

**The Portuguese-American Digital Newspaper Collection
at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth**

<http://www.lib.umassd.edu/archives/paa/PADigitalNewsColl.html>

Sonia Pacheco

Archivist

Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives

Judy Farrar

Librarian

Special Collections and Archives

Gloria de Sá, Faculty Director

Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives

University of Massachusetts, North Dartmouth

Massachusetts, USA

Session:

**119 – Users and portals: digital newspapers, usability, and genealogy –
Newspapers Section with Genealogy and Local History Section**

Abstract:

Many Portuguese immigrants to the United States brought their writing and editorial skills with them. The Portuguese press in the United States flourished throughout the late nineteenth and 20th centuries, especially in states with the densest concentration of Portuguese-Americans: California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Hawaii. This paper details how the Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives committed to identifying, digitizing and providing access to all American Portuguese language newspapers and magazines published in the United States, in order to create a central digital media repository that will aid in the study of Portuguese culture and history.

Background

The Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives (FMPAA) is a collaborative effort of the Claire T. Carney Library Archives and Special Collections and the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMD).

Established in 2005, it is the country's largest repository of historical materials documenting the experience of Portuguese immigrants in the United States. Along with Portuguese-American newspapers, the archives preserves and provides access to the papers of Portuguese-American families, authors, politicians, and other individuals, as well as the records of businesses, fraternal organizations, clubs and institutions associated with the group.

The university is located in the heart of Southeastern Massachusetts, between the once-thriving, industrial cities of New Bedford and Fall River. The region's industries and its proximity to a major fishing port attracted various waves of European immigrants over the past two centuries, first to work in the local whaling industry, and then in the textile, apparel, and fishing industries. Prominent among these immigrants were those from Portuguese-speaking regions of the world, especially the nine islands of the Azores, mainland Portugal, and the Madeira Islands. Continual immigration to the region for a period of almost two centuries has led to a high concentration of persons of Portuguese descent (Pap 1981, Williams 2005). This concentration has lasted to the present. According to U.S. Census, in 2000 approximately 38% of the population of New Bedford described themselves as being of Portuguese ancestry, while in Fall River, the group was 47% of the total population.

Although Southeastern Massachusetts was the first principal area of settlement for Portuguese immigrants, California soon established itself as a major destination for the group. Initially drawn by the Gold Rush, most Portuguese found their fortunes not in the mines, but in the plentiful and fertile agricultural land (Graves 2004, Pap 1981, Warrin and Gomes 2001,

Williams 2005), achieving great success as dairy and vegetable farmers. By 1960 California had become the state with the largest number of Portuguese residents (Williams 2005: Figure 3).

TABLE 1		
Population of Portuguese Ancestry by State of Residence: 2010		
State of Residence	Number	Percentage of Total Portuguese
California	356,704	25.4
Connecticut	50,113	3.6
Florida	77,303	5.5
Massachusetts	314,978	22.4
New Jersey	84,386	6.0
New York	51,076	3.6
Rhode Island	100,811	7.2
Other	370,538	26.4
Total U.S.	1,405,909	100.0
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010		

The primacy of these two states as areas of Portuguese settlement in the U.S. holds to this day (Table 1). In 2010, for example, there were about 1.4 million Americans of Portuguese descent in the United States and almost half of them lived in California and Massachusetts.

Despite being separated by a continent, over the years the two communities have kept close contact with each other, coming together as a unified group at times of difficulty or celebration. Although much of that contact was done through the personal exchanges of members of the same families or villages, Portuguese-language newspapers also played a major

role. Since some of the papers had correspondents in various areas of Portuguese settlement in the U.S., they were also instrumental in forging a common national group identity out of an often-fractured sense of belonging, based on place of origin or settlement. In addition, they fostered the integration of the Portuguese into American society, and their mobilization around issues of collective interest.

Until the advent of Portuguese radio programs, Portuguese-language newspapers were the sole source of news for those not familiar with English. Through them, Portuguese-Americans were informed not only about what was going on in their local community, but also about developments back in Portugal as well as in U.S. and the world at large. By reading these papers, members of the various Portuguese communities maintained their language and cultural traditions alive, shared in the experience of their compatriots living in other areas of the country and became aware of their common characteristics and needs.

