

SOME HINTS  
ON  
**THE AZORES ISLANDS**  
CHIEFLY CONCERNING THE ONE CALLED  
**TERCEIRA**  
AND  
**ANGRA DO HEROISMO**  
ITS CHIEF TOWN  
AND FORMER CAPITAL OF THE GROUP

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CÂMARA MUNICIPAL DE ANGRA DO HEROISMO  
TERCEIRA - AÇORES

PRINTED BY  
LIVRARIA EDITORA ANDRADE  
ANGRA DO HEROISMO  
1927

P.A.D.A.H.

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# THE AZORES ISLANDS

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*Cortereal* the lord and owner of Angra, in Terceira, was the first European to put foot on American soil since the Vikings.

Last year Professor Delabarre, of Brown University, made out in the Dighton Rock an inscription which seems to prove that *Miguel Cortereal* lived for some years among the Indians of Massachusetts whose chief he was in 1511-

This Miguel Cortereal was the son of *João Vaz Cortereal* who himself had received in 1474 half of Terceira island as a reward for his alleged voyage to Newfoundland.

*João Vaz Cortereal* settled with great state in *Angra* and there lived until his death in 1496. He was buried in the church of *San Francisco*.

The site of *his residence* is occupied

to-day by the house N.° 14 of the *Rua do Marquês*.

—\*—

When *Vasco da Gama*, returning from his first voyage to India, called at *Terceira*, his brother *Paulo* who was second in command of the expedition, died at *Angra* and was buried in the same church where *Cortereal* had found his last rest.

—\*—

*Terceira* was once a bulwark of Philip II of Spain against the *British sea rovers*.

Philip ordered the big fortress in *Monte Brazil* to be built and there kept a strong garrison.

*Drake*, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, *Cumberland* and many other attempted in vain to land in *Terceira* and the same *Earl of Essex*, with a fleet of near one hundred ships, was not capable of that feat.

The celebrated fight of the *Revenge* against the Spanish gallions was sustained not far from *Terceira*.

—\*—

In 1640 when Portugal was freed

from the Spanish rule, the inhabitants of this island, which had showed sixty years before a strenuous resistance against the usurper, promptly put a siege to the fortress of Monte Brazil and forced the Spanish governor to surrender.

The fortress which has since been named "*Castelo de S. João Baptista*" is worth being visited.

The deposed King Afonso VI was taken there as prisoner in 1669 and there lived five years.

To-day an African king lives there who is a descendent of Zulu chiefs. He was made a prisoner by the Portuguese troops thirty years ago with three other negro rulers who have since died.

—\*—

When a *civil war* broke out in Portugal, in 1828, between *D. Pedro* and *D. Miguel*, the sons of the deceased king *D. João VI*, *Terceira* took the part of *D. Pedro* and many troops were assembled here which went to land near *Oporto* and routed the army of *D. Miguel* in successive engagements.

A monument was erected to D. Pedro in Angra, a yellow pyramide which is conspicuously seen on the hill where Cortereal had put his stronghold three centuries before. It is called "*A Memória*".

Angra was given the title of "*do Heroismo*" by that time, on account of the heroic behavior of its inhabitants. The Great Cross of the most noble order of the Tower and Sword was put in its coat of arms, in the form of a blue ribbon with the Portuguese equivalents for the words: Valor, Loyalty and Merit.

—\*—

*The Azores* were once a Province of Portugal and his governor or *Captain General*, had its palace in Angra.

To-day the islands form three districts or counties: *Ponta Delgada* (San Miguel and Santa Maria); *Angra do Heroismo* (Terceira, Graciosa and San Jorge); *Horta* (Faial, Pico, Flores and Corvo).

—\*—

The *Military Governor* of the Azores has his residence in Angra. Two infantry



Regiments and two Batteries of Coast Artillery are garrisoned on these islands.

—\*—

*The bishop of the Azorean diocese* has also his seat in Angra.

Many monasteries existed here in former times but all have been closed since 1834.

Some fine Art works are still kept in the churches of Angra.

*The church of the Jesuits*, in front of the public garden, possesses some good pictures, namely that of Santa Ursula which surmounts the door of the sacristy and another of Saint Andrew.

There are found too some magnificent vestments which pertained to *John Grandison, bishop of Exeter* (1327-1369).

—\*—

*In 1431 the Azores islands were discovered* by Portuguese mariners sent here by the celebrated Prince Henry the Navigator. Their situation was uncertain though some vague idea of their existence prevailed among the most ancient seafarers.

They were named Azores on account of the numerous buzzards, which were mistaken for hawks (açores, in Portuguese).

*Terceira* is shown in very ancient maps as the island of Brazil but it was named by the Portuguese *the island of Our Lord Jesu Christ* and at last *Terceira*, or *the third*, as it was the third to be colonized. *Terceira* gave once its name to the entire group which was called the *Terceiras*.

No traces of any human beings were found in the Azores before the coming of the Portuguese.

The first settlers came from Portugal. Some Flemish were allowed to fix themselves here but they were very soon absorbed in the bulk of the Portuguese population. A Flemish nobleman, *James of Bruges*, was the first captain and owner of *Terceira* and another Flemish whose name was *Joe van Huertere* gave his name to Horta the chief town of Faial.

—\*—

*The Azores Islands* lie between 36°55' and

39°43' Lat., 24°41' and 31°17' Long.  
W. of Greenwich.

