



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
TORONTO, CANADA M5S 1A1

January 1, 1975

Mr. Thomas Raddall, Sr.
LIVERPOOL, Nova Scotia.

Dear Mr. Raddall:

I am presently involved in the study of Portuguese settlement in Canada. A colleague recently told me of a conversation he had had about Ketch Harbour: it was claimed that an Italian had led a group of Azoreans to settle in Ketch Harbour in the seventeenth century.

I am writing to ask if, with your very extensive knowledge of Nova Scotia lore, you have ever heard of this? I am unaware of any printed discussions of the Portuguese in Nova Scotia and would be immensely grateful if you could tell me of any.

Please accept my best wishes for the
New Year,

Yours sincerely,

David HIGGS

David Higgs
Associate Professor

January 9, 1975

Mr. David Higgs,
Department of History,
University of Toronto
Toronto M5S 1A1

Dear Mr. Higgs:

I have never seen or heard of any record of Azoreans settling at Ketch Harbour in the seventeenth century. I think that is a notion garbled from two facts.

(1) There is a place called Portuguese Cove about two miles from Ketch Harbour. It appears to have got this name some time after the foundation of Halifax in 1749. None of the first maps of "Chebucto" (the Indian name prior to the settlement of Halifax) French or English, show Portuguese Cove or for that matter Ketch Harbour. I was stationed at Portuguese Cove as a wireless operator in the summer of 1922. It was then a small fishing village and I knew the people well. None had a Portuguese name. It was supposed that "a Portuguese man" had fished there long ago.

(2) As I mentioned in my book Halifax, Warden of The North, referring to the early settlers of Halifax on page 38:- "One party of English immigrants arrived after a long delay at the Azores. With them was an odd character, a Sicilian soldier of fortune, Peter, Marquis of Contes and Gravina."

This is a corrected version of the passage in the first edition of my book, published in 1948, which says:- "One curious bit of immigration in these early days was a cluster of Portuguese from the Azores."

However, from these times onward there was a trickle of Portuguese-speaking men coming into Nova Scotia by way of the fish and lumber trade to Portugal, the Azores and Brazil. When a Nova Scotian seaman fell seriously ill or died in any of these places it was customary to ship a local hand in his place. A number of these Portuguese seamen married and settled here.

For example in my own small seaport of Liverpool N.S.E. there were several generations of families bearing the names of Gomez, Fernandes, and Da Silva. These names have died out since. I knew the last of the Da Silvas myself. At the present time in Shelburne N.S. there are several families who spell their name De Mings and Demings. All are descended from the first settler at Shelburne, a wandering Portuguese sailor named Anthony De Mings. He is mentioned in Collections of the N.S. Historical Society, Volume 6, page 63.

Sincerely,

J.H.R.

April 1, 1975.

Dear Mr. Raddall,

You must think me an ungrateful wretch not to have replied earlier to your very kind letter on the subject of the Portuguese. A research trip and the mail strike are among the reasons for this slowness. We are moving along on the book about the Portuguese in Canada and your letter was very helpful. You mention 3 Liverpool family names: Fernandes and Da Silva are without doubt Portuguese but Gomez spelled with a Z might perhaps be a Spaniard-~~or~~ Gallicien working in Portugal? ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Once again many thanks for your help, and the references,

yours sincerely,

David Higgs

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE



AÉROGRAMME

Mr Thomas H. Raddan

Liverpool

Nova Scotia

CANADA

PAR AVION

Deuxième pliage

Ce pli ne sera pas acheminé par avion
s'il contient un objet quelconque.

Adresse: David Higgs, 5, me Guy de la Brosse, Paris 75005

Nom

David Higgs

EXPÉDITEUR: