


6-1997

Celebrating the Portuguese Communities in America: A Cartographic Perspective (Exhibit Guide)

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Recommended Citation

Library of Congress and the Embassy of Portugal, "Celebrating the Portuguese Communities in America: A Cartographic Perspective (Exhibit Guide)" (1997). *Osher Map Library Miscellaneous Publications*. 8. https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/oml_miscellaneous/8

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*Celebrating the
Portuguese Communities
in America:
A Cartographic
Perspective*



Presented by the Library of Congress
and the
Embassy of Portugal
June 10–November 29, 1997



Although numerous countries and individuals were involved in the exploration and mapping of the Americas, it was the Portuguese who set the stage during the fifteenth century for the ensuing discoveries in the New World. Portuguese-born and sponsored explorers played a significant role, especially in charting a route around the southern tip of South America; in exploring and exploiting the waters bordering the northeast coast of North America; and in exploring the Pacific Coast of North America, particularly the area that today is the state of California.

Although the Portuguese did not establish major settlements in North America during the colonial period, they became an important immigrant group during the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. A few isolated settlements, such as the Portuguese-Jewish congregations in Newport, Rhode Island, and Charleston, South Carolina, have been documented in the original thirteen colonies. During the nineteenth century, Portuguese immigration started to increase, but did not reach large numbers. Most of these immigrants, who came from the Azores rather than from continental Portugal, were involved in the whaling industry. These settlements were concentrated in southeastern New England (especially around New Bedford, Massachusetts) with smaller numbers in the Pacific arena, including scattered whaling stations in Hawaii and along the California coast. The largest numbers of immigrants came in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century, as the new arrivals settled in the industrial towns of southeastern New England and the agricultural communities around the San Francisco Bay and throughout the San Joaquin Valley in central California.

Through maps and photographs, this exhibit celebrates Portuguese communities in the United States. Primarily, it documents the migration of Portuguese people to America and their subsequent settlement in this new homeland. It also highlights the Portuguese contributions to the exploration and mapping of these uncharted lands.

THE PORTUGUESE ROLE IN EXPLORING AND MAPPING THE NEW WORLD

Portugal, the western-most European country, was one of the primary players in the European Age of Discovery and Exploration. Under the leadership of Prince Henry the Navigator, Portugal took the principal role during most of the fifteenth century in searching for a route to Asia by sailing south around Africa. In the process, the Portuguese accumulated a wealth of knowledge about navigation and the geography of the Atlantic Ocean.

In the last decade of the fifteenth century, Christopher Columbus set out on a westerly course across the Atlantic Ocean searching for an alternative route to the Indies but inadvertently "discovered" a new continent. Although neither Portuguese-born nor sponsored, Columbus was Portuguese trained. He went to Lisbon in 1476 and remained there for several years, seeking the

support of the Portuguese king and gathering nautical and geographic intelligence from the returning sailors. He married a Portuguese woman; obtained navigation charts and related information from his father-in law, Bartholomew Perestrelo, who was the governor of the island of Porto Santo in Madeira; and was employed by João II as a navigator.

After Columbus' voyages to the New World, the Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, and English began the active exploration and exploitation of the newly discovered land in the Americas. Portuguese sailors continued to make important discoveries in this new arena as well.

Portugal during the Age of Discoveries

"Portugaliae," from Abraham Ortelius. *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. Antwerp: [1579?]. Hand-colored engraving. Geography and Map Division, Eastham Collection 225-A (1)

The Azores

"Açores Insulae," from Abraham Ortelius. *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. Antwerp: [1594?]. Hand-colored engraving. Geography and Map Division, Title Collection, Atlantic Ocean-Azores (2)

The First Circumnavigation of the Globe

Tabula Magellanica qua Tierra del Fuego. Amsterdam: Schenck and Valk, [1709?]. Hand-colored engraving. Geography and Map Division, Title Collection, Chile-Magellan Strait (3)