The Portuguese-American Digital Newspaper Collection

One of the major Portuguese-language newspapers engaged in the process of connecting Portuguese communities throughout the United States was the *Diário de Notícias*. Published in New Bedford from 1919 to 1973, the *Diário* had correspondents in all major areas of Portuguese settlement. It was read throughout the country as well as in Portugal, where it was sought out not only for information about the Portuguese in the U.S., but also for news and commentary about Portuguese politics, which were censored in the Portuguese national press. According to University of Coimbra's graduate Rui Correia, who consulted hundreds of pages of the *Diário* via microfilm for his dissertation research in 1996 and 1997,

The *Diário* is incredibly well written, with an original, critical point of view. The writers are of major status, as many are people who chose political exile here so they could write freely. The *Diário* includes dissenting opinions that were forbidden in the Portuguese press, which was strictly censored during

[authoritarian president António de Oliveira] Salazar's regime. Because the *Diário* covers worldwide news, Portuguese politics and local issues, there are so many angles that could be explored in its pages. You can find the history of leisure and sports in the Portuguese American community, or the progress of the many mutual aid societies that assisted immigrants. There is also lot of original literature – poetry and fiction – that is very good.¹

In 1975 the newspaper's last owner/publisher, João Rocha, donated a complete original run of the newspaper to UMD. The library had it microfilmed it in the early 1980s and retained the paper, which now comprises the only original copies known to exist. However, the microfilm, available in the main library serials collection since the 1980s, was not indexed, and was difficult to use. Given its considerable value as a source of historical information on Portuguese culture, politics and daily life, in 2000, Special Collections and Archives librarian Judy Farrar suggested its digitization. The Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture's director, Professor Frank Sousa, was enthusiastic about the project and eventually succeeded in raising enough private money to cover the cost.

After investigating the availability of digitization vendors in the United States familiar with handling newspapers, a small library team developed an RFP. This became a learning process, which included deciding on our approach to digitizing the papers. One of the questions faced by the group was whether to digitize from existing microfilm, the preferred approach followed by the National Digital Newspaper Project, or directly from the original papers. Ultimately, because of issues of availability and quality of scanned images, we chose to digitize from the original.

The vendor eventually chosen for the project was ArcaSearch, a division of ColorMax, Inc. of Paynesville, Minnesota. Once the papers arrived on site in Minnesota, ArcaSearch captured 24-bit images of each page, and created web-ready "Smart PDF" documents from the

¹ "Scholar Continues Research," *Dartmouth Chronicle*, August 21, 1996, p. 10.

captured images. Using their own, patented technology, ArcaSearch optimized the PDFs for viewing and searching. They also provided a graphical user interface and redundant web server backup at an online, off-site location.

On April 19, 2009, the Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives made public the online site for the digitized *Diário de Notícias*. The site can be accessed at <http://www.lib.umassd.edu/archives/paa/PADigitalNewsColl.html>. The final page count, which could only be estimated at the start of the project, was 106,506 pages. As part of the contract, ArcaSearch provided the UMass Dartmouth Library with copies of the master files, JPEG2000s, as well as thumbnails and PDF files for each page. The graphical interface was customized for the UMass Dartmouth Library website.

Following the digitization of the *Diário de Notícias*, the Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives, in partnership with the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture embarked on an ambitious plan to locate, digitize and provide access to all American Portuguese language newspapers and magazines published in the United States. The goal was to create a central digital media repository that will aid in the study of Portuguese culture and history. In the spring of 2009, the collection that will hold these materials was officially named The Portuguese-American Digital Newspaper Collection.

The first additions to the collection, after the *Diário de Notícias*, were two titles based in Massachusetts: *O Colonial* and *O Heraldo Portuguez*. *O Colonial* was published in Fairhaven starting in 1925, and at one point declared itself "The only Portuguese weekly printed in Greater New Bedford." Owned by Frederico A. Costa, it may have ceased publication in 1945. The

Heraldo Portuguez was published once a year during the month of December² by the Archives' namesake Affonso Gil Mendes Ferreira between 1925 and 1976.

The next major step in the project was to add complementary titles from the Portuguese community on the West Coast. Since the Archives did not own any such papers, and efforts to obtain them from those who did met with little success, it was necessary to seek out the collaboration of other institutions. After years of negotiation the FMPAA and the Center for Portuguese Studies partnered with the J.A. Freitas Library, a private, special collections library owned by the Portuguese Fraternal Society of America (PFSA), to digitize fourteen historical California papers.

