds.), *The Making of the Cape Verdean* (Bloomington: Author House, 2011), 107.

³ Dr. Henry Groebe (grandson of George Groebe), in discussion with the author, New Bedford, May 11, 2017.

Party.⁴ Despite these changes in outward appearances and racial politics, tensions remained, as some West Indians remarked, “Cape Verdeans became Black when Black became GREEN.” Some Cape Verdeans willingly moved to the West End, but “many other Cape Verdeans, mostly the old and the poor, [found] themselves living in the ‘black ghetto’ of the city through no choice of their own. One reason for this was a major urban renewal program of the 1960s that had torn down some of the older residences of the Cape Verdean ghetto.”⁵ Urban renewal reshaped the landscape of New Bedford and Rhode Island’s urban areas, and also reshaped racial relationships among African-descended communities.

Beginning in 1968, the city of New Bedford proposed a reorganization of the West End neighborhood to update the dilapidated housing and increase residential accommodations. The plan was the city’s “dirty little secret,”⁶ and no documents remain about the proposal and plan for the residential neighborhood. Between 1962 and 1974, New Bedford received more than \$90 million in urban renewal funds and supplemental “Model Cities” grants.⁷ Residents of New Bedford viewed the urban renewal project as a project of displacement, a threat to their neighborhoods. To make matters worse, the Cape Verdean community in South End was divided in half with the construction of the Massachusetts Route 18 - John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway. The highway, by eminent domain, destroyed part of the Cape Verdean enclave and displaced them into the West End. The highway project “eliminated 1,200 housing units and they

⁴ Jama Lazerlow, “The Black Panther Rank and File,” in *Liberated Territory: Untold Perspectives on the Black Panther Party*, ed. Yohuru Williams and Jama Lazerlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 174.

⁵ Costa, 11.

⁶ Unidentified, city planner, in conversation with author, New Bedford, April 14, 2017.

⁷ Ross J. Gittell, *Renewing Cities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 100-101.

have not been replaced with the needed low- and middle-income units, squeezing more and more Blacks into an inelastic area of the city.”⁸

At the very same time, Fox Pointers faced similar removal strategies. The expansion of Brown University and the implementation of the Model Cities project slowly eroded the Cape Verdean enclave. Between 1948 and 1955, Brown University demolished the buildings they deemed unsalvageable to make room for student and faculty housing.⁹ The extension of I-95 split the neighborhood, segregating it from other parts of the city and destroyed existing homes.¹⁰ Fox Point’s Cape Verdean community spread out to other cities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Those who remained sought to hold on and reclaim their ownership of their old neighborhood. They patronized Manny Almeida’s Ringside Lounge, a well-known establishment that was originally located on the corner of South Main Street and Wickenden Street. For Cape Verdeans, “frequenting Manny’s was not habitual behavior, but had a subtle purpose that could be understood by comprehending why Cape Verdeans claimed Manny Almeida’s Ringside Lounge as their bar” in the area undergoing urban renewal gentrification.¹¹ During the resultant displacement, Cape Verdeans saw Manny’s as a refuge, “the last beachhead of Fox Point Cape

⁸ “New Bedford Gets Curfew To Ease Racial Tensions,” *New York Times* (July 13, 1970). Accessed March 3, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/1970/07/13/archives/new-bedford-gets-curfew-to-ease-racial-tensions-new-bedford-imposes.html?_r=1

⁹ William McKenzie Woodward, Edward F Sanderson, and David Chase, “Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources,” Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1986. http://www.preservation.ri.gov/pdfs_zips_downloads/survey_pdfs/prov_citywide.pdf

¹⁰ Lauren Gorman, “Fox Point: The Disintegration of a Neighborhood,” (PhD diss., Brown University, 1998); Providence Tomorrow Report from the Providence Mayor’s Office, September 2009. <http://www.gcpvd.org/images/reports/2009-09-providence-tomorrow-college-hill-wayland-fox-point-neighborhood-plan.pdf>

¹¹ Sam Beck, *Manny Almeida’s Ringside Lounge: The Cape Verdean’s Struggle for their Neighborhood* (Brooklyn: Luso-Brazilian Books, 1982), 19.