Portuguese Exploration along the Northeast Coast of North America

Johann Georg Kohl. *Map of America, by Diego Ribero, 1529*. [1850?]. Pen, ink, and watercolor. Geography and Map Division, Kohl Collection no. 41 (4)

Cabrilho's Discovery of California

Johann Georg Kohl. *A Map Showing the Progress of Discovery on the West Coast of the U.S. and Vancouver Island*. 1857. Pen, ink, and watercolor. Geography and Map Division, Kohl Collection, miscellaneous (5)

Portuguese View of the World at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century

"Mapa de todo el Mundo," in João Teixeira. *Taboas geraes de toda a navegação* [Lisbon: 1630]. Pen, ink, and watercolor. Geography and Map Division, G1015 .T4 1630 Vault (6)

PORTUGUESE SETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Although there were scattered Portuguese settlements in the American colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sustained immigration began in the early nineteenth century, when young men from the Azores were employed in the New England whaling industry. In fact, approximately seventy

percent of Portuguese immigrants to the United States came from the Azores, while most of the remainder came from the other islands in the Atlantic—Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands. Most of the emigrants from mainland Portugal went to Brazil, although immigration to the United States during the middle of the twentieth century originated from mainland Portugal.

Portuguese immigration and settlements were not nearly as large or as geographically widespread throughout the northeastern and midwestern regions of the United States as the Irish and German immigration that dominated the nineteenth century. Rather, Portuguese settlements focused on several specific regions—southern New England, the San Francisco Bay area of California, and Hawaii, all linked by their mutual involvement in the whaling industry.

Distribution of Portuguese Ancestry in the United States, 1980

“Portuguese Ancestry,” in James Allen and Eugene Turner.

We the People. New York: Macmillan, 1988. Color facsimile.

Geography and Map Division, G1201.E1A4 1988 (7)

Whaling Industry Links Early Nineteenth-Century Portuguese Settlements

Matthew F. Maury. *Whale Chart*. Washington, D.C.: Naval Observatory, 1851. Color lithograph. Geography and Map Division, G9096s. C7 var. M3, series F (8)

WHALING, FISHING, AND INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTHEASTERN NEW ENGLAND

The largest concentration of Portuguese immigrants settled in southeastern New England, in an area extending from Providence, Rhode Island, through southeastern Massachusetts (including Cape Cod) to Boston. This concentration began with the organization of a Portuguese-Jewish congregation and the later establishment of the sperm oil industry in Newport, Rhode Island, during the last half of the eighteenth century. In the early nineteenth century, the focus of whaling shifted to nearby New Bedford, Massachusetts. With the employment of young Azoreans in the whaling industry, New Bedford became the focus of Portuguese immigration as the town became the leading whaling port.

From New Bedford, the Portuguese spread to other New England coastal ports. Sizeable Portuguese communities developed in Newport, Rhode Island, the ports on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard Islands, Provincetown on Cape Cod, the Boston metropolitan area, and Gloucester to the northeast. In these towns, they engaged in whaling, as well as other maritime activities, including cod fishing.

During the last two to three decades of the nineteenth century, as the whaling industry diminished and industrialization became a more important component of urban growth, Portuguese immigration increased significantly. New immigrants were attracted by employment in the textile factories in the industrial towns of southeastern New England. New Bedford provided substantial industri-

al employment, but other large Portuguese communities developed around the textile factories in nearby Fall River and Providence, as well as in the industrial towns around Boston, including Cambridge, Somerville, and Lowell.

Jewish Congregation in Colonial Newport, Rhode Island

Charles Blaskowitz. *A Plan of the Town of Newport in Rhode Island*. London: Faden, 1777. Hand-colored engraving.

