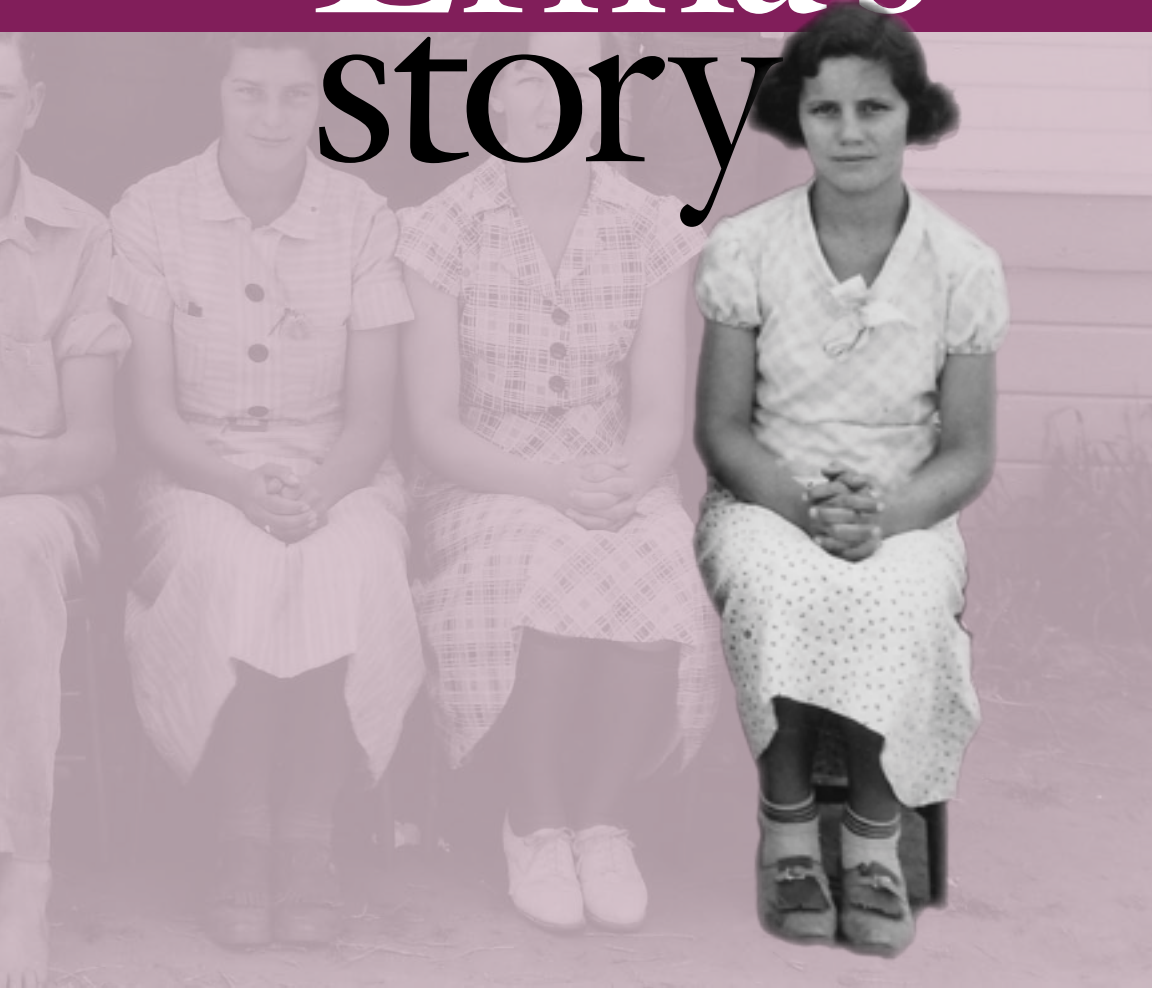




Erma's story





Fremont

Lemoore

CALIFORNIA

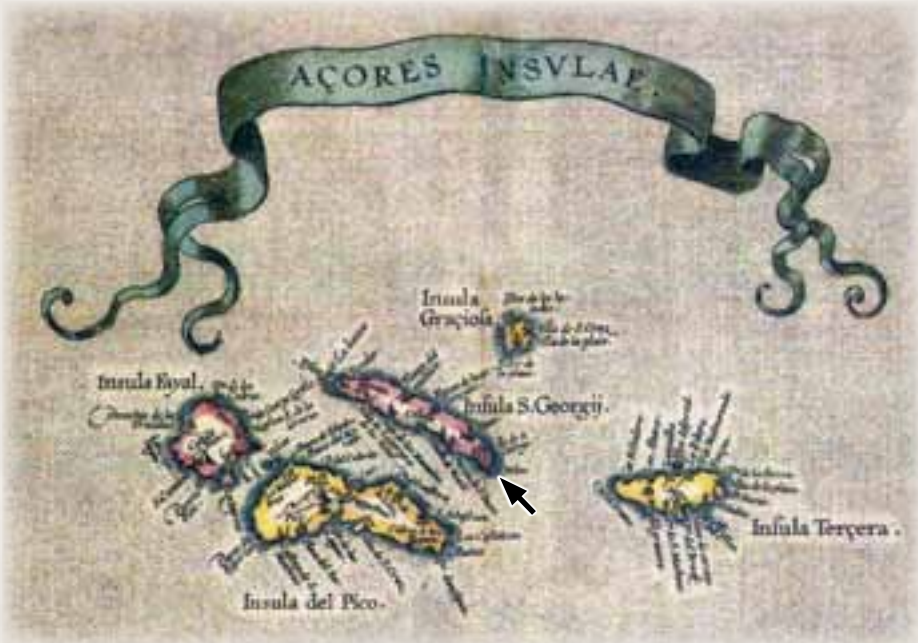
Hello. My name is Erma Maciel Andrade. I am 89 years old and now reside in a retirement community in Fremont, California. This is my story.



MY MOTHER, Mariana Azevedo de Borba, and my father, Gregorio Maciel, immigrated from the Azores islands to California. They had grown up on the same small island – São Jorge, only 70 miles in circumference – but did not meet until after they had arrived in the States. They were married on Feb. 19, 1916 in Lemoore, California, in the San Joaquin Valley. She was 18, he was 23.



I was born on a cold March 26 in 1921 in Lemoore. I was the fourth sibling, and we were very close in age. My sister Mary was the oldest, 15 months later came John, 15 months later Greg came, and 13 months later I came. The youngest, Bill, was born four and a half years after me.



The Azores islands ('Açores'). São Jorge is indicated by the arrow.



Mary and John



Greg, Erma, Mariana and Bill, 1925

Can you imagine taking care of four small children with no modern conveniences and working on a farm? My mom worked hard. She baked bread, washed clothes by hand using a washboard, and still helped on the farm milking and feeding cows, and taking care of chickens and pigs. We didn't have a tractor at first. We used mules to work the ground and pull the plow. We had a horse that pulled a buggy. I drove the buggy one time all by myself when I was seven or eight years old. Mom also worked in the local cannery. It was in Armona, about 15 miles away. In apricot season, she would stand at a counter and cut apricots; in peach season, peaches; etc. She'd ride in a neighbor's car to the cannery, about fifteen miles away. Later my sister Mary and I also worked there.

Our house had a kitchen, a tiny pantry, a bedroom, and a living room. My mother, sister Mary, and I slept in the bedroom, while the three boys slept in the living room.

My mother used to sing Portuguese psalms. One time there was a huge storm, and all we had was a little coal oil lamp. There was huge thunder and lightning, and it was frightening. All the kids were in the bedroom, and Mom was praying the psalms in Portuguese. Even though she couldn't read, she had learned them from her grandmother and could recite them by heart. Sometimes she would sing them.

My mother Mariana was the youngest of three sisters; the oldest was Mary, the middle was Anna.

Mom told me a story about a member of the family. She grew up with all women, so this was probably about her grandmother. They were going out early in the morning, just before dawn, to get some food for the cattle. So she and her sisters decided to scare her grandmother. One of the sisters put a big white sheet over her head and leaped out at Grandma. It scared the daylights out of her.

