

# The Emerald Family of East Falmouth

*Richard Kendall*

The 1995 Falmouth Annual Town Meeting voted to purchase "*land now or formerly belonging to Manuel Emerald consisting of 4.67 acres more or less, located off Davisville Road in East Falmouth.*" The purchase placed into town ownership a two story home and several acres of farm land. No one was living at the site in 1995 and no farming had taken place for many years. The family generously sold the property to the town at a price below what they could have received from a private buyer. In its vacant state the house has drawn differing views as to appropriate use.

Members of the Emerald family had owned the house from 1906 to 1995. Their years lived in this house are a representative chapter of Portuguese immigration history. The Manuel Emerald story in America began in the 1890s and is recalled by his daughter and the children and grandchildren of neighbors and friends.

## Coming to America

Manuel Emerald was born in St. Michael, Azores in 1876, in Ponte Garcia, a village on the southern side.



Brother John and wife Augusta Johnson Emerald. John was the first Emerald to come to America and the first grower to transport strawberry harvest by railroad. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

He was the son of John and Rose Emerald. Manuel's older brother John, a monumental figure in the growth of the strawberry industry, was the first in the family to immigrate to America. John had come to this country in the year of baby brother Manuel's birth. By 1890 John was using his farming background to grow strawberries in the fields of Falmouth. He was an entrepreneur at heart and had a vision of what could be harvested from the Falmouth soil.

Brother Frank came to America in 1898. In 1900, little brother Manuel, now twenty-four years of age, was sponsored for immigration by John and set sail for America. The three brothers, each an experienced farmer, were now settled in the new country and filled with optimism for the future. The streets of the new country were not paved with gold, but better still, the soil would respond to careful planting and constant attention. Crops could be grown, hard work rewarded and children could thrive.

In 1902, Manuel Emerald was introduced to Mary Estrella Farias at a friend's home near the Coonamesett River in East Falmouth. Miss Estrella had recently come to America from Lomba da Maia

on St. Michael. On August 19, 1903, they were married by Father M. C. Terra at St. Joseph's Church in Woods Hole. The wedding was witnessed by brothers Frank and John and John's wife, Augusta Johnson Emerald. It was time to buy a home and raise a family. The young couple, Manuel and Estrella Emerald, saw an ideal home site for sale on Davisville Road.



Wedding picture of Manuel and Estrella Emerald following 1903 service at St. Joseph's Church in Woods Hole. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

### A Clear Title

Warranty Deeds recorded at the turn of the century in the Barnstable County Registry of Deeds

show two other owners of this property on Davisville Road prior to the Emeralds taking title. In the 1800s the desired 4.67 acres had been divided into two parcels. In 1900 the then owner, Jabez D. Baker, sold "a certain tract of land with the buildings thereon" to Manuel Ferreira DeSouza for "one dollar and other

valuable considerations." It was not required at the time to list the actual selling price. In December of 1902 Mr. Baker sold off "a *certain parcel of woodland*" to Manuel F. Souza for "one dollar and other valuable considerations."

On October 6, 1906, Maria F. Souza, wife of Manuel

F. Souza, sold "*a certain tract of land with the buildings thereon standing*" to Manuel Amaral for "one dollar and other valuable considerations." The property descriptions in each of the transactions match the Emerald land bought by the town. The discrepancies in the spelling of the names is attributable to the Registrar who handled the recordings. Neither

Mr. DeSouza (Souza) or Mr. Emerald (Amaral) signed their own signatures on the deeds. In one case the initials of the notary accompany the signature and in another an "X" is accompanied by a Justice of the Peace signing for the buyer. Manuel and Estrella Emerald had acquired the parcels for what was to be the Emerald family homestead. With minor alterations as the children were born, the house stood the same until the major addition was put on by neighbor and builder John DeMello in the mid 1920s. Mr. DeMello was the father of former Falmouth Selectman John DeMello, Jr. and grandfather of Barnstable County Sheriff Jack DeMello.