Geography and Map Division, G3774 .N4 1777 .B5 Am 6-5 (9)

Whaling Industry and Portuguese Immigration Centered in New Bedford, Massachusetts

The Harbor of New Bedford. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Coast Survey, 1846. Engraving. Geography and Map Division, Title Collection, Mass.-New Bedford (10)



Portuguese School in New Bedford

John Collier. *Roman Catholic Portuguese School, New Bedford, Mass., April 1942*. Photograph. Prints and Photographs Division, U.S. Office of War Information, LC-USW-3-2021-C (11)

Bird's-eye View of Provincetown on Cape Cod

Provincetown, Mass. Boston: Walker, 1910. Color lithograph. Geography and Map Division, G3764 .P78A3 1910 .W31 (12)

Cod Fishing in New England Coastal Waters

John Collier, *Hauling in a Cod Aboard a Portuguese Fishing Dory, Spring 1942*. Photograph. Prints and Photographs Division, U.S. Office of War Information, LC-USW-3-2175-E (13)

Portuguese Town Fathers in Provincetown

John Collier. *City Fathers of Provincetown . . .*, April 1942. Photograph. Prints and Photographs Division, U.S. Office of War Information, LC-USW-1974-C (14)

Portuguese Settlement in the Fox Point Section of Providence, Rhode Island

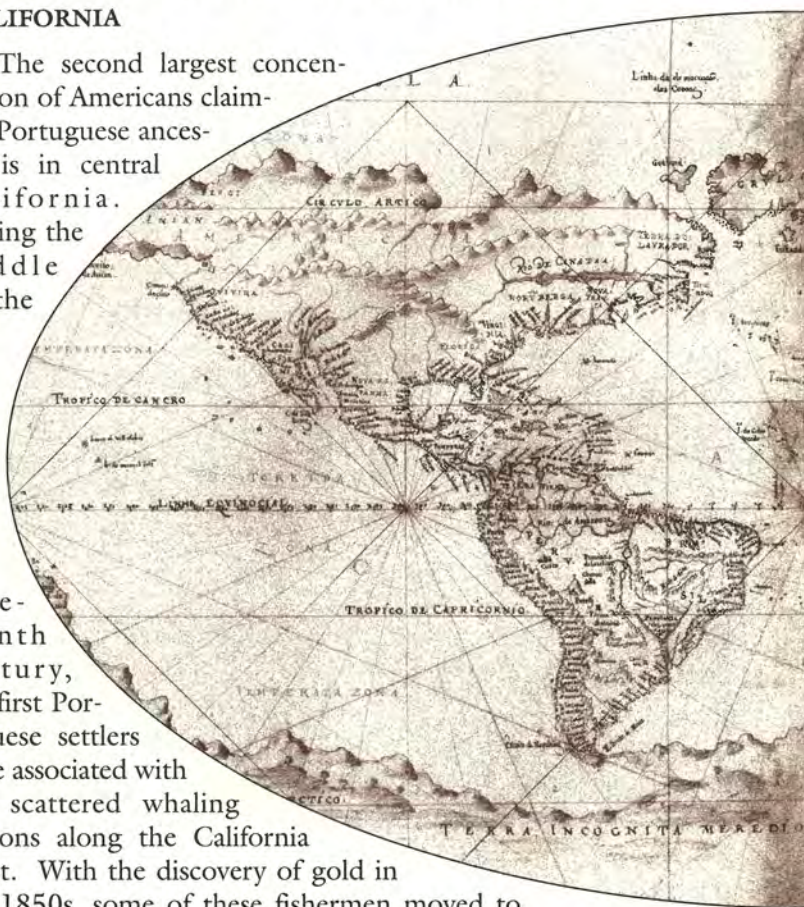
Plate 18 from *Plat Book of Providence, R.I.* Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, 1937. Color facsimile. Geography and Map Division, G1239.P9H62 1937 (15)

AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS IN CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

The second largest concentration of Americans claiming Portuguese ancestry is in central California. During the middle of the

nineteenth century, the first Portuguese settlers were associated with the scattered whaling stations along the California coast. With the discovery of gold in the 1850s, some of these fishermen moved to the gold mining camps in the Sacramento Valley. Most of these early immigrants were Azoreans, who had come to California from southeastern New England.