We had a happy childhood. We were poor but, growing up on a farm, there was enough food. I can remember my mother taking eggs to the store to exchange for food. By then we had a Model T, We had three plum trees. She'd take boxes of those to the store for flour, sugar, etc. She couldn't read or write, but a neighbor taught her a little recipe for cake, and she would make the cake, with icing every now and again. It was a treat for us.

When Bill was about six months old, Mom would have me watch the cows so they would stay inside the pasture. It was close to home but I was afraid of the squirrels. They would run up the fence posts, and I was terrified. I would cry until Mom would come out there and spank me and send me home to baby sit Bill. It was worth the spanking so I would be sent home.



We would visit our Aunt Anna and Uncle Joe Barros in Hanford, about 15 miles away. Uncle Joe would play a phonograph, an old crank-powered model. I was only a few years old, and would go look behind the phonograph to see the people who were singing. I couldn't understand it! They would laugh at my curiosity.

On the farm we had an old reservoir that had been used to store water for the animals. My sister and two older brothers told me that there was a fairy underneath the reservoir and they would

stomp their feet in a certain place in the reservoir and the door would open and the fairy would let them in. They would not tell me where the spot was. I spent hours going around the reservoir stomping my feet but no door would open. Later they told me that it was not true. I was very disappointed because I believed in fairies.



Greg, Mary, Erma, John and Bill

Before I started school, my mother taught me how to count in Portuguese. I made little corrals with sticks and strings and put little rocks in the corrals – they were my cows. My mother taught me how to count the cows as I moved them from one corral to the other.

I was about four-and-a-half years old when my brother Bill was born. I don't remember too much except for the trip to the hospital. Two or three years later my mother lost a son who was born prematurely. He lived just a few days, and they had named him Joe.

I was about six years old when my paternal grandmother and two cousins came to visit. They lived in Massachusetts. They brought me my first purchased doll. I had a doll my mother made from a sock. I loved it and played with it. But this new doll had a porcelain face and I loved it, too. I remember my Mom canning lots of fruit for them to take back with them. I enjoyed their visit, because we ate food we usually did not buy, as they were our guests.

To keep us kids away from the railroad tracks, we were told that if the engineers caught us on the tracks, they would catch us and use us for fuel. I kept away from the tracks. We were also told that if planes were overhead, they would drop a rope with a loop and take us up. One day a plane was overhead and I tried to hide in the ditch. I looked up and knew they could see me and I was very frightened.

Before I started school, my brother John came down with diphtheria. We were quarantined for almost two weeks. We had to spray our throats every day. Dad stayed away so he could take care of the animals. The rest of us did not get the diphtheria virus.

Dad took care of the farm, even though he didn't come home very often.

One year we purchased raisins to feed the cows: a big pile of them on the side of the house. Mom would have us go to the raisin pile and pick out the good plump raisins. They were good for eating and for baking. Also in Hanford we bought fruit pits to burn in the stove.



*Antonio Luis Borba,
Erma's grandfather*

My brother Greg and I learned to milk cows at the same time – one on the right side and the other on the left. The poor cows did not object.

One year we grew a lot of watermelons. We had so many melons that we would eat the best part – the center; they were so sweet. Uncle Barros would come with his pickup and take a load home.

Sometimes my maternal grandfather Antonio would stay with us. We had an outside toilet. When grandfather went to the toilet, he was bit by a black widow spider. He was rushed to the doctor and stayed in the hospital a few days. After that we were very careful to lift the lid and look for spiders before we sat down.

