

# Azoreans to California: A History of Migration and Settlement

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[Back to Home Page](#)

## Introduction

In the Atlantic Ocean, there is an archipelago of nine volcanic islands first settled by man at the beginning of the Renaissance. This is a study of the people of those islands who are essentially migrants going from one continent to the other. This is a story of that migration from the mainland of Europe to the valleys of California. These people who rode the ocean waves brought with them a deep-seated interest in farming and derived prosperity where there was only untilled soil. This is a story of their character, their ability, their culture, and their resolve.

Table of Contents	Page
<a href="#">Section I</a> <a href="#">Portugal</a> . . . . .	1-3
The Making of a People.	
<a href="#">Section II</a> <a href="#">Azores Islands</a> . . . . .	3-33
Early Accounts of Land Beyond. Prince Henry the Navigator and the Age of Exploration. Discovery of the Azores. Settlers and Settlement. The Flemings. Captain-Donatary System. In the Middle of the Atlantic. Climate. The Shaking, Spewing Earth. Plants and Animals. Agriculture. Resilient People. Mostly Humble Abodes. Clothing. Urban Environment. Names, Schools, and Illiteracy. Family, Village, and Island. Religion, Superstition, and Witchcraft. Azorean Festivals. Azorean Bullfighting. Important Historical Events.	
<a href="#">Section III</a> <a href="#">Azorean Migration</a> . . . . .	33-

43

A Way Station. Reasons to Leave. Time to Leave. Routine to Emigrate. Going Back Home. More Recent Emigration.

[Section IV](#) [Azorean Immigration into the United States](#) . . . . . 43-

51

Early Period. Corte-Real. Living in New England. Portuguese Jews. Serving the New Nation. Mass Immigration. Reasons to Become an American Immigrant.

[Section V](#) [Azorean and New England Whaling and Fishing](#) . . . . . 51-

58

Beginnings. Azores. Yankee Whaling. Fishing the Grand Banks.

[Section VI](#) [New England](#) . . . . . 58-

62

Azoreans on Shore in New England. Textile Mills. New England Farming. Other Occupations.

[Section VII](#) [California](#) . . . . . 62-

96

Discovery. Ship Jumpers. First Portuguese Settlers. Whaling and the Gold Rush. Waves of Immigration. Gold Fever Gone and Now Farming. Portuguese in 1880. Shore Whaling. San Leandro. Sacramento Area. Ventura. Sheep and Sweet Potatoes in the San Joaquin Valley. From Hawaii. San Joaquin Valley, the New Center of Azorean Population. Whaling and Fishing. Later Migration in the State. Nevada.

[Section VIII](#) [Azorean Culture and Assimilation](#) . . . . . 96-

110

Azorean Character. Culture. Religion. What's in a Name. Language and Education. Organizations. Festivals. Portuguese Language Newspapers. Assimilation.

[Notes](#) . . . . . 110-

126

[Bibliography](#)

---

Statistical Tables:

[Table 1](#): Size and Elevation of the Azores Islands . . . . . 12-13

[Table 2](#): Azores Islands: Population Density, and  
Population Change, 1864-1920 . . . . . 35-36

[Table 3](#): Population of the Azores Islands, 1920-1975 . . . . . 41

[Table 4](#): Portuguese Immigration to the U.S., 1820-1977 . . . . . 48

[Table 5](#): Portuguese Population in the U.S., 1870-1978 . . . . . 51

[Table 6:](#) Portuguese in California by Region, 1860-1880 . . . .70

[Table 7:](#) Island of Origin of the Portuguese Dairymen in  
the San Joaquin Valley . . . . .87-88



[Back to Home Page](#)

# Portugal

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## The Making of a People

The Portuguese are a cosmopolitan people living on the far western shore of Europe. Many different ancient tribes swept through the area and settled. The first group were the Iberians from which the land occupied by Portugal and Spain gets its name, the Iberian Peninsula. Iberians also settled in Italy, Scotland, and the Basque.

The Iberians were a mixture of migrant tribes of which one was the Lusitanians. They were described by the classical geographers Polybius and Strabo as a loose, quarrelsome federation of tribes, living behind the walls of fortified villages in the hills, engaging in banditry as their primary occupation, and carrying on incessant tribal warfare." Lusus was the mythical first settler of Portugal which the classic Portuguese poet Camoes in his epic poem "The Lusiads" or sons of Lusus is given its name. The Lusitanians inhabited the western edge of the Iberian Peninsula.

The Phoenicians established trading stations along the Portuguese coast, and they were followed by the Carthagians, Greeks, and Romans who also were involved in commerce. The city of Olissipo, which is modern Lisbon, was founded by the Greeks. The Romans gave the Portuguese the Latin language, political culture, the Christian church, and also bullfighting. Today's seaport city of Porto was originally the Roman settlement of Portus Cale from which the name Portugal came. The Romans named the peninsula where Portugal and Spain are located, Hispania.

The Celts too made their presence known, as well as the barbaric invaders from the north: the Vandals, Suevi, Alans, and the Visigoths. From the 8th to the 12th century, Portugal was under Arab and Berber control. The Arabs dominated the southern part which is where the province of the Algarve is located. From these people, Portuguese got science and navigation principles especially the compass which help set the stage for the period of exploration. The Muslim invasion and Moorish dominance strengthened the Portuguese's resolve and faith in Jesus Christ. They fought the Muslims unceasingly for several centuries employing guerrilla tactics of hit and run. The Christians held the mountains while the Muslims controlled the cities and valleys. It was a period of unrelenting Christian crusade.

The Christian Knights of Leon, fighting from 1055 to 1064, were able to free northern Portugal from the Moors. In 1095, the King of Leon gave this area, the county of Portugal, to his daughter, Theresa, as part of her dowry. Her son, Alfonso Henriques, defeated the Moors in a major battle which separated Portugal permanently from Spain. Crusaders from Germany, England, and Flanders drove the Moors out of Lisbon in 1147. Battles continued after this in southern Portugal to rid the Moors completely from the Iberian Peninsula. This Christian fervor was the impetus for Portuguese exploration which was initially a mission to save the world for Christ.

The composition of the Portuguese people is heterogeneous. Being a land bordered by the ocean, with its seaports serving as trading centers, Portugal became a mixture of peoples. It has been said, "There is no color prejudice in Portugal; there could not be . . . in Lisbon you can see the races of the earth in a single individual." This attitude of multicultural, of acceptability, became part of their colonial policy. They were tolerant of the native peoples they encountered and mixed freely and especially sexually with them. (The Brazilian philosopher Gilberto Freyre, said, "God created the white and the negro, and the Portuguese made the mulatto!" The offspring from these liaisons were "family" and treated as such, a characteristic of the Portuguese. They have a strong sense of responsibility to the family which became a major force in their migration.

One scholar wrote, "The mainspring of their [Portuguese] thought and actions is the heart . . . their successful treatment of native peoples

consists of sentimental approach . . . It is in this aspect of their character no less than in their humanity, they approximate to the English. Both peoples have a similar intuitive distrust of the intellectual, especially the hypercritical."



[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# Azores Islands

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## Early Accounts of Land Beyond

With the sea at his toes and an inquisitive and adventuring mind, the Portuguese natural orientation is towards the west. The 17th century Portuguese writer, Antonio Vieira wrote, "God gave the Portuguese a small country as a cradle but all the world as their grave."<sup>1</sup>

There were mythical lands across sea as suggested by ancient writing. Theopompue in 4th century B.C. wrote of a large western land in the Atlantic. Pliny and Diodorus wrote of a large continent beyond to the west. Solon of Greece in 600 B.C. visited Egypt and was told of an island named Atlantis which Plato wrote about in his Dialogues of 400 BC. His account tells of a powerful land outside the columns of Hercules which was larger than Libya and Asia combined. It was a land that was the way to other lands, but it sank during a time of earthquakes and floods. The water was so muddy from its sinking that it was impassable.<sup>2</sup>

But there were islands located in the Atlantic that were steeped in myth and seen on early maps. They had names like the Fortunate Isles, Antillia, Brazil, and California.<sup>3</sup> There were stories, such as Irish St. Brendan of Clonfert in 545 sailing from Kerry and finding islands which may have been the Madeiras.<sup>4</sup> On a Catalan chart these mysterious Atlantic islands were identified as the Isles of St. Brendan and lie only a few hundred miles off the Strait of Gibraltar.<sup>5</sup> Mohammad al Edrisi was credited at one time of having located a series of islands which might have been the Cape Verdes, the Maderias, the Canaries, or possibly the Azores. This was in the 12th century.<sup>6</sup>

A Medici map of 1351 contained seven islands off the Portuguese coast which were arranged in groups of three. There was the southern group or the Goat Islands (Cabrerias); there was the middle group or the Wind or Dove Islands (De Ventura Sive de Columbibus); and there was the western island or the Brazil Island (De Brazil). On a Catalan map of 1375, there were three Islands with the names of Corvo, Flores, and Sao Jorge. It was thought that maybe the Genoese

may have discovered the Azores at that time and gave those names.<sup>7</sup> These speculative sightings indicate that there was some ocean exploration occurring, or at least, there was interest in what lay beyond confines of continental Europe.

### Prince Henry the Navigator and the Age of Exploration

Portuguese Prince Infante Dom Henrique (1394-1460), or Henry the Navigator, was exactly what the literature proclaimed him to be, the founder of modern navigation. He was singularly instrumental in opening up the rest of the world to the Europeans. For the Azoreans, he was their founding father as we shall see. Henry studied the sea, weather, ships, geography and trade routes. He talked to navigators, and sea captains. He brought to his navigation school, which he founded at Sagres in 1416, cosmographers, mathematicians, cartographers, and learned men of all kinds. He collected maps, charts, books, and ephemera that would educate him and his circle of adventurers.<sup>8</sup>

The motive for this industry was to find a sea route to link up with the mythological Prester John, thereby encircling the Moslem world and with armies driving them from northern Africa and the Holy Land. To do this Henry needed money which he could garner through trade once he found a sea route to India. He was the leader of the religious-military organization, the Holy Order of Christ. Its program of exploration, discovery, and settlement was for the purpose of conquering the Muslims.<sup>9</sup>

Henry's first move was to defeat the Muslims at Ceuta (Morocco) in order to free the African coast for exploration. He, his brothers, and his father, King John I of Portugal, did this in 1415.<sup>10</sup> Henry experimented with ships and navigation during this venture, which led to designing of the caravel, a long and slender ship (by comparison) with lateen sails, that would be used by his Portuguese explorers on their long voyages.<sup>11</sup> Also the navigational instruments, such as the astrolabe, quadrant, and cross-staff, were developed to fix a ship's position. His captains kept logbooks of their voyages to document their experience for the knowledge of others. They also used flat maps to record longitude and latitude thereby simplifying cartography methods.<sup>12</sup>

It took great courage to navigate the unexplored seas. Positions had to be known to find one's way back. There were winds, weather changes, and sea currents to master. A small wooden ship could be broken at sea. Supplies of food and water could run out during a voyage. Disease could strike. Superstition and fear would attack. It took only the stout-hearted to head out onto the unknown waters on a voyage of exploration.<sup>13</sup>

Next, Henry colonized the Madeira Islands which were accidentally found by Joao Goncalves Zarco in 1419.<sup>14</sup> They were uninhabited and were to be used as a point of departure for further exploration and



in particular, for this study, the discovery and settlement of the Azores.<sup>15</sup> Camoes wrote in *The Lusiads*, "Thus far, O Portuguese, it is granted to you to glimpse into the future and to know the exploits that await your stout-hearted compatriots on the ocean that, thanks to you is now no longer unknown."<sup>16</sup>

#### Discovery of the Azores

There are accounts that Henry sent his able seaman and knight Goncalo Velho Cabral, in 1431, with the orders "to sail towards the setting sun until he came to an island."<sup>17</sup> Others say the islands had been found accidentally by Portuguese sailors returning from a voyage along the African coast or the Madeiras,<sup>18</sup> but this is not possible because the prevailing winds and ocean currents would not have allowed it.<sup>19</sup> Henry and his school of navigators knew there were islands located a few hundred miles off the Portuguese coast because they were shown on a Catalan map. In 1431, Cabral found a series of volcanic rocks protruding out from under the water which he named "formigas" or ants. He was just 25 miles from the nearest Azorean island at the time which apparently was not visible to his crew or him. He returned to Henry and was sent out immediately the next year to reexplore the area.<sup>20</sup>

On August 15, 1432, Cabral found Santa Maria, the easternmost island of the Azorean archipelago. It was the feast day of the Assumption of Our Blessed Mother, or Santa Maria, and consequently named for her.<sup>21</sup> The island was lush with forests, streams, and birdlife.<sup>22</sup> Apparently, there were many birds in flight, thought to be goshawks, and hence, the islands got the Portuguese name "acor" or hawk. However, there have never been goshawks there according to ornithologists. Many believe the birds seen were the Azorean buzzards.<sup>23</sup>

It is thought too that maybe the name for the islands came from this statement written by Martin Behaim, the maker of the Nuremburg globe of 1492: "All birds found in the islands by the first settlers were so tame that they came to the hand like hawks."<sup>24</sup> Another theory is that the word "raca" or "raka," meaning bird of prey in Arabic, was translated to the Portuguese acor. Raca appeared in an Arab manuscript designating an island, or islands, in the same location as the Azores.<sup>25</sup>

A letter written by Alfonso V, King of Portugal, dated July 2, 1439 is the first known document with a reference to the Azores. Its content reveals that there were seven islands and that Henry was given the right to settle them.<sup>26</sup> The next known document is a Majorcan map of the same year which had seven islands and the date of discovery was recorded as 1432.<sup>27</sup> There have been differing versions concerning the year-date of the discovery. It appears, after some analysis by scholars, that 1432 is the correct date.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, there were no written accounts of the voyage by the participants.<sup>29</sup> In fact, there is little information on the discoveries of the other

eight islands because of the same reason.

Sao Miguel was sighted followed next by Terceira, which means the "third." Then the central group of islands were found which were Graciosa, Sao Jorge, Pico, and Faial. And finally the western two islands of Corvo and Flores were sighted in 1452 which concluded the discovery of the archipelago.<sup>30</sup> There is no evidence that humankind had ever been on the islands.<sup>31</sup> But there are mysteries. There is the mystery of an equestrian statue on Corvo, and also the mystery of the Phoenician or Carthaginian coins said to have found there as well.<sup>32</sup>

Corvo along with Flores are the two westernmost islands of the archipelago, and hence, the last inch of European soil. It was here in the early 1500's, that Damiao de Goes, under the employment of King Dom Manoel of Portugal, wrote of a statue of a man on horseback pointing to the west which was clinging to a rocky ledge. The king asked for a drawing of it, and after seeing the drawing, he sent someone to bring it back. As the story goes, it was shattered in a storm en route, but the king received the parts. There too was an inscription in the rock below the statue, and an impression was taken of it. But neither the shattered parts of the statue, nor the impression of the inscription were ever found.<sup>33</sup> Was it a hoax? Scholars are still unsure.

Some have speculated that the statue was really just one of many rock formations seen on the island and nothing more.<sup>34</sup> Others feel it did exist and could have been evidence of the lost continent of Atlantis, or of another settlement of ancient peoples. Coins too were found on Corvo, and their images were published in a journal of the Society of Gothenberg. They were considered to be of Carthaginian or Cyrenean origin by the society.<sup>35</sup> A twentieth century Portuguese scholar, made a serious effort to locate the coins. He went to the convent to which they were first supposedly taken. He also visited museums where he thought information could be found. But his investigation turned up nothing.<sup>36</sup>

### Settlers and Settlement

At some point, following the discovery of Santa Maria, sheep were let loose on the island before settlement actually took place.<sup>37</sup> This was done to supply the future settlers with food because there were no animals on the island. Settlement didn't take place right away, however. There was not much interest among the Portuguese people in an isolated island world hundreds of miles from civilization.<sup>38</sup> But patiently Cabral gathered resources and settlers for the next three years (1433-1436) and sailed to establish colonies on Santa Maria first and then later on Sao Miguel.<sup>39</sup>

Brush had to be cleared and rocks removed for the planting of crops.<sup>40</sup> Grain, grape vines, sugar cane, and other plants suitable for settler use and of commercial value, were planted. Domesticated

animals were brought, such as, cattle, sheep, goats, and hogs. Houses were built and villages established.<sup>41</sup>

The first settlers were a mixed group of people from the Portuguese provinces of Algarve and Minho.<sup>42</sup> Also, Madeirans, Moorish prisoners, black slaves,<sup>43</sup> French, Italians, Scots, English, and Flemings were among the early settlers.<sup>44</sup> There were petty criminals, Spanish clergy, Jews, soldiers, government officials, European merchants and sugar cane growers.<sup>45</sup>

The purpose of the Azorean colony was to service the mother country with commodities and tribute. It was to be a station for Portuguese ships to be resupplied and repaired. The islands too were to produce crops for trade. In its peak trade years, there would be more than one hundred ships anchored at the Bay of Angra.<sup>46</sup> Slaves had to be removed from the islands and sent to Brazil and the Caribbean because there was concern about a slave insurrection.<sup>47</sup>

The islands were colonized under the Holy Order of Christ,<sup>48</sup> and the settlers were to be Christians. There were many languages, but after awhile Portuguese became the standard language of communication.<sup>49</sup> Because of the isolated nature of the islands, and the harshness of the land, and at times, climate, all settlers, regardless of their background, had to work together to survive. This gave the people a sense of equality and togetherness. As a consequence, more settlers were given the right to purchase land.<sup>50</sup> There were some slaves on the islands, and there were lingering concerns about a slave revolt which no settler wanted. Soon the slaves were sent to Brazil and to the Caribbean.<sup>51</sup>

### The Flemings

People from Flanders settled in the Azores beginning in 1450. These Flemish settlers played an important role in the creation of the Azorean culture. By 1490, there were 2,000 Flemings living in the islands of Terceira, Pico, Faial, Sao Jorge, and Flores.<sup>52</sup> Because there was such a large Flemish settlement, the Azores became known as the Flemish Islands or the Isles of Flanders.<sup>53</sup>

Henry was responsible for this settlement. His sister, Isabel, was married to Duke Philip of Burgundy of which Flanders was a part. There was a revolt against Philip's rule and disease and hunger became rampant. Isabel appealed to Henry to allow some of the unruly Flemings to settle in the Azores. He granted this and supplied them with the necessary transportation and goods.<sup>54</sup>

First group of Flemings was led by Willem van de Hagen, later known by his Portuguese name of Guilherme da Silveira. They settled in Terceira, and the Flemish nobleman, Jacome de Bruges, was placed in charge. The next contingents went to the islands of Faial, Flores, Sao Jorge,<sup>55</sup> and Pico.<sup>56</sup> Joos van Huerter founded the city of Horta on Faial<sup>57</sup> where evidence of the Flemish people and culture still exists

today. Faial was in fact called the Flemish Island and the valley behind the city still has the name, the Valley of the Flemings or O Valle dos Flamengo.<sup>58</sup>

But the Flemish language disappeared before long, and the Flemish settlers changed their names to Portuguese forms. For example, van der Hagen became Silveira, and Huerter became Dutra or Utra.<sup>59</sup> Flemish physical traits of light hair, light complexion, and blue eyes can still be seen in the features of many Azoreans. Flemish oxcarts and windmills are still seen on the islands.<sup>60</sup> The Flemish beghards and beguines (lay-religious group) brought the Festival of the Holy Spirit and their distinctive cloaks and hoods to the islands.<sup>61</sup> There are many religious statuary, paintings, and furniture found in Azorean churches and museums which show the Flemish influence.<sup>62</sup>

An interesting sidelight is the speculation that some Flemish people may have reached the North Carolina coast inadvertently during this migratory activity. In North Carolina, there was a group of people, calling themselves the Melungeons, who had light colored skin and identified themselves as Portuguese. These were not Native Americans. It is thought, that maybe one of the ships bound for the Azores, coming from Flanders, may have overshoot the islands and found its way to the Carolina coast, but evidence is lacking.<sup>63</sup>

#### Captain-Donatary System

The captain-donatary system of government was a conception of Prince Henry. He tried it first at Madeira and then next in the Azores. The system was duplicated throughout the Portuguese colonies and also used by the Spanish in their empire. It simply was a system by which absentee landowners could control their property and also receive payments from the peasant tenants on crop production.<sup>64</sup> Alfonso V, King of Portugal gave Henry the privilege of settling seven of the Azores Islands. Alfonso awarded the same privilege to his uncle, Alfonso Duke of Braganca, to settle Corvo, and to Dona Maria de Vilhena to settle the island of Flores.<sup>65</sup>

Henry made Cabral "captain" (governor) of Santa Maria and Sao Miguel. Van der Hagen became captain of Flores and Corvo, and Graciosa was given to Pedro de Correia, who was Christopher Columbus' brother-in-law. Van Huerta was designated captain-donatary of Faial, Pico, and Sao Jorge, while de Bruges was given the same title for Terceira.<sup>66</sup> The difference between a "captain-donatary" and a "captain" was the former was able to pass along his title as inheritance while the latter could not.<sup>67</sup>

The captains and captains-donatary were like governors who had full control over their domain. They held the office of judge. They could make land grants. They monopolized the gristmills, public baking ovens, and salt sales. Henry and his successors got a 10% tax from these monopolies, and his captains got 10% of his 10%.<sup>68</sup> The land they granted was subdivided for tenant farming. This way the lands

were farmed by peasants who had no ownership and had to pay high rent and tax. This system lasted for centuries and was one key reason for the high Azorean emigration. There simply was no way the peasants could advance up the socio-economic ladder.<sup>69</sup>

Through this system the King of Portugal had control over his lands and had administrators in place to manage and to collect royal tribute. Shortly, the land grant owners became wealthy and wanted more control over government. As a result, municipal districts were established with town councils where appropriate. This was a pseudo-democratic system which allowed input into local governmental policy. But in reality, the wealthy and the absentee landowners still controlled the islands.<sup>70</sup>

### In the Middle of the Atlantic

The Azores Islands lie about 700 miles off the Portuguese coast; 750 miles from Africa; 1,100 miles from Newfoundland; and 2,200 miles from the east coast of the United States. It is nearly midway between Europe and the North America.<sup>72</sup> The archipelago stretches about 375 miles from end to end and are found in three separate groups. They are volcanic in composition.<sup>73</sup>

There are three theories on the genesis of the islands: (1) they could be the last vestiges of a large continent such as Atlantis; (2) they could be the ragged edges of two continental plates pulling apart; or, (3) they could be molten lava seeping from a large crack in the ocean floor, cooled by ocean water, and rising to the ocean surface.<sup>74</sup> The latter seems to be the most probable as determined by the experts. The islands are essentially the tips of a large undersea mountain range, referred to as the Mid-Atlantic Ridge which stretches the entire length of the Atlantic Ocean, from north to south. It is made up of nearly 100 volcanoes, some active and some dormant, with 19 hovering over 3,280 feet above sea level. Pico Alto, on the island of Pico, is the highest volcano at 7,711 feet.<sup>75</sup> Because of these volcanoes, there is virtually no flatland on the islands.<sup>76</sup>

Table 1 below shows the varying sizes and heights of the islands. Sao Miguel is the largest in size with Corvo being the smallest having only 4 square miles of surface. Sao Miguel, Sao Jorge, and Pico are the longest islands with an average length of about 35 miles. Most of the islands are generally from 7 to 10 miles wide and have mountainous topography.