Although this initial migration was relatively small, larger numbers of Portuguese started moving into the area during the last decades of the nineteenth century. These newcomers engaged primarily in agriculture, including dairying and intensive vegetable



and fruit farming. At first they settled in communities on the east side of the San Francisco Bay such as Oakland, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Hayward, and Santa Clara, and then eventually in the San Joaquin Valley, developing fruit, vegetable, and dairy farms in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Kings, and Tulare counties.

Aerial Perspective of Three Towns with Large Portuguese Communities on East Side of San Francisco Bay

Aug. Chevalier. *Aero-View-Map of Hayward, Alameda Co., California*. 1931. Lithograph. Geography and Map Division, Title Collection, California-Hayward (16)

First Portuguese Mayor, San Leandro, California

Russell Lee. *This is a Five-member Board . . . San Leandro, California, April 1942*. Photograph. Prints and Photographs Division, U.S. Office of War Information, LC-USW-3-1871-D (17)

Bird's-eye View of Oakland, California

Fred Soderberg. *Oakland, California, 1900*. San Francisco: 1900.

Color lithograph. Geography and Map Division, G4364

.O2A3 1900

.S6 (19)



Portuguese Catholic Church in Oakland

Russell Lee. *Entrance to St. Joseph's Portuguese Church, Oakland, California, April 1942*. Photograph. Prints and Photographs Division, U.S. Office of War Information, LC-USW-3-1859-D (20)

Celebrating the Festival of the Holy Ghost in Santa Clara, California

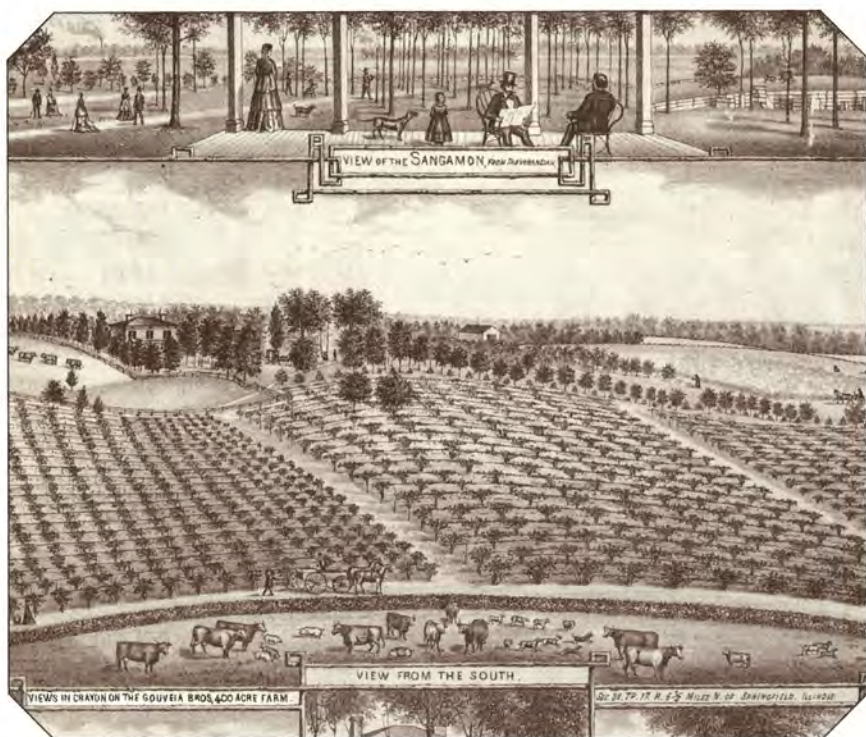
Russell Lee. *Queen Geraldine Vierra . . . of the festa of the Holy Ghost, Santa Clara, California, May 1942*. Photograph. Prints and Photographs Division, U.S. Office of War Information, LC-USW-3-4596-D (21)

Agricultural Settlement in the San Joaquin Valley

San Joaquin County, California, Plat Map. Madison, Wisc.:
County Plat and Directory Co., 1966. Color facsimile.
Geography and Map Division, G4363 .S26 1966 .C6 (22)

