

**University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Archives and Special Collections
Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives**

**Portuguese Alliance Benevolent Association
(Associação Benificente Aliança Portuguesa)
Records, 1924—2004**

MC50/PAA

Extent: 9 linear feet (3 manuscript boxes, 1 shoebox size, 1 oversize box, 25 oversize ledgers).

Historical note:

The Portuguese Alliance Benevolent Association was incorporated in Fall River in 1924. Its purpose was to pay mortuary and disability benefits to those of Portuguese descent; membership was open to Portuguese men and women, their descendents, and spouses of members, all of whom were between 16 and 65 years of age at the time of acceptance into the Association. At the time of its incorporation, mortuary benefits were not to exceed \$1,000, and disability benefits were not more than \$10 per week. Fees and dues were charged based on the age of the member. Applicants were subject to a medical exam and an investigation of personal background. Members were elected by votes cast with black and white cubes; seven or more black cubes led to rejection of the application.

In 1945, the purpose of the Association changed to offer medical and hospitalization benefits, as well as mortuary and disability benefits. The Association operated under the auspices of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Banking and Insurance. There was a social aspect to the Association as well, in that it sponsored cultural events, parties, and trips to Portugal.

The Board of Directors consisted of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Receiver. Additional officials were a Master of Ceremonies and an Internal Guard. Three elected members comprised the Financial Committee. Officers were elected to terms of one year.

The first slate of officers elected in 1924 was:

President:	João Maria Cabral
Vice President:	Francisco P. Silva
Secretary:	Alberto Freitas
Treasurer:	Manuel Andrade
Receiver:	Lafayette Silva Oliveira
Financial Committee:	Jorge F. Machado Francisco Silva Honorato Pavão Reis
Master of Ceremonies:	João Pavão
Internal Guard:	José Vieira Mattos

Monies were divided into Mortuary, Disability, Expense, and Special Funds. Disbursement of disability funds required documentation of disabilities, and the Association placed restrictions on the activities of those receiving disability payments. Further, the Association would not pay benefits for a disability originating from intemperance, immoral behavior, or pregnancy. As part of the mortuary benefit, the Association sent flowers to be placed on the member's coffin, and the President and three other officers attended a member's funeral.

The Association's first offices were located at 10 Bedford St., Fall River, moving to 324 Columbia Street in 1925, and later to various other locations in Fall River. Initial meetings were held the second and fourth Tuesday of every month, with the Board meeting weekly. Only Portuguese was spoken during meetings, and passwords were required to enter. Passwords were re-issued every six months.

Alberto Freitas, who was elected Secretary in the first slate of officers in 1924, served as President by 1930, and served until 1978, resigning for reasons of health. His daughter, Filomena Freitas Rezendes, herself a long-time Secretary since at least 1938, was elected President in 1978, and served in that capacity until at least 1999.

At its first meeting, the Association accepted 303 members, and had 2,662 active members by 1968. Total membership from 1924 to 2004 stands at 7,603. The Association occasionally failed to make quorum at its Annual Meetings, causing amendments to its by-laws to re-define a quorum. By the 1970s and 1980s, membership flagged and records were not as thorough. In 1985, only four new members were admitted. The Association was officially dissolved in 2004.

Scope and contents note: The collection consists of record books of minutes, membership, and disability payments. Also included are by-laws, some correspondence, booklets and pamphlets pertaining to the Annual Meeting, photographs, paintings, medals, commemorative items, and newspaper and magazine clippings.

Acquisition: The collection was donated by Alfredo Alves on behalf of the Association, August 9, 2004, Accession # 05-01.

Access: unrestricted

Repository: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives, Claire T. Carney Library, 285 Old Westport Road, N. Dartmouth, MA 02747. Telephone: 508-999-8684.

Processing note: Maura McGurk '07, January 2006.