Table 1  
Size and Elevation of the Azores Islands

Island	Area (sq mi)	Length (mi)	Width (mi)	% Below 1,000 Feet	% Above 1,000
Santa Maria	37.5	10.4	6.2	86.4	13.6

Sao Miguel	288.0	39.9	9.9	52.7	47.3
Terceira	162.9	18.0	11.2	55.6	44.4
Graciosa	23.9	7.8	4.7	94.5	5.7
Sao Jorge	95.0	34.1	4.2	30.1	69.9
Faial	66.8	13.1	8.7	53.5	46.5
Pico	172.2	33.2	9.2	41.2	58.8
Flores	52.2	10.5	7.7	32.5	67.5
Corvo	4.0	4.0	2.5	45.1	54.9
Total	808.1				

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Source: James H. Guill, A History of the Azores Islands  
& Jerry R. Williams, And Yet They Come.<sup>77</sup>

The islands are irregular in shape with most of the land sloping upward towards the volcanic peaks. The sea coast has cliffs that are several hundred feet high. The lower shorelines have coves that serve as harbors. Horta on the island of Faial has the best natural harbor in the islands. There are fine harbors at Ponta Delgada on Sao Miguel and Angra on Terceira.<sup>78</sup> The water is deep offshore, from 1-2 miles in most cases, reminding one that these islands are the tops of a mountain range having great vertical relief.<sup>79</sup> The water between Pico and Faial is 300 feet deep which indicates that these two islands were undoubtedly one island at one point.<sup>80</sup>

In the 1880's, American Lyman Weeks visited the islands and describes vividly what he saw:

The shore is high and precipitous, and dangerous headlands project outward in all directions; while reefs of hoary rocks, spume-covered and washed by angry waves, form a protecting cordon about the land. Over the edges of dark sea-cliffs, little rivulets, like silver threads upon cloth of a frieze, trickle down into the ocean. The fields are crossed and recrossed with hedges of bamboo, which divide the land into a regular checker-work of cultivation and pasturage. Groups of white buildings, with a steepled church always in the midst, occupy the most conspicuous locations.<sup>81</sup>

## Climate

Azorean climate is temperate having temperatures usually between 75 to 50 degrees F.<sup>82</sup> There is a band of high pressure, called the "Azores High," which keeps storms away from the islands.<sup>83</sup> The ocean currents run clockwise around the northern Atlantic with the warm Gulf Stream helping to keep the Azorean climate mild.<sup>84</sup>

Average rainfall varies with each island. For example, Flores receives 54.8 inches of rain a year while Sao Miguel gets 28.7. Humidity averages about 75% throughout the islands with a normal range from 59% to 99%.<sup>85</sup> Snow covers Alto Pico during the colder winter months, a time for storms and heavy winds. Corvo and Flores in the western part of the island chain get polar fronts that swing through

leaving heavy rain.<sup>86</sup> Tropical cyclones and hurricanes have pummeled the islands during September and October when low pressure allows them through.<sup>87</sup> One such hurricane struck the islands on August 30, 1857. At the American consulate in Horta, J.P. Dabney describes what he witnessed:

About nine o'clock the wind shifted suddenly from W. to N.N.W. and in a short time the hurricane was upon us. For about two and a half hours it blew as I never saw it blow before. The Bay with the wind off shore was one white mass of foam, and at times the vessels were almost swallowed up in spray . . . The growth and labor of years destroyed in one moment! I never saw such a wreck! Some paths were impassable from the trees that had fallen across them and over one hundred pine trees were broken short off . . . the corn laid flat on the ground, in every direction . . . the poor farmers seem in despair and yet they never murmur.<sup>88</sup>

### The Shaking, Spewing Earth

The Azores is a lively place to be. There is a continuous chain of earthquakes and volcanic activity that has had a great effect on its inhabitants. Many of them have left the islands in horror after witnessing one of these cataclysmic events. But disasters are bound to happen when a volcanic environment is home for thousands of human beings.<sup>89</sup>

A warning of such calamity was signaled early in man's history on the islands. When Cabral discovered Sao Miguel in 1444, he saw two volcanic mountains, one at each end of the island. The next year when he returned with supplies and additional settlers, he noticed something was wrong. The western mountain was completely gone! When he landed, he questioned the men he left behind from the previous voyage, and found that during his absence, earthquakes followed by volcanic explosions, collapsed the crater. The years that followed were labeled "the years of the ashes" because ash could be found several feet deep on parts of the islands, and ash impeded ocean traffic hundreds of miles at sea. The collapsed crater at Sao Miguel over the centuries has filled with rainwater forming two lakes, and next to the lakes, a village can be found which was given the mythological name, Sete Ciudades, or Seven Cities.<sup>90</sup>

There have been 21 major volcanic eruptions in the past 550 years collectively occurring on the islands of Sao Miguel, Terceira, Pico, Sao Jorge, and Faial.<sup>91</sup> In 1562, there was an eruption on Pico causing the residents to flee in horror to the other islands. In 1580, on Sao Jorge, 12 people and 4,000 head of cattle were killed.<sup>92</sup> In 1630, on Sao Miguel, 200 people were killed and numerous cattle during an eruption. In 1811 an volcanic islet, one mile in length, formed off the coast of Sao Miguel. A British Union Jack was planted on it claiming it for Great Britain. But the protruding islet sank back into the sea

taking the British flag with it.<sup>93</sup> As late as 1957, another volcanic islet arose off the coast of Faial, but this one connected to the island destroying a lighthouse in the process.<sup>94</sup> As one can see, the Azores is a living volcanic nightmare that has violently made itself known often through the island chain's history much to the detriment of its residents.

This was reported in 1862 during a period of earthquakes and volcanic explosions:

One hundred and twenty shocks occurred within ten days. They were not violent, but distressing to the inhabitants, most of whom left their houses, and betook themselves to tents. They lived in momentary expectation of an eruption, not knowing where or when it might burst forth . . . the people on the western slopes of the island, believing the sea to be on fire, and the end of the world at hand, got out their images of the saints, and chanted and prayed, night and day on the cliffs.<sup>95</sup>

They placed crowns, used in the Holy Ghost festival, on altars, hoping to soothe the anger of the belching earth and anxiously recited verses like this one found in the annals Azorean folklore:

The earth on fire shook  
Oh what distress and fear!  
To placate the volcano  
The blessed Crown brought near.<sup>96</sup>

Thomas Hickling, on the island of Sao Miguel, wrote this on February 28, 1811:

We were much alarmed by frequent shocks of earthquakes, perhaps upwards of twenty . . . a volcano had broken out in the sea. I repaired immediately to that part of the Island and to my utter astonishment saw a vast column of black smoke issuing out of the ocean. The wind was a gale from the southward and blew smoke over the land . . . at various times times through the night, fire issue forth like a number of rockets discharged together. Large masses of stone and lava were continually thrown above the surface of the sea . . . In eight days it entirely subsided leaving a shoal on which the sea breaks.<sup>97</sup>

Mr. John P. Dabney, American Consul, recorded this about an eruption on the island of Pico in 1808:

The large Crater . . . burst forth like a roaring Lion with horrible bellowings distinctly heard twelve leagues distant, throwing up prodigious large stones and lava and illuminating at night the whole Island . . . The lava inundated and swept away the Town of Ursulina and the country houses and cottages adjacent as well as the farm houses throughout its course. It as usual gave timely notice of its approach and most of the inhabitants fled. Some of them however



remained

in the vicinity too long, endeavouring to save their effects and were scalded by the flashes from its stream, which without injuring their clothes took not only their skin but their flesh; about sixty people were thus miserably scalded, some of whom died on the spot, others soon after, and some recovered . . . In short, this Island heretofore rich in Corn, Cattle and vineyards for exportation, is nearly ruined and a scene of greater desolation and distress has seldom been witnessed.<sup>98</sup>

The earthquakes have been just as destructive. There have been 18 major temblors on the islands in recorded history.<sup>99</sup> One such quake took place in 1522 when the entire village of Villa Franca, on Sao Miguel island, having 5,000 residents, and being the center of government, was engulfed within sixty seconds by land mass thrown from a hill behind the village. It caused a tidal wave and other destruction in the adjacent islands. It took a year to dig the village out and to give Christian burials to its 5,000 victims.<sup>100</sup>

As recently as 1980, a massive earthquake underneath the ocean near the islands of Sao Jorge, Terceira, and Graciosa took 60 lives; destroyed 5,278 homes, 32 churches, 6,000 other structures; and made 21,296 people homeless.<sup>101</sup>

This litany of volcanic and earthquake disaster, has indelibly burned itself into the psyche of the Azorean people. Some remain on the islands with courage and determination, depending upon their religious faith to see them through, while others emigrate and with good reason.

But They are Beautiful!

The Azores islands are like the mythical sirens sailors believe in, always dangerously beautiful. Most immigrants leave the Azores with the idea of returning to their verdant isles with their majestic cliffs, charming villages, and whitewashed homes glistening in the sun. Many do return, but usually just to visit. However, a few do make the islands their retirement home after working in the United States for decades. They have their well-earned social security checks sent to them.

There is a longing in the Azorean emigrant's heart for the home islands. It is called "saudades," a Portuguese word which has no English equivalent. It can be defined best as "nostalgia," a yearning deep within one's soul for the past. One of the highest compliments one can pay is to say "muitas saudades" to someone.<sup>102</sup>

Each of the nine islands has its own particular charm. Santa Maria has 20,000 acres of fertile volcanic soil and three mountains

that rise to 1,900, 1720, and 780 feet.<sup>103</sup> Sao Miguel is the largest island and is called the "Green Island" because of the lushness of its vegetation. It has a large crater named the Grand Cauldron which is 10 miles in circumference. Also, there is the Valley of Furnas with its hot springs and therapeutic baths.<sup>104</sup>

Terceira is the largest of the central group of five islands and is oval in shape, undoubtedly a volcanic crater. It has mostly level terrain. It has beaches and has a fine harbor at Angra.<sup>105</sup> Another island is Graciosa which means "gracious." It is not as mountainous and wooded as the other islands, but it does have fine fertile soil. The island of Pico is dominated by the large volcanic peak of Pico Alto at one end. It is rich in vegetation but lacks fresh water because it is porous. Rainwater seeps quickly into its many cracks caused by volcanic activity.<sup>106</sup>

Sao Jorge is a long slender island having 3,000 foot walls along its northern sea coast. These headlands create dramatic waterfalls during heavy rainfall. There are lush forests and pastures, and also fine bays on the south coast.<sup>107</sup> The island of Faial is dominated by a large volcanic cone a few miles from its very picturesque city of Horta.<sup>108</sup> The island is profusely covered with clusters of white and purple flowers of the hydrangea. It has the majestic view from its natural harbor of the 7,700 foot volcanic mountain Pico Alto which is only 4 miles across the channel on the island of Pico. Faial gets its name from the faya trees, that are like beech, which dominate the island.<sup>109</sup>

The westernmost island is Flores which is mountainous, wooded, and covered with flowers. It has eight lakes and six volcanic craters. It has no good harbors because of its treacherous shores.<sup>110</sup> Lastly is Corvo, the smallest of the islands. Its name comes from the birds found there. It is largely an extinct volcanic cone with few forests or woods.<sup>111</sup>

## Plants and Animals

What plants and animals found on this isolated archipelago were brought by the wind, ocean currents, and bird migrations.<sup>112</sup> At the time of discovery, the islands had only sealife, birds, and plantlife. Squalls brought insects and birds, such as, blackbirds, woodpigeons, canaries, starlings, and buzzards.<sup>113</sup> Sixty-three plants are unique to the Azores and about 700 were introduced,<sup>114</sup> such as, the magnolia, eucalyptus, bamboo, palm, oak, tea, tobacco, banana, citrus, and pine.<sup>115</sup> Forests were depleted by the settlers for a variety of purposes, and the brush burned off for pastureland. About 8.4% of the islands or 69,025 remain wooded today.<sup>116</sup>

## Agriculture

There are numerous varieties of agricultural crops on the islands. Much of it is for subsistence, but major cash crops have been

tried, and just as many have failed because of disease or problems in the world market. Sugar cane, citrus, grapes, and pastels have been tried, and for one reason or another, lost their worth.

Pastels, or woad, was grown to produce blue and purple dyes, but was replaced with indigo and brazilwood that were grown elsewhere.<sup>117</sup> Sugar cane caused a serious debacle between the farmers and the government because of the revenue the government and the rich took from the farmers.<sup>118</sup> Tobacco was tried, but it seriously depleted the soil. Tea couldn't compete with the growers in the orient. Oranges were shipped in large amounts, 500,000 annually, to England in the 1800's,<sup>119</sup> but blight struck them, and the industry never fully recovered. The same happened to grapes, especially on Pico, where the quality wine of its wine was well-known outside the Azores.<sup>120</sup>

The islands also produce grains, beans, flax, corn, sweet potatoes, dairy products, and a variety of fruits, such as, figs, pears, apples, peaches, and quinces.<sup>121</sup> Domesticated animals, such as sheep, cattle, hogs, and chickens have been raised for local useage.<sup>122</sup> The islands have rich volcanic soil, but there are no large tracts of unobstructed land available. Lava and other volcanic deposits pose great obstacles. Rocks are removed and used for fences since wood is scarce. In reality they are 4 to 5 feet high walls which act as windbreaks, sheltering vines and other fruits from the wind. They are stacked to form rectangular fields of about 100 square feet. It is not unusual to see corn or grape vines planted in the cracks between rocks because very vestige of soil must be used in this volcanic littered land.<sup>123</sup>

This was written in 1880's by an American visitor:

Between the villages, sloping to the sea, lay broad and fertile fields; yams and sweet-potatoes, besides Indian corn, wheat, and other grains, beans, melons, squashes, and potatoes, as luxuriant as on the meadow-lands of the Connecticut.<sup>124</sup>

The island of Sao Jorge has extensive pastureland for dairy cattle and produces milk and cheese for the islands and some cheese for exportation.<sup>125</sup> Another island with dairies is Terceira. It is common for most Azorean families to have a family cow or two to provide the household with milk, butter, and cheese.<sup>126</sup> The Azores have mostly holstein and shorthorn breeds.<sup>127</sup>

There have been two ways to survive on the islands: one must fish, or one must farm. Some combine the two out of necessity. Because of the lack of good harbors, high coastal walls, and the deep rolling seas surrounding the islands, fishing has never been a major activity. Consequently, agriculture has been practiced by nearly all of the islanders for a livelihood.<sup>128</sup>

Because of the lack of available land, farming has had to be intensive.<sup>129</sup> The land tenure system puts the farmer in

"perpetual leasehold," that is, he is virtually landless and must lease land to farm. The rent is fixed, but unlike tenant farming where the owner and the farmer share in profits and losses, the renter takes the full impact of good and bad agricultural years. Leases are hereditary, being passed along to subsequent generations, and the leased lands can only be subdivided by permission of the owner. Thus, as the population grows the opportunities dwindle for the younger generation. In 1840, only 3% of the land was controlled by the population.<sup>130</sup> In 1965, 81.8% of the Azorean farms were 3 acres or less, and 3.2% larger than 10 acres.<sup>131</sup>

The peasant farming his small acreage for sustenance has no interest or means to progress technologically. In the 1880's the status of farming equipment found on the Azores was as this visitor saw it:

Flax is extensively cultivated and used, yet a loom or spinning-wheel is a thing almost unknown . . . wheat is trodden out by oxen on a large circular threshing-floor, as in patriarchial times . . . In churning . . . still adhere to the traditional method of shaking the milk in an earthen vessel or burying it in a leathern bag in the ground until the butter comes. A large broad hoe with a short handle is universally employed in agricultural labors. Spades, shovels, and forks are tabooed as inventions of the foul fiend . . . The plough is the old Latin plough reproduced. It is of wood, the share alone being shod with iron. The ploughman rides to the field on his donkey, and then has a pair of oxen to do the work, while the donkey is turned loose into the hedge to wait. So it was in the days of Job, who tells us that "the oxen were ploughing and the asses feeding besides them."<sup>132</sup>

### Resilient People

Hardship builds character. This is seen time and again throughout history, and this aptly applies to the Azoreans. They have had to survive earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, fierce storms, crop disease, European wars, and pirate raids to name their greatest challenges.<sup>133</sup> Because of their isolation in the middle of the Atlantic, they have had to be self-reliant, independent, and harmonious to survive.<sup>134</sup>

There are many descriptions of the Azorean's character and lifestyle in the literature. Most of it is complimentary. Some of it is derogatory and scathing which quite often comes from upper class travelers who have little interest in the welfare of the peasant class. The following

are some of the opinions that represents both viewpoints.

An American, Alice Baker, traveled to the Azores during the summer in the early 1880's. She wrote this:

The Portuguese peasant class is poor and often poverty-stricken though living under fairly favorable climate conditions; that they have a very low standard of living, dwelling in humble cottages which are sometimes uncleanly and usually devoid of the barest necessities, and eating the plainest of food; that they lack knowledge of hygiene and sanitation; that they are devout though somewhat less in parts of the mainland than on the islands; that their religious ideas are somewhat vague and associated with many superstitions; that their recreation is limited and semi-religious in some of its aspects; and that they are grossly ignorant, illiterate, often lacking in a desire for education, though not unintelligent . . . Quick intelligence, the dreamy melancholy, the slyness and love of intrigue, the wit and imagination are here and the power of expression in words . . . They are devoted to music, flowers, dance, and song.<sup>135</sup>

Lawrence Oliver, himself an Azorean immigrant, describes his people as they appeared to him:

The Portuguese have always been liberty-loving race . . . They are adventurous, courageous, natural pioneers. They are home lovers and home builders. Of a deeply religious nature, they support their and its needs. Although thrifty, they recognize the good things of life and when acquired, use them with moderation and good judgment. Seldom will their names be found on relief rolls and even less often on the records of our criminal courts.<sup>136</sup>

Mark Twain visited the Azores and wrote about the islands and its people in his work *Innocents Abroad*. It must be remembered that Twain's style is witty and satirical, and he uses forced humor at times to entertain the reader. But still his comments are worth hearing, if only because he is a giant in the observation of people. His preoccupation with the donkey in the below passage comes a day after his rigorous travel on the beast of burden:

The community is eminently Portuguese -- that is to say, it is slow, poor, shiftless, sleepy, and lazy . . . The people lie, and cheat the stranger, and are desperately ignorant, and have hardly any reverence for their dead. The latter trait shows how little better they are than the donkeys they eat and sleep with . . . The donkeys and the men, women, and children of a family, all eat and sleep in the same room, and are unclean, are ravaged by vermin, and are truly happy.<sup>137</sup>

Mostly Humble Abodes

Houses in the Azores are usually one-story made of black lava rock cemented by limestone, a mineral found only on the island of Santa Maria. The black rock is plastered over and then whitewashed. The exterior of the house has tiles of white porcelain with designs in blue, brown, green, or yellow for decoration. The tiles are from an inherited handicraft coming from both the Moors and the Flemings. The roofs are tiled in red, or thatched, and have no chimneys. The islands' architecture shows strong Moorish decorative influence.<sup>138</sup>

The Azorean dwellings are usually one room, some have a loft, some have a separate cooking area, and most have earth floors. There are no windows, and those with them, have no glass. Their beds are mattresses of corn husks or silky fibre put in homespun linen ticks. Most homes don't have a stove but will have a fireplace with a broad stone shelf. Some do have stone ovens though. There is very little furniture in the house, and the lighting is poor. Religious pictures can be found hanging on the walls, as much as for decoration, as for devotion to patron saints. Household cloths are the products of the women living in the house. Farm animals are frequent visitors inside the house mostly when they are seeking shelter during bad weather or when the sun sets.<sup>139</sup>

This was observed by a visitor at the turn of this century:

When the Azorean peasant is hungry and needs a stew, he gathers a few faggots, places them on the ground, sets on the kettle or stew-pan, lights the fire; then when the dish is cooked the doors and windows are opened and the smoke allowed to escape. . . The morning light is sure to discover all the animals nestling in and about his bed, from the huge black pig and the tiny donkey, down to cats, dogs, sheep, and calves, half-starved hens, clean fat rats and cosmopolitan fleas.<sup>140</sup>

Azoreans eat stew, fish, cornbread, cabbage, and potatoes. Cornbread and cheese with water is a meal. Pork saugages are ritually made and are spicy.<sup>141</sup> There are no wells; therefore, cisterns are used to collect rainwater. If there is a drought, some islanders have to walk 6 to 8 miles to find spring water which is collected in wooden pots and carried by Azorean women balanced on their heads.<sup>142</sup>

Famine and hunger are always a concern, as witnessed by this account:

On the island of Corvo in the Azores we lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Sometimes a hurricane came in and out of the North Atlantic and wiped out the corn crop. When that happened, there was real hunger. We rationed what we had and prayed a lot."<sup>143</sup>

Clothing

Last century the Azorean men dressed in coarse wool and linen pants, shirts, and jackets, all homespun. Feet were bare while some wore wooden shoes. A skull cap was worn with a tassel on top. Azorean women used the same material for their clothing and wore braided hair topped with a cap or handkerchief. They too were barefooted.<sup>144</sup> Some women wore a capote especially where the Flemish influence was strong. A capote hasn't been worn on the islands since the 1930's. It was a hooded cloak of dark blue broadcloth brought to the Azores by the Flemish beguines, a lay-religious group. This comment was made by a visitor in the 1870's: <sup>145</sup>

The strangest sight in Horta is the capote of the women, worn alike in summer and in the rainy season: this cloak is of heavy, dark-blue stuff, falling in massive folds to the ankles, and surmounted by a stupendous hood, stiffened with whalebone and buckram, and of astounding shape and size. Some pretty faces may occasionally be discerned under this grotesque guise.<sup>146</sup>

### Urban Environment

Villages are the hubs of daily Azorean activity. Farmers work their fields during the day and return to their village home in the evening. Shops are plentiful. For example, in the 1880's, the city of Ponta Delgada had 23 clothing stores, 6 apothecaries, 139 grocery or liquid stores, 12 butcher shops, 8 ironsmiths, 15 bootmakers, and 8 tailors. A hospital had 400 beds<sup>147</sup>.