PROTESTANT EXILES FROM MADEIRA IN ILLINOIS

One of the most unusual Portuguese immigration stories involves a group of religious exiles from Madeira (Portuguese islands in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Morocco) who settled in Illinois in the 1850s. In 1838, a Scottish physician and Protestant minister on his way to China stopped on one of the islands to recover from a sudden illness. Upon recuperating, he



stayed, converting hundreds of islanders to Protestantism. Having become alienated from the vast majority of the Catholics in the islands, these dedicated converts (numbering about 1,000) moved to the British island of Trinidad off the northern coast of South America in 1846. After three years in this new location, the exiles found that they were unable to adjust to the tropical climate and the plantation working conditions.

When the plight of these Protestant exiles received wide publicity in the United States, people in the vicinity of Springfield, Illinois, encouraged and assisted them in relocating to their mid-western, prairie community. The first of these immigrants arrived in 1849, and by 1855 the group was well established in the area. Approximately 400 settled near Springfield, the capital of Illinois and the county seat of Sangamon County, while a similar-sized group settled near Jacksonville, the county seat of neighboring

Morgan County. Although evidence of their Portuguese cultural heritage is not very strong today, there are still family names (Gonçalves, Fernandes, Gouveia) indicating Portuguese ancestry and geographical place names (Portuguese Hill, Trinidad School) commemorating this group's long and determined journey to find a permanent home.

Portuguese Land Owners near Jacksonville, Illinois

"Township 15 North, Range 10 West," from *Atlas Map of Morgan County, Illinois*. Davenport, Iowa: Andreas, Lyter & Co., 1872. Color lithograph. Geography and Map Division, G1408 .M8A55 1872 (23)

Place Names Document Nineteenth-Century Portuguese Settlement near Jacksonville

Virginia Quadrangle, Illinois. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Geological Survey, 1936. Color printed map. Geography and Map Division, USGS quads (24)

View of Portuguese-Owned Farm near Springfield, Illinois

"Views in Crayon of the Gouveia Bros. 400 Acre Farm," from *Illustrated Atlas Map of Sangamon County, Ill.* [St. Louis?]: Brink, McCormick & Co., 1874. Color lithograph. Geography and Map Division, G1408 .S4B7 1874 (25)

TWENTIETH-CENTURY ARRIVALS FROM PORTUGAL SETTLE IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

A significant concentration of Portuguese-Americans is also found in the New York City metropolitan area, with important clusters in the boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn, the suburban community of Yonkers in Westchester County, and the Long Island town of Mineola in Nassau County. The latter two communities had their beginnings in the 1920s, when textile workers moved from New Bedford and other southern New England industrial towns.

Another New York metropolitan area community, which has experienced some of the most recent Portuguese immigration, is the Ironbound section of Newark, New Jersey. Although this cluster had its origins in the 1920s and 1930s, when southern New Englanders migrated here, these relocated Portuguese-Americans were joined by a large number of new arrivals from mainland Portugal, particularly from small fishing villages in the northern part of the country. By World War II, this new Portuguese community had an estimated population of 6,000, including the immigrants and their American-born children.

Fire Insurance Map Showing Two Portuguese Churches in Newark, New Jersey

Insurance Maps of Newark, New Jersey. New York: Sanborn, 1930, corrected to 1951, vol. 2, sheet 260. Color lithograph with paste-up corrections. Geography and Map Division, Sanborn Collection (26)

Portuguese-American Newspaper Published in Newark, New Jersey

Luso-Americano. No. 2934. Newark, New Jersey, May 7, 1997. Newspaper. Gift of publisher. (27)

Page from Newark, New Jersey, City Directory Listing Portuguese Residents

Newark Directory, 1947. Newark, New Jersey: Price and Lee, 1947. Facsimile. General Collections (28)

MANY LISBONS IN THE UNITED STATES

In contrast to the highly localized distribution of Portuguese-Americans in southern New England and central California, there are at least thirty-seven communities in the United States that bear some form of the name of Lisbon, Portugal's capital city and cultural center. These places are located in twenty-six states, primarily in the eastern half of the country. Ironically, there are no Lisbons located in the four states which have been traditionally associated with Portuguese immigration and settlement—Rhode Island, Massachusetts, California, and Hawaii.