Due to the fragility of the papers, the Freitas Library required the digitization to be done on site, a logistic barrier, which was solved by having Color Max carry out the digitization on the premises of the PFSA, utilizing ArcaSearch's mobile digital laboratory.



Figure 1: The ArcaSearch mobile laboratory 'MAX': a converted RV

² Occasionally, it also published a second issue around Easter.

Figures 2 and 3: The digital technician at work in the laboratory



The selection of date-ranges and the titles that were digitized was based upon the condition of the newspapers, the number of total volumes available, and the dates and duration of publication. Due to cost and other constraints, not all available titles and volumes were digitized. Our hope is to be able to complete the digitization at a later date.

Thus far, the California component of the Portuguese-American Digital Newspaper Collection includes the following fourteen titles published between 1885 and 1940:

TABLE 2
California Titles
Portuguese-American Digital Newspaper Collection

Title	Range of Available Dates
<i>A Colónia</i>	1924-1930
<i>A Liberdade</i>	1934-1937
<i>A Voz Portuguesa</i>	1887
<i>O Imparcial</i>	1930
<i>O Jornal de Notícias</i>	1921-1932
<i>O Arauto</i>	1909
<i>O Lavrador Portuguez</i>	1912-1916
<i>O Progresso</i>	1935-1937
<i>O Progresso Californiense</i>	1885-1887
<i>O Portugal</i>	1932-1937
<i>O Portugal da Califórnia</i>	1935-1937
<i>O Repórter</i>	1909
<i>A Califórnia Alegre</i>	1936-1940
<i>A União Portuguesa</i>	1888 and 1940

The history of these newspapers is difficult to patch together as many of the originals are missing and references to them difficult to locate and often contradictory. For a significant number, the first year of publication is known or can be calculated from information contained in the existing copies, but it is often difficult to establish when they ceased publication. From the information available to us, we know, for example, that *O Repórter*, began publication in Oakland in 1897 under the direction of C.C.L Soares, but we have not been able to establish

when it ceased publication. The same is true of *O Portugal*, which was created and published in Oakland in 1929 by João Roldão. Other newspapers for which we have a beginning, but not an ending date are: *O Portugal da Califórnia*, originally called *Ecos de Portugal* (1934-1935), which began publication in 1935 by Jordão Marques Jardim; and *A Califórnia Alegre*, a self-described “humorist-critical” weekly that was published by C. da Costa, starting in 1932.

According to the data available to us, the first Portuguese-language newspaper published in California was the *Voz Portuguesa*, founded in 1880. It was one of three founded by António Maria Vicente, one of the most tenacious publishers to take on the Portuguese newspaper trade in California.³ The other two were *O Progresso Californiense*, and *A União Portuguesa*. In 1884, Vicente sold *A Voz* to Manoel Stone who would publish it until 1888. A year later, he went on to establish the *Progresso Californiense* in San Francisco, which ran between 1885 and 1887. In 1887, he started *A União Portuguesa*, also in San Francisco, which he then sold to Manuel Trigueiro who moved it to Oakland. Of all of Vicente’s newspapers, *The União Portuguesa* had the longest run; it only ceased publication in 1940 with Trigueiro's death.

Some of the papers were closely associated with the members of the Portuguese Catholic clergy. That was the case of *O Arauto*, initially called *O Amigo dos Católicos* (The Friend of the Catholics), which was founded by Fathers Francisco Fernandes and João Francisco Tavares in 1888. In 1896, it was sold and moved to Oakland, at which point it changed its name to *O Arauto*. It ran from 1896 to 1917 under the direction of F.I. Lemos and J. de Menezes. In 1917 it was purchased by Pedro Silveira, who moved it to San Francisco and had its name changed to *Jornal de Notícias*.

³ From 1877 to 1884, António M. Vicente also published the *Jornal de Notícias* in Erie, Pennsylvania, in collaboration with his brother João M. Vicente. According to the Library of Congress, the *Jornal de Notícias* was the first Portuguese language newspaper to be published in the U.S.