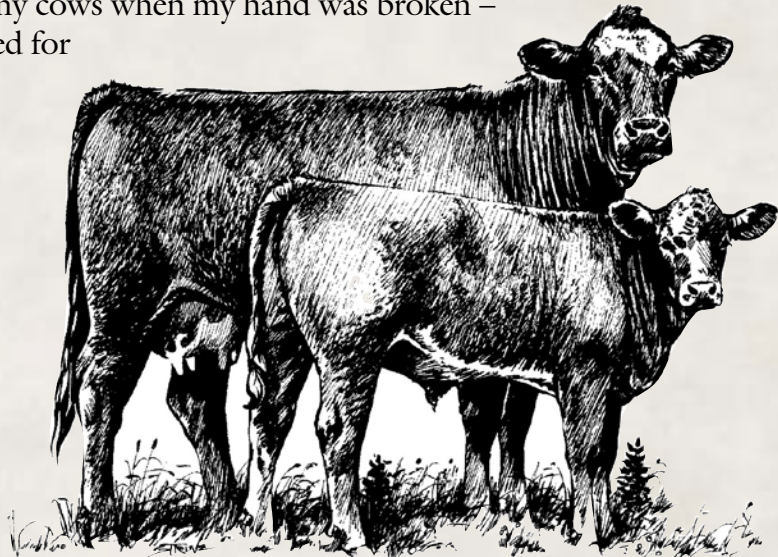
(Grandfather Antonio came to California to earn a living when his three daughters were very young. His intention was for the family to come to California. My grandmother Maria did not want to leave her Sao Jorge (Azores) home. So Antonio stayed in California and

did not return to his family. His daughters came to California as young women where they married and raised their families.)

We had a wood stove and no electricity. One Sunday afternoon in December, when I was about seven years old, we were all outside and one of us looked up and saw smoke and flames pouring out from the house. It burned down and we lost everything.

We stayed with a neighbor at first. The first night, when I would close my eyes, I would see the house on fire. It was a nightmare. The neighbors donated clothes, furniture, and food. We moved to a home about a half mile away from the farm. We traveled from the house to the farm by horse and buggy. We stayed in the rented house until summer when school was out. We lost the ranch and moved to Hanford.

Before the fire, our neighbor, Joe Mello, caught and broke his hand on a running belt. He couldn't milk his cows, so John and Greg milked them. When our house burned down, we moved into a house on Mr. Mello's rented property. Before we moved to Hanford, John asked Mr. Mello how much the rent was for our living in the house. He answered, "It is already paid for. You and Greg milked my cows when my hand was broken – and you never asked for payment."



The school we went to was about a mile from the farm – a one-room schoolhouse with one teacher, from first to eighth grade. We did not speak English at home because my parents spoke only in Portuguese. When Mary and John started school, they did not know any English. It was hard for them. It was easier for me and Greg; we learned English from Mary and John before we started school.

When I was in the fourth grade we moved to Hanford, California, about nine miles east of Lemoore. Mom worked in a cannery there and did housework to support us. Dad left us when I was about eight years old. My sister started working in the cannery when she was 12 years old to help support us. In those days we did not have to show proof of age. The boys did yard work and cut lawns to help with expenses. We finally were able to afford electricity. Before, we had been using kerosene lamps; now we could see the corners of the rooms! We still used kerosene for the stove.

When I was about 12 years old and in the seventh grade, we moved back to a farm in Laton, California – not far from our first farm. We had cows again and also grew cotton and alfalfa. Mom wanted some cows, so she and John went to a cattle dealer to buy three. They were \$17 each or three for \$50. She had no cash and offered to pay him \$5 per month. The dealer would not sell them because three cows would not generate enough income. So he offered to sell her six cows for \$100 for \$7.50 per month. The additional cows would generate enough money for food. She accepted the offer.

My mom could not read or write but she managed her business deals – in purchasing the farms, cattle, etc. My sister would read her mail to her and write the checks for her. John was her chauffeur when she finally purchased a car. He was able to get his driver's license at 14 years of age. Mom worked in the cannery, as did my sister until she went to business college. I started working in the cannery at age 14. At that time the wage was three hours for one dollar. All of us worked on the farm.

When I was in the eighth grade, during the berry season, Mom, Greg, and I would get up at daybreak and go pick berries for a farmer. Then we would go home and Greg and I would then get ready and go to school. When I graduated, I had a beautiful ruffled long organdy, purple dress for graduation. It cost \$1.98!

I worked cutting apricots in the dryers for four cents per box until I was old enough to work in the canneries. There was always housework and farm work to do.