Because the naming process, especially for smaller towns and villages, has not always been well documented, it is not possible to determine the motivation for selecting the name "Lisbon" for each of these places. Immigrants from Portugal may have settled in some of these communities, but in most cases, the residents had very little relation to Portugal. The town fathers often selected the name of a European city (as was a common practice during much of the nineteenth century) in anticipation that their newly founded settlement would emulate the larger namesake. However, none of the American Lisbons rivals its European counterpart in size or importance.

In an interesting counterpoint, New York City, which would eventually be considered America's cultural center, was erroneously portrayed as Lisbon in a late seventeenth-century map. In pirating a sixteenth-century image of Lisbon, a French publisher simply relabeled the streets and landmarks, presenting it as a faithful depiction of New Amsterdam or New York City.

New York City or Lisbon, Portugal?

C.L. Jollain. *Nowel Amsterdam in l'Amerique*. 1672.

Engraving. Geography and Map Division, G3804 .N4 1672 J6 Vault (29)

Late Sixteenth-Century Map of Lisbon, Portugal

"Olisippo. Lisabona," from Pierre d'Avity. *Neuwe Archontologia Cosmica*. Frankfurt am Main: M. Merian, [1646?]. Engraving. Geography and Map Division, Title Collection, Portugal-Lisbon (view) (30)

Communities in the United States Named Lisbon

Localities Named Lisbon in the United States. Washington: Geography and Map Division, Cartographic Lab, 1997. Computer-generated map. (31)

Lisbon, Howard County, Maryland

Woodbine Quadrangle, Maryland. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Geological Survey, 1979. Color printed map. Geography

and Map Division, USGS quads (32)

Lisbon, Lisbon Center, and Lisbon Falls, Androscoggin County, Maine

Lisbon Falls North Quadrangle, Maine. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Geological Survey, 1979. Color printed map. Geography and Map Division, USGS quads (33)

FURTHER READING

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Sauer, Carl O. *Sixteenth Century North America.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971

Scammell, G. V. *The World Encompassed: The First European Empires, c. 800-1650.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981

Williams, Jerry R. *And Yet They Came: Portuguese Immigration from the Azores to the United States.* New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1982

This exhibition was made possible through the generous support of the Portuguese Embassy; the Luso-American Development Foundation; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for the Portuguese Communities, Eng. José Lello; Mr. José João Morais, Newport Concrete, Inc.; and the co-operation of the Interpretive Programs Office, the Hispanic and Geography and Map Divisions of the Library of Congress. Special thanks to Teresa Greenwald, Counselor, Embassy of Portugal, who co-ordinated these efforts.

Staff for the exhibition: Irene Chambers, Interpretive Programs Officer; Kimberli Curry and Giulia Adelfio, exhibit directors; Iêda Siqueira Wiarda and Ronald E. Grim, curators; Bethany Letalien and Monica DiGialleonardo, research assistance; Georgette Dorn, Ralph Ehrenberg, and Elizabeth Mangan, administrative support; Gene Roberts, Colleen Stumbaugh, Lynn Wojcik, and Richard Antonisse, scanning assistance; Rikki Condon, conservation; and the staff of the Printing Management Section; and the staff of the Interpretive Programs Office: Martha Hopkins, Deborah Durbeck, Tandra Johnson, Chris O'Connor, Denise Agee, Gwynn Wilhelm, Cheryl Regan, and Carroll Johnson.

This exhibition was made possible by the Luso-American Development Foundation and the Secretary of State for Portuguese Communities. Additional support was received from Newport Concrete, Inc.