Frequently, the newspapers migrated from community to community as publishers changed residence, new partnerships were forged or old ones broke up. *O Lavrador Portuguez* [The Portuguese Farmer] exemplifies this pattern. Started in Lemoore in 1912 by Artur Vieira de Ávila, João de Melo, and Constantino Barcelos, it subsequently moved to Hanford, where Ávila became the only publisher. In 1920 it moved again, this time to Tulare, where Alfredo Silva joined Ávila in editing the paper, which they then moved to Oakland in 1927.

While many newspapers, especially the early ones, were in print for only a few years, others enjoyed quite long lives. One of those who defied the odds of early mortality was *A Liberdade*, a Sacramento daily created by Guilherme Silveira da Glória in 1900; it ran until 1937. But the largest and longest-running Portuguese newspaper in California was *O Jornal Português*.⁴ It was created in 1932 by Pedro Silveira with the merger of *Imparcial* (Sacramento, 1913-1932), *Jornal de Noticias* (San Francisco, 1917-1932) and *Colonia Portuguesa* (1924-1932) and ran until 1997.

Using the Collection

Accessing the papers is mainly accomplished through Boolean keyword searching, but they can also be browsed issue by issue. Because printed newspapers often contain typing and spelling errors, we made sure that the level of fuzziness desired could be adjusted, and that searches were accent-neutral. It must be noted that searches must be conducted in Portuguese, even though the database is only available in English.

⁴ *O Jornal Português* is not included in The Portuguese-American Digital Newspaper Collection. Microfilmed copies are available in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

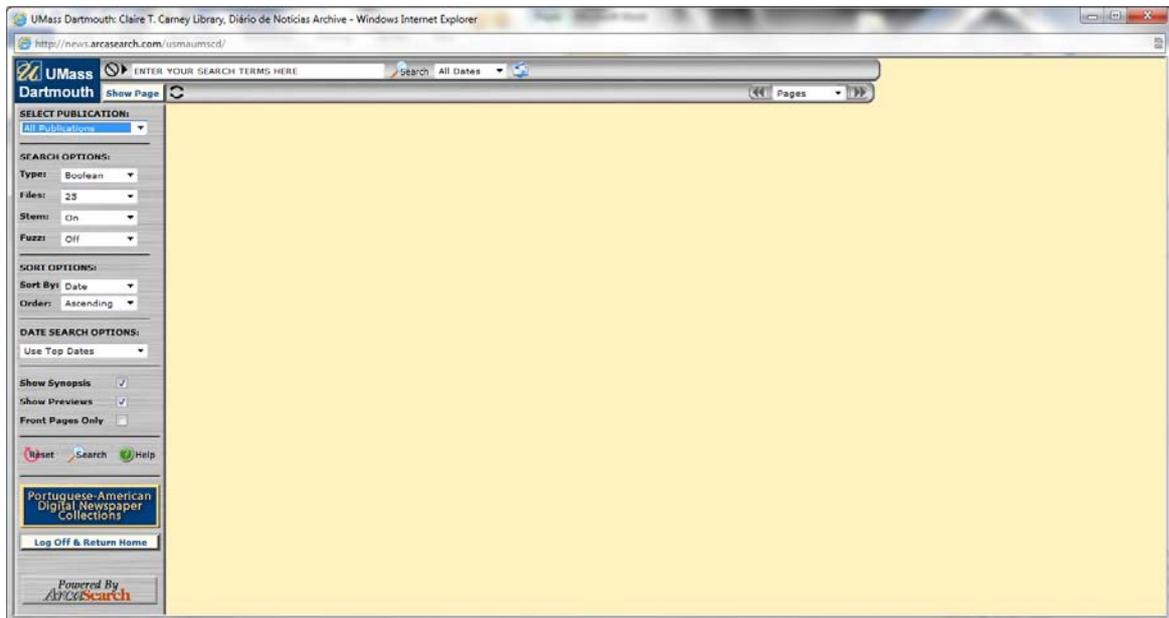


Figure 4: Screen capture of the search screen

Once a search is completed, viewing the results can be limited to a decade, year or issue. Search results are initially presented as a synopsis of the title of the newspaper, date and page of the specific issue. Rolling a mouse over the result presents a thumbnail of a page, and if you click on that thumbnail, the PDF will appear, with search terms highlighted in blue. The features available, allow the searcher to manipulate his or her results depending upon the Acrobat software being used. When browsing page-level thumbnails, the interface presents facsimile-like, color digital files of such quality that patrons experience the feel of browsing through a real newspaper, with each page laid out side-by-side.