Brother Frank came over from the Azores in 1898 and settled in North Falmouth. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

The Emeralds moved into a growing community. A 1907 map of East Falmouth shows the Methodist Church and church cemetery located nearby on "Falmouth Road" (Route 28). The former church site is presently the address of the law office of attorney Arthur Rapoza. Also shown is the old elementary school which was located opposite the church site. The post office was on the corner of Davisville Road in the old general store. Passing this corner heading toward Teaticket was the church parsonage and then the Village Hall on the present site of Jake's Tap.

## A Daughter Remembers

Beatrice (Emerald) Burdo was born in 1917, the seventh of eight children to be raised by Manuel and Estrella Emerald. Mary, Emily, Lena, Manuel, John, Bee, Rose and Lewis were each born at the Davisville home. Mr. and Mrs. Emerald were to lose two other children in infancy. Bee's clear recollections of her parents and careful filing of important family papers and photographs allow inquirers to capture the essence of family life during the first half of this century. She begins recollections of the inside of her home at about age five.

"The back pantry led into the dining room. There was a black sink and a hand pump for water. There was no running water until much later. Kerosene lamps were used for light." One of those lamps remains among Bee's prized possessions. "There was no refrigerator. An ice box was filled with ice in the summer and the outdoors provided refrigeration in the winter. The house was heated by a wood stove. A scrub board was used for washing clothes." Her mother would use only the "Welcome Soap" brand. You could save the labels and redeem them for prizes. A crystal bowl with cups was a special reward for her mother after many, many, many washes. There was no wallpaper in the original house. Bee would add



The Emerald family gathered in 1935 as Estrella prepares for visit back to St. Michael: (front row from left) Rose, Lena, Lewis, Mary; (back row from left) Beatrice, Manuel, Pa, John, Ma, Emily. Courtesy Bee Emerald.



"Pa" Emerald with daughter Emily, 1942. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

this later during her working years as a surprise to her family. The original house had a small open staircase leading to the upstairs. After Lewis, the eighth and youngest child, was born in 1926, Bee would often look after him. She soon figured out that by tying a rope to the baby's cradle and running it down the stairs she could sit on the bottom step to listen to the grownups talk in the dining room and gently pull on the rope to rock the baby to sleep.

There was so much a child could do on the farm she recalls. The family had a milk cow, a horse named Dan, chickens and geese. Chicken was on the dinner plate a lot. Bee doesn't ever recall only one chicken being prepared. "One would never feed us all." Mr. Emerald planted apple and plum trees which produced the fillings for prize-winning pies at the Barnstable County Fair.





Bee, Rose and friends from New Bedford helping with strawberry harvest. House and barn are in background. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

The house was always immaculate and in good order even with so many children coming and going. Her mother braided beautiful rugs which covered the dining room floor. The material for these rugs was bought on shopping trips to the New Bedford mills. When the rugs were hung outside to air, the older daughters could scrub the floor. Bee, being the next to youngest, would be sent to the cellar to watch for any water which might leak through the floor boards into the cellar. Bee's tap on the floor above

would be notice that her sisters were using too much water and not enough scrub brush!

### The Emeralds - A Team

Bee's eyes turn moist and her voice becomes husky when she speaks of her parents. Fifty years after the passing of her mother in 1937, and forty-one years after the death of her father, the memories are strong and vivid. Emily, second to the oldest, became mother to the younger children, especially to Lewis who was only eleven at the time of his mother's death.

"Dad would hitch up the horse and buggy to take mother to Woods Hole to catch the boat to New Bedford. This was an annual trip taken by mother to buy wool and cotton materials. Mom was a wonderful seamstress and would turn the material into dresses and shirts. "Remember there were *eight* children!" Bee emphasized. When the planting and harvesting seasons had passed and winter approached, the inside "sewing season" began.

