

Are you proud of your name?

Dear Manuel:

I have read and reread several times “The Portuguese Making of America”. You will recall that I told you of the Azorean “sotaque” in which the Azoreans drop or swallow their words endings.

Common surnames in Appendix A contain some surnames that are not translated or changed greatly. For example, Bernanrdo is Bernard. The dropping of the “o” is indicative of the Azorean “sotaque”. Other examples: Augusto-August; Bernardo-Bernard; Campos/Camp; Coxe-Cox; Leonardo-Leonard; Levinho-Levin; Celmente-Clement;. There could be family names of early Azorean descendants. I emphasize “early” because the more recent Azorean immigrants don’t usually alter their family name. They do keep their family whereas the early families altered their name or it was altered by officials.

Not long ago, a young student of Azorean origin took home a school paper on which her name had been changed from Rodrigues to Rogers. Upon reading the name her father asked who was responsible for the name change. The girl replied “My Teacher.” Whereupon the father next to the school. Upon seeing the teacher’s name on her desk, he asked “Is that your name?” The teacher replied “Yes.”

The father asked, “Are you proud of your name?” The teacher replied, “Yes.”

The father said “I am proud of name, too, and I want my child to carry it.

The name is Rodrigues no Rogers.

Therefore some of the name alterations given in your book could be of comparatively later origin. Research into these name alterations might result in some revealing history of the possible early Azorean settles in North America who felt it wiser not to be too visible.

Perhaps those in authority were responsible for their name alterations and the Azoreans felt it wiser not to contest the powers that be.

My Best Regards

Frances Sylvia Gracia