Mark Twain praised the Azoreans for their well-kept villages:

Every street is handsomely paved . . . and the surface is neat and true as a floor . . . Everywhere are walls, walls, walls -- and all of them are tasteful and handsome -- eternally substantial . . . the town and the island are miracles of cleanliness.<sup>148</sup>

The dairymen lived in the villages but had to ride their horse or donkey daily up to higher elevations to milk and care for their stock as seen in this experience:

I milked the cows every day while they were giving milk. We kept the cows in our pastures; which were five to seven miles from home. When they were five miles from home, I arose at three o'clock in the morning to get there at daybreak . . . I would milk the cows and return home with the milk about noon. I had lunch, rested for an hour, then went to work in the fields for the balance of the afternoon . . . In the Azores, the people own pieces of land that they have inherited. Sometimes the parents from whom they inherited lived far away, on the other side of the district, five, six, or seven miles from where the children lived. Each family, also, had, its own pasture for cows, sheep, or whatever else they possessed. This was the way it was with

us.149

### Names, Schools, and Illiteracy

Surnames are seemingly unimportant to the Azorean. They will take any surname that seems appropriate. Family members will often have different surnames within one household. The wife sometimes will take her husband's last name and quite often she will not. The oldest son will take his father's last name while the next son will take the mother's maiden name. Nicknames are common and many are stuck with them for life.<sup>150</sup>

Education has no priority in a peasant society. The primary concern of the peasant family is survival and that means everyone works to assure it. No advantage is seen by going to school, and in fact, the peasant feels that it is a detriment in that it takes the child away from his responsibility at home. Schools have been available though for those who are interested. The Portuguese government through the centuries has never fully supported public education; consequently, there is a very high illiteracy rate in the Azores.<sup>151</sup>

### Family, Village, and Island

In the Azores there is a hierarchy of loyalty. One's first loyalty is to the family. It is the most important socio-economic unit in which every member is expected to do his or her share to strengthen the family's stability and well-being. The father is the head of the family and makes the important decisions. Land and farm animals are passed along to the each generation. This provides continued security for the family members.<sup>152</sup>

The Azoreans second loyalty is to the village which consists of a network of families many which are interrelated by marriages. When tragedy strikes one the village families, the rest of the village contributes aid in the form of food, work, and care.<sup>153</sup>

After the family and the village, the Azoreans next loyalty is to the island on which he or she lives. Each island has a certain uniqueness about it. The nationality of the settler is different; the industry, topography, and religious celebrations are different. Dialects differ too. The people of Sao Miguel have a harsher accent because of their stronger Iberian heritage as compared to the Flemish-settled islands where the spoken tone is softer and the language more sophisticated. The Portuguese language throughout the Azores is different from the mainland in tone, words, and style. The Portuguese spoken in the Azores is an older and more conservative form because of the archipelago's isolation.<sup>154</sup>

### Music

Azoreans are fond of music and dance. The viola is the dominant instrument which is a guitar-like mandolin. In Terceira, the viola is a



little larger in size, and Spanish-like, because of the influence of the Spanish occupation of the island, 1583-1643. The other islands have the "viola dos dois coracoes" which is a guitar that has two heart-shaped holes instead of one the large round whole in the middle of the body of the instrument. It has 12 strings which is very similar to the modern 12-string folk guitar. It is not uncommon for the man of the house to play and sing after the family's evening meal for relaxation and entertainment.155

Azorean folksongs are descriptive and colorful in keeping with the tradition of the medieval troubador. They are about the joy and the rigors of life. Verses for these songs are mostly improvised at the moment of playing. This improvisation can become a contest between singers which the Azoreans call "odesafio."156

The chamarrita is the folk dance of the Portuguese and is similar to the traditional European folk dances. Usually the men and women begin the dance in two separate lines, they circle, and then pair up. The caller instructs the dancers on each move. The chamarrita is a family dance enjoyed by all.157

#### Religion, Superstition, and Witchcraft

Almost all Azoreans are Catholic, but there are Protestants and a few Jews among the population. The islands were found under the religious-militant organization, the Order of Christ, under Henry's command. Cabral, the discoverer of the islands and first captain-donatory, was a priestly knight within the order. The islands had monks, friars, and priests among the first settlers, and they built churches, chapels, monasteries, and convents.

The Azorean people were far removed from the events of the Protestant Reformation and consequently were little-affected by it. The Spanish occupation of the Azores came also at the time of the Inquisition. The Azoreans opposed the Spanish presence, and consequently the Inquisition. The Spanish were fearful of a revolt and never enforced the Inquisition.158

Because of the Azorean's subjection to natural calamities, starvation, and isolation, and their lack of education, it is understandable that the Azoreans would have strong religious convictions and would turn to superstition and maybe pagan witchcraft in times of trouble.159 They have a belief in evil spirits, evil eyes, witches, magical potions, and omens. For example, a piece of deerhorn hung around the neck of a newborn is to ward off evil spirits until the infant gets christened. They believe that a baby could get colic for three months by hanging diapers in the moonlight.160

The following can cause bad luck: hurt someone's foot; knives that are crossed at the table; walking over straw in the shape of a cross; leaving liquid in a cup; and laughing on Friday. The following can bring good luck: meeting a goat or frog on the road; salt melting is an

ill-person's hand; spider spinning a web; and spitting on a comb or playing cards.161

In times of struggle promises are made to God or to patron saints. Many Azoreans will promise to do some type of penance which usually is praying at a certain chapel. Some promise to walk around a church singing hymns.162 Curiously enough, Christopher Columbus was involved in one such promise during his return voyage from the new world.

One could say that Columbus was nearly Portuguese. He lived and studied navigation in Portugal, spoke mostly Portuguese, and married a Portuguese woman. On his return trip to Europe in 1493, having just discovered the new world, his ship met a terrible storm, and his crew, having a few Portuguese, made a promise to God that they would perform an act of obedience if He would deliver them from the calamity.163

Here they are returning with the greatest news of the age, and their first European stop is the Azores. They land at the island of Santa Maria, and they walk to a chapel for prayer dressed only in their shirts. That was their promise to God. The islanders saw this and listened to their tale of a new world, and thought they were crazy. The crew was promptly arrested. Columbus had to threaten to raid the town to free them.164

#### Azorean Festivals

The Azores are quite famous for their annual festivals or "festas." The festa honors some patron saint, such as St. Peter or St. Anthony. Some festas focus on the Virgin Mary and Jesus. These celebrations originated from promises made by Azoreans in times of need or because of miracles. For example, the Festival of the Lord of Holy Christ of Miracles is celebrated at Ponta Delgada each spring. A statue of a suffering Christ is paraded and honored because it is believed that this particular image caused a miracle in the 17th century.

The Festival of Our Lady of Miracles is celebrated at Terceira because of a promise from the people asking the Holy Mother to deliver them from an invasion by the Spanish in the 17th century. The Festival of the Holy Spirit is the most common festa. It commemorates the feeding of the poor by St. Elizabeth of Hungary. There is a coronation, a procession, and a feast for everyone.165

#### Azorean Bullfighting

Bullfighting began in Greece and was adopted by the Romans who transferred it to the Iberian Peninsula. The Muslims used men on horseback to fight the bulls which evolved into the practice of using cape and sword, the Spanish way. Bullfighting first appeared on the island of Terceira in 1588. It is a "bloodless" affair with both the bullfighter and bull surviving the best they can.166 There is another

type bullfighting which is also done on Terceira and is called "tourada da corda" or roped-bull baiting.

In modern history, spring and early summer is the time for branding cattle and with this is the battle of man and beast competing to see who is the strongest. Also, with branding time comes man's rite of spring in which he demonstrates his maleness to the opposite sex. Thus, we have the background for tourada da corda.

In tourado da corda a 250 foot cord is tied to the neck of bull with several men holding the other end. The perplexed bull is released in town and is chased and tormented with umbrellas and other such raiment. Azorean men test their courage against the bull's fickle disposition. Some get hurt, but it is a joyous celebration which everyone in town attends. The cord incidentally is the one way the bull is brought under control when need be.167

### Important Historical Events

Dr. James H. Guill of Tulare, California is an American expert on the history of the Azores. His 1972 publication of A History of the Azores Islands and his 1993 work, A History of the Azores Islands: Handbook, are two of the only English language histories available. Any student of the islands should certainly have the latter work for reference. Incidentally, there are no modern histories of the Azores in Portuguese which is surprising.

The Azores, because of its natural setting in the Atlantic, has always been a resupply depot and a trading station for Atlantic shipping. Horta, Angra, and Ponta Delgada harbors were in constant use by ships of all nations even during wartime. Many types of people have put ashore at these ports and have left something of themselves there.168

The French, English, and pirates of all types raided the Azores and attacked Spanish shipping along the coast.169 Angra, Terceira was the center of government for the Azores, and when the Spanish took control of Portugal in 1580, they wanted to claim the Azores as well. On July 25, 1581, the Terceirans along with other Azoreans fought the Spanish in a bloody land battle where cattle were released by the Azoreans to disperse and stop the invaders.170

Undaunted, fifty Spanish ships bombarded the island with cannon. The French sent troops to help the Azoreans, but the Spanish forces prevailed. Soon though the Azoreans rejected the authoritarian rule of the Spanish governor and were supported by 7,000 French and English troops and 70 ships. Spain sent a fleet of ships and won the battle. Another skirmish on land followed, but this time the Spanish won. They held the Azores in what is called The Babylonian Captivity of 1580-1642.171

The Azores were involved in the Portuguese Civil War which lasted

from 1820 to 1833. The Azoreans supported a constitutional monarchy and repelled invaders from opposite side in 1829. This resulted in a government for the Azoreans under the Portuguese crown. The king gave them the latitude to make most local governmental policy themselves.<sup>172</sup>

To end this discussion on the history of the Azores Islands, the Dabney family of Boston needs to be mentioned. Various members of the family served as U.S. Consul to the Azores through the 1800's. Their consulate was in Horta, Faial, and they were closely involved in commerce between the U.S. and the islands. The family had their own ships, and they made major contributions to the islands. They supported the whaling enterprise and were involved in connecting the islands by submarine cable. Also they helped to erect a breakwater at Horta which was extremely important to protecting the harbor.<sup>173</sup>

While Charles W. Dabney was U.S. Consul in the late 1850's, there was a famine in the Azores. He had 43,000 bushels of corn shipped to help alleviate the problem. In 1858, he distributed at his own expense wheat and Indian corn to 800 needy people on the island of Pico with each receiving 1/2 lbs. of food daily for four months. In 1859, he solicited friends and countrymen in Boston to pay for 10,000 bushels of corn. He was praised by the Azoreans as seen in this excerpt from an official government statement: "This corn was transported in the barque 'Azor' which he owned, free of cost; and he also refused to accept any compensation for the use of his granaries, and landed the corn at his own expense."<sup>174</sup>

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[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# Azorean Migration

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## A Way Station

The Azores were uninhabited at the time of discovery and were settled shortly thereafter. The settlers were originally emigrants from Europe, as we have seen, primarily from Portugal and Flanders. These emigrants in turn would become emigrants again leaving those volcanic islands and heading to yet another homeland. In a sense, the Azores is really a temporary residence, a way station. Certainly parts of the population have always remained, but not one Azorean family hasn't seen the effect of emigration.

Europe had its problems of plagues, war, starvation, crime, rebellion, and overpopulation. The new world, and the other parts of the world the European powers would claim, were places of refuge, places of relief, for the teeming thousands of tattered and struggling European peasants. The Azores provided Portugal with additional land where it could send a few criminals, a few rebels, a few adventurers, and a few capitalists to serve the motherland. Some of the Portuguese migrants stayed in the Azores and some continued on to new lands when opportunity called them or when conditions on the islands forced them off.

## Reasons to Leave

The major reasons Azoreans left the archipelago are fairly consistent throughout its five hundred years of history and are similar to the reasons for European emigration at large. At first it was an adventuring spirit on the part of those who had wunderlust. Soon though there was overpopulation on the islands which caused starvation and lack of employment. The land tenure system on the islands allowed no opportunity to better oneself which led eventually to mass emigration. Beginning around 1800, the Portuguese government's mandatory military conscription for fourteen year olds, and later for sixteen year olds, convinced thousands of young men to illegally emigrate. The discovery of gold in California was the catalyst

for thousands more to leave. And earlier emigrants returning to the Azores with talk and demonstration of success (money and material goods) in America enticed others to emigrate. Then there was always the fear of natural disasters which cause still others to leave.<sup>1</sup>

The first two hundred years of Azorean history saw the early settlers and subsequent generations struggle for a common good in making the economy of the islands successful. In 1640 there were 100,000 people in the Azores. Portugal had some of her colonial lands taken away by European nations, especially by the Dutch. The Azoreans joined Portuguese forces to retake these lands, but with this exposure to other colonies and seeing their wealth, the Azoreans now saw opportunities elsewhere. Towards the end of the 17th century, Azoreans left to mine recently found gold in Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

Hunger struck the Azores fiercely beginning in 1680 because of overpopulation and poor farming techniques. Brazil looked very good to the Azoreans. The Portuguese government offered incentives to entice settlers to Brazil by providing land, a cow, farm implements, seed, and transportation to anyone who wanted to permanently settle there. Many took this offer.<sup>3</sup>

Ships from the American colonies began to stop at the Azores. When the United States was an infant nation, contact with the Azores increased providing the Azoreans with a window to the land of opportunity which was just west of their doorstep.<sup>4</sup> Mass emigration to the United States would take place without question. This emigration can be separated into three chronological units: 1800-1870, 1870-1930, 1957 to the present.<sup>5</sup>

Starvation, not only being a physical problem, economically it ruin the local economy. Beginning in the 1830's, potato rot and grape fungus hit. Pico's famed wine was reduced to a trickle. Orange blight struck in 1877, and cut the production by two-thirds.<sup>6</sup> Drought would occasionally occur further punishing a starving people. This short poem captures the feeling:

The land is poor, the children swarm,  
                                   our fields lack seed:  
 Our cradles fill, -- a double harm:  
 God sends drought upon the farm  
                                   and a mouth to feed.<sup>7</sup>

Time to Leave

Yankee whaling provided a means for the young Azorean male to leave the islands. He was seeking opportunity and a way to escape the yoke of mandatory military service and the trap of the peasant land tenure system. Whaling ships stopped at the Azores to take on supplies and also Portuguese sailors. The Azorean teenager would in some manner secretly board the ship and leave the islands fully expecting to return someday after he had accumulated some

wealth.8

Overpopulation was a serious problem as can be seen in this table:

Table 2  
Azores Islands  
Population, Population Density, and Population Change  
1864-1920

Island	1864	Persons per	1920	
Persons per	Population	Sq. Mile	Population	
Sq. Mile				
Santa Maria	5,863	158	6,457	174
Sao Miguel	105,404	366	111,745	388
Terceira	45,781	300	46,277	302
Graciosa	8,718	366	10,479	227
Sao Jorge	17,998	195	13,362	145
Pico	27,721	165	19,925	118
Faial	26,259	398	18,917	286
Flores	10,259	191	6,720	122
Corvo	888	131	661	98
Total	249,686	280	234,543	260

Source: Jerry R. Williams, *And Yet They Come*.<sup>9</sup>

The population density shown in Table 2 tells the story of overcrowding, but these figure are based on total square miles and not on "livable" square miles. Only 40% of the Azorean land is inhabitable because of its volcanic terrain.<sup>10</sup>

When reviewing the biographies of Azorean immigrants during the 19th century, one first notes that they are mostly teenagers and also male. Fleeing mandatory military service was a prime objective for most every Azorean family with teenage boys. An Azorean male at the age of 14, and later at the age of 16, had to several years in the military usually on the mainland (Portugal) and sometimes in the colonies. The wage was meager and the benefits nil. The Azorean had no love for Portugal because they had ignored the the islands' plight for centuries; consequently, there was no great desire to serve "motherland."<sup>11</sup>

In 1873, a Portuguese law abolished surrogates in military service. This meant that substitutes no longer could be paid to serve someone else's duty. This didn't affect the Azoreans too much as they didn't have money. In 1880, another law was instituted which required \$300 to be deposited for any male of military age leaving the country legally. Again, the Azoreans couldn't afford this expenditure. Nevertheless, these laws further increased the Azoreans dislike of governmental interference.<sup>12</sup>

Illegal Azorean emigration was common, but if caught, one could be heavily fined so there were chances to take. It was typical to see a mother or father holding onto his teenage son in the midst of the night, on the cold and windy shore, waiting for a boat to pick him up. For many this would be the last time they would see each other.

### Routine to Emigrate

It became routine for Azoreans to migrate to the United States. (134:95) During the period of 1899-1917, 73% of the Portuguese emigrants were 14-44 years of age and 20% were under 14. They left behind family, friends, and a familiar way of life to head to a new land with a different language and customs. It took courage even for a sturdy peasant boy.<sup>13</sup>

Stowing away on a whaling ship was common in the early years. Later in the 19th century, other types of ships would cruise the Azores to "steal Portuguese" as it was called; that is, looking for illegal emigrants to steal away to the United States.<sup>14</sup> A traveler out of Boston, on the ship "Surprize," witnessed such activity in the early 1870's:

About nine in the evening a brilliant light, the concerted signal, appeared, flashing at intervals on St. George [Sao Jorge island]. We stood in, and at about ten a light shone out suddenly close to the ship, and a boat was soon vaguely discerned.

As they came up, "Is this an American ship?" was the hail.  
"Yes!"

Then they pulled alongside and boarded us, bringing four passengers. At one o'clock A.M. another boat came up with four more passengers, and informed us that several were waiting for us on the other side of St. George . . . although they have slip down steep ledges and sometimes swim several yards through the surf to the boats, as the sea is often too high to allow a boat to land. An English brig had taken off eighty from that side a few days before our arrival.<sup>15</sup>

Another ship, "Jehu," would pick up Azoreans who lit fires on the shore:

It was now calm, the moon near the full; and soon the expected beacon-flame was seen blazing at intervals at Calheta on St. George. We ran in and showed our light in the rigging, and about eleven a large launch appeared bringing thirteen passengers, including several women and children. This completed the number we could get from St. George, but twenty less than promised. But the season was advanced, and the supply was running low, over one thousand having already left the islands during the summer, of whom the "Jehu" had taken one hundred and twenty on her previous trip.<sup>16</sup>

The American clipper ship could reach Boston in four days but not all could pay for this travel. Most went by slower ships that took



weeks in the early years of emigration. Towards the end of the 19th century, steamships plied the routes and travel became systematic. English, German, and American steamers traveled between the Azores and New England five to six times a year and carried 170 passengers each.<sup>17</sup>

The passengers were put in steerage and in any open area on a ship's deck as related by this account: "They stayed on the bow of the ship next to the pilot house. All they had were the clothes on their backs and what small possessions they could carry."<sup>18</sup> This the Azorean could endure having been tested with far worse conditions.<sup>19</sup>

In the early years, the young male Azorean worked his passage to the United States on a whaling ship, a voyage that sometimes could last two or three years. Later on though, he would be a passenger on a steamship with his family or some benefactor paying his way. Some emigrants would pay back their fare once they had worked and saved.<sup>20</sup> Steerage passage on a steamship in 1900 cost \$10-\$15 which was 2-3 weeks wages in the United States. It took a week to travel to New England then.<sup>21</sup>

Emigration for the Azoreans was a family affair as we have seen. Once the emigrant saved up enough money, he would send for his family, usually one member at a time. Some emigrants would return and bring others back with them to the United States such as seen in this account: "My grandfather made several trips to the Azores and each time he would bring someone else back."<sup>22</sup>

### Going Back Home

The returning emigrant would impress his countrymen with his success influencing them to emigrate as witnessed by this Azorean who later became very wealthy in tuna fishing in San Diego, California:

They were glad to show their wealth to us. They did no work. Their relatives waited on them hand and foot, as though they were royalty. This gave me the idea that people lived in America like they were kings and queens. Money just came to them -- they picked gold coins off a tree. I wasn't two weeks in the United States before I found out that this wasn't true.<sup>23</sup>

Some emigrants returned to stay especially if they were older as seen in this account:

Many emigrants sail from Velas [Sao Jorge]. They are mostly cowherds on their way to California, and usually return from America with well-lined wallets and build themselves a white house up on the Serra, in the district where they were born. To encourage them, there is a memorial in the main square of the town erected to the memory of a certain Souza, who left Velas barefoot for America's ranches and became a public benefactor to the town when he returned.<sup>24</sup>

From 1908 to 1919, 20,751 Portuguese did emigrate from the United States returning to the Azores. This figure is misleading though because it includes those who just went for a visit, but it confirms that there was much contact by the emigrant with his land of embarkation.