The buying trip to New Bedford was a well-planned excursion. A good sized trunk was carried on the buggy to be placed aboard the boat, soon to be filled with the materials purchased from the city's textile mills. Estrella Emerald would make her purchases and carry them back to the boat until the trunk was filled. These recollections are of the early 1920s when it was customary to leave the trunk unattended between trips to the mills. "Nobody helped themselves to things in those days," said Bee. The busy sewing season lasted all through the winter. With her children in bed for the night, mother would begin sewing. The material bought in New Bedford was turned into the clothes worn by the

family during the next twelve months. She was especially skilled at making over beautiful clothing provided by friends. Fond memories remain of Mr. and Mrs. Rawson Jenkins furnishing lovely clothing, outgrown by their children, to be made over for an Emerald child. In return, the Jenkins would dine on strawberries, potatoes and fresh vegetables from the Emerald farm. The close relationship between the families continued throughout the years. Rawson Jenkins was elected Tax Collector for the town in 1911 and served in this capacity until 1929. (The passing of years is reflected in his vote total and salary in 1911. Mr. Jenkins was swept into office with 448 votes for the \$2000 a year position.) Mr. Jenkins



Manuel at home, 1935. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

often encouraged Bee to accept a position at Town Hall. She always declined and remained loyally employed by the elder Joe Miskell at Wood Lumber Company for twenty years, until her retirement in 1958.

Material for clothing was not the only treasure carried back from New Bedford on the shopping expeditions. The children could look forward to "goodies" that mother would surely bring back with her. One such surprise was a small white puppy wearing a big red bow that was presented to brother Lewis. This was to be the first of several dogs for the animal loving youngster. In later years, when Lewis went off to serve in World War II, he left behind his two pet beagles. Sisters Bee and Rose could be relied on to care for the pets until he returned at war's end.

Estrella Emerald was an independent lady. Her shopping trips to Falmouth village called for her to hitch up the one-seat buggy and drive the Vineyard Sound shore route to the stores. She would tie the horse to a metal ring fixed to a granite post familiar to many of Falmouth's older residents. If the shopping had taken longer than expected and dinner was behind schedule, she would set the horse on a quickened pace that would bring the shopper home on time. The tell-tale sweat on the horse would tip off her husband that it had been a busy shopping day.

Most of the grocery shopping was done in East Falmouth at the general store at the corner of Davisville Road and what was "Falmouth Road" and is now East Falmouth Highway, Route 28. Estrella would drive the buggy to the store operated by Ferdinand Baker. Mr. Baker's daughter, Frances, married Mr. Stevens, a name readily recognized by shoppers at Stevens' Store in the years that followed.

Frances served as Post Mistress at the small post office located within her father's general store. Rose Emerald became assistant to Mrs. Stevens and worked with her for several years. The Emeralds did not have carrier delivery and would pick up their mail at post office box #14. With the opening of newer and larger post office buildings in East Falmouth the number changed to #314 and remained the family's box number until the death of Emily, the last Emerald to live in the house and pick up mail at the post office.

Dinner time at the Emeralds brought out Estrella Emerald's cooking skills and creative talents. Before marrying Manuel and settling in East Falmouth, she had been employed as a cook for a wealthy family in the Azores. She could prepare feasts for family reunions and was equally adept at turning leftovers into memorable meals. Her first meals at the Davisville home were prepared on a wood stove, later a coal stove and eventually an oil stove. Bee remembers her mother serving the family around a large dining room table, the kind with claw feet common in this era. A large hutch stood in the room. The family sat with father at the head of the table. The children living

at home sat in descending order of age, starting at his left, first Mary, then Emily, Lena, Manuel, John, Rose, Bee and Lewis. Overseeing the meal gave Mrs. Emerald great satisfaction even though she was the last to be seated and the first to get up from the table, ensuring that her family was well taken care of.

Selection of the menu required any number of decisions by her. The family farm produced an abundance of fruits and vegetables for the table and for Estrella's store of preserves. Mr. Tsiknas was also on



Estrella Emerald at the farm during growing season, 1936. Courtesy Bee Emerald.



the street with items from the Boston Market. A dishpan (1925 size) full of bananas and oranges could be bought for twenty-five cents. Estrella had choices from several vendors who would go up and down Davisville Road offering meal options. Mr. Oliver from down the road came with his call of "baker man" offering a selection of fresh baked goods. Beef stew could be prepared from the beef that was available from the Bourne's Market man who traveled over from West Falmouth. A fisherman from Provincetown would find a ready buyer for his catch at the Emerald house.