My \$2 graduation dress

My mom, sister, and I worked in the cannery six days a week; on Sunday we would can fruit for the winter and wash and iron clothes. Any spare time we would help my brothers with the farm work.

I graduated from the eighth grade and went to Riverdale High School. In my senior year, I had to have my tonsils out. I missed a half year of school and decided to go back and finish my senior year the following year. But I did not go back. It was a bad choice.



Eighth grade graduation: Greg is standing, second from the left; I am sitting at far right

At Thanksgiving time my uncle Manuel Mendonca from Tulare would come and pick us up to have Thanksgiving dinner with them. It was a fun time, and we enjoyed visiting with our cousins. This went on for a few years.

When I started working at age 14 in the cannery, I told them I was 16 because that was the age required. Two years later when I was 16, the Social Security program began. When I had to fill out the papers, I wrote down that I was 18, because I was afraid of being fired for lying about my age. The papers did come back and I put my age at 17. It was accepted and for many years I was a year older in Social Security until I retired and filed. Then it was corrected.

When we moved to Laton, we purchased a 20-acre farm. A few years later, we purchased another 20-acre farm almost across the road. It was covered with sunflowers. We spent many hours chopping the sunflowers so we could plant crops on the farm.

Then there was a Joe Louis fight. We wanted Joe Louis to win. We agreed that if Joe Louis won, we would go to the show. He won, but we did not have enough money. So my brothers took the car seats out to try to get enough change, and they also took the door apart, because some change had fallen in the door. They dug up enough change to be able to go to the show. So we all went to the show to celebrate.

We would get up early and milk cows and feed chickens, pigs, and lambs before going to school. We had to catch the school bus and it would take about 45 minutes to get to school.



The farm in Laton, California

When I went to high school, my brothers would pick me up on Fridays after class, drive by the creamery and they would fill a couple of milk cans with hot water, and I would wash the clothes. This was done during football season. To wash clothes, we had to heat the water outside in a tub to fill the washing machine. For many years we had to pump the water by hand for all of our needs. We had an outhouse. As time went by, we were able to have running water and a bathroom.



When I was 17 Mom, Greg, and I came to Fremont for the summer to work in the cannery. The first year we stayed with friends in Irvington. They had lived on a farm not too far from us in Laton. Their son, Clarence, became my boyfriend. We worked in a dryer cutting apricots before the cannery started. We also became acquainted with a Union City (Decoto) family who also worked in the dryer. When the season was over, we returned home to Laton.

The next year Mom and Greg went to Fremont and Union City to check on the work in the cannery and find a place for us to live that summer. We were promised a job. Mom and Greg came home to get me and the things we needed. They had rented an apartment from the Union City family. Until the cannery started, we cut apricots in their daughter Anne's dryer. I noticed and became interested in the youngest boy from the Union City family. He was my age, good looking, and had beautiful eyes! His name was Joe. We talked and visited during the summer. He took me out with his nephew Delbert Costa and Delbert's girlfriend. Delbert asked him, "Have you asked her yet?" Joe said, "No, not yet." Then Joe turned to me and said, "Will you?" And I said "Yes."

I had fallen in love and we were 200 miles apart. There were no telephones so we wrote to each other. In December he came to see me and gave me an engagement ring.

The next summer Mom decided that I wouldn't go to work in the cannery with her and Greg. I would stay home in Laton and help my brothers. I don't think she liked Joe much. She was brought up – like me – with no men around. She didn't like men. She didn't talk about it, but I could tell. I don't think she wanted to let me leave. I was heartbroken and upset.

I wrote a letter to Joe and he wrote back that he was coming to get me and that we would go to Reno to get married. He was 19 so he had to get a statement signed by his mother granting permission. He picked me up and we went to Reno and were married on August 4, 1940. His sister, Mary Luiz, and nephew, Delbert Costa, were the witnesses.

There was bad feeling between the two mothers – Joe's and mine. My mother was upset with me and Joe for eloping. Finally she came to be on speaking terms with us.