Azorean population went from 249,135 to 231,543 during the years of 1864 to 1920. (See Table 2) The islands of Pico, Sao Jorge, Faial, and Flores had very heavy reductions. These people went to the United States while the people from the islands of Sao Miguel, Santa Maria, and Terceira went to Brazil.<sup>25</sup> Between 1890 to 1920, 84% of the Azorean emigrants went to the United States while 14% went to Brazil.<sup>26</sup>

In 1919, there approximately 300,000 people in the Azores while there were 100,000 Azoreans in the United States. Very few countries in history had had such a massive number of emigrants for such a brief period of time. Every Azorean family and village was affected by emigration.<sup>27</sup>

Unlike earlier American immigrants, the Azoreans didn't go to the United States seeking religious freedom, political liberty, or release from incarceration. They went for economic opportunity which was not available on the islands. They were willing to work hard in their new country which they did as we shall see.<sup>28</sup>

Lawrence Oliver was smuggled aboard a White Star steamer at the age of sixteen. All he had was a \$5 gold piece his mother gave him and the clothes on his back. He couldn't speak a bit of English; however, as he reflected years later: "No one who had lived in a country as poor as my homeland can ever realize the feelings of joy and hope which filled the hearts of our little group." He was anticipating opportunities noted in letters and by returning Azorean emigrants.<sup>29</sup>

Those who did return to the Azores brought gifts for their friends and relatives, and also possessions for themselves if they were staying. The passage below takes place in 1881 and are emigrants returning to the island of Flores after a stay in the United States. The ship had to anchor out and the passengers were taken off by shore boats:

As the boats drew near, the steerag passengers crowded to the ship's side. They were all in their "shore clothes" . . . As the oarsmen recognized old friends they became greatly excited. Clambering on board, they kissed and embraced, men and women indiscriminately, and such jabbering I never heard . . . the noisy crowd poured into the boats, each bearing some cherished article of household furniture, -- bedsteads, tin boilers, sewing-machines, stoves, lamps, and, dearer than all to the Portuguese soul, the Connecticut clock.<sup>30</sup>

## More Recent Emigration

Azorean emigration to the United States came almost to a complete stop during the 1920's because of new U.S. immigration laws. Then it increased dramatically in the 1960's after U.S. refugee laws were enacted for Azoreans. Violent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions had hit the islands leaving many homeless. Canada drew a number of Azorean emigrants, as well, with a worker's program.<sup>31</sup>

Table 3 bears this out as it shows an increase in population in the Azores when U.S. immigration laws were restrictive, and then a decrease in population when U.S. refugee laws allowed greater numbers to immigrate:

Table 3  
Population of the Azores Islands  
1920 to 1975

Islands	1920	1950	1960	1975
Santa Maria	6,457	11,844	13,180	7,784
Sao Miguel	111,745	164,167	169,170	136,972
Terceira	46,277	60,372	72,479	61,450
Graciosa	7,477	9,517	8,634	6,337
Sao Jorge	13,362	15,529	14,764	11,930
Pico	19,927	22,557	21,626	16,096
Faial	18,917	23,923	20,343	14,073
Flores	6,720	7,650	6,556	5,093
Corvo	661	728	669	355
Total	231,543	316,287	327,421	260,090

Source: Jerry R. Williams, *And Yet They Come*.<sup>32</sup>

Mass Azorean emigration of 1870-1920 relieved the pressure of overpopulation some, but the population built up again in the next 40 years. The average population density in the islands in 1960 was 376 persons per square mile; consequently, this overcrowding provided an internal stimulus to emigrate.<sup>33</sup> From 1965 to 1983, 136,603 Azoreans emigrated with 77,897 seeking refuge in the United States and 55,744 went to Canada.<sup>34</sup>

In the recent past, nothing really has changed in the islands. The peasant society still exists, and Portugal still treats the Azores as a colony. Ties with Azoreans in North America is still very strong.<sup>35</sup> A new phenomena has occurred though. Whole families have been emigrating especially to Canada. These families locate earlier Azorean emigrants for support and aid. Modern mass transportation has made emigration easier and quicker than ever before. Canada and New England are just hours away rather than a long sea voyage of weeks by sailing ship or 5 days by steamer.<sup>36</sup>

Today, Azorean emigrants returning to the islands, and Americans

with Azorean heritage, who are essentially tourists and who are visiting the islands, show more wealth than ever before. They are members of the American middle class who are educated, and who are skilled or professional people. This obviously has great appeal to the islanders and causes them to want to emigrate. This isn't really new as we have seen, but with modern transportation being convenient, and examples of American success being readily displayed, the temptation to emigrate is stronger than ever.<sup>37</sup>

Portugal as a whole, which includes the Azores, from 1864 to 1973 had over 2 million emigrants. Its population in 1864 was 4,300,000 and 8,900,000 in 1973, again including the Azores. Next to Ireland, Portugal had the largest number of emigrants during that period of time per capita. Of the 2 million emigrants, 160,000 went to the United States and were almost exclusively Azoreans. For curiosity sake, it is interesting to note that 800,000 Portuguese emigrated to France; 620,000 to Brazil; 140,000 to South Africa; and 110,000 to Canada.<sup>38</sup> It has been said, "Portugal's principal export is its people."<sup>39</sup> How true.

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[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# Azorean Immigration into the United States

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## Early Period

Modern scholars have speculated, with supporting evidence, that Europeans had discovered America before Columbus. The Norsemen and the Portuguese are frequently cited as being those early discoverers. The following are some of the claims and evidence. In a 1424 nautical map, found at the University of Minnesota, has the Portuguese in the Antilles. In 1472 or 1473, Azorean chronicler, Gaspar Frutuoso, has it recorded that Joao Vaz Corte-Real from Terceira had landed in New England. A British historian has evidence that a Portuguese explorer with the name of Dualmo had reached America in 1489.<sup>1</sup>

Setting speculation aside, it is well-documented that the Portuguese did explore the New England shores shortly after Columbus discovered the Caribbean islands. In 1497, sailing for England, John Cabot found the Grand Banks off Newfoundland. The banks lie in shallow water which is primarily a breeding ground for codfish.<sup>2</sup>

History has it that before this voyage, "men of Brittany and the Iberian Peninsula had been bringing home codfish which had been split, salted, and stretched for curing on a stick" which was called "bacalhau," a Portuguese word for codfish. When Cabot went to name the banks, we are told that he used the local native's word for it which was "baccalaos." "Bacalhua" and "baccalaos" are very similar words. Does this mean that the Portuguese had had contacts with the native peoples, and those people adopted the Portuguese word? This could be. But, there were Portuguese in Cabot's crew who were taken on board when he stopped at the Azores. Thus, there were Portuguese speakers on ship who certainly could have suggested the name "baccalaos."<sup>3</sup> In fact, Cabot assigned the name "lavrador" to the land mass he saw directly west which is a Portuguese word for farmer.<sup>4</sup> What ever is the case, Portuguese names were given to geographical discoveries on this voyage, and there were Azorean men in the crew.

## Corte-Real

In 1500-1501, Gaspar Corte Real, Joao Core Real's son, sailed to Greenland and Labrador, and then down the New England coast. There were two ships in the voyage, one commanded by Gaspar and another commanded by his brother Miguel. The ships got separated, and Gaspar's ship was never seen again. In 1502, Miguel returned to find his brother, but to confound history, he disappeared too. Years later near Dighton, Massachusetts, an inscription was found on a large rock near the shore. The date inscribed was 1511 and read, "Miguel Cortereal, by the will of God here chief of the Indians." Drawn on the Dighton Rock is the Portuguese coat-of-arms and Christian crosses.<sup>5</sup> It was the practice of the Portuguese to plant a stone pillar of several feet high at discovery sites claiming the land for Portugal. It had the captain's name, date, and Portuguese coat-of-arms.<sup>6</sup> Was the Dighton Rock a replication of the Portuguese stone markers? Obviously this whole mystery has stimulated much debate.

There is some more evidence of the Corte Reals' landfall. The Wampanoag tribe in southern New England was identified by Roger Williams in 1643 as having light-skinned members. They also used Portuguese words such as "cabbo" for cape, "pico" for peak, and "sementels" for grain. In Newport, Rhode Island there is an old stone tower which was not made by native peoples and shows every evidence of being Portuguese. This is near the Dighton Rock. Are these proofs then that the Corte-Real brothers and their crews lived in southern New England after wrecking their ships?<sup>7</sup> The debate continues.

## Living in New England

In 1500, a company was formed in Portugal to fish the Grand Banks. In the royal account book for 1505, it is recorded that the King of Portugal paid a group of sailors for their work in Newfoundland. A year later, the sailors paid 10% tax on the profits they reaped.<sup>8</sup> As early as 1506, this company was sending codfish to Portugal from the Grand Banks.<sup>9</sup>

In 1520, Joao Alvares Fagundes, a Portuguese, explored Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.<sup>10</sup> A year later, a company of Portuguese settlers built 80 houses along the coast of Cape Breton Island. They returned to Portugal in 1526 abandoning the project.<sup>11</sup> Francesco de Souza wrote about this enterprise in 1570:

It will be 45 to 50 years since certain gentlemen of Vianna [Portugal] associated themselves together and according to information which they had of Terra Nova de Bacallaos, they determined to go to settle some part of it, as in fact they did go in one vessel and one caravel. But finding the country to which they were bound very cold, they sailed along the coast from east to west. They then sailed from northeast to southwest, and there settled . . . They were in the company of some families from the Azores, whom they took on their way, as is well known.<sup>12</sup>

The Portuguese were involved at many levels within exploration companies. They serve not only as leaders but also as a general members. For example, eight Portuguese were with Hernando de Soto in 1539 and five with Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1540. Portuguese blood was spilled too in these, at often times, violent expeditions.<sup>13</sup>

In 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed Newfoundland for the English, and while doing it, he found Portuguese fishermen there. They outfitted Gilbert's ship with supplies as was recorded by him:

Put aboarde our provision, which was wines, bread or ruske, fish, wette and dire, sweet oyles, besides many other, as marmalades, figs, lymmons barrelled, and like . . . In brief, wee were supplied of our wants commodiously,  
as if we had been in a countrey or some citie populous and plenty of things.<sup>14</sup>

Without question mainland Portuguese and Azoreans had been active along the Canadian and New England coast for many years in the early exploration and settlement period. They had been explorers, fishermen, and settlers and were some of the first Europeans to live and work in upper North America.

#### Portuguese Jews

Many Shephardic Jews from Portugal fled persecution and came to the colonies. Mathias de Sousa was one such Jew who arrived in Maryland in 1634 being the first documented Portuguese to live in the colonies.<sup>15</sup> In 1654, 23 Shephardic Jews arrived in New Amsterdam fleeing persecution in Brazil. These Jews and other Jews in the area formed what became known as the "Portuguese Nation."<sup>16</sup>

In 1733, forty Portuguese and Spanish Jews left England and settled in Georgia. They lived in Savannah and also Charleston, and were split on the slavery issue.<sup>17</sup> In 1752 Aaron Lopez, who was born in Lisbon and baptized Catholic, was really was a Jew which he proclaimed once he got to Newport, Rhode Island. He helped build the first Jewish synagogue in America at Newport. Lopez founded the sperm whale oil industry in America and had 30 ships in his fleet. He got his crews from the Azores and operated out of New Bedford, Massachusetts. These whalers were the first documented Azorean settlers in the United States. They came from Sao Jorge, Faial, Pico, and Flores.<sup>18</sup>

In 1790, about 3,000 Jews lived in the newly formed United States. with many being Portuguese. They could be found living in Boston, Philadelphia, and Richmond.<sup>19</sup>

## Serving the New Nation

John Paul Jones had twenty-eight Portuguese aboard his ship the *Bonhomme Richard*, and in the battle with the British ship *Serapis*, eleven were killed. Peter Francisco, a Portuguese, served in the Continental Army. There is a monument in Greensboro, North Carolina commemorating his effort. Part of its inscription reads: "strongest man in the Revolutionary armies." He was an orphan who lived in Patrick Henry's uncle's home. He was shopkeeper, blacksmith, planter, and eventually a wealthy country squire.<sup>20</sup> Francisco also became a friend of Lafayette and accompanied him in his 1824 visit touring the United States.<sup>21</sup>

Some Portuguese settled in Louisiana about 1800 and fought with French Pirate Jean Lafitte who attacked British shipping. During the Battle of New Orleans at the end of the War of 1812, there were Portuguese with Andrew Jackson. Also Portuguese sailors were with Oliver Hazard Perry on Lake Erie and the sea battles which were fought there.<sup>22</sup>

Much later in United States history, John Phillips, born on the Azorean island of Pico, became an American hero in 1866 by riding 236 miles in a blizzard through Indian country to save army troops. Fort Kearney, Wyoming had been besieged by Indians, and Phillips rode to Fort Laramie for help. He received a U.S. Congressional award with this accolade: "In all the annals of heroism in the face of unusual dangers and difficulties on the American frontier, or in the world, there are few that can excell in gallantry, in heroism, in devotion, in self-sacrifice and patriotism, the ride of John Phillips."<sup>23</sup>

## Mass Immigration

Whaling ships brought the first Azoreans to the United States. They first settled in the New Bedford area of Massachusetts and then in the surrounding areas. These were young males who eventually would send for their loved ones. When whaling was on the decline, the Azoreans gravitated towards textile mills found in and near New Bedford and to the fishing banks nearby. Some went to California on whaling ships and soon were in the gold fields there.

Table 4 below shows the cycles of Portuguese immigration to the United States. There were essentially three waves: 1820 to 1870; 1870 to 1930; and 1960 to the present. These statistics give "Portuguese" immigration with no distinction for Azoreans, Madeirans, Cape Verdeans, and mainlanders who are all Portuguese. Census data can be a troubling mire at times with little consistency. Researchers glean out what they can and present it as well as they can. In the case of the Azoreans, if an Azorean distinction was being made at the time of census collection, many immigrants just considered themselves "Portuguese" when the question was asked about their country of origin. It is safe to assume, however, that at least 80%, if not higher, were from the Azores which is confirmed by



county, state, and regional historical accounts.<sup>24</sup>

Table 4  
Portuguese Immigration to the U.S.  
1820 to 1977

Decade	Number of Immigrants	Decade	Number of Immigrants
1820-1830	35	1901-1910	69,149
1831-1840	829	1911-1920	89,732
1841-1850	550	1921-1930	29,994
1851-1860	1,055	1931-1940	3,329
1861-1870	2,658	1941-1950	7,423
1871-1880	14,082	1951-1960	19,588
1881-1890	16,978	1961-1970	76,065
1891-1900	27,508	1971-1977	75,717
		Total	436,837

Source: Francis M. Rogers, "Portuguese" & Lionel Holmes and Joseph D'Alessandro, Portuguese in the Sacramento Area.<sup>25</sup>

#### Reasons to Become an American Immigrant

In the 1870's, direct shipping began between Boston and Horta, Faial which was an impetus for increased immigration to the United States. In 1890's, the U.S. Consul moved from Horta to Ponta Delgada which is on the most populated island in the archipelago, Sao Miguel. This brought direct shipping to Sao Miguel and further increased immigration to the United States. In 1910, the Portuguese monarchy fell, and an anticlerical government was instituted which caused conservative Catholics to leave Portuguese possessions and relocate. Many came to the Azores and to United States. More Azorean immigration came from young men fleeing mandatory military service during World War I.<sup>26</sup> Jobs were available in New England because of massive industrialization. This attracted Azoreans because of their lack of employment.<sup>27</sup>

Cape Verdeans, Madeirans, Azoreans, and mainland Portuguese were all considered Portuguese, and they all immigrated to New England. The Cape Verdeans were primarily African Negroes and worked in the cranberry bogs and on whaling ships. Madeirans were from the mainland, and the Azoreans were a mixture of people of primary Portuguese and Flemish heritage. Thus, there was a wide variation in physiology and skin coloring. Obviously problems occurred because of racial prejudice, black stigma, and misidentity.<sup>28</sup>

Heavy immigration of southern Europeans to the United States in the latter part of the 19th century and first part of the 20th century was of great concern to Americans of northern European heritage who made up the bulk of the United States population. The culture and religion of these new immigrants were different, and they appeared

to be a blight on the eastern cities. World War I was just as disturbing to most Americans. It was seen as a "foreign war" which needed very little American involvement. As a result of this xenophobia, restrictive immigration laws were passed to reduce the "foreign element" in American society.<sup>29</sup>

Literacy was a requirement in a 1917 law which severely hampered Portuguese immigration because Portuguese illiteracy was at 80%. Next came the the quota law of 1921 which fixed the number of immigrants from any given country at 3% of the 1910 U.S. census. This meant if a country had 1,000 emigrants in the U.S. in 1910, only 30 (or 3%) could immigrate per year under this new law. In 1924, another quota law was passed, allowing 2% of the 1890 U.S. census which was purposely written to allow more northern Europeans to immigrate.<sup>30</sup> The 1924 law was revised in 1929.<sup>31</sup>

Under the quota law of 1921, only 2,520 Portuguese were allowed to immigrate to the United States; in 1924, this was revised to 503; and revised again in 1929 to 440.<sup>32</sup> Statistics in Table 4 reflect these changes. It should be noted that in 1921, 19,195 Portuguese immigrated to the U.S., then each year after that, immigration dropped off dramatically as the new laws took affect.<sup>33</sup>

During the Great Depression and World War II, Portuguese immigration to the U.S. was static because of worldwide economic difficulties and wartime dangers. Some Portuguese were able to escape hostile regimes and were allowed immigration to the United States.<sup>34</sup>

Then in 1957, disaster struck the Azores, when a volcano erupted offshore near the island of Faial. Two Azorean Refugee Acts were passed in 1958 and 1960 to admit Azoreans needing refuge.<sup>35</sup> Disaster struck again in 1960 and 1964, when an earthquakes shook Sao Jorge. More legislation was passed to admit further Azorean refugees. From 1961 to 1977, about 150,000 Azoreans immigrated to the United States.<sup>36</sup> In 1965, immigration quotas were dropped, and a new law instituted allowing 20,000 immigrants for each country.<sup>37</sup>

Table 5 shows the location of Portuguese in the United States from 1870 to 1978. These statistics represent Portuguese of first and second generation only. And again, Azoreans are generally 80% of the figures. California and Massachusetts have always had the largest concentration of Portuguese. Migration to other eastern states has taken place in recent years which the figures bear out.

Table 5  
Portuguese Population in the United States  
1870 to 1978

State	1870	1900	1930	1960	1978
-------	------	------	------	------	------

California	3,435	15,583	99,194	97,489	
21,261					
Connecticut	221	655	4,701	9,930	8,737
Hawaii	-	7,668	19,121	9,325	117
Massachusetts	2,555	17,885	105,076	95,328	
46,792					
New Jersey	-	62	5,099	8,933	
16,487					
New York	334	823	7,758	11,497	7,455
Rhode Island	189	2,865	29,097	29,155	
16,351					
All Others	1,015	2,558	8,680	15,745	5,247
Total	7,649	48,099	278,726	277,402	
122,330					

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Source: Jerry R. Williams, *And Yet They Come*.38

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# Azorean and New England Whaling and Fishing

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## Beginnings

In the minds of many, whaling and fishing is synonymous with the Portuguese. Actually only a small number of Portuguese have been involved in these maritime enterprises. But it is the adventure, the danger, and the high seas romance that has been told in fictional accounts, as well as true stories, that have generated an image of the Portuguese whaleman lashed to his helm in heavy weather barely able to see five feet in front of him because of the slashing rain and crashing seas. The classic story Moby Dick is a case in point. Herman Melville wrote of a man's struggle against the monster of the deep who has the ability to turn and thrash at moment's notice the enemy riding precariously in little wooden craft. There is truth to this, and the Azoreans have been uniquely involved in the whaling story.

Whaling is a business, an economic endeavor. Profits are sought from the products produced. A whale's cadaver was processed for lamp oil, candles, medicines, perfume, machinery lubricant, and corset staves.<sup>1</sup>

The first type of whaling done was shore whaling. Along the New England coast, Native Americans sent their boats out and speared one of the passing behemoths. This practice was followed by European settlers later, and then expanded to deep sea whaling where ships would go out for long spans of time whale hunting.<sup>2</sup>

## Azores

Azoreans began with shore whaling which is an industry that takes whales within sight of the shore. Whales would migrate around the islands and travel especially in the channel between the islands of Sao Jorge and Pico. The people of Pico are known for their whaling. The island is virtually useless for agriculture because volcanic rock is found everywhere; thus, whaling and fishing became necessary occupations for its inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> Other islanders have done shore

whaling as well. In fact, "canoes" or whaling boats, of about 38 feet in length are painted with different color stripes to tell the islanders apart. Pico uses blue; Faial use yellow; and Sao Jorge use green.<sup>4</sup> Last century, one might have seen as many as 60 whaling boats in the Sao Jorge Channel at one time.<sup>5</sup>

This account of Azorean shore whaling is vividly told giving one a feeling of the adventure (and also remorse) and is worth reprinting here. Once a fountain of water is spotted from the shore and the word "blos" is shouted, the whaling boats are shoved into the surf and the hunt is on:

The usual technique is to approach [the whale] from behind until they are almost within touching distance. The harpooner braces himself, with his knee steadied against the seat in the bows, and raises his arm. There is a flash in the sun, and the harpoon is embedded in the spinal column, where the hook opens out. The struggle starts with a great splash of water. It is a fight to the death between the great beast and this slender craft, from which a line of more than two thousand feet is unwinding at full speed around the bollard. The men have to pour cold water on it, otherwise the friction will set it on fire.