Once, to the surprise and dismay of Mrs. Emerald the fisherman passed the house by. John, who did not care for fish, had told the fisherman that his mother would not be buying any fish that day. It is not known whether John gave the same message to Mr. Sylvia who provided fried eels from nearby Green Pond. Mrs. Emerald expected that good, nutritious meals would be eaten. She didn't expect her children to be fussy eaters. "If you

don't like the dinner tonight, you will like it better tomorrow night," she said.



Friends help out with haying at the farm. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

As in all homes, with the meal completed, the task of washing the dishes followed. In the Emerald house two copper kettles were filled with water and put on the stove to heat for dish water. With no running water on the street, the chore of pumping enough water by hand to fill the kettles fell to the two oldest daughters, Mary and Emily. The youngest, Bee and Rose, would go to work washing and drying. Father and sons headed to the fields with bucket and hoes for the never ending job of weeding. Father always seemed to be working.

Manuel Emerald was a man set on accomplishment. He had a strong work ethic and a love for the land. He was a worker from first light of day until sunset. During the first years of marriage he supported Estrella and himself by taking outside work wherever work was to be found. He was a familiar sight pedaling his bicycle to Woods Hole for landscaping work on Penzance Point. Old

timers say his tree plantings and stone walls still grace the lovely estates. Later on he also worked with Mr. Motta from Old Barnstable Road digging foundations. Bee recalls, "They didn't have any heavy equipment for excavation but did very well using a horse and scoop."

Manuel and his brother John certainly did many things well but it is their success in the strawberry industry that brought them public recognition during the years between the 1890s and World War II.

## Strawberries

Large, red strawberries have been the hallmark of Falmouth growers for one hundred years. During the first half of this century, strawberry growing was a major force in the economy of the region. A front page story in the New Bedford Standard Times in June of 1930 estimated the Falmouth crop to be two and one half million quarts with a value of \$400,000. The article described strawberry growing as "an important Cape Industry" which had grown at an "astonishing rate since the first planting in the 1890s." The Times attributed this growth to the "untiring industry" of John Emerald and his "fellow Portuguese immigrants who followed him to Cape Cod and cleared themselves a strawberry empire.....which is now the largest berry producing area north of Maryland." The paper had sent reporters to cover strawberry picking at farms in Davisville. They visited the fields of Manuel Benevides, Manuel Pacheco, Ernesto

Frias and Manuel Emerald. Manuel was identified as the brother of "the pioneer John Emerald, now dead for some years." The paper reported that "the Emerald farm is nicely kept with nice rows and fine berries which are in keeping with the family tradition." Two large pictures filled page two. The caption of one hails "Pickers bring in the fruit," showing twenty workers at the Emerald farm and the second picture is of a refrigerated rail car destined for



Rose, Bee, Emily and friends during strawberry harvest. Courtesy Bee Emerald.



Enjoying the fruits of her labor, 8-year-old strawberry picker Alice Valerio, 1930. Courtesy Alice Valerio Ciambelli.

Portland, Maine. John Emerald was the first grower to ship strawberries off Cape using the railroad. The use of rail and refrigeration in shipping had transformed the local start-up strawberry business into a major regional industry.

Bee can recall back over seventy years to some of these earlier days. She was an experienced picker at seven. She knows that her father had plowed the fields with his horse. After buying eight additional acres across the street from the family's house, he used a "new" method of clearing. Manuel called upon a neighbor known as "Dynamite Jack" or "Four Finger Jack" who dynamited out the stumps and opened the earth for planting. Manuel Emerald took pride in the quality of his land. He paid \$100 an acre for his farm land. He had been offered other land at \$1.00 an acre but turned it down as not being up to his standards.