Joe's brother Manuel rented his house to us and went to live with his mother Clara, next door. Manuel was a bachelor and 20 years older than Joe.



Before the wedding, 1939



Marriage photo, 1940

The house had a kitchen, a bedroom, and a full-length garage. Joe worked at the Wedgewood metal foundry and I worked at the cannery. I soon became pregnant and within a year, on July 13, 1941, our first son, Joe, Jr. (Joey) was born. We were living in two rooms.

When Joey was born, my mother didn't want to come visit. I was ten days in the hospital. That was the way things were. After going home I had to go back to the hospital because my afterbirth hadn't come out. I was so weak. I couldn't work. My mother heard about it and sent a girl, Ludrie Mendes, to care for me. She ended up marrying my brother John!

After I got married, we would go to Monterey occasionally – to the beach. I knew my Dad was there. So on one trip my brother-in-law Joe Dutra started asking around and located my Dad. We visited him. He and Manuel Andrade ('Uncle Manuel') became friends. He would come down from Monterey, because he was friendly with Uncle Manuel. One time while my mother was staying with me (as we were both working at the cannery) my dad showed up. They said hello to each other, but he stayed with Uncle Manuel that night!

World War II began in 1941 and there was the threat of Joe being drafted. He worked on repairing pontoons for airplanes at Wedgewood foundry, so he was deferred from the draft for a while. But in December, 1944 he was drafted and sent to Europe where he would be stationed in France, Germany and Belgium. I went to Hanford to be with my mother. A few weeks later our second son, Bob, was born on January 13, 1945. Joe was in the Army until February, 1946. Bob was 14 months old when Joe returned home.



Baby Bob



With Joey and Bob

Joe came back a different man. He'd always had a temper. He got that from his mother. She had a temper, and she would start cussing. But after the war he was quiet a lot. He had a hard time sleeping. He'd get mad, and I wouldn't argue with him, because he'd take it out on the kids. So we never cleared the air. I'd hold it inside. Sometimes I felt like leaving, but in those days, where would I go? I didn't want to go back to my mother. I just didn't want to. Maybe it was pride.



We purchased the house in 1946 from Joe's brother, Manuel; we then remodeled the garage into a bedroom, bathroom, and hallway. There was a shortage of supplies due to the war. We finally got a bathtub and water in the house. We also got a furnace and a hot water heater. Joe built a garage with a shed in the back and my Mom gave us her old Maytag washer. Joe set up the washer in the shed behind the garage. It was great to have a washing machine.



*Joe, Joey, Gregorio and
Manuel at Fort Ord*

Joe used the GI Bill to learn to fly. He took lessons and received his license at the Centerville (now Fremont) airport. He flew a small, yellow plane and took me flying a few times; he also took Joey. Joe also served as an Auxiliary Deputy Sheriff for Alameda County. Later he joined the Air National Guard, serving from 1950 to 1953.

My Mom sold her property in Laton in the late 1940s. She was very clever. When she sold the property she retained an eighth of the mineral rights. She was paid by oil companies for the right to explore for oil. Although they never drilled for oil, she did receive some money for the exploration rights.

Life went on. Joe worked at Wedgewood. Joey and Bob went to school; and I worked at the cannery. Then I worked in the cafeterias of the New Haven School District. When Joey was in high school, he worked at Bert's grocery store, and both Bob and Joey worked at the local packing shed.



Decoto school cafeteria staff

Before 1958 Wedgewood Stove Co. was bought by Rheem and then closed. We chose not to go to Southern California to work for Rheem Manufacturing. Joe went to work for Montgomery Ward in Oakland. When he went for the required physical, it showed he had a thyroid problem that required surgery. His surgery took five hours on the operating table. He recuperated and worked for Montgomery Ward for a short time. Our dentist, Dr. Grimmer, suggested that Joe apply to the local school district for a job. He got the job and worked for the Tri-City School District until Union City incorporated in 1958. Then he worked for the New Haven Unified School District until he retired in 1983.

The family went on vacations at Lake Tahoe and visited Mona Pence and Manuel Perguica in Turlock as well as relatives in Hanford. We also went to Bethel Island occasionally.