In the meantime the huge, maddened beast dashes off, dives, comes up again, threshes about, and beats the sea with its great forked tail . . . the whaling-boat hauled in her line in order to approach the retreating beast. The harpooner braced his arms to fling several sharpbladed, hookless spears, keen as razors, and made to deal blows to the vital organs and cause lung hemorrhage and death by asphyxia. Already the spouting breath had reddened. A bleeding jet gushed out at the nostrils, and a purple ring was widening in the broken water . . . In vain the poor crippled body, held back by the spear-lines, tried to escape, and, with fits of convulsion, beat the water into white foam. Occasionally it wheeled round, followed yard by yard by the boat, which was as lithe as a bull-fighter throwing his bandeillas.<sup>6</sup>

The whale is then brought ashore and carved up. The blubber is melted down for oil and the bones tossed aside and saved. The stench is almost unbearable and the work bloody and slick.<sup>7</sup> (38:148)

### Yankee Whaling

The Dutch controlled whaling during the 17th century. The British followed in the 18th century as the chief whalers. During the 19th century, New Englanders led the way in whaling which peaked about 1850 with its center being at New Bedford. In 1755,

the Yankee whaling industry sent out 304 ships and 4,059 seamen operating out of Nantucket, Cape Cod, and New Bedford.<sup>8</sup>

Wages were based on a lay-system, or what could be described as profit-sharing. The more whales taken, the more money for all. At the end of a cruise, money received for the oil and bone would be tallied; then operating costs, the owner's profit, and the officers' wages were subtracted. The crew then divided up equally the balance of the money<sup>9</sup> which could be \$200 to \$300 for two to three years labor.<sup>10</sup> Normally 25% of the crew never returned from a whaling voyage because of death or desertion.<sup>11</sup>

Whaling crews were always needed, and they could be found at the Azores. Most Yankee captains would disembark from New England with a skeleton crew and head for the Azores or the Cape Verde Islands looking for a supply of sailors. They liked the Portuguese because they were hard working, quiet, and cheap.<sup>12</sup> The Azorean teenage male was waiting to be picked. He was seeking opportunity and a way to the United States generally because he was fleeing military service. Thus, the Yankee captains found their crews on the Azorean shores just for the asking. This was noted in Moby Dick:

No small number of these whaling seamen belong to the Azores, where the outbound Nantucket whalers frequently touch to augment their crews from the hardy peasants of those rocky shores.<sup>13</sup>

Coming from Faial, Sao Jorge, Pico, or Flores, the Azorean would sneak aboard the whaling ship at night to avoid being caught by Portuguese authorities. Once aboard, there was usually no discussion of pay. At some point during the voyage, the captain would legally sign up his Azorean crew at a U.S. consulate to allow the crew members to enter the United States legally and to receive their pay.<sup>14</sup> One took one's chances. Some captains were fair to their crew and others were not. A few benevolent captains were known to take in young Portuguese men into their own home as family members.<sup>15</sup>

Here is a fictionalized account, but accurate in terms of reality, of two young Azoreans waiting to be taken off their island clandestinely:

Francisco Marroco and Joao Peixe-Rei turned their eyes toward the night-darkened sea. They didn't speak, they even feared to breathe, terrified as they were of the government's oarsmen. The waves whined, the breeze chilled them, the hours went slowly. Around midnight, they thought they saw a shadow on the water. Was it the longboat from the whaler? Or was it the oarsmen's boat come to capture them? Joao Peixe-Rei and his companion crouched lower, their blood pounding in their veins. Then the flicker of a weak light shone three times out on the water. Three times! That was the signal they had agreed on. It was the whaler's boat come to take them off the island! <sup>16</sup>

But once on ship, life could be unbearable at times. Some captains were ruthless and some voyages tragically terminated like the wreck

of the Yankee whaling brig Ardent with an Azorean crew. The ship wrecked at sea and many of the crew members died from starvation, overexposure, and drowning. Survivors were eventually rescued by a British ship.<sup>17</sup> Mutinies would occur on the long voyages, and they were generally caused by starvation. Of course, there were the classic mutinous revolts against malicious captains as well.<sup>18</sup> One writer summed up the violence found aboard ship this way:

If anyone should stack up all the ships' logs, the sailors' journals, newspaper stories and other non-fiction -- all the writings into the workday record of the sea -- gather them in one big pile and then compare them with anything that has even been imagined of the doings of men ashore, the salt-water account would assay more violence to the ton, more convincing hardship, more human misery.<sup>19</sup>

The first New England whaler to stop at the Azores did so about 1730, and by 1750 Azorean crews were being taken. This went on for 175 years ending in 1921 when the last whaler appeared.<sup>20</sup> In 1780, as many as 200 whaling ships could be found in the Azores picking up crew members.<sup>21</sup> Not only did the ships stop at the Azores for crews, they also picked up supplies and repairs were made. Some would deposit the whale oil and bones for shipment to New Bedford.<sup>22</sup>

Once an Azorean sailor arrived in Massachusetts, he many times would find work in the local area. Some would travel to California either by land or on another whaling ship. Sometimes the Azorean would return home to the islands for a visit or to bring his wife and children back to the United States.<sup>23</sup> Those who stayed in the New Bedford area, could find jobs on shore in many of the whaling-related industries. There were whale oil refineries, cooper shops, toolworks, and processing plants.<sup>24</sup> Soon Southern New England became populated with Azoreans, and they could be found living in Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, Cape Cod, Gloucester, Boston, and Providence to name a few locations.<sup>25</sup>

But some Azoreans stayed on as whalers and eventually became sea captains and owners of ships. It wasn't long before the whaling industry was mostly in the hands of the Portuguese. The first Portuguese whaling captain was Captain Anthony Marks who in 1844 was in command of the Garland sailing out of New London. He was followed by Captain Joseph Dias who was the skipper of the St. George. Another was Captain Joseph Silva who operated many ships in the 1850's to the 1870's.<sup>26</sup> There were as many as 50 Portuguese captains in New England from 1906 to 1915.<sup>27</sup> Antone S. Sylvia, who came from Sao Jorge in 1855 to New Bedford at the age of sixteen, became a millionaire in the whaling business ultimately owning several vessels.<sup>28</sup>

But the whaling industry was running out of whales. Shortly it would be replaced by the petroleum industry. Towards the latter years of the early 20th century, the whaling business became so pathetic that

it took special skippers to squeeze profits from their voyages. Portuguese captains apparently had the ability to do this which is verified by this commentary:

Even the captains of to-day are mostly Portuguese and many of the vessels are Portuguese-owned, for the natives of the Western Islands [Azores] are satisfied with smaller profits, can live more cheaply, and are more thrifty than their American predecessors . . . the Portuguese skippers are skillful whalers, good business men, strict disciplinarians and secure catches which would make the old-time Yankee whalemens turn green with envy.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, the Azoreans first came to the United States in large numbers as members of whaling crews. They settled in New England or went to California, and once at their destination, they sent for their families.<sup>30</sup>

#### Fishing the Grand Banks

Some believe that the Portuguese fished the Grand Banks off Newfoundland before Columbus. We know for a fact that they fished shortly thereafter which was seen earlier in this study.<sup>31</sup> The fishing industry in the Azores was never of much size. But in the United States, the Azoreans had better fishing grounds which produced a viable industry for them.

The Portuguese established themselves in New England fishing in the middle of the 19th century when Azoreans began arriving in greater numbers on whaling ships. They replaced New Englanders who moved on to other locations and occupations.<sup>32</sup> Once whaling began fading, the Azoreans took to fishing or found jobs in the local textile mills.<sup>33</sup>

Provincetown and Gloucester became fishing centers. A hill in Gloucester became known as "Portygee Hill" because of the number of Portuguese residents there.<sup>34</sup> At first, fish were salted to preserve them. In the 1870's, the fresh fish industry was developed followed later by quick freezing techniques.<sup>35</sup> Fortunes were made because there was a demand for fish in the New England area.<sup>36</sup> Fish were caught by weirs (traps) and also by nets. In 1880, fishermen made about \$300 annually, and later in 1930, about \$1,200.<sup>37</sup> Fishing the Grand Banks was done during April and May, with a ship full of cod, late last century bringing \$9,000 to \$16,000.<sup>38</sup>

This was written about the Azorean fishermen in a Provincetown newspaper in 1894:

Captains and crews are all, or nearly all Azorean, and from a mere handful in 1840, the Portuguese population has increased to upward of 2,000 souls in 1849. Not all of these are natives of the Western Islands [Azores]; a large portion were born here. But born in America or the Azores, they take kindly to the sea, and make excellent fishermen.<sup>39</sup>

But fishing was not without its danger. Between 1830 and 1881, Gloucester fisheries lost 2,249 fishermen at sea and 419 seacraft at a value of \$1.8 million. In one single storm in 1879, thirteen



vessels went down carrying 143 fishermen who left 40 widows and 115 fatherless children.<sup>40</sup> The Portuguese "faddo" is a musical performance which expresses the sorrow one feels during such times of disaster. It is sung by a widow wearing black who gazes towards the sea.<sup>41</sup>



[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# New England

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## Azoreans on Shore in New England

New England became the focal point for Azorean migration to the United States. Some immigrants made it their home and worked as fishermen, whalers, farmers, and textile workers. Others moved on to California after working awhile. Massachusetts saw the greatest concentration of Azoreans in New England, but Rhode Island and Connecticut had significant populations as well.<sup>1</sup>

In certain communities in southern New England, especially Bristol County, Massachusetts, Portuguese would be the dominant ethnic group. The towns of New Bedford and Fall River became the major centers of Portuguese population. In fact, New Bedford was known as "the Portuguese Capital of the United States" because of its host of Portuguese.<sup>2</sup> The first Azorean family settled there about 1840, and by 1920, there were 30,000 Portuguese.<sup>3</sup> Its sister city of Fall River had 22,000 also at that time.<sup>4</sup>

The first Portuguese settled in Provincetown, which is located on Cape Cod, in 1853. Gloucester had its first Portuguese settler in 1845. They were attracted to the fisheries. In 1860, Boston had 40 Azoreans to give some idea of the extent of Azorean settlement.<sup>5</sup>

## Textile Mills

When whaling was on the decline, investors began putting their resources into textile mills. Former whaling crews now turned to the mills for employment. The first textile mill was built in New Bedford in 1848, and by 1900, it had 14 mills. In 1920, at the height of the industry, there were 63 mills.<sup>6</sup> The industry expanded to Fall River, and by 1900, it would have 80 mills expanding to 111 mills by 1923. Azoreans could be found working at mills in Lowell, Tauton, and Pawtucket.<sup>7</sup>

The mills had a history of hiring immigrants because they could pay

them less. There were Irish, French-Canadians, Portuguese, Greeks, Syrians, Poles, and Italians at the mills.<sup>8</sup> Women worked too generally to pay off their passage from the Azores and to save money to buy a house or fare to California. Children were put to work as soon as the law allowed.<sup>9</sup>

The average Portuguese immigrant made \$14.66 a month in the mills late last century.<sup>10</sup> Their first job was sweeping floors at \$3.50 a week.<sup>11</sup> Male weavers made \$8.76 a week, and women earned less at \$7.85.<sup>12</sup> Work was six days a week, eleven hours a day.<sup>13</sup> Jobs were primarily unskilled which accommodated the Azorean immigrant at his or her level being largely unskilled and illiterate. There was little opportunity for advancement.<sup>14</sup>

To put their wage in perspective: it cost \$6 a month for room and board; ten cents for a beer and sandwich; and ten cents for a movie ticket. It was found that a family could live off of \$10 a week.<sup>15</sup> Tenement housing was unattractive, no bath, and a toilet in the corner of the room with a curtain. It was an unsanitary environment even by the standards of the day.<sup>16</sup> This is what one researcher found in 1920 during an inspection of a Portuguese tenement:

No one will deny that the sections of the city where most of the Portuguese live are unattractive. There is a dreary monotony of plain two and three story frame buildings with accommodations for from two to twelve families, sometimes fronting the street and sometimes ugly alleys. In most yards the tramp of many feet has prevented the growth of grass although there are exceptions to this. Even where the interiors of the tenements are well-kept, hallways are apt to be defaced and uncleanly.<sup>17</sup>

There was cholera, small pox, tuberculousis, and an high infant mortality.<sup>18</sup> Thirty-nine percent of pregnant Portuguese mothers worked at the mills.<sup>19</sup> Infant mortality rate was 200 per 1,000 births which was twice the national average at the time. The pregnant mother worked in appalling and unhealthy mill conditions and a crowded home environment which studies attributed to the high infant mortality.<sup>20</sup>

In 1870's there were 2,000 millworkers in New Bedford; in 1900, there were 10,000; in 1925, there were 40,000 with most being Portuguese.<sup>21</sup> But in 1938, in the midst of the Depression, the New Bedford workforce was cut in half to 21,280 millworkers. Only 50% of the Portuguese had jobs at that time. Those that were unemployed were unskilled. Many moved on to Connecticut and New Jersey to work in the garment industry.<sup>22</sup>

## New England Farming

Some Azorean immigrants took to farming in New England which was their traditional vocation. New England farmland was not as attractive as California's massive acreages, but the Azoreans with

their usually tenacity farmed it nonetheless.<sup>23</sup>

New England farmland was rocky and hilly. The Azorean farmers did as had done in the islands; they used the rocks for fences and did intensive farming with their hands employing few implements.<sup>24</sup> An immigrant farmhand made \$5 a month which included room and board which was less than he could make in the mills.<sup>25</sup> Land rented for \$5 to \$12 an acre. The Portuguese planted potatoes, onions, corn, oats, rye, and hay crops. They also raised fruit and garden vegetables mostly for their own table. The only dairying done was milking the family cow.<sup>26</sup>

The Portuguese have had a reputation for making something out of nothing. The Portuguese could grow potatoes where the Non-Portuguese farmers had nothing but problems. A common saying of the time was, "If you want to see a potato grow, you have to speak to it in Portuguese."<sup>27</sup>

They were frugal farmers as well and could accumulate property like no other immigrant group which certainly became the case in California.<sup>28</sup> In 1909, the average size of their farms was 24.5 acres. Fifty percent of the farms they owned were 15 acres or less. Long hours were required and took the help of every member of the family for success.<sup>29</sup>

Azorean farmers in the Portsmouth area came from the islands of Sao Miguel, Faial, and Sao Jorge. The below excerpt is a description of a Portuguese farmstead near Portsmouth written by a researcher in the early 1920's:

It is usually the former residence of some Anglo-Saxon who has died or given up the struggle of the soil. The house is not the better for the new owners. The yard is somewhat littered and full of hens and ducks . . . Large tubs stand in they yard with a rather corpulent woman bending over one of them. Her children are numerous and barefooted. She, however, has both shoes and stockings on, is genial and well-mannered. In the kitchen, conveniences are few and the mother wipes crumbs off a wooden chair for her guests to sit upon. Everything has the appearance of being made for use and of being everlastingly used. If one gets to peep into the bedroom or livingroom, however, there is some attempt at decoration, albeit cheap and gaudy . . . No books are seen.<sup>30</sup>

### Other Occupations

As has been discussed, immigrant Azoreans were employed in New England in whaling, fishing, farming, textiles, and small businesses. They also were longshoremen, coal or brick workers, pork packers, laundry workers,<sup>31</sup> railroad workers, carpenters, mechanics, shipyard workers, and machinery operators.<sup>32</sup> Some were teachers, engineers, clerks, and accountants.<sup>33</sup>



[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# California

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This is the final leg of the Azorean journey to California. All aspects of the Azorean experience in California will be discussed in this section. The Azorean came to California originally by whaling ship. Sometimes he came directly to the state from the Azores, but mostly there was a stop in New England first to work and save money for a passage to California. The Portuguese had some early connection with California in the age of discovery.

## Discovery

The world-traveling Portuguese were the first Europeans to step on California soil. Joao Rodrigues Cabrilho, employed by Spain but Portuguese by birth, was on a voyage of discovery when he sighted San Diego Bay on September 28, 1542. He sailed from Navidad in New Spain with two ships and with Portuguese sailors in his crew. From San Diego, he continued up the coast stopping at the channel islands. Then he put ashore in the Ventura area, and sailed to Monterey Bay discovering it on November 16th. A tragedy occurred. Cabrilho fell and broke a bone which became infected. He died January 3, 1543 and was buried on the channel island of San Miguel. Bartolome Ferrelo replaced him as captain, and he explored the California coast to the Oregon border.<sup>1</sup>

The next Portuguese to set foot on California, was the Portuguese pilot Nuno da Silva who Sir Francis Drake captured in January 1578. (Many nations, employed Portuguese pilots because they were the best in the world.) Silva was the pilot of the Golden Hind when they stopped north of San Francisco to repair the ship in June 1579. Silva kept a log of the voyage and the crew acknowledged Silva's ability as a pilot.<sup>2</sup>

California became a possession of Portugal, indirectly however. In 1580, Phillip II of Spain seized the Portuguese throne when it was vacated after the death of the Portuguese king. All Portuguese and Spanish possessions, which included California, were under one king for sixty years.<sup>3</sup>

Two Portuguese Franciscan missionaries, Fray Francisco de Nogueira and Fray Rufino, were the next Portuguese to see California. They were traveling on a ship commanded by Pedro de Unamuno, sailing from Macao, a Portuguese possession now temporarily under Spain. On October 18, 1587, they anchored in Morro Bay. Fray Nogueira went ashore as a member of a landing party that explored 15-18 miles into the interior. Another landing party, with Fray Rufino along, fell into a fight with some California Indians. The former landing party came to their rescue, and everyone fled to the ship with their wounded.<sup>4</sup>

Under the employ of Spain, Portuguese captain Sebastiao Rodrigues Cermeno, sailing from the Philippines, sighted Cape Mendocino on November 4, 1595. On November 7th, he went ashore and claimed the land for Spain. He gave the name San Francisco Bay to the anchorage, which was later to be renamed Drake's Bay.<sup>5</sup> He sailed on down the coast to Monterey Bay, Morro Bay, and the channel islands.

### Ship Jumpers

Deserting ship was not uncommon because the voyages were long and rigorous, and many captains were tyrants. Two Portuguese deserted from the ships of Captain George Vancouver during his voyage around the world. He stopped at San Francisco in 1792, and the two men jumped ship. It was felt that the Spanish might have lured them because of their vocational skills. Nevertheless, they stayed in the area for two years, but were fined \$281.33 each for room and board.<sup>6</sup>

The Spanish didn't want foreigners in California because they were worried they might lose control of the the land. They would, however, allow foreigners to stay if they would be Catholic, marry into one of the Spanish California families, raise their children Catholic, and not teach the English language. When the Mexican government took over California in early 19th century, they allowed foreigners to stay which resulted in Americans eventually annexing the state.<sup>7</sup>

### First Portuguese Settlers

The first Portuguese settler in California was Antonio Jose Rocha. He too deserted ship but was allowed to stay because of his blacksmith and carpenter skills. He was Catholic and was Portuguese, a kin to the Spanish, which made him more acceptable in Mexican California. In 1815, he was in Los Angeles and had a blacksmith shop.

In 1821, Rocha built "El Molino" or the old mill for the missionaries at Mission San Gabriel. He also constructed the building which would later be the first headquarters of Los Angeles county and city

governments. Rocha married Maria Josefa Alvarado, who was from a prominent California family, and had five children. He got a land grant in 1828 which was the 4,600 acre Rancho La Brea, and he raised cattle on it. He allowed the public to use the tar from the now famed La Brea tarpits to roof their houses. He and his family moved to Santa Barbara in the 1830's,<sup>8</sup> and he died sometime shortly after that. J.J. Warner, an important early Californian, said this about Rocha:

He was a pious man, quite a favorite with all the priests, a very industrious man, and one of the most respectable and esteemed citizens of Los Angeles from the time of my first acquaintance with him in 1831 until the time of his death.<sup>9</sup>

Hubert Howe Bancroft lists five Portuguese who were pioneers in California before 1830. Rocha was one, and the second one was Manuel de Dios Pasos, a Brazilian, who arrived at Monterey in 1822 at the age of eighteen. According to the census records, he lived in Santa Barbara in 1836 and in Los Angeles in 1845. He was a hunter.<sup>10</sup>

The third Portuguese settler was Joaquim Pereira who arrived in Santa Barbara in 1826, on a Mexican ship, at the age of 20. The ship was wrecked therefore leaving Pereira stranded. He became a vaquero or cowboy and resided in Santa Barbara. He confided in a judge that he was a member of a group of 150 men, under the leadership of Jose Antonio Carrillo, who planned to attack Santa Barbara some time in August 1840. Carrillo was arrested and released, but Pereira disappeared and was never heard of again.<sup>11</sup>

The next Portuguese settler was Jordan Pacheco who arrived in California in 1829, from San Blas, at the age of 47, and settled in Los Angeles. He married Maria de Jesus Lopez and raised a family. He was a tavern keeper with assets valued at \$4,500 according to the 1850 census.<sup>12</sup>

The fifth and last Portuguese settler in the Bancroft's pioneer list was Manuel de Oliveira who came to California in 1829 at the age of 25. He married Micaela Polloreña and had four children. He became the chief steward at Mission San Gabriel, but was removed when problems arose under his authority.<sup>13</sup>

There were seven Portuguese who came to California after 1830 and before the American conquest of 1846. There were probably others, but Portuguese immigrants would anglicized their names making it impossible to determine their true identity. Foreign contacts in California at this time were through trade and whaling. In the early 1840's, there were about 5,000 foreigners in California, and Portuguese were known to be among them. There were Portuguese listed in Thomas Oliver Larkins' business ledgers in Monterey for example.<sup>14</sup>



## Whaling and the Gold Rush

Years before the gold rush in California, Yankee traders plied the California coast purchasing hides and tallow for the New England market. American whaling ships were in the Pacific beginning in 1787.<sup>15</sup> In 1819 the first New England whaler stopped at Hawaii.<sup>16</sup> Bancroft has a listing of nine American whaling ships in California in 1825. The American ship *Cyrus* was in San Diego in 1830 and had 1,500 barrels coopered for whale oil.<sup>17</sup> The California coast was busy with whaling and trading.

In the 1840's, American traveler William Heath Davis saw 40 whaling ships in San Francisco Bay at one time. They would be there for four to six weeks taking on provisions from the ranchos on the eastern side of the bay and doing necessary repairs.<sup>18</sup> Down the coast, there were whaling ships in Monterey Bay hunting the humpback whale.<sup>19</sup> The crews of these Yankee ships had Azoreans crew members who were working their passage to New England. Some would jump ship and seek opportunities in California which soon would be many because of the gold rush.<sup>20</sup>

In 1848, great schools of bowhead whales were found in the Arctic near Alaska. Once the Yankee whaling fleet heard of this finding, the long arduous trek around the horn to Alaska began, and San Francisco now became another major port for whaling ships besides Honolulu.<sup>21</sup> Whaling ships would anchor at Richardson's Bay (Sausalito) which is in the northwest corner of San Francisco Bay. Shortly though, abandoned gold rush ships would soon clutter up the berthing area.<sup>22</sup>

The cry of gold brought the world to California. As far away as Oporto, Portugal, in 1849, a pamphlet appeared announcing the finding of gold in California. It had the title "Information and Suggestions Extracted from Official Documents Concerning California and Her Gold Mines." The following excerpt comes from the pamphlet which tells more about California than just gold:

A country teeming with gold and precious metals necessarily attracts a great multitude of people, as indeed we see. Moreover this has an excellent climate,

a soil of incomparable fertility, and occupies a geographical position well suited for it to become the Universal Emporium of the Trade of Asia and Europe.

These innumerable throngs of people which are flocking into California from every quarter of the globe are entirely employed in the exploration of gold, they lack even the most indispensable comforts of life although they have plenty of gold to buy them. So long as those mines continue to produce gold in such abundance and so easy to extract (and they are said to be inexhaustible)

the people will not apply itself to any other labor, and for this reason the country will be for many years the best market for European products.<sup>23</sup>

This unabashedly exaggerated promotional piece appeals not only to those gold fever souls, but also to the merchant and the farmer of which mainland Portugal and the Azores had plenty.