Planting, harvesting and marketing his crop was an every day, day-long effort. Mr. Emerald's hard work had produced good results. His family was well cared for and he had been able to afford more land to farm. In strawberry season, it meant more help was needed. His wife would help him get the extra workers. In the spring Estrella would take the train to Wareham and go house to house asking for pickers to come to the Emerald farm in East Falmouth for the season. The farm needed twenty-five strawberry pickers in the fields. If the workers could not be found in Wareham it meant a ride to New Bedford and perhaps still another trip to Providence to get workers. The picking season would only last three to four weeks. The finances of the Emeralds and ev-

ery other strawberry grower in town depended on picking and marketing the crop in this very short time.

It was necessary for growers to provide quarters for the workers during their several week stay at the farm. It was a common sight to see "picker sheds" behind the grower's house. In Manuel Emerald's case it meant providing housing and preparing twenty-five beds for the workers. Those who lived in East Fal-



Strawberry season helpers. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

mouth during the first half of this century recall these additions to the local population as being as much a part of the summer scene as the summer tourist work force is today.

With pickers hired and housed and the berries ripening, the Emeralds and other growers were ready for an exhausting several week push. Everyone in the household helped out. The regular farm chores would be taken care of and then – berries to be picked! Crates of berries would be stacked for pickup and transport to the railroad station. Uncle John had led the way. As years passed, transportation shifted to truck. A number of old East Falmouth names are



Emily picking grapes which grew the length of the property behind the house. She was the jam maker; her mother created a special strawberry wine. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

recalled as men who drove through the night to bring Falmouth's freshly picked berries to the Boston Market auction.

## Neighbors and the Neighborhood

Rose (Balona) Marks is Bee (Emerald) Burdo's god-child. The Balonas were Davisville Road neighbors of the Emeralds and close family friends. Gabriel Balona served as a pall bearer at the 1956 funeral of Manuel Emerald. Rose is the wife of Falmouth Selectman Edward Marks.

The Balona family raised a small crop of strawberries and vegetables. "Nothing like the Emerald farm, but large enough," Rose recalls. She also remembers the "picker sheds" in the neighborhood providing seasonal housing for the workers. Rose remembers that strawberry picking hours were long. Her brothers "would pick at home all day and then go over to the Emeralds to help pick their crop." It was usually Mr. Furtado who would truck their berries to Boston. A small family patch could produce a remarkable crop that could "pay for the winter's coal. But the first picking would go to the church," she added softly. During each conversation concerning strawberry growing in East Falmouth, the commitment of parishioners to Saint Anthony's Church is mentioned.

As a young girl of nine or ten, Rose remembers "the soldiers marching down the street." American troops were training on Washburn's Island for the anticipated World War II invasion of Europe. Soldiers were camped in the nearby fields of East Falmouth as well as on the island. As the troops would march down Davisville Road in combat gear, Rose's mother would instruct her children to fill the soldiers' helmets with



strawberries. Young men, soon to be part of invasion forces moving forward against killing machine gun fire, would reach out their helmets and the smiling children would fill them with the biggest and ripest berries from the field. There was no knowing what fate awaited these troops as they waved and thanked the youngsters.

As the end of the war in Germany drew near, Rose's husband saw soldiers in uniforms different from those seen before. Ed recalls seeing German prisoners of war picking strawberries in his brother Albert's fields. They worked the 250 foot-long rows of strawberry plants at the farm off Sandwich Road. Ed, barely teenaged, would be allowed to ride in the truck with his older brothers, carrying the crates of berries to Boston. Leaving at nine at night the brothers would arrive back in Falmouth in the early morning in time to start work for the next day.

Rose remembers Mr. Emerald as a "lovely man." He would come over to the Balonas' often for talks with Rose's parents. He had a presence to him that immediately identified him as 'the boss.' If he was speaking, one would listen. On occasion his visits would come as the Balona children and other neighborhood youngsters were playing ball on the lawn with



The Emerald's five daughters: (from left) Mary, Emily, Lena, Bee, Rose. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

the ball game playing from a radio in the window of the living room. The 'boss' would instruct the players that "they should not be playing ball, they should be working."

Rose recalls a soft side of Manuel Emerald as well. On warm summer evenings the ice cream truck would drive around the neighborhood. If Mr. Emerald was on the street at the time it was a sure bet that "he would take out his small change purse and give coins to the children for ice cream."