Box #	Folder #	Description
3	oversize	Certificate of Incorporation, November 8, 1924
	Volume 1	Record Book, 1924-March 1926. Includes founding by-laws, meeting minutes, and member list
1	1	Copy of amendments adopted to the bylaws, 1932 - 1939
1	2	Copy of amendments adopted to the bylaws, 1940 - 1947
1	3	Copy of amendments adopted to the bylaws, 1953 - 1959
1	4	Copy of amendments adopted to the bylaws, 1960 - 1969
1	5	Copy of amendments adopted to the bylaws, 1977 - 1983
	Volume 2	Record Book of Membership, 1924-1985. (Also a copy?)
	Volume 3	Record Book of Disability and Hospitalization Benefit, 1926-1985
	In Mezzanine storage	Weekly Financial Records
	Volume 4	January 1957 - December 1961
	Volume 5	January 1962 - September 1967
	Volume 6	October 1967 - May 1970
	Volume 7	May 1970 - May 1980
	Volume 8	June 1980 - February 1986
	Volume 9	February 1986 - November 1992
	Volume 10	November 1992 - July 1999
	In Mezzanine storage	Treasurer's Records
	Volume 11	January 1963 - December 1973
	Volume 12	January 1974 - October 1983
	Volume 13	October 1983 - September 1993
	Volume 14	September 1993 - June 2002
	In Mezzanine storage	Social Records
	Volume 15	January 1960 - December 1969
	Volume 16	January 1970 - July 1980
	Volume 17	August 1980 - May 1990
	Volume 18	June 1990 - December 1999
	In Mezzanine storage	Disability Books
	Volume 19	1924 (?) -
	Volume 20	1947 - 2003 (?)

Volume 21	1969 – 1972
Volume 22	1973 – 1984
Volume 23	1985 – 1990
Volume 24	1991 – 1999
Volume 25	2000 – 2004

Box #	Folder #	Description
1	7	Correspondence, 1936-1992
1	6	Meeting minutes, 1930s?, 1940, 1978
1	8	Accounting, 1929
1	9	Official Bulletin, 1938
1	10	Annual books, 1938-1943
1	11	Annual bulletins, 1939, 1942-1956
1	12	Annual report/souvenir books, 1958, 1965
1	13	Annual Meeting and Anniversary pamphlets, 1967-1995, 1999
1	14	Souvenir programs, 1925, 1939
1	15	Souvenir programs, 1949, 1954, 1959
1	16	Souvenir program, 1964
1	17	Souvenir program, 1969, 1974
2	17a	Souvenir programs, 1979-1994
2	18	The Alliance Bulletin, April 1939
2	19	Pamphlets and flyers, 1945, 1949, 1959, 1965, 1967
2	20	Scrapbook of newspaper clippings, 1924-1940s predominately includes one photo of Social Committee, 1940
2	21	Portuguese Human, Social, and Recreational Organization Directory, 1986
3	(oversize)	Newspaper clippings related to Alliance, or Portuguese events, 1920s – 1990s
2	22	Photocopy of <i>O Jornal</i> articles on history of Alliance, 10/18/95 and 4/23/97
		<u>Photographs:</u>
2	23	Macomber block building (10 Bedford Street), location of Association, 1940
2	23	Officers, group photo, 1940
2	23	Board of Directors group photo, 1940
2	23	Parade float, dated 11/13/60
3	oversize	Officers and Board of Directors, 1984-1986
3	23	Color group photo, taken outdoors, October 1994, (unidentified)
3	23	Mary Frances Reis, with photocopied inscription from framing materials Testimonial Dinner in Honor of Vasco de Sousa Jardim, Essex House, Newark, NJ, 2/19/96 [judging by fashions and hairstyles, date seems to be incorrect]

Box #	Folder #	Description
2	23	Officers color group photo, 1990s? (2 copies)
2	23	Group photo (undated, unidentified: 10 men, 2 women)
2	23	Color photo: decorated Portuguese Alliance car passing in a parade, 1970s?
2	23	Statue of Virgin Mary—unidentified location
2	24	Framed group photo with Mary Fonseca, undated
<u>Framed artwork:</u>		
3	oversize	Painting on cardboard of Alliance seal
3	oversize	Painting on cardboard of 1960 Prince Henry the Navigator parade float
Framed		Undated painting on cardboard of parade float with globe
3	oversize	Gold and goache on parchment, with photo cutout Translation: <i>With all homage, respect and gratitude to His Excellency, Senhor Joao Bianchi, Portuguese Minister for the United States.</i> [On the occasion of the annual Alliance festival, at which he was a speaker].
<u>Artifacts:</u>		
4		Medals and Ribbon sets with Alliance seal, Portuguese and American flags, and title plates designating Alliance officers
4		Medal/ribbon set with no title plate
4		Triangular flag: Filarmonica “Eco Edificante”
4		32 memorial mass cards
4		Pamphlet with souvenirs from Israel’s holy sites—soil, water, stone, leaves, seeds
5		Commemorative ceramic desktop piece, in recognition of a presentation before the Portuguese Congress, 1964, labeled “Albert Freitas, President of Alliance”
5		70 th Anniversary ceramic coffee mug