*Manuel Perguica, Joe's cousin, and
Mona Pence, his significant other*



*With Manny at our
Bethel Island cottage*



*With Liz Barbee at Tracy
Wildlife Preserve*

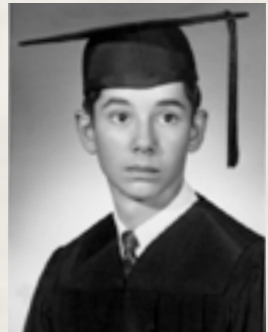
One time when Joey was in high school he had a temperature and a terrible headache. We thought it was a cold, so he stayed home while Joe and I went fishing. When we returned, he was feeling worse. We took him to the doctor, who put him in the hospital as a possible polio. He was in isolation; we could only see him through the windows. The nurse said his legs were stiff. We bought a toy telephone and used that to talk with him. I asked him if he could move his legs – he could and did! He recovered and went back to school. We were so thankful.

Joey graduated high school in 1959 and went to the University of California in Berkeley. He completed his bachelor's degree at San Jose State. He then did graduate work at the University of Denver where he received his doctorate. While in Denver, on February 4, 1966, he married Barbara Williams whom he'd met in Berkeley. They have two sons, Tonio and Aaron. Tonio has a doctorate in History from Yale University and Aaron graduated in Journalism and Environmental Studies from University of Oregon, Eugene.



*Joey and Barbara's
wedding reception*

Bob graduated from Logan High School in 1962. He went to trade school for a while and then joined the Navy. While in boot camp, he caught pneumonia and was very ill. He couldn't call, and I became very worried. He finally did call – it was a relief to hear he was getting better. He received a medical discharge. Not hearing from him taught me a lesson about keeping in touch. So I called my mother more often! Bob married Joyce Barbee in 1964 and they



Bob graduates, 1962

have three sons – Rob, Tracy, and Todd – and a daughter, Michelle.

When Bob was five years old, his paternal grandmother, Clara, fell and broke her hip. She was in a wheelchair for 11 years before she passed away in 1961. When she died, I was pregnant with my third son, Manuel ('Manny').

Manny was born in 1961. When he was older we joined a trailer club. We went on vacations and outings with other families. I went back to work in the school cafeteria when Manny was in the fifth grade.

Manny married Debbie Alexander and they have a daughter, Stephanie.



*Bob and Joyce at
Michelle's wedding*



*Tracy, Rob, Michelle
and Todd*



Clara, Joey and Bob



*Debbie, Stephanie and
Manny; September, 1999*

For a time, Joe and Manuel enjoyed playing Portuguese guitar, with a Mr. Olivera.

Joe had a major heart attack in 1981. I retired in March, 1983 in order to care for him. Joe died in October, 1983. The death certificate noted that he had an apparent congenital narrowing of a coronary artery.



Guitaristas Andrade: Joe and Manuel, Denver, 1968.

I cared for my mother and Manuel until their deaths in 1984. My father, Gregorio, had died earlier, in 1965, from cancer. My brother Greg died in 1991 and my sister Mary in 1995 – both also due to cancer.



Mariana and Mary

I kept very busy doing volunteer work and taking care of my home and yard. I taught Sunday School at Our Lady of the Rosary in Union City. I was involved in social justice projects through Congregations Organizing for Renewal (COR); we worked with Union City to develop after-school programs. A local ball court used for drug dealing caught my attention. I worked with two churches and Union City to remove it. Union City Parks and Recreation then planned a playground park for children. And I also had fun!



I sold my home at 33757 12th St. in Union City in August 2004, after living there for over 60 years. I am now living in an independent retirement center on Country Drive in Fremont. I do miss my pets (Daisy the dog and Tiny the cat) and garden.



Joey and I visited Manny several times at Atwater USP. During the last visit I wore unallowed colors – so Joey and I swapped pants so I could get in!

Manny is now out and working. He ‘inherited’ my wonderful Geo Metro.

I enjoy visiting and being in touch with my kids, grandkids, and now great grandchildren. I also enjoy playing (and winning!) at Bingo.