As with other residents involved with strawberry growing, she offered that "it is easy to remember that time because it was such a happy time. If someone was sick you took them bread. You may not have



Saint Anthony's Church was opened on January 1, 1923, the year this picture was taken. The parishioners raised the money to pay for the church. Many strawberry farmers donated their harvest on the Sunday at the peak of the season. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

a lot but you shared what you had." Rose and her husband feel this was passed on to the next generation: "to share and to have respect for elders. To give of yourself to help others." Rose and Ed Marks still live in East Falmouth.

Cynthia (Augusta) Botelho is the fourth generation of her family to live and work in East Falmouth. Great grandparents Manuel and Mary Souza are buried in the old Methodist church cemetery in East Falmouth. Grandmother Marion Souza married Antonio Roger Augusta. Their son John, born in 1896, would marry Elvira DeMello and their daughter Cynthia would become Falmouth's Strawberry Queen at the big Festival in 1952. Cynthia's father, John Augusta, succeeded John DeMello and became

the second president of the Falmouth Strawberry Growers' Association.

Cynthia's grandfather was a strawberry grower. Cynthia's father, a builder, was very active in support of the strawberry industry because of "loyalty to her grandfather who was still in the growing business," she said. Grandfather Antonio also shipped berries by rail and also sold his produce to Swift's Market on Depot Avenue. Swift's became the site of The Market Bookshop.

If her father and grandfather were involved with strawberries then it was

certain that Cynthia would be as well. Her first bike was purchased with earnings from picking strawberries. She rode with her father to Wareham to pick up pickers. She rode with him in the truck to pick up crates of strawberries at farms all over East Falmouth. Strawberry picking occurred every day but Saturday. The Boston market was closed on Sunday so there were no Saturday night deliveries of berries. Falmouth berries had to be fresh for auction.

Cynthia and husband Dan (the Botelhos are another long time East Falmouth family) recall crates of berries stacked at Saint Anthony's Church ready to be transported to Boston. The proceeds of the sale from "Strawberry Sunday" were the offerings from a hard working and devoted parish.

Cynthia had a unique opportunity to see the business end of the strawberry industry. Her father, as president of the Growers' Association, had to negotiate with brokers from the city markets. She has clear memories of two brokers that regularly dealt with her father. Mr. Otto and Mr. Ingersal came to Falmouth from Maine to purchase berries, potatoes and other vegetables from local growers in the association. Cynthia can still remember the chocolate that Mr. Ingersal would bring with him to give to her. It was a treat for the eight year old. The buyers would stay overnight at the Elm Arch Inn during their business trips.

The highlight of the season for Cynthia, her sister Annette and brother John, came each year when they would be allowed to ride to the Boston Market in the strawberry truck. The truck would leave at night, allowing use of every bit of sunlight for the day's

picking. The drive to Boston in the 1930s was a several-hour journey north on Route 28. Cynthia knew she was getting close to market when she could smell the sweet aroma of chocolate from the Baker's Chocolate factory. Falmouth strawberries always drew top price at the market. She recalls the name "fern berries" being attached to the strawberries from Falmouth fields. Freshly cut ferns would be piled in layers on top of each crate of berries. Falmouth berries arrived fresh, whole and delicious.

The Market was an exciting place, busy with farmers, truckers and buyers. It was easy to stay awake until the drive home but just in case, "Dad would add an incentive of five cents for staying awake into the evening." From experience he knew that it was best to have sleeping passengers aboard for the long ride home. Looking back, Cynthia suspects that it was the sight of children, fast asleep in the truck as



Son John pulling a drag with scale to weigh sacks of turnips, 1941. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

they headed home, that inclined the State Trooper at the Blue Hills to tear up an about-to-be-issued speeding ticket.

The Botelhos feel the strawberry industry and other farming efforts provided a sense of "freedom." The recently-arrived Portuguese immigrants could be economically self-sufficient. They were seen as hard working, honest and displaying great courtesy and kindness to others. The work was hard and whole families participated in the hard life. Cynthia notes with deep respect that farming families "planted on their knees, weeded on their knees and picked on their knees." Their descendants are proud Americans with roots

that are Portuguese. Dan Botelho is sure that strawberry growing "benefited both the town and the Portuguese settler." The descendants carry on the tradition of working to benefit the town. The Botelhos live in East Falmouth.