San Francisco Bay filled with abandoned ships of all kinds. Their crews and officers were in the gold fields seeking instant wealth. Ship shortages were talked about even as far away as Horta, Faial which had sons already in the gold fields. The letter is dated October 11, 1849 and is information coming from a trade merchant:

We send you this time a vessel which does not command our unqualified admiration, but the demand for vessels is far greater than the supply; the late accounts having revived to a certain degree the 'California emigration mania.' The question is beginning to pass from mouth to mouth, 'what is to become of all the vessels sent to San Francisco?' Of course the old ones will lay their bones there, or on the way thither, but so many new ones have gone that there must be a time when they will all return or at least a large proportion; what then will become of ship-owners and ship-builders, who are now reaping a golden harvest?<sup>24</sup>

Ironically, whaling ships that brought the news of the gold rush to the east coast, provided transportation back to California where they were abandoned.<sup>25</sup> It was a free passage for a gold-fever crew!<sup>26</sup> This jingle was popular on the docks of New Bedford, Massachusetts:

Who jumps ship may go to prison  
But all the gold he gits is his<sup>27</sup>

Between 1850 and 1860, the number of Portuguese in California went from 109 to 1,560.<sup>28</sup> There were 804 goldmining in nine foothill counties of Tuolumne, Placer, Mariposa, El Dorado, Nevada, Butte, Yuba, Sacramento, and Trinity. Concentrations could be seen at Shaw Flat and Columbia in Tuolumne County and Auburn in Placer County.<sup>29</sup> Also, Cathay's Valley in Mariposa County had many Portuguese.<sup>30</sup> There were 31 Azorean miners in Klamath County in 1860 and eight Azoreans with nine other Portuguese in Shasta County also at that time.<sup>31</sup>

One mining camp in Siskiyou County named Hawkinsville, three miles south of Yreka, in 1880, still had 175 Portuguese with 70% of them still in mining.<sup>32</sup> Yreka Journal ran this about them in 1868 with the headline, "Portuguese Coming."

We learn that about 140 Portuguese are shortly coming to this country from the Portuguese Islands and other counties in this State, including a number of women and children. The Portuguese at Hawkinsville are already making preparations for them by holding a miners' meeting tomorrow to regulate size of claims. Several of them intend securing ranches also, and the prospects are that a very large portion of our county population will consist of Portuguese, who seem to be a very industrious and hard working class.<sup>33</sup>

This article reveals that communication had taken place between the Portuguese in the mines, those elsewhere in California, and in the Azores. Lines of communication is central to Azorean migration. It connects countrymen with countrymen providing information helpful in the immigration process and settlement. The article also reveals that the Portuguese were well-received and not considered "foreigners."

### Waves of Immigration

There are essentially four waves of Portuguese immigration into California: 1800-1850; 1850-1870; 1870-1930; and 1960 to the present. These are somewhat similar to New England except the first two waves above were concentrated in one wave in New England. Also, where in New England the interest was in whaling, fishing, and textiles, in California it was in whaling and fishing, to a small degree, but the major interest lay in gold mining and agriculture.

### Gold Fever Gone and Now Farming

To get to the gold fields, one had to travel by boat, horse, and foot. Once there, shelter, food, and medicines would be needed. These necessities cost an exorbitant price and could be in short supply at times. Gold mining was hard work and was not successful for many.<sup>34</sup> The Portuguese who grew tired of mining, instead of returning to whaling, went into a more natural and traditional Azorean pursuit, farming.

They began settling in the Sacramento Valley, Mission San Jose, San Leandro, Oakland, and Castro Valley. The East Bay locations were fertile lowlands just perfect for the type of farming the Azorean knew best, intensive farming.<sup>35</sup> They would work for wages for awhile, then rent land, and then finally buy land. This process became a common practice.<sup>36</sup> Within time, the Azorean men would send for their families to come and join them.<sup>37</sup>

Table 6 shows the distribution of the Portuguese in California for the years 1860 and 1880. It also shows a definite emphasis in settlement in the central coast, which is the Bay Area and Monterey. This region would be the gathering point for migration which would occur later into the San Joaquin Valley. Sacramento Valley shows a sizeable Portuguese population because of its closeness to the mines. When mining luck or patience ran out the Azorean would farm. Notice that there are very few Portuguese in southern California which would change some later when fishing took hold in San Diego.

Table 6  
\*Portuguese in California By Region  
1860 and 1880

Region	1860 Population	1880 Population	Percent Gained
North Coast	53	219	1.5
North Central	156	594	3.8
North East	5	23	0.2
Central Coast	606	9,409	77.2
Sacramento Valley	289	1,427	10.0
San Joaquin Valley	12	449	3.8
Sierra Mountains	577	831	2.2
Southern California	19	163	1.3
Total	1,717	13,159	100.0

Source: Alvin Graves, "The Portuguese in California, 1850-1880." 38

\*"Portuguese" has to be used in these early years because "Azorean" was not distinguished in census gathering. But the vast bulk of the California Portuguese came from the Azores.

#### Portuguese in 1880

In 1880, the region of the north coast had 219 Portuguese with 87% living in Mendocino County. Sixty-six of them were working in the lumber industry. In the north central area, 549 lived in the Shasta, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties and worked as miners, farmers, and general laborers. It was found that 201 of the 549 were second generation already having been born in the United States.<sup>39</sup>

In the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the 831 Portuguese could be found living primarily in Tuolumne, Nevada, and Placer Counties. In the Shaw Flat and Columbia area, there were 163 Portuguese employed as miners or in farming. Of the 831, 292 were born in the United States.<sup>40</sup>

The central coast had 71.5% of the Portuguese living in California primarily employed in intensive farming in the East Bay. In fact, nearly 75% of the Portuguese farmers at this time could be found in this region. In some of the communities in Contra Costa, Alameda, and San Mateo counties, the Portuguese were at least 20% of the total population.<sup>41</sup>

The Sacramento Valley had 11% of the state's Portuguese, and they were employed in farming, fishing and general labor. They lived in Sacramento, Yolo, and Solano counties. Merritt Township in Yolo County alone had 218 Portuguese.<sup>42</sup> In the San Joaquin Valley, all six counties had Portuguese with most living in Fresno, Kern, and Stanislaus counties. They were employed in farming or animal husbandry. In Fresno County, the largest concentration were sheepherders with one-half of the Portuguese involved in that industry. Of the 449 living in this region, 75 were born in the United States.<sup>43</sup>

There were very few Portuguese living in southern California, and those that did were in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties. They were employed as whalers, fishermen, and laborers. Of the 163 living in this region, 50% were born in California.<sup>44</sup> In fact, of the 13,159 Portuguese found in California in 1880, 5,169 were born in the United States. The other 7,990 were foreign born, but they were almost entirely from the Azores.<sup>45</sup>

In 1880, 84% of the Portuguese living in California could be found in rural areas. Of that, 82.6% owned or operated farms. Of the entire California Portuguese population, 9.1% were in mining and just 4% in maritime occupations.<sup>46</sup> The Azoreans in California came from the islands of Faial, Pico, Flores, Sao Jorge, and Terceira.<sup>47</sup>

In *Where Opportunity Knocks Twice*, Forrest Crissey, wrote:

Today you may visit whole sections of the Pacific slopes peopled by these Portuguese islanders, and listen to scores of personal stories of how sea legs have been trained into steady plow legs, and of the individual transformation of ocean wanderers into plodding farmers who are disinclined to stray any farther from their homes than they can drive with their own teams.<sup>48</sup>

## Shore Whaling

Shore whaling in California was done just like in the Azores and in New England which was described earlier in this study. In California, shore whaling remained a small industry phasing out by 1900. Later with improved equipment, it would start again but never ranked in any significance.

Shore whaling began in Monterey in 1851 and was begun either by Captain Davenport or Captain Joseph Clark, nee Joao Machado. It wasn't until 1854 that a company was formed as seen in this piece from the March 14, 1855 edition of the *Sacramento Daily Union*:

During the year a number of Portuguese whalers have established themselves at Monterey Bay for the purpose of capturing such whales as are indigenous to the coast. They caught 5 grays, 9 humpbacks, four killers; six were lost; the crew was paid \$438 each for its work from April to September.<sup>49</sup>

Another company was formed in 1855 of 17 Portuguese and for three years took 800 barrels of oil. In 1858, Davenport formed another company which had harpoon guns and took in 600 to 1,000 barrels of oil annually for several years. Whaling companies in Monterey were merged into one 1865 forming a crew of 23 men. This company took in \$31,000 worth of oil and bone the first four months!<sup>50</sup>

This was generally how a shore whaling company divided their earnings: 1 barrel of oil in 35 went to the boat steerers, coopers, and

ship keepers; 1 barrel in 50 went to the oarsmen and blubber carriers; the owner of the whaleboats got the rest. The boats cost \$500 each. A day's kill could bring \$3,000 to \$4,000, but this was the exception.<sup>51</sup>

A shore whaling company consisted of a captain, one mate, a cooper, two boat steerers, and eleven men. Each boat took a crew of six, while four men were left on shore, working shifts in scanning the horizons for whales and attending to the boiling blubber in the trypots.<sup>52</sup> There were always two boats out in case a whale smashed one giving the survivors a boat to return to shore. The boat crews got their signal from the shore flag as to which direction the whales were located.<sup>53</sup>

There were seventeen shore stations along the California operating intermittently from 1850-1880.<sup>54</sup> The members of the whaling companies were almost all Azoreans as noted by G.B. Goode of the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries in 1887: "There are two companies of whalers in San Luis Obispo County. The first . . . consists of twenty men, most of whom are from the Azore [sic] Islands. The other camp . . . consists of twenty-one men, all of whom, save one American, are from the Azores."<sup>55</sup> Stations were found at Crescent City, Half Moon Bay, Carmel Bay, San Simeon, Portuguese Bend, and San Diego Bay to name a few.

Edwin C. Starks of the California Fish and Game Commission wrote this while investigating the station at Moss Landing, Monterey Bay:

Nearby are the try works, sending forth volumes of thick black smoke from the scrap-fire under the steaming caldrons of boiling oil. A little to one side is the primitive storehouse, covered with cypress boughs . . . on the crest of a cone-shaped hill, of the shapeless mass of mutilated whale, together with the men shouting and heaving at the capstans, the screaming of gulls and other sea fowl, mingled with the noise of the surf about the shores, and we have a picture of the general life at a California coast whaling station.<sup>56</sup>

As for the men, Albert S. Evans said this in his travel journal in 1873 while visiting Pigeon Point station, six miles south of Pescadero:

"These men are all 'Gees' -- Portuguese -- from the Azores or Western Islands. They are a stout, hardy-looking race, grossly ignorant, dirty and superstitious. They work hard, and are doing well in business."<sup>57</sup>

"Superstitious" was indeed apt for these men who had to fight the thrashing cetacean at sea. This is shown in this passage from the life of Robert Louis Stevenson who spent time in Monterey. The Monterey pavements had whale bones imbedded in them as an religious offering for a whaler's survival.<sup>58</sup> Stevenson walked with

Joaquin, a Portuguese whaler, to the local church, and the whaler said:

Look at the whalebone pavement in front of the church, Senor Stevenson. The Star of Hope is there all in the bones of whales that Saint Anthony has sent us. Each time a whale is caught, Portuguese fishermen carry bones on their backs all the way from the beach and kneel before the church to set them into the pavement in honor of the Saint.

I see, Stevenson nodded and looked on the beauty at his feet. Perhaps a fisher for words can someday honor the Saint by telling all the world about the devotion of fisher folk who come to the Mission Church of Monterey to pray and pay tribute.<sup>59</sup>

At the Carmel Bay station, residences of the shore whalers were described by Charles M. Scammon in his classic work on whaling. The picture is that of subsistence farmers doing what they did in the islands:

Scattered around the foot-hills, which come to the water's edge, are the neatly whitewashed cabins of the whalers, nearly all of whom are Portuguese, from the Azores or Western Islands of the Atlantic. They have their families with them, and keep a pig, sheep, goat, or cow, prowling around the premises; these, with a small garden-patch, yielding principally corn and pumpkins, make up the general picture of the hamlet, which is paradise to the thrift clan in comparison with the homes of their childhood.<sup>60</sup>

## San Leandro

If New Bedford was the "Portuguese capital of the East," San Leandro was certainly the "Portuguese capital of the West." In San Leandro, as early as 1852, there were Portuguese in poultry, boating, and fishing businesses. Anthony Fountain, nee Antonio Fonte, in 1851

took milk from Oakland to San Francisco by boat. In 1860 there were 240 Portuguese living in San Leandro and Hayward<sup>61</sup> such as Antonio Rogers, who was born in Faial as Antonio Soares. He worked as a whaler until 1895 when he settled on "Chicken Lane" in San Leandro.<sup>62</sup> In 1870, it was estimated that there were 4,000 to 5,000 Portuguese living in the area.<sup>63</sup>

In San Leandro there were two streets colorfully named. "Chicken Lane," which later became Dutton Avenue, was the street where most early Azoreans settled. They raised chickens along with other agricultural pursuits. The other street was "Kanaka Road" which was where Portuguese from Hawaii had settled. These Hawaiians were mostly Azorean emigrants. "Kanaka Road" became Orchard Avenue later when fruit trees were planted on a large scale.<sup>64</sup>

Azorean Antone Silva, nee Antone Carvalho, was a whaling ship

captain and settled in San Leandro with his wife. They had a thirteen acre farm along "Chicken Lane" for which he paid \$1,340 in 1861. He planted cherries and apricots. His three children changed their name to Oakes (Carvalho in Portuguese) from which Oakes Boulevard drew its name.<sup>65</sup>

The excerpt below comes from a book published in 1876 celebrating the centennial of the United States. It is about Alameda County in which San Leandro, Oakland, and Hayward are located:

What they called the Portuguese population in Alameda County commensed to settle here at an early date, and are amongst the most thriving portion of our population, occupying as they do, small farms of the best land and growing vegetables and fruits. They are natives of the Azores or Western Isles, and are exceedingly industrious and thrifty class, with simple hearts and simple pleasures . . . 66

Intensive farming, also known as market gardening or truck farming, supplied fresh produce to the surrounding communities. The success the Azorean saw in this type of farming came from hardwork, ingenuity, and thrift. In *Opportunity Knocks Twice*, the author remarks after observing a farm in San Leandro:

When you see a house surrounded by an orchard, and the sides of the road planted to vegetables clear out to the wheel tracks, you may know that a Portuguese lives there; but don't make the mistake of thinking that it's poverty that pushes his gardening up against the wheels of passing vehicles. It's thrift! These men with street gardens are the solid men of the town. They own business blocks and ranches, and have bank accounts that put some of us Americans here 'way in the shade.' It hurts a Portuguese to waste an inch of land. He'll buy the best land out of doors -- knows the best when he sees it too -- and will pay a top price without question or flinching; but after he gets it he wants every inch of it to be working for him, night and day, every minute of the growing season. And he'll generally contrive to get three crops a year where an American will be content with two.<sup>67</sup>

Another remark on how intensive, "intensive" is!

One of these town orchards in San Leandro has currants between the orchard rows, beans between the currant rows, a row of beans on each side of the trees, beans between the trees in the row and beans form the ends of the rows to the wheeltrack in the street. Not satisfied with this degree of intensiveness and interplanting, the owner doubled the number of rows in the space or corner where his private sidewalks joined the public street!<sup>68</sup>

The Azoreans had a knack or a certain ingenuity when it came to farming and marketing as expressed in the below passage. This Azorean farmer came to San Leandro only with clothes on his back and worked on farms for ten years. He studied the various crops and felt tomatoes were for him. He comments:



I began to study the tomato game by talking with everybody who grew them about here, and especially with the men connected with the canneries. There is generally about one main trick with every crop that makes it a big thing instead of just a fair thing or a failure. The trick was to plant the tomatoes so they would mature just perfect for the best price.<sup>69</sup>

He ended up operating 500 acres employing between 40 to 100 seasonal workers most of whom were fellow Azoreans. (32:90)

Writing in Valley of the Moon, Jack London too tells of the creativeness of the Portuguese farmer. The main characters, Billy and Saxon, are walking through San Leandro, "Porchugeeze headquarters" as they call it, and they discuss why the Portuguese have had success where "Americans" have failed. They come upon a lineman whose family used to own the property now belonging to the Portuguese. They look at a fruit tree that has four main branches with "living braces" in the crotch. The lineman comments:

You think it growed that way, eh? Well it did. But it was old Silva that made it just the same -- caught two sprouts, when the tree was young, an' twisted 'em together. Pretty slick, eh? You bet. That tree'll never blow down. It's a natural, springy brace, an' beats iron braces stiff. Look along all the rows. Every tree's that way. See? An' that's just one trick of the Porchugeeze. They got a million like it.<sup>70</sup>

They continue their discussion, and the lineman explains how the Portuguese acquired their land:

. . . my grandfather used to own this . . . Forty years ago old Silva come from the Azores. Went sheep-herding in the mountains for a couple of years, then blew in to San Leandro. These five acres was the first land he leased. That was beginnin'. Then he began leasin' by the hundreds of acres, an' by the hundred-an-sixties. An' his sisters an' his uncles an' his aunts begun pourin' in from the Azores -- they're all related there, you know; an' pretty soon San Leandro was a regular Porchugeeze settlement.

An' old Silva would up by buyin' these five acres from grandfather. Pretty soon -- an' father by that time was in the hole to the neck -- he was buyin' father's land by the hundred-an'-sixties. An' all the rest of his relations

was doin' the same thing. Father was always gettin' rich quick, an' he wound up by dyin' in debt. But old Silva never overlooked a bet, no matter how dinky. An' all the rest are just like him. You see outside the fence there, clear to the wheel-tracks in the road -- horse-beans. We'd a-scorned to do a picayune thing like that. Not Silva. Why he's got a town house in San Leandro

now.71

Some Azoreans owned large acreages, but the average at the time was 46.6 acres. The farms had orchards of fruit trees, vegetable gardens, cows, chickens, and hogs. The local economy was a healthy one but soon urban sprawl would push these farmers east out into the Livermore Valley and then into San Joaquin Valley.<sup>72</sup>

Not all the Portuguese in San Leandro were involved in farming. They also had jobs as carpenters, shoemakers, clerks, railway workers, cooks, store owners, blacksmiths, and machinists to name a few.<sup>73</sup> The Azoreans came from the islands of Pico, Faial, Flores, and Sao Jorge, and later from Terceira, Graciosa, Sao Miguel, and Santa Maria.<sup>74</sup> Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel became the sister city of San Leandro.<sup>75</sup> In the May 12, 1887 issue of the Portuguese language newspaper of Progresso Californiense, there was an advertisement for "Azores Hotel," owned by Joao D. Pinheiro, and charged \$5 a week for lodging.<sup>76</sup> The Azoreans had arrived!

#### Sacramento Area

In 1852, there were 33 Portuguese in Sacramento, and in 1890 about 189. Along the Sacramento River, they built levees to reclaim the land, and farmed an area known as the "Lisbon District" because of the heavy concentration of Portuguese there.<sup>77</sup> The district had three ferryboats that crossed the river transporting residents to school, church, and to visit neighbors. In the 1890's, ferryboat use cost 10 cents per pedestrian, 25 cents for a horse and rider, 50 cents for a wagon and two horses, 75 cents for wagon with four horses, and livestock such as sheep, goats, cattle, and hogs were 10 cents each.<sup>78</sup>

Antonio Mendes, born in Terceira, was one of the first to navigate the Sacramento River. He abandoned mining in 1855 and bought a boat that traveled from Stockton to Sacramento conveying people and cargo. He soon owned a number of boats coming from San Francisco, mostly paddlewheelers, flatboats, and scows.<sup>79</sup>

Portuguese planted asparagus in Petuluma, but it was a failure because of rust damage. It was tried in Sacramento with great success leaving one Portuguese farmer with a rags to riches life.<sup>80</sup> Portuguese in Petuluma later went heavily into chicken farming.<sup>81</sup>

#### Ventura

Fortunes were made in lima beans in Ventura County by the Portuguese. They learned how to manage the soil and the terrain like Manuel Farias who bought hill land for \$25 an acre. He worked the slopes with two workhorses and one saddle horse which he rode in front of the others to guide the plow. The farmers broke through the hardpan and kept the clumps of soil on the surface to retain the moisture there.<sup>82</sup>

Frank Crissey made this comment about the Portuguese farmer in his travels in California during the first decade of this century:

. . . once a Portuguese gets hold of a piece of land he never rests until it is paid for, and he sacrifices his personal ease and comfort until the mortgage is wiped out, to that end saving every dollar above the sternest actual necessities. A mortgaged homestead and an automobile are contrary to the Portuguese catechism! He never stints his land or his stock, however. Again, in addition to being an untiring worker, he is an intelligent farmer. I never knew a Portuguese farmer who was not a good farmer.<sup>83</sup>

#### Sheep and Sweet Potatoes in the San Joaquin Valley

There was a small wool industry in the Fresno and Hanford area beginning in the 1860's where the Portuguese served as shepherds. But soon the industry went into decline because of drought, which happened in 1876 and 1877, when sheep and cattle perished by the thousands. Sheep usually sold for \$2 to \$3 a head but now sold for 25 cents. This was a sure sign that irrigation was needed to water the desert-like terrain and turn it into a productive agricultural land.<sup>84</sup>

Sheep raising too took place in Merced County where one could see Portuguese shepherds with a dog tending to 2,000 or so sheep.<sup>85</sup> One citizen of the area commented saying, "They [the Portuguese] all have a natural liking for animals, and stock in their hands always thrives. As soon as the ranchowners found this out they encouraged the firstcomers to send back to the Azores for their husky young relatives."<sup>86</sup>

The Portuguese worked for awhile as shepherds and then bought their own land and flocks. Even when irrigation came, they still drove flocks along the public roads outside their fences to use every inch of land in a productive form. It kept the grass down which prevented fires helping local governmental agencies. These roving flocks would travel four miles a day and might end up being as far as twenty miles from home. Before long automobile traffic put a stop to this practice.<sup>87</sup>

John B. Avila came to California from Sao Jorge in 1883. He worked for a time in Niles and Mission San Jose in market gardening and then moved to the Atwater-Buchach area of Merced County in 1888. He was the first Portuguese in the area. Avila bought flood land for \$1 an acre and planted a patch of sweet potatoes from seedlings he got from the Azores. He marketed his crops in the Delta area where they were sent to San Francisco. The tubular vegetable became very popular, and he increased his acreage and took in three Azorean partners.<sup>88</sup>

Sweet potato acreage in Merced County by 1910 had rose to 2,114 acres. Sweet potatoes were planted in abundance in neighboring