Using a patented process, and working from the originals, ColorMax was able to maintain the quality of photographs and artwork in advertisements, something that is frequently lost when newspapers are digitized from black and white microfilm. The text is optimized, and the background lightened, therefore, each page is very readable.



Figure 5: Screen capture of the search results screen

Using the collection for genealogical research

There are several issues that need to be taken into consideration by those who will try to search out information in Portuguese language newspapers. While there is a certain standardization of the type of information that is listed within birth, marriage and obituaries announcements in English language newspapers throughout North America, this is not true for Portuguese language newspapers. The following is a list of some of the most important considerations to keep in mind:

- Wives are rarely referred to by their husband's first and last name (i.e. Sra. Francisco Sousa); they retain their first names and, depending on the time period, may also retain their own last names.
- Generally, these types of announcements are not consistently found within one specific page or section of the newspaper.

- A newspaper published in one location, may have listed information and announcements, that occurred in other Portuguese-American communities throughout the United States and Portugal, where the paper had correspondents.
- As with events published in English language media, there is normally a delay between the actual date of the event, and when it gets published in the newspaper. It is not uncommon to find up to a two-month delay in news that was relayed from California and published in New England newspapers, especially in the early 20th century.

Birth, marriage and death information

Birth announcements published in Portuguese language newspapers of the late 19th and early 20th century, rarely list the name of the child that was born. As a general rule, they provide the name of the father in full and the gender of the child. In later announcements, the mother's name is listed as is the family's address. The specific keywords that should be used include: *nascimento*, *natividade*, *parto*, *deu à luz*, *mimoseou* and *presenteou*.

—No dia 4 do corrente a esposa do nosso amigo sr. Manuel L. Greves, residente em Livermore, deu á luz uma linda creança do sexo feminino. Mãe e filha vão de perfeita saude, o que estimamos.

O Progresso Californiense, June 11, 1885

—O sr. Francisco Augusto Betencourt, proprietário, solicitador judicial, residente em Santa Cruz desta ilha, foi, no dia 6 de Março, presenteado por sua exma. esposa com uma criança do sexo forte.

A Colonia Portuguesa, June 27, 1924

De uma creança do sexo masculino, filho de Manuel Andrade e Frances Blaise, 82 Davis Street, nascido a 29 de Janeiro;

Diário de Noticias, February 18, 1930

Marriage announcements in Portuguese language newspapers vary widely in their content. The information provided ranges from brief mentions that only list the names of the bride and groom, to those that mention full accounts of the wedding ceremony. Unlike most English-language marriage announcements, it is not uncommon to find a series of consecutive

announcements related to one specific couple: an announcement related to their engagement, an announcement upon the civil registration of their marriage, and a final announcement upon the religious celebration of their marriage. The language that is used to describe a marriage announcement includes: *casamento*, *enlace matrimonial*, *união*, and *consórcio*. One of these keywords should be used in combination with either the groom's or the bride's name when doing the search.

LICENÇAS DE CASAMENTO

Na repartição do registo civil, de Somerville, requereram licenças de casamento: Joseph Ponte, 46 -A Spring St., e Glória M. Hayes, 303 Beacon St., Ernest R. Duarte, 102 Propect St., e Mary P. Wilson, de Cambridge; Nicholas R. Taddeo, de Medford, e Eleanor F. Williams, 81 Bartlett Street.

Marriage license:

Diario de Noticias, March 23, 1966

Na igreja de St. Catherine's, em Somerville, foram recentemente unidos pelos laços matrimoniais, o sr. Joseph Ponte, 46-A Spring St., Somerville, e a menina Glória M. Hayes, 303 Beacon St., também de Somerville. Celebrou o acto, o Rev. Padre Alfred V. Puccini.

Religious ceremony:

Diario de Noticias, April 20, 1966

Realisou-se hontem pelas 11 horas da manhã na igreja de San Francisco d'Assis, n'esta cidade, o enlace matrimonial do nosso sympathico e prezado amigo sr. Vito Lucio de Figueiredo socio gerente da Botica Portugueza, de Oakland, com a exm.^a sr.^a D. Mamie J. Glover, gentil filha de Mr. Andrew Glover, proprietario n'esta cidade e interprete portuguez nos tribunaes de San Francisco.