*Area*: 923 sq. miles; Largest island: San Miguel, 293 sq. miles; smallest: Corvo, 6 sq. m.

*Population*: 236,900 (San Miguel: 116,500; Corvo: 800).

The area of Terceira is 105 sq. miles and its population 48,000. *Angra do Heroismo* has a population of 10,000 (Ponta Delgada 16,000, Horta 6,000).



The islands are of *volcanic origin* and large craters abound everywhere as a characteristic feature of the soil. They are called *caldeiras*.

The highest mountain of the Azores (Pico, 7,461 feet) is a volcano whose activity is not entirely extinguished. Some eruptions have taken place, and many tracts of soil still remain unproductive on account of the lava which covers them. These

are called *misterios* a corruption of «*más terras*» (bad lands).

Eruptions have also occurred in some of the other islands (In Terceira in 1761) and earthquakes are not infrequent. Flores and Corvo as well as Santa Maria have alone been preserved from these calamities.

Eruptions on the sea have caused at times the formation of islands: in 1811 near San Miguel one of these was formed which was christened the Sabrina by the captain of a British Frigate who promptly hoisted there his flag; but the sea waves devoured in a few weeks this frail possession of His British Majesty.

*Fumerolles* are found in the islands. Those in the interior of Terceira are called *Furnas do Enxofre* (Sulfur Caves). Hot springs are not uncommon too. None can compete with those existent and very renowned in the island of San Miguel.



*The climate* of the Azores is very mild.

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Mean yearly temperature.....	64°F.
Mean temperature February....	48
"          "          August.....	72
Mean of min. temp. February..	54
"          max. temp. August...	77
Highest temp. ever recorded...	82
Lowest    "          "          "      ...	42
Average yearly rain fall.....	28,3 in.
Highest, October, average.....	3,6
Lowest, July average.....	0,8
Relative humidity .....	75 %

This data, obtained at Ponta Delgada, refers to a period of 30 years and applies with no great discrepancies to all places on the islands near the sea-shore.

Agriculture is the main wealth of the Azores. Terceira excels for its cattle rearing. Oxen are exported to Lisbon as well as butter and cheese. American agricultural implements are in vogue as a consequence of the active emigration of the islanders to the United States.

When emigration to the United States was unrestrained thousands of Azorean laborers went every year to settle in America.

Some went to the Western States where they became active farmers, laborious and pacific; others found an occupation in the manufactures of Massachusetts, and not a few rendered themselves to the arduous toil of fishermen and whalers.

Many went so far as the Hawaiian Islands where they form with their descendants a good part of the white population.

—\*—

Some important *industries* are in good progress in the Azores.

In Terceira the hand manufacture of the so-called "*Madeira Embroideries*," gives much employment to the female population. Besides that, tanning, pottery, etc.

—\*—

There is a particular form of amusement in Terceira which is not found everywhere.

Though a *praça* exists in Angra where *bullfights* are commonly given—an amusement which finds no place in the other islands—a most curious form of bullfight

is seen every week in Summer, in any of the villages. It consists of a bull being tied to a very long rope by the horns and led through the streets to give every one an opportunity of exhibiting his abilities as *a capinha*.

This form of entertainment attracts always a great bulk of people from every corner of the island.

—\*—

The people of Terceira are for the greater part, Roman Catholic. They are pious though never fanatic. The worship of the Holy Ghost is very popular with the Azoreans and gives the rich people an opportunity of displaying their generosity.

—\*—

The condition of the people of Terceira as well as those of some of the other islands is much to be admired.

Since the odious feudalism of the *morgados* was put to an end by D. Pedro in 1834, the land is for a great part in the possession of the laborers.

Misery is very rare and promptly remedied.



Though the weather from October to April is often rough, *fishery* is an occupation well contemplated throughout the year by some seashore villagers.

*Whaling* is prosecuted in the old fashion with very elegant canoes, affording sport and profit to those which hazard themselves to this arduous work. The sperm whale is the more common species caught; the right whale is an exception.



The Azores are bound to Europe and America by numerous *telegraphic cables*. Horta is one of the leading centres in the world for cable-telegraphy.

*Wireless stations* have been established in San Miguel (Marconi), Terceira, Faial, Flores and Santa Maria.

There is a *mailboat* from and to Lis-



bon every fortnight. Sailings from Lisbon on the 8<sup>th</sup>-and 22<sup>nd</sup>-every month. Ports of call: Madeira, Santa Maria, Ponta Delgada, Angra, Graciosa, S. Jorge, Pico, Fayal, Flores and Corvo.

The steamers of the *Fabre Line* as well as those of the *Cosulich Line* call often at some of the Azorean ports (chiefly Ponta Delgada) on their way to and from the United States.

The "*Companhia dos Carregadores Açoreanos*" maintains two monthly sailings from Ponta Delgada to London and Hamburg with its fruit steamers.

The progress of the *transatlantic aerial navigation* will bring new opportunities to the Azores. The ports of Horta and Ponta Delgada have been visited by transatlantic flyers and the site for an aerodrome was once studied in Terceira which affords good plains in its interior.

Aerological studies have been made for a few years in the observatory of

Angra which is a branch of the Meteorological Service of the Azores, a well known institution founded by the late Colonel Chaves of international repute.

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