



American-Portuguese
Genealogical and Historical Society, Inc.

Bulletin Board

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Vol. XXIII, No. 2

Spring 2002

**MARIO AUGUSTO SILVIA
SQUARE**

**DIED ON A BATTLEFIELD
IN FRANCE
WORLD WAR I**

After the tragedies of September 11, 2001, xenophobia has caused some Americans to call for a cessation of immigration. The time when this nation extended an open invitation to the people of the world is gone and the danger presented by illegal immigrants must be addressed, but Portuguese-Americans and other hyphen Americans should think carefully before joining the call for total cessation. Ethnic prejudice against immigrants has never been absent, but our immigrant ancestors—and their descendants—overcame this bias and became loyal citizens. For example: The American army that fought World War I was eighteen percent “foreign stock” (they or one or both parents were foreign-born), but there was no doubt to which side of the hyphen their loyalty belonged. Such was Mario Augusto Silvia.

Born in Portugal on May 1, 1894, his World War I Selective Service record says "Oporto"; the Massachusetts Gold Star Report (see ~~Bulletin Board~~ Vol. XV, No. 1, winter 1994, p.10) says "Berto." In 1902 he emigrated to the United States with his parents, Antone Joaquin and Leopolda (Vieira) Silvia and resided with them in Fall River. On February 8, 1916, he married Maria Felicia Souza in Holy Family Church, East Taunton. The Sousas lived at 294 Middleboro Avenue. A son, Arthur Augustus, was born on June 29, 1917. Mario was working at the Evans Stamping Plate Co. (later called Paragon Gear) when he was inducted into the Army on October 17, 1917. After basic training at Camp Devens, Massachusetts, he was sent overseas on February 27, 1918. While serving in Company K, 165 Infantry Regiment, 42nd (Rainbow) Division, he was killed near Sergy, France, on July 28, 1918. Born in Europe, he was buried in Europe in the Oise-Aisne Cemetery, Block A, Row 6, Grave 8.

On October 12, 1930, a marker bearing Mario's name was dedicated at the square named in his honor—the third such square in Taunton's history. Among those present at the ceremonies were his widow, son and parents. The present marker was placed in 1997 next to the East Taunton Post Office.

The Vasconcelos of Bretanha: Landed Gentry

Bretanha, São Miguel, is a little out-of-the-way place, little visited by tourists, with few sights of historical significance. Nevertheless, some of the freguesia's inhabitants can claim descent from an island pioneer family.

Gaspar Frutuoso recorded that the island's Oliveira Vasconcelos family originated from Martim de Oliveira Vasconcelos, son of Rui Mendes de Vasconcelos, descended from the lords of Gascony, France. Martim was married Teresa Velho, sister of Gonçalo Velho Cabral, discoverer and first ruler of the Azores. Teresa was attached to the households of princes Henry (the Navigator) and Fernando. Martim, according to Frutuoso, left Beja in the Alentejo region of southern Portugal, for São Miguel with Teresa and their children. Apparently the island was not his liking for he soon returned home. His son, Diogo de Oliveira Vasconcelos and his wife, Maria Teves, however, remained on São Miguel. Maria was the daughter of Afonso Velho, a powerful member of the Velho family.¹ Diogo and Maria are the ancestors of the Oliveira Vasconcelos of São Miguel.

Many of their descendants mistakenly claim a common descent from Gonçalo Velho Cabral, believing that Diogo was Gonçalo's nephew—the son of the discoverer's sister, Teresa. However, in a letter of King Manuel I, dated 3 July 1504, in response to the petition of Diogo de Oliveira Vasconcelos, the king legitimized Diogo, who was actually the son of Martim and Caterina Afonso, a single woman. The decree gave legitimacy to Diogo and absolved him from the stains and penalties of illegitimacy.

Among the children of Diogo and Maria de Teves was a Diogo who married Genebre Anes. Their granddaughter, Inês, married João Manuel Pavão, a descendant of Agua de Pau's founding families. João and Inês' daughter, Guiomar, married Sebastião Afonso de Sousa, a captain in the Bretanha militia. That brought the Oliveira Vasconcelos to Bretanha.³

Cristóvão, son of Guiomar and Sebastião, was also a militia captain. He and Isabel Alvares⁴ were the parents of several children, one of whom was Iria (sometimes called Maria), who married Simão

(or Manuel) Dias Vultão. The Bretanha baptismal register recorded her as a godmother in 1623. She and Simão apparently were wealthy enough to own slaves, because the same register recorded the baptism of such.⁵