Verdean culture” despite being under Azorean ownership.¹² Manny Almeida, the owner, was a boxer and fight promoter. Frequenting Manny’s “served as a reminder to everyone that Cape Verdeans remained in ‘their’ neighborhood!”¹³ Today, this street corner bears no resemblance to the highly networked neighborhood Claire Andrade-Watkins lovingly recalled in her documentary *Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican?* It now belongs to Brown University, with students renting houses and drinking specialty coffee while furiously typing away on their MacBooks.

Back in New Bedford, as the West End became increasingly congested, a plan was brought to the 11-person city council to develop housing in the city’s North End. The city council struck the plan down, as they “had no intention of promoting such integration by adopting an ordinance that freezes single-family zoning on any land bought by the city for housing development.” The council’s councilor, William Saltzman, stated, “I’ll be damned if I’ll knock out 500 white men’s homes to integrate five Negro families. We’ll build the housing where we want to build it — the *beggars* are not going to be the boss here.”¹⁴ City segregation and intense unemployment and poverty culminated in the four-day 1970 “riot.”

The riot began on July 10, 1970. The mitigating events that culminated in the riots are unclear. A news source pointed to New Bedford police’s harassment and arrest of a young Black man.¹⁵ Russell Whyte, an organizer of the Learning to Learn program and grandson of William L. Kydd, was an eyewitness and provided a different story. The Learning to Learn program was

¹² Ibid., 77.

¹³ Ibid., 83.

¹⁴ “New Bedford Gets Curfew To Ease Racial Tensions.” Emphasis mine.

¹⁵ “New Bedford Gets Curfew To Ease Racial Tensions.”

a state-sponsored summer job-training program housed in the West End for New Bedford's young men and women. For their participation in the program, the youth, mostly African American, West Indian, and Cape Verdean, were provided with a stipend. According to Whyte, due to an administrative delay, the participants' stipend checks were not ready for pick up. By nightfall, when the checks still were not in their possession, the participants began to throw rocks and cause a disturbance.¹⁶ The police became involved, and what started as a small disturbance came to be known as New Bedford's riot.

The city's white population was on edge, turning to violent rhetoric and action. A white gas station attendant stated, "Listen, [the Blacks] aren't that bad. I went to school with a whole shitload of them. . . . If it was really us against them, it'd be Custer's Last Stand. They'd be Custer, we'd be the Indians. We'd pave the streets with black skin."¹⁷ On Saturday, July 12, the riot came to a head when three white men — George D. Rose of Fairhaven, and Gary M. DesLaurier and Ralph D. Brown of Acushnet — shot into a crowd of on the corner of Kempton and Cedar Streets, killing 17-year-old Cape Verdean-American Lester Lima and injuring third-generation American of Jamaican decent, Kim Holland;¹⁸ fourth-generation American of

¹⁶ Russell Whyte (grandson to William L. Kydd), in conversation with author, telephone call, May 5, 2017; "Work Program Failure Blamed For City Fracas," *The Standard Times* (New Bedford, MA): July 14, 1970.

¹⁷ David R. Ignatius and M. David Landau, "New Bedford, Quiet but Tense, Still Faces All Its Problems," *The Harvard Crimson* (August 4, 1970).

¹⁸ 15-year-old Kim Holland was the daughter of native-born African American Timothy S. Holland and second-generation Jamaican American born in Virginia Rachel Virginia (Carnegie) Holland. Rachel Holland, United States Social Security Administration, *U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007*. Ancestry.com. Accessed March 2, 2018; Rachel Holland, National Archives and Records Administration. *Fifteenth Census of the United States. 1930*. Ancestry.com. Accessed March 2, 2018; Rachel V. Carnegie, *New York, New York, Marriage License Indexes, 1907-1995*. Ancestry.com. Accessed March 2, 2018; Timothy S. Holland, *U.S., World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946*. Ancestry.com. Accessed March 2, 2018;

Vincentian descent, Randall Robinson,¹⁹ and Cape Verdean Gordon Rebeiro.²⁰ New Bedford's mayor, George Rogers, immediately issued a curfew to quell the riot.²¹ Rogers, Senator Edward Brooks, the city council, and members of the Black community met to address the community concerns, which included dropping charges for Black people arrested during the unrest and securing more recreational grounds, employment, local Black elected officials, increased community control over police, and college access funding for Black youth. Though the mayor agreed to the resolutions, Whyte argued not much came of it. Nearly a year later, "... on May 18, 1971, an all-white jury acquitted the three men. The jury also chose not to consider lesser charges of second-degree murder, manslaughter, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon."²² Though the verdict was met with disappointment, there was no public demonstration or follow-up to the riot.

¹⁹ Randall Robinson's great-grandfather was George Ollivierre from St. Vincent. Living at 303 Middle Street, it is likely he was related into the familial network of the Kydd-Ollivierre connection, mentioned in Chapter Three. George Ollivierre, United States Selective Service System, *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. Ancestry.com. Accessed March 2, 2018; George Ollivierre, National Archives and Records Administration. *Sixteenth Census of the United States. 1940*. Ancestry.com. Accessed March 2, 2018 (hereafter referred to as 1940 United States Federal Census; Ursula Ollivierre Offley, *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995* Ancestry.com. Accessed March 2, 2018; "Ursula Clark Obituary" <http://obit.altmeyer.com/obitdisplay.html?task=Print&id=1465371> Accessed March 2, 2018; Randall A. Robinson, New England Historic Genealogical Society, *Massachusetts Vital Records Index to Deaths [1916-1970]*. Ancestry.com. Accessed March 2, 2018.

²⁰ Coincidentally, Gordon Rebeiro was related by marriage to Randall A. Robinson. Rebeiro's wife Lynn Ollivierre was the daughter of Herbert Ollivierre, Robinson's uncle; Herbert Ollivierre, *1940 United States Federal Census*; Herbert Ollivierre Obituary <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/obituaries/20160301/herbert-a-ollivierre-86>. Accessed March 2, 2018;; "Lynn Ollivierre Rebeiro" <http://www.currentobituary.com/obit/65733> Accessed March 2, 2018;

"Council to Meet over Racial Crisis: Youth Slain, 3 Hurt By Gunfire from Car," *Standard Times* (New Bedford, MA), July 12, 1970.

²¹ "Rogers Proclaims Curfew for City," *The Standard Times* (New Bedford, MA), July 13, 1970.

²² "Man Acquitted in 1970 Murder of Teen Dies," *Standard Times* (May 1, 1997). Accessed May 4, 2017 <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/19970501/News/305019994>

In the midst of the unrest, the city continued planning the West End urban renewal project. At first, the Model Cities project planned to continue the urban renewal targeting of the South End, but due to the unrest, the project plan was moved to the West End, covering most of the area that was destroyed by the riot.²³ The new plan was to increase “medium-to-high density housing on Cedar, Cottage, High, and Elm Streets [and create] an 800-pupil elementary school with a commercial district bounded by Kempton, Cedar, Cottage, and Middle Streets.”²⁴ In 1972, the urban renewal project began demolishing signs of the West End’s rich West Indian legacy. The Bethel AME church, long the hub for British West Indians, held its last service at its brick-and-mortar location on October 29, 1970, on the date of its 130th anniversary. This site at 318 Kempton Street had been the church’s house of worship since 1855. It’s fitting then that the organizers of the church’s celebration bore the names of their West Indian ancestry — Leonora (Kydd) Whyte, Mariah Groebe, George Groebe, Montaine Merkman, and Cleone (Drayton) Joseph Monteiro.²⁵ The Bethel church later moved to its current location at 532 County Street. The “West Indian” AMEZ church at 275 Elm Street also fell victim to urban renewal. The congregation moved to William Street, but by 1992 a combination of dwindling numbers and the effects of urban renewal displacement closed its doors for good.²⁶

Well-known West Indian properties like the Coblins’ home at 310 Middle Street and its nearby boarding house at 292 Middle Street, the Kydds’ homes, and others were razed to the ground. Driving through the area, Yvonne Drayton pointed out what used to be — the cordage

²³ Ross J. Gittell, *Renewing Cities* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2014), 101; “West End Renewal Told,” *Standard Times* (July 17, 1970).