Arthur Rapoza is a practicing attorney with offices in East Falmouth. He is the grandson of John and Philomena Rapoza, the next door neighbors of the Emerald family. The grandparents had five sons:

Manuel, whose service to the town is legendary, Arthur (father of the Falmouth lawyer), Edward, George and Benjamin. All of the children were born at their Davisville home.

Attorney Rapoza's law office is not far from his grandfather's and the Emeralds' Davisville Road homesites. He remembers the old Methodist Church which once stood where his law office now stands. His front office windows look out to the site of the

early East Falmouth Elementary school. By the 1890s the school's enrollment listed children of the early Portuguese settlers. Records show the Augusta, Souza and Emerald families in attendance. Arthur's rear

windows look onto the church cemetery head stones marking burials in the last century. He walks through this historic site and notes with sadness the thoughtless vandalism that has caused damage to a head stone. Arthur understands the significance of those who once lived here and are buried in this historic place.

Arthur's father owned five acres of farm land on Old Barnstable Road and young Arthur was to learn just



Manuel and Estrella prepare to celebrate their thirty-second wedding anniversary in 1935. Courtesy Bee Emerald.

how much hard work is involved in growing strawberries. In Junior High school he was assigned a one-third acre plot to care for. Over the next year he planted and weeded. The mother plants sent out their runners and Arthur was rewarded with two years of picking 5000 quarts of strawberries from the plants. He remembers the three years spent on hands and knees tending his crop as a great learning experience. If the practice of law requires patience, he had learned the virtue.

Arthur Rapoza is now 63. He thinks back to being a nine year old during the World War II years. The war effort had taken many men and women into the military and other war-related efforts. "It was hard to get pickers, even at five cents a box," he recalled. Arthur remembers that the East Falmouth fields were good and had been well planted. He can recall the Emerald's truck picking up the day's harvest and transporting the strawberries to Boston. He can also recall picking strawberries along side German prisoners of war. Arthur could see the armed American soldier standing guard over the POWs. The crop had to be brought in and there was no time to spare!

While picking season is short, the commercial strawberry growers are at work for most of the year preparing for the harvest. In recalling earlier days, work done from April to November are spoken of as crucial times for successful growing. New fields were plowed and planted in April for picking the following year, related Dan Botelho. The fields had to be weeded. The "mother" plants sent out runners and parallel rows were established. The plants have a productive life of three years. In the fall pine needles were gathered and spread over the plants to protect them from frost. Periodic crop rotation revitalized the soil. The farmer worked in harmony with nature.

## Portuguese Culture Lives On

Bee Emerald Burdo expressed the wish that she could tell her parents just how much she appreciated them. Father and mother knew that their children loved them, but Bee also hoped that they knew how proud the children were of them. "They picked up their suitcases and came to this country and gave us everything." Early immigrants courageously faced uncertain futures in a new land. They brought with them an ethic for hard work, family loyalty, a ready hand for anyone in need and an obvious capacity to love and enjoy life.

The Emerald family homestead on Davisville Road stands as one reminder of an extraordinary period in Falmouth's history. The late 1800s introduced an important new element to the community. The Portuguese culture was admirable and the agricultural vision of the new immigrants was remarkable. A century after the first immigration their descendants are vital contributors to the life of the town. Now that the town has bought the Emerald property, we have an opportunity to insure that future generations understand and appreciate this period of history.

Richard Kendall is a Falmouth native. After graduation from the Falmouth schools and Brown University he entered the United States Marine Corps serving as a First Lieutenant. He returned to Falmouth in 1960 following his discharge and managed the family printing company for the next ten years. He was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1970 and served four terms. He has also served the Commonwealth as Massachusetts Commissioner of Environmental Management, Director of Forests and Parks, and as the Governor's Legislative Director. Mr. Kendall has been a Town Meeting member for over thirty years and has been active on a number of town boards and committees.