Manuel Dias de Vasconcelos succeeded his father as a local militia captain as did succeeding generations. Son Manuel Alves de Vasconcelos married Ana Martins and settled in Gintes; a grandson, (another Capitão Manuel) married Ana do Ameral in Candelária.⁶ One of their sons, António Francisco de Vasconcelos, the Vicar of Bretanha, consolidated the family's fortune and social prominence in the parish. He acquired and entailed vast holdings from São Miguel's northern coast to the craters of Sete Cidades Valley, along with other holdings in Capelas in 1720, making the successors landed gentry. Additional holdings were added in 1777 when land belonging to the Jesuits were auctioned following the order's expulsion from Portugal.⁷

The vicar's nephew, Capitão Manuel Joaquim de Vasconcelos, son of Manuel Dias de Vasconcelos and Maria de São José, succeeded as squire. He and his wife, Getrudes da Câmara, who was the daughter of a Rabo de Peixe squire, raised fourteen children in their Lomba Grande solar overlooking the Atlantic. Besides contributing to the political and social life of the islands, the family was known for its ingenuity and inventiveness and acquired a reputation as tinkers: Luis de Sousa Vasconcelos, for instance, invented machinery that simplified rural life.⁸

It was into this family that Manuel António de Vasconcelos was born in 1796. The death of an older brother left him the heir to a great fortune.⁹ The mother was descended from Gonçalo Vaz Botelho, leader of São Miguel's first settlement, and from Rui Gonsalves da Câmara, the island's third Captain-donatory, who had purchased the island from Velho's cash-strapped heir. Manuel António, however, wasn't interested in rustivating in a rural freguesia and relinquished his birthright shortly before his father's death in 1829 and ended the entailment in 1841—leaving his widow and young children impoverished and dependent on the generosity of his friends.¹¹ Manuel António de Vasconcelos was also the principal actor in one of the Bretanha's most well known mysteries and scandals.

For over a century there has been a belief that the Caputos of the Bretanha region were the descendants of Louis Capet of France, son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The *Dauphin* (a title bestowed on the eldest son of the French monarch similar to Britain's Prince of Wales), would have ascended the throne as Louis XVII but for the French Revolution. After its start in 1789, the royal family was apprehended while trying to flee France and eventually imprisoned in Temple, a fortified monastery once the property of the Knights Templar, where the son died. In French history there is a legend that a sympathetic guard allowed a switch and that the boy who died in Temple was the Dauphin's substitute. In Russia, a similar legend had Princess Anastasia surviving the 1918 execution of the Romanovs.

Revolutionary France abolished all titles of nobility. The former king and queen, at their separate trials, were addressed as Citizen and Citizeness Capet (in 987 Hugh Capet, Duke of France and Count of Paris, had been elected King of France by his fellow nobles). Thus, the not-to-be Louis XVII becomes (posthumously) Louis Capet.

While in Bretanha, according to the legend, the Dauphin was visited by his father's watchmaker and was said to have fathered a child. Following his father's pattern, the son is supposed to have sired other illegitimate children, who (since their parents never married) took the name "Capeto."

supposedly a corruption of Capet. The legend was furthered by Paul Bartel, a French journalist, who visited Bretanha and Capelas in 1932. Writing in *L'Illustration*, a French periodical, Bartel said he found the descendants of Louis Capet in the descendants of António Francisco, the son of an unmarried mother of Bretanha, who, Bartel claimed, was Louis Capet's daughter.¹²

Legends are best when supported by facts. António's mother, Ana da Conceição, unmarried, did have two children by Manuel António Vasconcelos, but she was the daughter of António de Amoreira and Ana de Jesus, not someone's illegitimate love child. Her two children, Maria Ricarda and António Francisco, were left by her at the doors of villagers who could be relied upon to succor them. According to a cousin, Breno Dias de Vasconcelos, an Azorean journalist, the identity of the father, Manuel Antonio de Vasconcelos, was undisputed. Manuel resisted all efforts of his brother, António José de Vasconcelos, to act honorably and acknowledge his children, but the two and their descendants were acknowledged and accepted by their Vasconcelos cousins.¹³

Messing up the legend are other facts: At the time of the French Revolution, the ruling dynasty (since Henry IV in 1589) was Bourbon; Capetians hadn't ruled France since Charles IV in 1328. Louis XVI and the Queen were renamed "Capets," but not their son. Since Bartel's story, DNA testing has proven that the boy who died in Temple was the Dauphin.

