

Introduction

What are dispensation records?

Dispensation records are records that are generated by the Catholic Church that provide allowance for persons who are related by blood or affinity (in-laws) to marry. In the Azorean marriage records, you will sometimes see the notation that a couple is related in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th grau consanguinidade (degree of consanguinity). This tells you how distantly related they were and is a clue for you to look further for their dispensation.

What good are these records?

If you are in the early 1700's and you have reached the end of the marriage records for your village, then you may be able to get back another 2, 3 or 4 more generations! Not all Dispensation Records have survived, but those that have often include vital information. It is not necessary for you to have any direct-line ancestors who married cousins for these records to be of help to you; anyone having early lineage on the Island of São Jorge can benefit from these records. While your ancestors may not have married cousins, there is a very high probability that one of their brothers, sisters, cousins, or second-cousins somewhere along the lines did, and their dispensation will still provide the information needed to extend your line. This is certainly incentive to research all of your ancestor's sibling's marriages and follow collateral branches of your family tree!

Additionally, much of the information contained within the dispensation records cannot be found anywhere else. The records include information that was extracted long-ago from church books that no longer survive, such as marriages from Topo, Santo Amaro, and Rosais. In the 1780's and later, the priest from Norte Grande wrote "I cannot provide certificates of the records requested because the books no longer exist." They had been damaged by the humidity of the village and also the earthquake of 1757, that destroyed the church and consequently the parish records.

About this project:

This publication is being made available thanks to donations made by São Jorge Genealogy Group members. It is comprised of all dispensation records for the Island of São Jorge spanning from 1683-1830 and includes all genealogically pertinent information that could be extracted from the original records. Transcriptions of the original documents held at the Angra Archive were completed by João Ventura.

João Manuel Diniz da Silveira Ventura has been immersed in Azorean genealogy for more than 25 years. He is a professional genealogist and has worked for the Government of the Azores in the field of genealogy and is currently the archivist of Direção Regional da Cultura (Regional Directorate of Culture). João was responsible for scanning church records for Terceira, São Jorge and Graciosa, and supervised the digitizing of the records for Faial, Pico, Flores and Corvo. He studied at the University of Coimbra where he earned a degree in English and German and a postgraduate degree in Archivology. He has successfully completed genealogical research for government entities, fellow genealogists, and individuals. João has also given genealogy workshops and lectures in São Miguel, Terceira, Faial, as well as in California and Salt Lake City.

~ Jeremy G. Berry-Cahn and Rosemarie Giamona Capodicci