Stanislaus County and soon in other valley counties. In 1910, there were 5,111 sweet potato acres in California.<sup>89</sup> Population in the Merced area increased because the sweet potato's success and also because irrigation was instituted. In 1908, there were 146 Portuguese in Atwater and 340 in Buchach.<sup>90</sup> There was a link from sweet potatoes to dairying, which would soon dominate the area, as seen in this comment: "Typically a family would buy twenty to forty acres, plant sweet potatoes the first season, and later start a dairy herd."<sup>91</sup>

From Hawaii

Many Portuguese came from Hawaii to the Bay Area between 1890 and 1910,<sup>92</sup> Their contribution is important in the discussion of Azorean migration to California. Portuguese first arrived in the Hawaiian Islands, then known as the Sandwich Islands, in 1794. Antonio Silva, arriving in 1828, brought sugar cane agriculture to the islands. Another Portuguese, John Elliot de Castro, became King Kamehameha's friend, adviser, and physician.<sup>93</sup>

Azoreans jumped ship when the whaling vessels they were aboard pulled into port for supplies and repair. By 1870, there were about 400 Portuguese living in Hawaiian islands.<sup>94</sup>

In 1877, the Hawaiian government needed sugar cane workers, and offered to pay transportation costs for anyone wanting to immigrate from the Madeira Islands and the island of Sao Miguel in the Azores. From 1878 to 1899, 12,780 emigrated from those islands to Hawaii. Also, 1,652 came from mainland Portugal. They had to work in the sugar cane fields for 36 months for which they got \$10 a month for men and \$6.50 for women along with lodging, rations, and medical care.<sup>95</sup>

Whole families came. (4:15) Forty-two percent of the Portuguese emigrants were men, 19% women, and 39% children.<sup>96</sup> Women and children did not work in the sugar cane fields because the work was very arduous.<sup>97</sup> In 1900, 35.6% of the Portuguese lived on the big island of Hawaii, and 38.1% lived on the island of Oahu.<sup>98</sup>

Soon though, many of the Portuguese in Hawaii were discouraged. The local Hawaiian population treated them as laborers of the lower class. This didn't bode well for the Portuguese people who took pride in themselves as hard workers and achievers. Many left the islands, but those that stayed, disbanded as a group, intermarried with other people, and left the plantations. They didn't keep their Portuguese traditions because they wanted to rid themselves of the laboring class stigma.<sup>99</sup> These Portuguese spread throughout the Hawaiian islands, bought land, raised cattle, and grew vegetables, while some went into urban occupations. In 1920, there were 21,208 Portuguese living in the Hawaiian islands.<sup>100</sup>

Between 1890 and 1910, numerous Portuguese migrated to California, primarily to the Bay Area, and specifically for many, to

San Leandro along "Kanaka Road."101 From 1911 to 1914, 2,600 or more came to California.102 Since then there has been continuous movement of the Portuguese to and from the Hawaiian Islands.103 An Azorean who eventually settled in Turlock, located in Stanislaus County, worked with the Portuguese who came from Hawaii, and he lamented:

I especially enjoyed listening to the Hawaiian-Portuguese music. It was so sad and plaintive that it made shivers go up and down your spine. These men were from the Azores, but became indentured workers in the sugar cane fields in Hawaii. From there they came to California to work in the melon fields of Turlock, but their hearts were in the land of their youth, the lush,  
green fields of the Azores.104

This longing for the homeland is the Azorean "saudade" which was addressed earlier in this study. The Hawaiian musical instrument, the ukelele, which means "jumping mosquito" in Hawaiian, was a Portuguese adaptation. Portuguese cabinet maker Manuel Nunes, in 1877, made the first ukelele in Hawaii which was similar to the small Madeiran guitar called the cavaquinho.105

#### San Joaquin Valley, the New Center of Azorean Population

Dairying and the Azoreans are like the euphemistic phrase "goes to together like hand and glove." Being unskilled and using very little tools and implements, most Azorean farmer peasants, brought only their hands and their farming knowledge to the United States for a livelihood. This is well put in the following commentary by an Azorean who early in this century migrated to the San Joaquin Valley:106

I don't remember making a decision to become a farmer. It just seemed to be the most natural thing for me to do. For centuries my ancestors were farmers, not from choice but out of absolute necessity as a means of existence. When you live on an island you eat only what you can grow. The clothing we wore and the blankets we slept under were made of the wool my father sheared from a small flock of sheep. My poor mother spent endless days spinning and weaving the wool into cloth. So generation after generation, the love of the land was inbred into us. To the early Portuguese immigrant it was nearly unbelievable that here in the Turlock area there were thousands of acres of virgin soil, just waiting for the plow. Sometimes when I am working in the fields, I reach down and get a handful of good clean dirt. It feels warm  
in the palm of my hand. I let it dribble through my fingers and I feel as if I had just shaken hands with all my ancestors.107

Not just men had an urge to become farmers and dairy farmers; Azorean women did too as seen in the below fictionalized account found in Jack London's Martin Eden. In London's early years he spent time in Oakland and got to know the Portuguese who lived there. He had a certain respect for the Portuguese people which was seen

earlier in this study in a passage from Valley of the Moon. When one visits his property in Glen Ellen, California, one learns immediately that London was very interested in farming and innovative farming practice.

In this account, the main character Martin Eden, who is a fledgling writer, makes a promise to his friend, Maria, who is an immigrant Azorean and neighbor, and does domestic work for him. He wants to reward her and her children for her work and kindness when he becomes a successful writer. He asks her what would she want if he were God and could give her anything. Maria replies:

I lika da have one milka ranch -- good milka ranch. Plenty cow, plenty land, plenty grass. I lika da have near San Le-an; my sister liva dere. I sella da milk in Oakland. I maka da plentee mon. Joe an' Nick no runna da cow. Dey go-a to school . . . Yes, I lika da milka ranch.108

Dairying has been done on the Azorean islands of Sao Jorge, Flores, and Terceira. In the 1880's, immigrants from Sao Jorge began milking cows on dairies found in Sausalito and Bolinas. First they were milkhands, then renters, and finally owners. The Bay Area market was their pot of gold. Point Reyes had sixty-six Portuguese milkers; seventy-nine Portuguese owned dairies in the area; and by 1900 in Marin, San Mateo, Monterey, and San Benito counties, one-half of the dairymen were Portuguese.109

In Sausalito in 1889, there were 313 Portuguese in dairying, and of those, 78.1% came from the island of Sao Jorge.110 Most milkers earned \$36 a month for a seven-day work week which included room and board.111 Once enough money was saved, from working as milkhands, about \$2,000, tenant dairying was tried.

Large land holdings in Marin County, 54,250 acres to be specific, were broken up for tenant dairying. The owner fenced the land, provided the buildings, including a comfortable house, and cows. The tenant needed to provide the horses, wagons, farming implements, dairy equipment, furniture for the house, and the necessary labor. He rented the cows for \$27.50 annually and agreed to take care of the stock and the farm, making repairs when needed. One-fifth of the calves went to the owner while the tenant could sell for himself pigs, calves, and dairy products. His net profit was \$5 to \$15 a cow annually from which he saved to buy his own dairy.112

Just before the turn of the century, Portuguese began moving to the San Joaquin Valley to buy cheap land to farm. They sold their Bay Area property when urban sprawl encroached and moved to an area where large acreages could be purchased. At this time, irrigation was introduced into the valley which became a boon for further Portuguese migration and investment.113

One Merced resident, while riding with Forest Crissey, the author of *Where Opportunity Knocks Twice*, pointed out to his guest the

irrigation canals and fenced in land, and implied that irrigation was here because of the Portuguese zest and ability for farming:

There is an example of Portuguese methods that is worth the attention of any American in almost any part of the country. This district through here is rapidly changing from a range country to a farming country. Every few miles you'll run across a new irrigation canal with freshly cut laterals.

They welcomed it [irrigation] and said that they'd raise alfalfa and keep dairies of blood stock.114

Some of the early forms of California dairying were practiced in Fresno and Kern counties where the Portuguese had served as shepherds. The wool industry plumented, and the Portuguese shepherds found employment on dairies. Word soon got around that dairying was a successful venture in the valley which interested the Portuguese and brought more of them to the region.115

Dairying provided security for those who practised it. For one, there was always a monthly milk check providing constant revenue.

(18:68) The investment was solid because one owned land, equipment, and cattle which could always be sold in an economic crisis. For the thrifty minded Portuguese, who save their money continuously, the initial investment was something they could afford. They saw opportunity in something that an unskilled, mostly illiterate, and non-English speaking Azorean peasant could do with success and profit.116

The Azoreans are family-oriented people who sacrifice and work together as a unit towards a common goal. This family effort is the basic reason why they became so successful in dairying. No dairy partnerships are formed outside the family because the children inherit the dairy.117

The link with the Azores is important too for the successful continuation of dairying in the hands of the Azoreans. The Azorean dairy farmers will send for, or bring back relatives and friends from the Azores to join them in dairying. These new immigrants have immediate jobs, homes, and paychecks. Soon they move out and own their own dairies. The culture, and hence the thinking, is basically singular among the Azoreans which allows for smoother operation of the dairy business. 118

There are Azorean enclaves strung throughout the valley.119 In a 1960's study, it was found that 82% of dairy workers worked for Azorean dairymen, and 32% of the dairy workers were Portuguese who worked for non-Azorean dairymen.120 To quote from the study:

A.F. Mendes of Riverdale recalls that when he migrated to the San Joaquin Valley, he first located in south-central Kings County, where no less than fifteen families had gathered that were from the village of Santa Barbara of the

island of  
Terceira."<sup>121</sup>

The west side of the valley has been settled primarily by Terceirans which is 60% of all Azorean dairymen. In eastern Merced County, 50% of the dairymen are from Sao Jorge.<sup>122</sup> This cultural unity among the Azoreans has made them a formidable force in the California dairy industry.<sup>123</sup>

This table shows the distribution of Azorean dairymen by island in the San Joaquin Valley which was derived from research done in the 1960's:

Table 7  
Island of Origin of the Portuguese Dairymen  
in the San Joaquin Valley

Island	Percent
Terceira	63.0
Sao Jorge	15.0
Pico	11.0
Faial	3.5
Flores	2.5
Sao Miguel	2.0
Santa Maria	1.0
Graciosa	1.0
Corvo	0.0
Total	99.0

Source: Alvin Graves, "Azorean Portuguese" <sup>124</sup>

In 1915, Azoreans owned one-half of the dairy land in the San Joaquin Valley and produced over half of the dairy products. Milk producer's cooperatives sprang up having strong Azorean membership. In the 1930's, the Portuguese controlled an estimated 60 to 70% of the California dairy industry, owning 450,000 head of dairy cattle representing \$30 million in assets.<sup>125</sup>

In 1923, 85% of the dairymen in Stanislaus and Merced counties were Portuguese.<sup>126</sup> In Stanislaus County in 1926, there were 407 dairy farms owned by Portuguese with an average of 70 acres. Also, 493 Portuguese had acreage in alfalfa which is a crop used in dairying.<sup>127</sup>

Dairy sizes increased from 30 cows in 1930 to over 100 in the 1960's because of the advancement of technology.<sup>128</sup> In 1972, 1,062 dairies, or 52.6% of the total number, were owned by Portuguese in the San Joaquin Valley. In an area of 1,700 square miles covering Fresno, Kings, and Tulare counties, Portuguese control 70% of the dairy farming. In an area within Kings and Tulare county, Portuguese have 90% of the dairies.<sup>129</sup> The natural disasters in the Azores of the



late 1950's and early 1960's, and the resultant U.S. emergency refugee laws, has seen many more thousands of Azoreans funneled into the California dairy industry. This will ensure Portuguese control of dairying in the future.<sup>130</sup>

### Whaling and Fishing

Earlier in this study, shore whaling was discussed noting the almost exclusive presence of Azoreans in the enterprise. Deep sea whaling, or ship whaling, as it is sometimes called,<sup>131</sup> found less Azorean involvement, but involvement nonetheless. Azoreans were parts of whaling crews and some served as officers.<sup>132</sup> We saw earlier how the Azorean teenage males were smuggled aboard whaling ships. Frank Gomes did that:

Frank J. Gomes was born on the Island of Flores in 1855. At the age of eighteen he joined a whaling ship and voyaged four years under great hardship. he was given a mere \$100 as his final share when he came ashore in San Francisco in 1877.<sup>133</sup>

Whaling voyages were indeed treacherous and inhumane as seen in this fictionalized account written by William H. Thomas in 1872 and found in his book *The Whaleman's Adventures in the Sandwich Islands and California*. We find the captain punishing Joe Frank, the Portuguese cook, for giving a black crew member some rum. The captain has just hit and kicked Frank, and then:

The Portuguese arose with some difficulty, and stood trembling before the quarter-deck tyrant [the captain] . . . and then drew back his arm and let his fist fall upon the unprotected face of the Portuguese, and he fell to the deck as though struck by lightning.<sup>134</sup>

One would hope that Joe Frank might jump ship at first opportunity for his own safety. Frank was at least alive. Whales fared much worse.

Before the European whaler traveled the oceans hunting the mammoth sea creature, whale population was immense worldwide. Along the Pacific Coast, whales would migrate winter and spring from the Arctic to Mexico.<sup>135</sup> San Diego Bay was a favorite of female whales where they calved in the spring. In 1602, Sebastain Vizcaino saw whales in Monterey Bay which were described in a 1758 translation:

This bay also had been already surveyed by the Almirante [Vizcaino's ship] who gave it the name Bahia de Belenas or Whale Bay, on account of the multitudes of that large fish they saw there, being drawn thither by the abundance of several kinds of fish.<sup>136</sup>

The translator then appended this excerpt:

But the most distinguished fish of both seas are the whales; which induced the ancient cosmographers to call [lower] California, Punta de Belenas, or Cape Whale; and these fish being found in multitudes along both coasts give name to a channel in the gulf, and a bay in the south sea.<sup>137</sup>

Even in 1876, as the whale supply was waning, R. Guy McClellan wrote in his work *The Golden State*: "hundreds of them can be seen spouting and blowing along the entire coast."<sup>138</sup>

Hawaii was the center of whaling ship activity in the Pacific like the Azores had been in the Atlantic. In 1855, there were 650 whaling ships operating in Pacific with 15,000 men and a \$20 million investment.<sup>139</sup> There were at least 100 New Bedford whaling vessels off the California coast annually.<sup>140</sup> Once whales were discovered in abundance in the Arctic, San Francisco became the hub of whaling activity in the Pacific which was from 1865 to 1881.<sup>141</sup> The ship that opened whaling interest in San Francisco was the New Bedford whaling bark, the *Russell*, with its Azorean crew. This was 1851.<sup>142</sup>

Many ships lay in the mud along the shoreline of San Francisco Bay, abandoned by their crew and officers for the gold fields. Some of these ships, including New England whalers, were used as storehouses, saloons, and hotels. When the gold fever died down, some of them were repurchased for \$4,500 to \$14,000 and refitted for whaling.<sup>143</sup>

The slaughter of the whale is richly documented. Whaler Captain C.M. Scammon, who published a classic book on whaling, and for whom Scammon's Lagoon in Baja California is named, described the massacre of whales in his lagoon in 1855:

While the ships lay moored, as many as twenty whaleboats scoured the lagoons 'mud-holing' for grays. By day the waters were noisy with the sounds of thrashing whales, the reports of bomb guns, and the cries from scores of whalemens. By night the sky was bright with the fiery glow of boiling try-pots aboard the anchored ships.<sup>144</sup>

One can imagine the two Azoreans, Frank Gomes and Joe Frank, whose accounts were given above, and hundreds of their countrymen, busy in the lagoon, firing harpoons guns, rowing boats with a whale in tow, and manning the try-pots on shore. Shortly though, the lagoons would run out of whales, and these Azoreans had to find other occupations ashore.

Azoreans were also involved in the California fishing industry. Salmon fishing along the Sacramento River was done by the

Portuguese. Any coastal seaport (San Francisco, Pescadero, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and San Diego) would usually have some Portuguese operating fishing boats.<sup>145</sup> In an 1880 government report, there were 90 Portuguese fishermen and 228 fishing-rated businesses operated by Portuguese in California.<sup>146</sup>

In San Francisco near the wharf on Vallejo street, there was a "village of Portuguese" as it was described in an 1880 government report. The investigators found that two-thirds of the Portuguese were unmarried, lived in cheap housing, and ate in low class restaurants. They paid 25 cents for a meal or \$3 a week. Some owed \$20 to \$150 to the restaurant for back meals. "Breakfast at the Fisherman's Home consists of an egg, biscuit, and wine or coffee, and is served on a long pine table unpainted," was the description from the report.<sup>147</sup>

Tuna fishing was more lucrative and centered in San Diego, or "Tunaville" as some have called it.<sup>148</sup> The first Portuguese fisherman came to San Diego in 1876 and fished for barracuda and yellowtail. In 1885, the tuna fishing industry began.<sup>149</sup> Joe Mederios and Manuel Madruga, both from Pico, where much of the Azores Island fishing is done, came to California from Provincetown. They were in the Klondike gold rush and worked in codfish ships. Finally they settled in Point Loma on San Diego Bay and began very profitable tuna fishing business.<sup>150</sup>

At first, fish were dried and salted. Then came the fresh fish business where fish were iced and transported to southern California coastal markets. In 1919, the canning of fish began which changed the industry dramatically. Tuna fishing boats evolved just as the industry did, from small wooden craft to large sea-going tuna ships worth millions which can travel great distances. The Portuguese were instrumental in many of these changes.<sup>151</sup>

True to form, the tuna industry, like the dairy industry, has been a family business for the Portuguese. They bring relatives and friends from the Azores to work with them which continues the Portuguese domination of the industry. Tuna seasons control the activity of the community at Point Loma. Its family atmosphere provides support when the fishermen are gone for long lengths of time at sea. The isolation of the community and the solitude on ship where Portuguese is spoken, allows the Azorean immigrant to assimilate into the American culture gradually. He doesn't need to learn the English language and American culture quickly to function in the workplace or in his community. This is also true of his dairying counterpart.<sup>152</sup>

#### Later Migration in the State

Occupations of the Portuguese in California this century can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Northern coastal California in lumber industry
- (2) Sacramento area in industry, fishing, and farming
- (3) San Francisco Bay Area in industry, commerce, and farming
- (4) San Joaquin in dairying and farming
- (5) Monterey area in fishing
- (6) Los Angeles area in commerce, industry, and dairying
- (7) San Diego in fishing<sup>153</sup>

Obviously, this is a generalization, but at least it is an outline to see where the Portuguese ultimately settled in the state and their occupations. Of course, in the contemporary era, those of Portuguese decent are involved in practically every industry and at every level in our contemporary society.

During the period from 1910 to 1925, a series of California county histories were published containing biographical sketches of the "leading men and women" as some of the titles read. Actually very few women graced the pages of these volumes as it was still a male-dominated world. This writer studied the Portuguese biographies found in twenty of the county histories and took biographical facts from them. The histories used were from counties having high concentration of Portuguese. There were some county histories which had no Portuguese biographies at all. In others, there could be as many as twenty Portuguese biographies which was really only a small fragment of the book's content. It seems the longer an immigrant lived in the county, the more possibility that he would appear in the publication. One's longevity meant that one was a pioneer and important to development of the area.

This is what this writer learned about the leading Portuguese citizens found in the county histories: Seventy-nine percent entered California from 1870 to 1900 with 21% being born in California. Only one had been a Massachusetts resident for a substantial length of time, but nearly 40% had stopped briefly in New England before continuing to California. Two came from Brazil and four from mainland Portugal. True to form for this period, they originated primarily from the islands of Pico, Sao Jorge, Flores, Faial, and Terceira.

Concerning occupations, 70% were in farming and dairying and 25% in business or commerce. Four percent were general laborers, and 1% were in the professional fields, such as, law, medicine, religion, and engineering. There were a few bankers, accountants, and insurance agents.

The Bay Area was the center of Portuguese immigrants last century. Large numbers have moved out to the San Joaquin Valley as we have seen. The central coast had 70% of the Portuguese from 1880-1910. In 1930, this changed to 52% while 33% lived in the San Joaquin Valley which clearly shows the drift to the San Joaquin Valley.<sup>154</sup> But overall, Portuguese population increased dramatically throughout as seen in Table 5. It shot up from 15,583 in 1900 to 99,194 in 1930.

Oakland went from a rural community to an urban center having a Portuguese population of 12,260 in 1920.<sup>155</sup> (116:72) Second and third generation Portuguese were now turning to city jobs and moving away from rural employment. They were becoming more educated as well.<sup>156</sup>

In 1930 there were 99,194 in California of Portuguese decent. Of this total, 63,799 had one or two parents born in the Azores or Portugal, and 30,395 were immigrants almost solely from the Azores. In 1940, the census showed that the Portuguese population remained static which was because of the Depression and unfavorable immigration laws.<sup>157</sup>

This excerpt reveals how one Portuguese family in the Oakland hills provided food during the Depression:

"Mrs. Josephine Silva Reports how it was on their ranch in Palomares Canyon. Food was plentiful, but people were poor. The entire family butchered regularly.

Everyone had a special job, even to holding the pan to catch the blood for the

traditional Portuguese blood sausage. They salted down meat, cured bacon and hams and made linguisa. The family drove to Pittsburg to get sacks of oysters and salmon to salt in barrels. They canned fruit and dried apricots.<sup>158</sup>

In 1940, 75% of the Portuguese lived in rural areas, but by 1960, this changed dramatically to 30%. Movement to the urban areas was the trend in California where jobs in business and industry could be found. Second and third generation Portuguese were a part of this movement. Land prices had gone up discouraging any who were interested in farming.<sup>159</sup>

In Table 5, there is a noticeable drop in California Portuguese population from 1960 to 1978. This was because the statistics for the latter date were for immigrants only. The 21,261 figure does reflect Azorean immigration after the natural disasters of the 1950's and 1960's when Azorean refugee laws were put into effect. The eastern states especially, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, saw a dramatic influx of refugees.

