

## 2. Portuguese in Canada - 17th and 18th centuries

Although Portuguese and Azorean emigration, relevant in numbers, only occurred in the twentieth century, there were already Portuguese in Canada in previous centuries. This is the case of Mathieu da Costa, thought to be Luso-African (there are doubts as to his origin), who in the 17th century was an interpreter for the French explorer Champlain in Canada to speak with the natives.

Pedro da Silva was born in Lisbon, son of José and Maria Francisca, and was baptized in the parish of São Julião in 1647. However, his future would not be in Portugal, because years later he appears in North America, settled in Beauport, near Quebec City, in the current province of Quebec, and in this place, on May 16, 1677, he married Jeanne Greslon, and they had a total of 15 children, and he would die in 1717.

Besides these personal and family details, it should be noted that Pedro da Silva was a bourgeois and even a landowner, however, he would go down in Quebec and Canadian History, within the area of communications, as he was the first official letter carrier, between the cities of Quebec and Montreal. He was appointed to this task in the year 1705 by the French Intendant Jacques Raudout, providing significant services in this area, receiving the post of messenger by the aforementioned Intendant, on December 23, 1705, and would have transported this mail by canoe, sailing between Quebec and Montreal, in the service of the Governor and Intendant at the time.

In 1938, the Historic Sites and Monuments Commission of Canada, appreciating the role of Pedro da Silva, "the Portuguese", placed a bilingual plaque (in French and English) in Montreal, at the post office building on Rue Jacques, near the corner with Cathedral Street, with the following inscription: "From 1693 on, letters were carried between Quebec and Montreal by messengers. The first letter carrier was Pedro da Silva, called the Portuguese".

Other Portuguese would have settled in Canada, especially in Quebec, as is the case of Jean Rodrigue (João Rodrigues) (1641-1720), from Lisbon, who settled in the province mentioned, in the 17th century, in 1668. He married Anne LeRoy, daughter of a Parisian couple, on October 28, 1671, in Quebec. The couple had seven children, as well as João Baptista Rodrigues da Fonte, from Viana do Castelo, who settled in the Acadia region (northeastern Canada), in principle in the year 1707, Sébastien Rodrigue de Évora who lived in the region of Soulanges (Quebec) around the year 1755, Martinho (Martin) Pire-Henne, natural of São Martinho de Braga, in continental Portugal, baptized in 1647, getting married in Quebec in 1674, marrying Françoise du Faye, daughter of two Frenchmen (her mother was from Reims), and the couple had 7 children. He was buried in Charlesbourg in 1711, and finally Michel Rodrigue, son of Jean Baptiste Rodrigue de Viana, was born in Louisbourg. He was the owner of a fishing concession in Île Royale, and in La Rochelle, in 1749, he hired for his fishing concessions, two men brothers named Jean and Bastien Serbèra (perhaps a Franciscanization of the name Cerveira), from the island of Terceira, in the Azores.

In the 1700s, Portuguese and Spanish Jews also arrived in Montreal, Quebec, where they founded the first Jewish congregation in 1768, called Shearith Israel. In the 18th century, there were also some Portuguese Jews in the territory that would become the

United States, as in the case of the Portuguese-Jewish merchant from Lisbon, Aaron Lopez, who was very successful in the city of Newport, in the current state of Rhode Island, where he was successful in selling textiles, chocolate, rum, but especially slaves.

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