That’s all for now!

August, 2010

Emma M. Andrade



Appendix

ERMA'S GRANDCHILDREN

Rob Andrade	7-13-65
Todd Andrade	8-17-66
Tracy Andrade	10-21-67
Michelle Andrade Faleski	5-14-69
Tonio Andrade	7-7-68
Aaron Andrade	6-20-70
Stephanie Andrade	1-9-96

ERMA'S GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

Anthony Maggio	8-24-91
Danielle Maggio	6-5-93
Tyler Maggio	7-17-95
Michael Faleski	3-10-99
Brittany Andrade	9-26-88
Adam Andrade	7-22-91
Amalia Andrade	9-3-06
Sylvia Andrade	11-12-08
Nathaniel Andrade	11-7-09

FAMILY DEATHS

Joe Andrade, Sr.	12/25	<i>Father-in-law</i>
Maria Candida de Azevedo ...	1941	<i>Grandmother</i>
Antonio Luis Borba	1942	<i>Grandfather</i>
Mary Costa	10/63	<i>Nephew Delbert's wife</i>
Joe Barros, Jr.*	7/64	<i>Cousin</i>
Gregorio Maciel	11/5/65	<i>Dad</i>

Clara Andrade	3/65	<i>Mother-in-law</i>
Frank Mendonca*	7/69	<i>Cousin</i>
Maria Mendonca	1/72	<i>Aunt</i>
Anna Barros	8/72	<i>Aunt</i>
Joe Dutra	9/74	<i>Brother-in-law</i>
John Santos	10/75	<i>Niece Beatrice's Husband (Luiz)</i>
Ethen Hoover, Sr.	2/76	<i>Brother-in-law (Mary's husband)</i>
Beatrice Lopes	6/77	<i>Erma's father's niece</i>
Joe Luiz	9/77	<i>Brother-in-law</i>
Joe F Barros	11/77	<i>Uncle</i>
Rosalina Costa	1/80	<i>Nephew Delbert's second wife</i>
Sylvester Smith	2/80	<i>Cousin</i>
Clara Maciel	4/83	<i>Aunt (Dad's brother's wife)</i>
Joseph Andrade	10/24/83	<i>Husband</i>
Manuel Andrade	2/10/84	<i>Brother-in-law</i>
Mariana Maciel	10/5/84	<i>Mother</i>
Mabel Xavier	12/84	<i>Cousin Mendonca</i>
Gabe Quadros	9/85	<i>Cousin</i>
Jose Moniz	6/86	<i>Cousin Tina's husband</i>
Frank Barros	11/87	<i>Cousin</i>
Maria D Maciel	5/88	<i>Aunt (Father's sister)</i>
Ludrie Maciel	2/90	<i>Sister-in-law</i>
John J Maciel	8/90	<i>Cousin</i>
Anna Maciel	3/91	<i>Aunt (Dad's sister)</i>
Gregory Maciel	10/91	<i>Brother</i>
Manuel Homen	11/92	<i>Cousin Bernice's husband</i>
Mary Hoover	5/95	<i>Sister</i>
Rose Piper	7/96	<i>Cousin Mendonca</i>
Joan Casado	2/12/99	<i>Niece (Hoover)</i>
Sarah Freitas	8/00	<i>Cousin</i>
Joe M Souza	10/00	<i>Cousin</i>
Mary Souza	11/00	<i>Cousin Mendonca</i>

Bill Hoover	1999?	<i>Nephew (Mary's son)</i>
Tina Moniz	12/01	<i>Cousin</i>
Tony Mendonca	12/01	<i>Cousin</i>
Jim Hill	2003	<i>Cousin</i>
Delbert Costa	12/03	<i>Nephew</i>
Mary Luiz	12/05	<i>Sister-in-law</i>
Polly Maciel	11/30/04	<i>Sister-in-law</i>
Anna Dutra	8/10/05	<i>Sister-in-law</i>
John Maciel	10/30/08	<i>Brother</i>

* Barros and Mendonca are Mariana's sisters.

Erma & Joe