Canada too has had a monstrous wave of Portuguese immigration in very recent history. There are 250,000 Portuguese living in Canada, and most came from a 1953 recruitment program of the Canadian government. Fifty percent came from Sao Miguel, the Azores most populous island. They were recruited to work in the railroads and forestry. Many have since gone into urban occupations. Currently, Toronto has 100,000 Portuguese; Montreal has 20,000. The rest can be found in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Quebec.<sup>160</sup>

Nevada

The gold rush brought some Portuguese to Nevada too, and their

story parallels California's. They came from the islands of Pico, Sao Jorge, Faial, Flores, and Corvo. Census shows that there were 120 Azorean men working as miners in 1875 in Storey County.<sup>161</sup> There were Portuguese shopkeepers and barbers too. The barbershops at the time were meeting halls for the male population where news, gossip, and politics were engaged.<sup>162</sup>

The Portuguese in Nevada were just as thrifty as their counterparts in New England and California. A man name Silva was killed in a work-related accident in 1891. He had \$500 in his pocket and \$5,000 in the bank. Another Portuguese died of pneumonia with \$800 on his person. One Portuguese miner at Battle Mountain gave his savings to a store owner for safe-keeping since there were no banks in town. The miner stacked \$2,000 on the store's counter and the store-owner, Lemaire, tells the story:

This is quite a bit of money, pardner. I'd better give you a receipt for it. [said the Lemaire] Glaring fiercely at me, the old coot [Portuguese miner] snapped, Your name's Lemaire ain't it? I nodded. Well, he growled, that's good enough for me! It wasn't long till the old man had \$5,000 cached with us. Then, one day, he came in and drew the whole blasted thing, and we never saw him again! We had money stashed all over the store -- in barrels of beans, and brown sugar barrels, and rice barrels. I often wonder if I've found all of it, or if there still might be some sticking around!<sup>163</sup>

The Azoreans also were shepherders who later became ranch owners possessing large flocks.<sup>164</sup> The Portuguese owned dairies as well. There were two Portuguese dairies found in Gold Hill in 1880. In 1924, one-fourth of the dairies in Nevada were owned by Portuguese.<sup>165</sup>

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[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# Azorean Culture and Assimilation

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## Azorean Character

This summary seems to capture the character of the Azorean as represented in the literature:

The Azoreans are seen as possessing a character that is deeply religious, good-natured, submissive, indolent, sensitive, pacific, orderly, family oriented, industrious, nostalgic and somewhat sad. That character is deeply endowed with a strong sense of family responsibility, one which transmits to children a worldview calling for adherence to a hard-work ethic and to well-disciplined obedience.<sup>1</sup>

This excerpt complements the above and further reveals the nature of Azoreans in America:

They are home lovers and home owners. They have attained middle-class economic status, and are satisfied, and no thought of leaving. They are proud of their achievement as well as of the fact that they have seldom needed welfare aid, even in times of depression . . . they are peace-loving people and seldom come before the courts . . .<sup>2</sup>

Personality types differ in the Azores. They seem to be distinct for each island primarily caused by the people who immigrated there. For example, Sao Miguel saw a greater amount of southern Portuguese settlement and Spanish influence than the middle and western islands which were settled primarily by the other Portuguese and Flemings.

Consequently, the Sao Miguelan is "rough, industrious, sturdy and tenacious," while the Azorean from the middle and western islands are "affable, somewhat cunning, fond of festivities, and indolent." The people of Pico are a mixture being "vigorous, wholesome, sometimes heroic, and always takes life seriously."<sup>3</sup>

All of the Azoreans have been affected by the sea, the isolation of the islands, and by the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The influence of this natural phenomena on the psyche of the Azorean

has been richly written about. Terceirense ethnologist, Luis Riberio, wrote this:

The contemplation of the sea makes men dreamers, saddens and depresses them with its monotony . . . the rythmic cadence of the waves and of the tides regulates his slow steps and wooden gestures, gives a tone to his drawl and song-like intonation, wrinkles his face and sharpens his sight.<sup>4</sup>

During a vulcanic eruption or an earthquake, man feels both his own weakness and power of the unfathomable natural forces around him, with the usual violence. Surprized, terrorized, he seeks desperately for the shelter of divine protection, because the forces unleached about him vastly exceed his every possibility of defence.<sup>5</sup>

Thriftiness of the Azoreans has been alluded to throughout this study. Their frugality comes from their peasant background where every resource was needed for survival. In the United States, the immigrant set goals for his money. For example: he would save enough to bring his family to America, or he would save to buy a house or land. Azorean families were large too making frugality a must.<sup>6</sup>

The "Azoreans make good citizens" a statement which is found endlessly in the literature. For example, this was said by a Kings County citizen: "They are law-abiding, God-fearing folk, good neighbors and liberal givers to any good cause."<sup>7</sup> Azoreans are also considered to be hard workers. A Cape Cod visitor writes, "They manage to do their work without fuss or ostentation. They even create beauty as they work . . ." <sup>8</sup>

## Culture

Azorean culture is family based. Family means survival to the Azorean peasant because everyone is needed to work the land in order to provide food, shelter, and clothing for everyone. Raising healthy children mean a continuation of the family and hence the culture.<sup>9</sup> This cultural tradition was transferred to the United States with the immigrants.

Women are considered working equals on the islands because of the manual labor required. They work with their husbands in the fields and around the homestead.<sup>10</sup> In New England, Azorean women have worked away from their home, typically in the factories. This exception is allowed culturally because her employment is necessary to the family.<sup>11</sup> (2:48 & 116:127) In California though, most Azorean women have lived in rural areas staying at home which makes them more traditional than their New England counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

The Azorean family is strongly male-dominated which causes stress in the immigrant family in America. Divorce is not uncommon because of it.<sup>13</sup> There has always been respect for the elderly in the



Azorean culture. Kissing the elderly person's hand and asking their blessing is traditional as well as addressing them as sir or madam. No backtalking is allowed from children.<sup>14</sup> These Azorean practices have been largely discontinued in America.

Azoreans are generally friendly and each individual will have several personal friends. A relative is trusted before a friend because "blood is thicker than water." In America, friends cannot be in the same occupation because the Azorean is a strong competitor.<sup>15</sup> A father will like his son to succeed, but he does not want him to be more successful than he is.<sup>16</sup>

The Azorean Godparent system provides security for children. Godparents are selected to be sponsors of children by the parents. They can be a friend or relative. The Godparents are expected to help Godchildren in times of need if the parents are deceased or are incapable. In America, this system disappears quickly after the first generation because the need for aid is not as great here, and the Americanization of the second or third generations has taken place.<sup>17</sup>

The immigrant Azorean has made the best effort to keep their culture intact. Throughout this study we have seen how Azoreans have lived in conclaves isolated from American society instances especially in farming, dairying, and fishing communities. Their system of immigration of bringing family and friends to the United States and settling them in the same location keeps the Azorean culture alive. This way the language can continue, their tradition of religion and celebration remains. The standard occupations of farming and fishing give links to that tradition.<sup>18</sup>

## Religion

To be Azorean is to be Roman Catholic. It is part of the culture. Portuguese Jews are accepted, and Portuguese Protestants are tolerated but arouse suspicion. The church gives the Azorean peasant security because of its conservatism. A peasant wants things to remain the same because a static society and steady economy means survival. The ritual of the Catholic church is important for the stability of the peasant class:

From a peasant perspective, it was not necessary to understand the tenets of the church as long as one had faith and followed the religious dictates of the priest. Bordering on mysticism, their religion combined the inordinate faith in the power of the saints with a strict devotion to the ritual and ceremony of the mass.<sup>19</sup>

Women are the spiritual motivators in the Azorean culture. Men are basically inactive church members but expect their children and women to attend. Male Azoreans are anticlerical. They are suspicious of the devout priest and his lack of world practicality. They do expect him to remain moral and to teach their children.<sup>20</sup> Priests are

referred to as "mother-in-laws" by the men because of their seemingly nagging disposition.<sup>21</sup> The negativism of the Azorean man towards the priest is no much so that to utter the word "priest" aboard ship is to bring bad luck.<sup>22</sup>

The church however is the nerve center of the traditional Azorean society. It provides not only spiritual aid but social and cultural support as well. Many of the Azorean celebrations are church-related and church gatherings are contacts for people and especially children who will someday marry.<sup>23</sup>

In the United States, the Azorean immigrants built churches from their savings and with their manpower. Masses held in Portuguese were special and every parish strived to have a Portuguese priest because it continued the culture with which they were familiar. The illiterate Azorean also needed someone who spoke the language so he could understand the faith. It was not easy though to get a Portuguese priest as most communities discovered.<sup>24</sup>

What's in a Name?

Azoreans have little reverence for family names surprizingly. They will take their mother or father's surname at will. Some are even given a nickname and are saddled with it the rest of their life. For example, Antoine Joaquim Souza had a head that reminded someone of a cantaloupe. He became Tony Melao (Melon) for life.

The names of many Azoreans were changed when they entered the United States. Mostly illiterate, they couldn't write their names so when an immigrant official asked for a name he usually wrote what he heard or changed it to something recognizable in English. Teachers and census takers did the same thing. Joao became Joe or John. Mello became Miller; Rodrigues became Rogers; Pereira became Perry; and Madeira (translated wood) became wood. The most frequently cited example was the man whose name was Joaquim; he changed his name to "Joe King" because it sounded like Joaquim.<sup>25</sup>

Immigrant Azoreans would give their children typical Portuguese names, such as Joao or Maria, but some wanted to Americanize their children quickly by giving them standard English names, such as Charles or Alice. Second and subsequent generations gave their children English names dropping the Portuguese forms altogether. This bears out in the biographies of the Azoreans found in the county histories.

Language and Education

Language is the backbone of a society. It allows societal members to communicate their needs and opinions. It acts as a symbol of the society, and its mastery by individuals leads to higher status.<sup>26</sup> Azoreans in 1900 were 82% illiterate.<sup>27</sup> This high percentage of illiteracy is revealed in the drastic drop in Azorean immigration

when a literacy requirement was put in effect. The immigrant needed only to read forty basic words in Portuguese, but many were completely unschooled and consequently couldn't meet the requirement.<sup>28</sup>

In California, as we have seen, many immigrants isolated themselves in Azorean enclaves where they could operate by using their native language. But in New England this was different because in the mills they had English-speaking supervisors. They had to learn basic English to understand their work and communicate with others. In fact, the better English that one spoke the better position one would get.<sup>29</sup>

The immigrant's inability in speaking the common operating language sometimes is seen as a sign of lack of intellect. This is not true as shown in the many research studies. Language can be tied to patriotism at the chagrin of and unfairness to the immigrant.<sup>30</sup>

The first generation immigrant will speak some of his new country's language. The second generation is generally bilingual while the subsequent generations will not speak the old country's language at all. The second generation is then the buffer between two languages and two cultures. He must communicate to both sides.<sup>31</sup>

When the second generation was with his immigrant parents, the old country's language was used at home, while outside the home, the new country's language was used. It was common for the first and second generations to speak with each other mixing the two languages in the conversation. The second generation will not teach his children the language of his parents because of the stigma associated with accented speech. Normally in his home the old language is not used.<sup>32</sup>

Media is not only for information and entertainment, but it helps cultures to understand one another. Portuguese language newspapers were spawned by immigrants in the United States for those reasons. Radio and television programming followed later and has served as a vehicle to inform and to assimilate immigrants into society.<sup>33</sup>

When languages come into contact, they influence one another. A word, a phrase, or pronunciation is adopted. The Portuguese language took on a new look in the United States as it did in Brazil, Hawaii and elsewhere. Occasionally, there is some adaptation too such as these examples: bridge in Portuguese is "ponte" but in California Portuguese it is "brij." These are some others: carrot is "carrota"; cellar is "cela"; truck is "troque"; somebody is "samebari"; and to farm is "farmar".<sup>34</sup>

In the United States, education has been associated with success. In the Azores, it has not, because of the emphasis is on manual labor for success; therefore, peasants see no value in education.<sup>35</sup> Priests have

been the educators in Azorean society, but they haven't been trusted by Azorean men because of their advanced education. They feel that priests have no practical knowledge, and also that they keep their children in school and away from work.<sup>36</sup> Through the centuries, compulsory education in the Azores has been nonexistent which has led to very high illiteracy.<sup>37</sup>

New England had schools for the immigrants, but most Azorean parents stopped sending their children to school once they reached the age required by the government. Not only did they want their children to work, but they also considered public education injurious to traditional Azorean culture and values. The purpose of public education is to prepare students to function in the surrounding American society. Wiser immigrant parents knew of this purpose and its benefit to their children and consequently supported public education.<sup>38</sup>

### Organizations

Mutual aid societies are unique to the Portuguese. It began in the 15th century as support groups for widows when fishermen were lost at sea. In the United States, these societies were formed again to be beneficial to those fellow-countrymen who needed help in time of need. They provided a life insurance policy that paid burial costs and other expenses. But their purpose went much further. They provided forums for communication to the immigrant at their meetings and celebrations. They also kept the Azorean culture and Portuguese language alive. It gave the new immigrants programs that would help he or she settle in their new country.<sup>39</sup>

The first fraternal organization began in San Francisco in 1868 and was the Associacao Portuguesa Protectora e Beneficente (A.P.P.B.). In San Leandro in 1880, Uniao Portuguesa do Estado da California (U.P.E.C.) was chartered. In San Jose the next year, Irmandade do Divino Espirito Santo (I.D.E.S.) began.<sup>40</sup> Two women organizations were started: Sociedade Portuguesa Rainha Santa Isabel (S.P.R.S.I.) began in 1901 at Oakland, and Uniao Portuguesa Protectora do Estado da California (U.P.P.E.C.) began in 1901 also in Oakland. There have been organizations for the individual islands, for the mainland Portuguese, and for the other Portuguese in the United States.<sup>41</sup>

U.P.E.C., I.D.E.S., S.P.R.S.I., and U.P.P.E.C. have been the most successful of the Portuguese mutual aid organizations serving their constituency well. At first, the church was against these organizations, especially when they organized and promoted events, which had Christian connotations but didn't have church involvement.

The church felt that these were lodges and would corrupt the faith of the people and secularize Christianity. The organizations demonstrated their strong beliefs in the church and invited church sponsorship. Some priests accepted this compromise and others didn't, but before long the organizations and their programs became traditional and fully acceptable.<sup>42</sup>

Most anyone can join these organizations, men, women, children, Portuguese, and non-Portuguese. They are family-oriented where everyone gets involved in their programs.<sup>43</sup>

## Festivals

In the United States in the spring and summer, Azorean communities have traditionally staged festivals to honor patron saints, the Virgin Mary, the Holy Ghost, and Jesus. There are processions with bands and floats. There is a Mass followed by a feast, music, and dance in a fellowship hall. It is a time for the Azorean ethnic group to share, worship, and entertain. In Portuguese it is called a "festa."<sup>44</sup>

In the Azores, the various islands and villages will have their own festa, but everyone is invited. The celebration festivities are more primitive in the islands than in the United States, but the tradition is the same. Many of the festas in the United States are modeled after the Azorean ones.<sup>45</sup>

The most common festa is the Holy Ghost Festival or Festa do Divino Espirito Santo which has its roots in medieval Hungary or Aragon depending upon which version. Elizabeth of Hungary in 1296 honored the poor in a celebration. Queen Isabel of Aragon did the same about the same time. The idea was to make the poor royalty for a day where they could eat and dance escaping from the druggery of being poor. This celebration has been continued annually and was brought to the Azores by either the Portuguese or the Flemings, maybe both.<sup>46</sup>

In the Azores as in the United States, a crown is placed on an emperor or empress, and he or she is escorted through the streets followed by a parade to the local church where Mass is held. The entourage goes to the fellowship hall where there is a feast and a dance. This has wide variation depending upon the tradition and monetary support. Anyone is invited to eat as it is free following the tradition of feeding the poor or the masses. The food is soup and sweet bread called "sopas" and "massa sovada" or "pao doce" respectively.<sup>47</sup> On the crown is the symbol of a dove representing the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Christian Godhead.<sup>48</sup>

There are are festas celebrating saints who the originators feel have helped them in times of trouble. Because the Azores can be harsh and the sea treacherous, many faithful have requested intercession in times of fear and difficulty. A promise is usually made to a patron saint which can be a festa in the saint's honor.

On the island of Terceira, a priest built a chapel in the 16th century and placed in it an image of the Virgin Mary which he attributes to miracles. Since then the image is celebrated with hope of further miracles. It is called Nossa Senhora dos Milagres or Our Lady of Miracles, and in California, it is held annually in Gustine. As many as

30,000 have attended. It is a week celebration ending with a feast, dance, and a bloodless bullfight. Keeping with the Portuguese interest in dairying, cows are milked and fresh milk given to the celebrants.<sup>49</sup>

This is one non-Portuguese's observation of a festa he attended in the Bay Area just after World War II:

I went last summer to this big fair they [Portuguese] have there: singing and dancing; a big barbeque, in these pits they got set out; a million kids running around; buses of Portuguese from all over the state . . . Really had quite a time . . .<sup>50</sup>

### Portuguese Language Newspapers

Portuguese language newspapers in the United States began in the 1870's and 1880's both in New England and in California. Their purpose was to provide information to Portuguese immigrants. They contained local news, and translated news stories of the Azores, Portugal, Europe, and the United States. They ran advertisements and served as a community bulletin board. Some were dailies and some were weeklies. They were mostly poorly written at first but the journalistic style improved within time. Their political and editorial stances were important giving the immigrants viewpoints to ponder as part of their American education. Some newspapers failed immediately while others continued for decades.<sup>51</sup>

Because many of the immigrants were illiterate, newspapers were read to them by their friends or neighbors who could read. *Voz Portuguesa* was the first Portuguese language newspaper in California, published in 1884 at San Francisco. *Uniao Portuguesa* published in San Francisco and later in Oakland lasted until 1940. *O Arauto* ran from 1896 to 1917 in Oakland. Another Oakland newspaper was *A Liberdade* lasting until 1937. *O Imparcial* was published in Sacramento from 1903 to 1932. *O Jornal de Noticias* was another important newspaper running from 1917 to 1932 in San Francisco.<sup>52</sup>

### Assimilation

An underlying theme in this study is assimilation. Did the Azorean acculturate and become part of the American society? Of course the United States is an unique nation being a country of immigrants. At some point, every family's forefathers had to come into contact with an existing society somewhere within our borders.

The first group of immigrants from Europe were northern Europeans who were the first to establish values, language, and culture in America. This immigrant culture set the status quo for the American society. One had to be Protestant, speak English, value education, hardworking, self-sufficient, egalitarian, and love freedom. Anyone coming afterward were expected at some point to fulfill these requirements to be an American. This would not be difficult if one

came from England, Germany, or Scandinavia. The adjustment wouldn't take long.

Most immigrants, regardless who they are, are looking for an opportunity to improve their prior condition with the feeling that there will be some compromising to be able to function in the new environment. With this in mind, how did the Azoreans fare?

In the eastern United States, they were late immigrants. A few Azoreans had found their way to America prior to the 19th century, but not many. This meant that American culture had been established before they arrived. The Azoreans began entering in the form of young men who had found passage on whaling ships. Shortly they joined the massive immigration of southern Europeans of late 19th century and early 20th century.

Southern Europeans differ with the northern Europeans in several ways. They were non-Protestant, darker skinned, shorter, less reserved, and didn't speak English. There was a clash of cultures which found expression in anti-immigrant statements in newspapers and in governmental circles. This eventually led to immigration laws based on a quota and isolation in American foreign policy.<sup>53</sup>

The Azorean immigrants didn't speak English, were Catholic, and had a culture different from their hosts. The transition would not be easy. It would take one or two generations for real acculturation to occur in the genealogy of the family. Learning the English language would be their most important endeavor. Since many of them began working at the textile mills, they needed some English to be affective, and they learned as much as they needed.<sup>54</sup>

Their religion they kept. There was religious toleration in America, but the Protestant Reformation was fully in place. The differences in cultural practices could be smoothed over with some public education.<sup>55</sup>

Public education is the basic method of acculturation. This would eventually allow the Azorean to slip into American society. It is in the classroom and on the playground that basic citizenship and tolerance is learned. The Azorean children learned the English language and the ways of the surrounding Protestant society. They tried to bring this home to their immigrant parents many times with a great deal of conflict. Intermarriage is also an outgrowth of public education because of its social mix and a serious step towards assimilation.<sup>56</sup>

The working place too acculturates the immigrant. New ways are learned. Backwardness and ignorance of the peasant must come to an abrupt end. To function and to be successful, change had to take place. According to the literature, the Azorean did this as well as any other southern European immigrant group. They soon owned their own houses and then their own farms. They became owners of sea

vessels and businesses.57

In California, assimilation came at a slower pace because of the isolation of Azorean immigrant in the various farming enclaves. He or she didn't have to learn English, a new culture, or change occupational techniques. This was especially true in the dairy settlements. On a dairy, no English was needed to talk to the animals. Technologically, hands were all that was needed, and farming skills were imbedded into the Azorean mind. It was only when the second and third generations came along when full Americanization would take place.58

There were though several similarities culturally between the Azorean and his new countrymen. Azorean peasant society found everyone equal which is the basic American political concept. One had to work hard to survive which again is American being a free enterprise nation. There was also a strong interest in family which has been the core of American society.59

A non-Portuguese in the Bay Area wrote this shortly after World War II. It reveals the acceptance of the Portuguese in the surrounding society:

The Portagees? Sure. Two of my mechanics are Portagee fellas. Over around the church, on Park Boulevard, is where you'll find them. They aren't as clannish as the Mexicans or the Italians either . . . there isn't what you could call a Portuguese neighborhood . . . No, nobody would even think about it if a Portagee was to move in next to them. I wouldn't have thought about it myself, if you hadn't asked.60

The Azorean is a composite of many nations as we have seen, and he is very tolerant of other peoples because of it. Politically the Azorean is connected to Portugal, but his interest and love is for America. There was in fact a recent movement wanting the United States to annex the Azores because Azoreans are American-oriented. As we've seen, every Azorean family, every Azorean village, has an American son or daughter.

One looks at the American society today and without question the Azorean has assimilated. He or she has blended into the American society still though keeping something Azorean. However, acculturation isn't easy as can be seen in this true but rather humorist account told by an Azorean immigrant:

One of our Cousins, who had lived here for some time, gave us a live turkey for our Thanksgiving dinner. My mother didn't know how to cook a turkey. As a matter of fact, she had never seen a turkey before. My father saved the day by going to town and buying a big pork roast . . . We kids made a pet out of that turkey. It would eat out of our hands and followed us all over the barnyard. It finally died of old age . . . "61





[Back to Table of Contents](#)

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[Back to Table of Contents](#)



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[Back to Table of Contents](#)