António took the name "Capeto"; his grandson took "Capeto de Vasconcelos" when he married. Some say Capeto is a corruption of Capet, but the aforementioned Breno Dias and other vernacular scholars say it's corruption of "capitão—captain." António's paternal grandfather was Manuel Joaquim de Vasconcelos, a local squire and captain of the local militia—like his ancestors. The bastard grandson was nicknamed "Capito—the little captain"; it was Capito, not Capet, that became corrupted to Capeto.¹⁴

In Capelas, São Miguel, there are presently descendants of António; others have emigrated. In the Fall River, Massachusetts, area is Isabel Capeto who writes mysteries and light romances under an assumed name (and her own) for Avalon Books and Acadia House.

In Ponta Delgada, Manuel António Vasconcelos and his brother established the oldest Azorean newspaper still in publication, *O Açoriano Oriental*. Manuel later was one of the founders of a Lisbon daily, *O Tempo*. In 1836 he was elected to the Parliament and served until 1842 when an ailment left him deranged. His marriage to Edwiges de Fonseca (twenty-four years his junior) in 1838 had produced but two children who survived infancy: Clemente and Edwiges. Only the descendants of Clemente survive today.¹⁵

Physicians urged Manuel to return to Azores in the popular belief of the time that the salubrious climate of his homeland would restore his health. It was not to be. He died on 10 October 1844 without the sacraments, having "been demented in the last year of his life," according to the parish priest's death-record entry.¹⁶ He was forty-eight. Having relinquished his birthright, his death left his widow and children in a financially precarious position making the three dependent on the generosity of friends for survival. Clemente became the Logoa town clerk. His great grandson lives in a house on Avenida Gaspar Frutuoso designed by his father, Clemete's grandson. The family is today prominent in Ponta Delgada society.¹⁷

Manuel António's brother, António José, purchased most of the remnants of the dissolved estate.¹⁸ Until 1910, when Augusto de Meneses Vasconcelos (known popularly as o Morgado da

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Lomba) died, the family lived on in their *solar*, the grandest house in Bretanha. In 1910 the solar was boarded up and fell into disrepair. Fortunately, a Ponta Delgada entrepreneur recently acquired it and is in the process of restoring it for use as a tourist retreat. The Vasconcelos family is still prominent in Bretanha today; Augusto's son, Jaime Botelho Vasconcelos is president of the parish assembly.