Serviram de paranymphos: por parte do noivo, Mr. J. Glover irmão da noiva, e por parte d'esta, suagentil irmã Miss Maggie Glover.

Os noivos seguiram para a cidade de San Jose, logo apoz a cerimonia nupcial religiosa, onde passarão parte da sua venturosa lua de mel.

Ao enlace matrimonial do nosso amigo só assistiu a familia Glover.

Que chovam sobre o galante casal catadupas de venturas são os nossos desejos sinceros, porque bem o merecem os dois jovens e distinctissimos esposos.

Jornal de Noticias, November 4, 1921

Much like births and marriages, there is no consistent pattern to obituary notices published in Portuguese language newspapers. The language used to describe the event is varied, as is the information actually provided within the announcement. Some of the words that may be used are: *obituário*, *falecimento*, *funeral*, and *sepultou-se*.

—Sepultou-se no cemiterio desta vila, um filinho do sr. José Pereira Soares.

O Lavrador Portugue, March 6, 1915

Abril 9—1924.—Ontem sepultou-se a sra. Virginia Pita, no cemitério da Altanta, deixando 4 filhos e seu marido para lastimar a sua perda. Incorporaram-se no préstito os srs.

A Colonia Portuguesa April 15, 1924

PLYMOUTH, Mar. 17—No Hospital Jordan desta localidade; onde tinha dado entrada na passada Sexta-feira, em resultado de qualquer desarranjo interno, faleceu Sabado 15, ás 11 horas da noite, o Sr. Alexandre Pereira Barrocas, de 46 anos de idade e socio da firma "Ideal Baking Co."

O extinto era natural de Penacova, Distrito de Coimbra, Portugal. Era divorciado apenas ha dois mezes, deixando dois filhos na sua terra natal. Não tendo familia nesta cidade, tomou a direção do seu funeral a Sucursal No. 1, da "União Portugueza Continental dos E. U. A., á qual pertencia e deixa o seu mortuario.

Diario de Noticias, March 30, 1930

Other information

Portuguese language newspapers were much more than just a means to communicate the local news to a particular audience: they were a tie between the various communities that had been established by Portuguese immigrants throughout the United States. They often contained a wealth of information on private and social events and thus are a great resource for today's genealogists and social historians. Some keywords that may yield valuable information on the content and variety of such events are : *indagações*, *férias*, *visitas*, *negócio*, *doente*, *doença*, and *no hospital*.

Deseja-se saber noticias de Antonio Tavares Corrêa, natural do Raho de Peixe, ilha de S. Miguel, e que ha uns 6 annos que se acha no Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Tambem se deseja saber noticias de José Moniz da Rocha, successor de José Francisco da Silva Quetim, que tinha loja de fazendas e roupas feitas em 124 rua do Hospicio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Este ausente é natural das Calhetas da ilha de S. Miguel. Qualquer informação dos individuos acima indicados ao cunhado e primo dos mesmos, José Jacintho Moniz, Veetamoe Mills, Fall River, Mass., ou á redacção d'este jornal, será muito agradecida. [Pedimos aos nossos collegas do Brazil a fineza de transcrever esta indagação, favor que nos promptificamos a retribuir logo que se nos faça o pedido.—O REDACTOR. 98-tf

O Progresso Californiense
April 9, 1887

Future of the Collection

So what does the future hold for the Portuguese American Digital Newspaper Collection? Where do we go from here?

While those directly involved acknowledge that the goal of the FMPAA regarding the collection is an ambitious one, we also believe that with support from the heritage community, the private and public archives that house the publications, and that of the newspapers themselves, the goal is also an achievable one. As a result of our inquiries and track record, a number of newspapers, available both in print and microfilm, have been identified and verbal agreements for future digitization secured. Among the most significant is a collection of various historical newspapers published in Hawaii as well three weeklies, which are currently published on the East Coast—The *Luso-Americano* from Newark, NJ, published since 1919; the *Portuguese Times* from New Bedford, MA; and *O Jornal* from Fall River, MA.

To sum up, we feel that the variety of newspapers included in our digital newspaper collection thus far, allied with its superior quality in terms of readability, searchability and availability, have made a major contribution to the field. They have opened up new areas and opportunities for research in Portuguese studies, made family research more accessible and gave the Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives the legitimacy and prominence needed to carry out future digitization initiatives.

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