²⁴ “West End Renewal Told,” *Standard Times* (July 17, 1970).

²⁵ Newspaper clipping from Yvonne Drayton’s Private Collection

²⁶ “Douglass A.M.E. Zion Church Closes After More Than 140 Years,” *Standard Times* (December 17, 1994).

factory, her mother's house, and her grandfather's home at 307 Ash Street, where she grew up. The old neighborhood was gone. Her parents' home and her childhood memories were replaced by newer homes, businesses, and community organizations.

At the core, Black immigrant residential enclaves are the sites of this community-level microhistory, so it is fitting that this dissertation ends with the disruption of those communities as a result of urban renewal. These ethnic communities facing rupture from governmental interference lost the places that remade their homelands in diaspora. Their homes and community institutions were destroyed, streets rerouted, and neighbors displaced. For West Indians, their enclave within an enclave ceased to exist. What remains now are brightly colored, modern, modular buildings. Currently, the new Capital of the Cape Verdean colony in the United States sits in Brockton, Massachusetts. The pulse of these communities remains in the institutions they formed and in their memories.

This dissertation focused on the quotidian experiences of West Indian and Cape Verdean emigrants in southeastern New England in the early twentieth century. They arrived on whaling ships and began to form small, ethnic-based enclaves within historic neighborhoods. As they slowly integrated into their neighborhoods, they established familial, institutional, and economic networks that became the center of this narrative. These networks and institutions shaped Black immigrants' quotidian lives in their residential enclaves and resulted in African-American and ethnic identities that matured with the ongoing relationships with the homeland and the host land.

For West Indians, family reunification in their West End neighborhood amounted to an enclave within the historically African-American enclave. Their intentional residential choices, marriages, and membership in local organizations became an energetic network of familial,

intimate, neighborly relationships that supplanted the need for traditional forms of organizing. As a result, they did not require formal homeland societies; those in need tapped the network. The five main families — the Draytons, the Coblinses, the Kydds, the Timbers, and the Fabios — in this study were related by blood, proximity, and affiliation. For West Indians, the politics of return were inverted as they opted for reunification and chain migration rather than a physical return.

As early as 1874, pioneering West Indian settlers grounded the emergent community in the neighborhood and in the city. They formed the core of what became a thriving community for the next century. As they integrated with their African-American neighbors, they simultaneously energized their network connections to foster a distinctive West Indian ethnic identity. The streets surrounding the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal and the Frederick Douglass Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches were the center of the West Indian enclave. The Dutch West Indians, under the leadership of Robert Coblins and Aaron Timber, reshaped the AMEZ church into the “West Indian church,” meanwhile, William L. Kydd converted from the Anglican church to become a member of the Bethel church, serving as its clerk for more than 50 years, ushering in the British West Indian population. By the 1930s, the West Indian contingent of the West End enclave cultivated a strong ethnic identity, slowing their assimilation into the surrounding African-American community. They continued their practices of ethnic-exclusive boarding, maintained the dense residential clustering, and retained intentional membership in local organizations. Their lack of formal ethnic organizations did not define their relationships with each other. The lack of these organizations in the city did not demonstrate a loss of culture. In fact, it was the quiet conversations at the kitchen table on the porch, a cut at Mr. “Obrey’s” Barbershop, and the greetings on the streets that strengthened and

sustained the West End's West Indians. At the same time, they were African American. There was no conflict or hesitation in embracing both interlocking identities. When asked, "How do you identify," the resounding response from third- and fourth-generation West Indian-Americans was an embrace of the racial and ethnic duality.