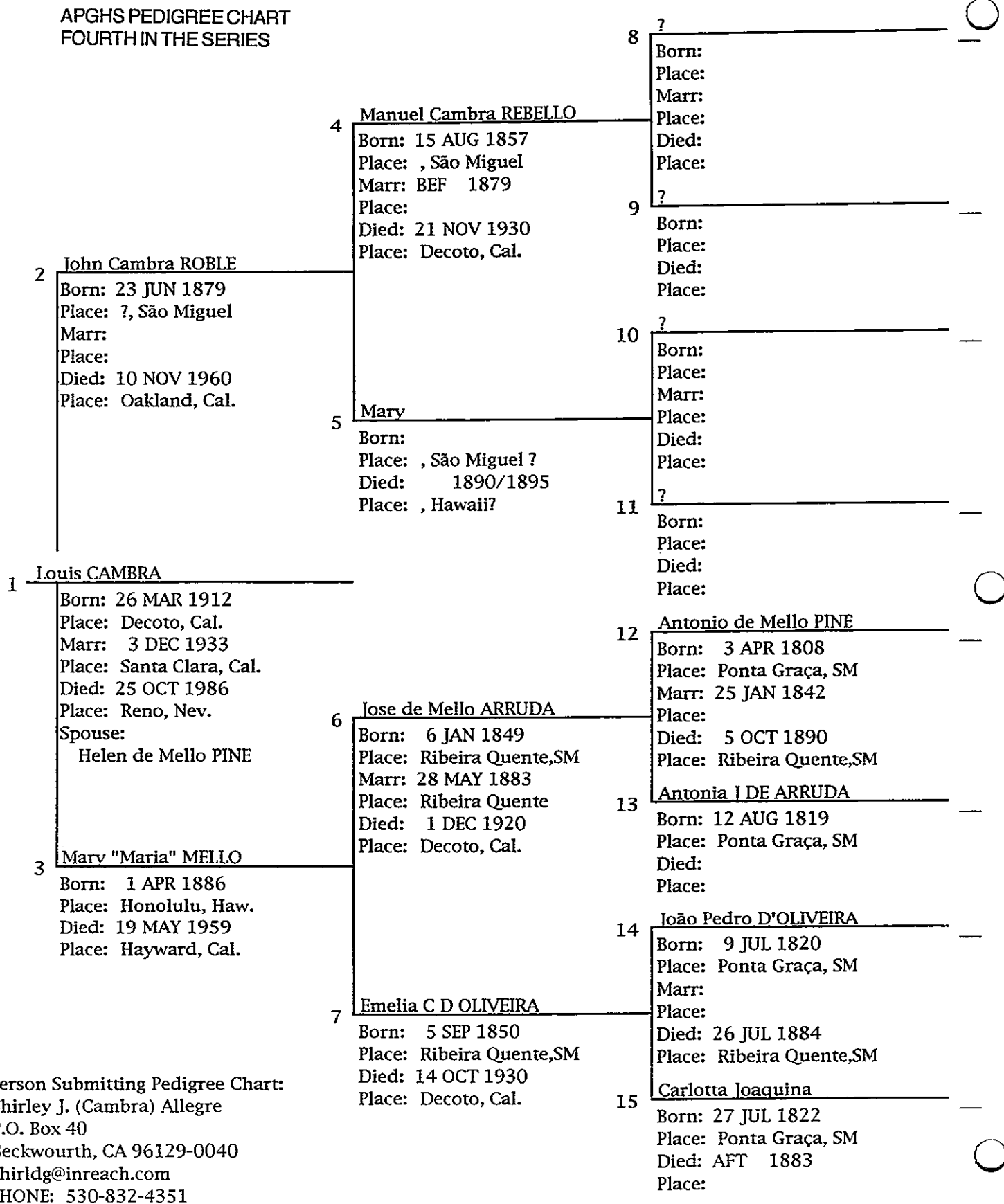
Other descendants of Captain Manuel Joaquim de Vasconcelos and Gertrudes Vicência have earned their place in Azorean society and letters. A grandson, António Manuel de Vasconcelos, taught art at the Lyceum of Ponta Delgada. His brother, Manuel António, organized the Museu Carlos Machado and was decorated for his efforts with the Order of Santiago by King Carlos I. The journalist Breno Dias de Vasconcelos and the poet Vasconcelos César both claim the captain as an ancestor.

Footnotes:

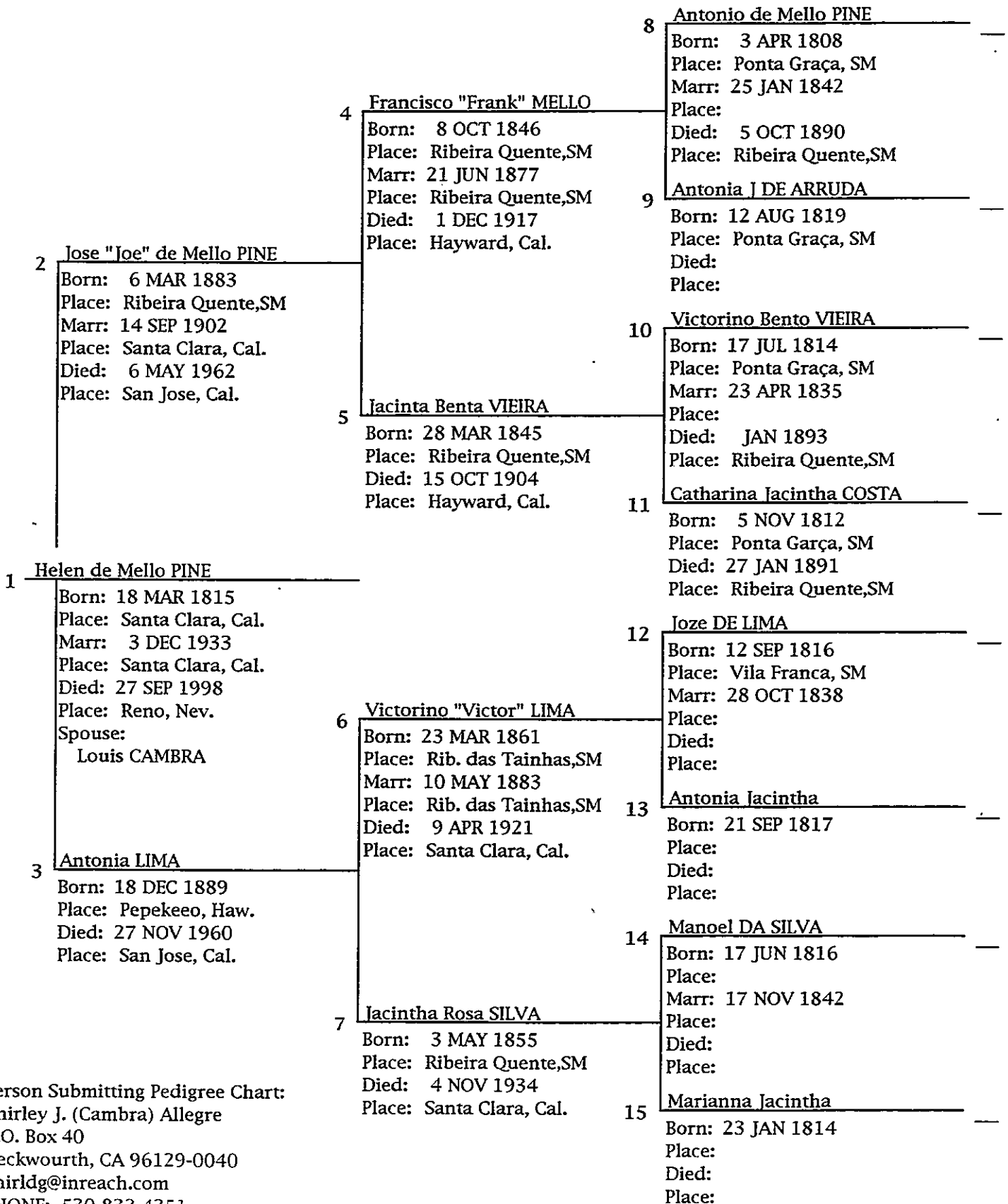
- ¹ Gaspar Frutuoso, *Saudades da Terra*, Instituto Cultural de Ponta Delgada: 1985, Book IV, Vol. I. p. 203.
- ² D. Manuel I, *Carta legiitimando a Diogo de Vasconcelos: 3 July-1504*, Archivo Nacional da Torre de Tombo, Book 22, p.49.
- ³ Gaspar Frutuoso, *Ibid.*
- ⁴ Married in 1574, Carlos Machado, *Genealogias*, MS, Arquivo e Biblioteca Pública de Ponta Delgada, n.d., p.373.
- ⁵ Octávio Luis Reis, *Registros Paroquiais: Baptismos: 27-2-1639-2-3-1644*, MS Arquivo e Biblioteca Pública de Ponta Delgada, n.d.
- ⁶ Octávio Luis Reis, *Pilar, Bretanha: Apontamentos*, 1974, pp. 27-28.
- ⁷ Manuel Ferreira, *Manuel António de Vasconcelos: o I o. Jornalista Micalense e O Açoreano Oriental*, Ponta Delgada: 1994, pp.24-26.
- ⁸ Octávio Luis Reis, *Pilar, Bretanha: Apontamentos*, p. 28.
- ⁹ Manuel Ferreira, *Ibid*, p.28.
- ¹⁰ Carlos Machado, *Genealogis*, p. 381.
- ¹¹ Manuel Ferreira, *Ibid*, p.162.
- ¹² Paul Bartel, "Louis XVII Vécut Aux Açores," *L'illustration*, 20-Jan-1934, pp.88-89.
- ¹³ Manuel Ferreira, *Ibid*, p.40.
- ¹⁴ José de Almeida Pavão, "Aspectos Populares no Povoamento," *Aspectos Populares Micaelenses no Povoamento e na Linguagem*, Ponta Delgada: Instituto Cultural da Ponta Delgada, 1977, p.40.
- ¹⁵ Manuel Ferreira, *Ibid*, p.163.
- ¹⁶ *Registos Paroquiais de Rabo de Peixe: Óbitos: 10 Oct 1844.*
- ¹⁷ Manuel Ferreira, *Manuel António de Vasconcelos: O Homen e o Artista*, Ponta Delgada: Instituto Cultural de Ponta Delgada, 1993. p. 189.
- ¹⁸ Manuel Ferrera, *Manuel António de Vasconcelos: o I o...p.157.*
- ¹⁹ Breno de Vasconcelos, *Paz Cinzenta: Os Açores através de algumas figuras e eposódios de uma época*, Lisbon: 1979, pp. 13-17.