In New Bedford's South End and Providence's Fox Point, Cape Verdeans had a markedly different experience. Within their enclaves, they formed the traditional cultural institutions and homeland societies that were common to newly arrived immigrants, such as the Catholic and Protestant churches — Our Lady of Assumption and Portuguese Mission — church associations, labor guilds, such ethnic-based associations as the *Associação Beneficente Caboverdeana*, and women's clubs. New Bedford and Providence were part of a constellating social and cultural field. Though New Bedford was the more common place for a Cape Verdean settlement, nearby Providence attracted many new emigrants as a final destination. The local Cape Verdean ethnic institutions demonstrated a high-degree of interconnectedness and overlapping membership. The organizations' leaders established a core contingent among Cape Verdean-Americans, connecting the enclaves to the Cape Verdean archipelago and Portugal. These men and women were at the center of transnational aid efforts, strategically using patriotism to form a bridge between the islands, the diaspora, and Portuguese governmental officials.

Between 1885 and 1942, Cape Verdeans took up the responsibility to their homeland. Each generation carried with them the feeling of *sodadi*, or longing, that undergirded their local institutions. *Sodadi*, as a feeling, became instrumentalized as a tool, empowering Cape Verdeans to utilize their economic power to provide aid and other services to homelanders, and to purchase and refit old whaling ships to the employ of their revolutionary transnational shipping fleet, dubbed the Brava Packet Trade. The packet ships of the trade replenished the enclaves with new

emigrants, ensuring the long-term survival of Cape Verdean culture. The Brava Packet Trade made the islands, though more than 3,000 miles away from southeastern New England, accessible, enabling a transnational social field that limited Cape Verdean interactions with their non-Cape Verdean neighbors. *Sodadi* affected both sides of the transnational field, enabling multi-directional transnational relations. Cape Verdean-Americans gained social and cultural currency in receiving goods from their loved ones who remained. For homelanders, the gifts and goods became imbued with meanings for eventual reunification, promises of return, and as status symbols in their *kaza merkanas*. The Brava Packet Trade and the institutions within their residential enclaves maintained their world as a Cape Verdean one. Like their West Indian counterparts in the West End, their quotidian lives in Fox Point and the South End centered on the community network connection in both cities, on their use of *Kriolu*, and on their religious and organizational lives. Cape Verdean-Americans' eyes never left the homeland. Their social, cultural, and economic institutions were trained toward return and reunion. Even as United States immigration sought to sever their relationships to the homeland, Cape Verdeans adapted their institutions toward giving and renewed their interest in cultural retention.

In the early twentieth century, the West End, South End, and Fox Point communities were the sites of an overlapping diaspora. Supported by the whaling and textile industries, Black immigrants migrated, enacted chain migration for family reunification, and instituted a series of associations, maintaining connections to their respective homelands. This dissertation, through social network analysis, explored the inner workings of the familial and institutional networks. What this study uncovered was that while West Indians firmly planted their feet in their neighborhoods, becoming homeowners and business leaders, Cape Verdeans hovered between the cities and their homeland, committed to the people they left behind while making a life in

their enclaves. West Indians' familial and social networks supplanted the need for formalized institutions, allowing them to lean on their ethnic relationships to sustain the growing community. Cape Verdeans' social, benevolent, religious, and economic institutions assisted in migration, facilitated the sending of remittances and goods, and supported the development of a Cape Verdean-American identity.

The actions of these early Black immigrants had a lasting effect on the third and fourth generations of Black immigrants in the 1970s facing displacement and state and vigilante violence. West Indians were still leaders in the West End, evidenced by Russell Whyte's role in the Learning to Learn program and Bernard Drayton's leadership in the West End Social Club. Cape Verdean local clubs, such as Manny Almeida's Lounge, the Ultramarine Band Club, and the Cape Verdean Women's Social Club, were still spaces to express cultural identity, continuing the legacy of their founding members. Over the course of a century, between the 1870s and the 1970s, West Indians and Cape Verdean continued to support the needs of new emigrants in the city, upheld their traditional values and heritage, and kept their eyes trained to the homeland. Their intentional living in southeastern New England enclaves stripped away their double invisibility. They were in plain sight and highly mobile. Even as West Indians grounded, they were ever reaching toward the homeland, enacting a chain of migration and becoming outspoken, multigenerational leaders in their community. The New Bedford docks during the arrival and departure of the packet ships were an energetic scene, packed with furniture, luggage, goods, and people. It was a site of celebration. Black immigrants were not invisible; their lives were a part of the dynamic of multi-ethnic African-American historical experiences.