Submitted by John M. Raposo of Massachusetts

The author is seeking material on the original families of Bretanha. Those wishing a possible inclusion in a work to be titled "The Old Families of Bretanha" should submit material to him at 91 Old Fall River Road, Swansea, MA 02777-4003 or Marralha@cs.com

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With permission

David Mishkin
P.O. Box 4628
Portland, ME 04112

ANNOUNCING:

Those wishing genealogical research in the Azores may write to João Ventura, Ladeira Grande 137, Ribeirina, 9700-451, Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira, Portugal. His e-mail address is heroi99@yahoo.com. Senhor Ventura is bi-lingual; his fee is \$15 per record (copy, transcription and translation included). He has ready access to the Terceira, Graciosa and São Jorge records in the Angra biblioteca and "regularly" visits Ponta Delgada (the records of Santa Maria and São Miguel) and Horta (the records of Corvo, Flores Faial and Pico). Correspond directly with him. Please tell the Society of your results. A previous APGHS attempt was unsuccessful and the Society, while hoping for success, doesn't wish to perpetuate another dead-end lead.

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APGHS Membership

There had been no listing of new members since Vol. XX, No. 2 (spring 1999). Here's a "ketchup."

From Arizona: John Miguel

From California: Phyllis Araujo, Diana S. Bergner, Edward S. Bettencourt, Robert A. Camacho, Bernice Detmers, Florence H. Eldridge, Shirley A. Hoegerman, Mrs. Kenneth Mason, Joseph R. Mattos, Dolores L. Morgan, Ernie C. Vierra

From Florida: Gloria de Angelis, Paul J. Viveiros, Delia R. Yeargan

From Louisiana: Bernadette M. Loebs

From Massachusetts: June M. Almy, William M. Antoine, Alice F. Beauregard, Beverly O. Connors, Cynthia A. LeClerc, John M. Raposo, Mary H. Silva, Old Colony Historical Society, Carlotta A. Torres

From Nevada: Neva K. Barnhart

From New Hampshire: Lewis H. Busell

From New Mexico: Mary L. Eastman

From New York: Mimi F. Christy, Ronald O. Reis, Alan J. Silva

From North Carolina: Marlene J. Perry

From Ohio: William S. Frazier

From Oregon: Dolores R. Gregg, Janice E. Martin

From Rhode Island: Gail P. and M. Douglas Silva, Emil H. Silveira

From South Carolina: Paul B. Dacey

From Tennessee: John A. Mayo

From Texas: John Hooper Jr., Judith R. Johnson

From Virginia: Robert J. Silva

From Washington: Adrienne Jacobsen, Mrs. Howard Palidar

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George Gardin from California

Janice F. Koch from Kansas

John A. Mayo from Tennessee

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John D. Morris from Rhode Island

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Kevin F. Williams of Florida

Ernie C. Vierra of California

Welcome to the Society and thank you for becoming Life members.

American-Portuguese Genealogical and Historical Society, Inc.

The Society's year is July 1 to June 30.

DUES SCHEDULE:

\$ 10.00	Regular membership
2.50	Spouse, no Surname Roster reception
10.00	Professional Membership, no Surname Roster reception
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Regular members are those who have submitted a pedigree chart; their known ancestors are printed in the summer Surname Roster. Members who wish to have their pedigree chart printed in the ~~Bullet Board~~ should re-submit a new chart, which confers permission to print. Life Member dues are kept in a separate account. When it reaches \$1,000 certificates of deposit are purchased. The interest from the CDs is withdrawn each June 30 and put into the Library Fund to continue our goals with the Special Collection.

The Society has been ruled a federal income tax-exempt organization under section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and qualifies for the maximum charitable contribution de-duction for bequests, legacies, devices, transfers or gifts of money or property.

The following are available:

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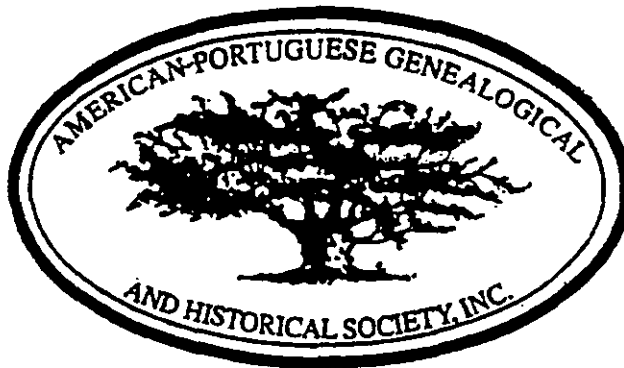
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