Though they were often subsumed into African-American history, for West Indians and Cape Verdeans, living in southeastern New England was not a "denationalizing" experience.

Those who left — and those who were able to remain — could trace their histories back to a single person or persons, retaining the memories of days past. In this dissertation, anthropologist James Clifford’s question, “How long does it take to become ‘indigenous’” is germane.²⁷ With ancestral flags hanging in kitchens and in cars, and *Kriolu* being taught in homes and in schools, the legacy of the Black immigrant enclaves in New Bedford and Providence endures.

Implications

you broke the ocean in
half to be here.
only to meet nothing that wants you.²⁸

This dissertation sought to destabilize constructs of homogenized, monolithic African-American ethnic identity to consider the role of immigration in the development of overlapping diasporas. Focusing on West Indian and Cape Verdean organizational lives and quotidian lives in southeastern New England, I hope this study on Black immigrants, as part of African-American history, will inform current immigration debates. Last year was the 100th anniversary of the Literacy Act, a measure introduced into the contemporary immigration law that implemented tests to determine who is properly credentialed to immigrate into the United States. In 1924, the Literacy Act was followed up with new immigration legislation focused on limiting the number of immigrants via 2% quotas based on the 1890 census data. Colonial nations, at the time the majority of the Black world, were counted among the immigrants of their metropole and were disproportionately discriminated upon due to a lack of sovereignty. Questions of race and class were omitted from explicit mention in the legislation, but in the silence between the lines lay the insidious desire for white, wealthy immigrants over colonized, impoverished Black immigrants. For Black immigrants in this study, the 1924 legislation cut the chain of migration that, for

²⁷ James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9 no. 3 (August 1994), 309.

²⁸ nayirrah waheed, “immigrant.’ in *salt*. (2013).

many, had sustained their communities. While return to their homeland was still ever-present in their minds, family reunification was effectively halted. This immigration law was not overturned until the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, which eliminated nation-origin quotas and reignited family reunification through a system of visas.

Recently, questions of immigration and its merits have received plenty of attention under the presidency of Donald J. Trump. In January 2018, Trump made comments harkening back to this centuries-old debate on merit-based immigration. Reports of the January meeting referred to more comments regarding his distaste of immigrants from “shithole” countries, namely Haiti and some African countries.²⁹ This dissertation, then, comes at an opportune time, as a refutation to the commentary that Black immigrants are blighting or draining this country’s resources.

These comments are also personal. According to the current sentiment surrounding immigration, I am an “anchor baby.” My mother was pregnant with me as she, my father, and my brother emigrated from their home in Guyana, South America. I was born in the United States seven months after they emigrated, the first American citizen born in my family. Growing up in the 1990s in New York City, I listened to news stories of “illegal aliens” coming into the United States, taking jobs from “hard-working” Americans. I grew up with the worry that my parents, though “legal,” would be subject to immigration questions or even eligible for deportation. I saw the story of Elian Gonzales play out on the national news and wondered, quietly, if Elian were Haitian would his story gain the same attention. I saw how race, skin color, and national origin affected the questions of desirability. As an adult, I have witnessed friends’ fights in immigration courts and have questioned my own citizenship.

²⁹ Eli Watkins and Abby Phillip, “Trump decries immigrants from 'shithole countries' coming to US.” Accessed January 12, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/11/politics/immigrants-shithole-countries-trump/index.html>.

In this climate, privileging the stories of Black immigrants extending into the mid-nineteenth century is an important reminder of the creative energies, technological tools, and cultural enrichment that they brought to the United States. Contrary to what the current president believes, for centuries Black immigrants from “shithole” countries have had a place in the United States, in American immigration history, and are part of African-American history. They have long been part of the United States history through their labor on the Panama Canal, in the American-owned fruit plantations throughout Latin America, and their contributions to Black liberation movements. This dissertation, one of many works on Black immigrant contributions to American history, hopes to center their stories in this political climate, humanizing their experiences in a moment of dehumanized, racist immigration policies.

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