

FESTAS DO ESPÍRITO SANTO

Fresh Pond Holy Ghost Association, Falmouth, Massachusetts

BROTHERHOOD

Brotherhood	<p>Entirely autonomous.</p> <p>The priest cooperates by offering prayers and blessing the meat, which he also does for the neighboring East Falmouth Holy Ghost Society. The priest also says what is usually the 9:30 am Mass for the Feast that includes songs particular to the occasion.</p>
Year founded	<p>The official date of the founding is nebulous as there was a Feast that was carried out prior to the building of the Hall in 1900. Without a space at which to celebrate the seven weeks, the Feast was conducted among the domingas from house to house including the final week.</p> <p>Holding Feasts prior to the building of a space is also a feature of the earlier communities in the Falmouth area, including the Holy Ghost Spirit of Santuit & Cotuit, as well as the Saint Anthony's Hall group prior to the founding of the Church.</p> <p>There is a possibility that there were other groups as well that may have either been disbanded or absorbed by other Holy Ghost Society <i>Irmandades</i>. Some older members of the Fresh Pond group made reference to the Waquoit Holy Ghost Society to describe the group. The question is whether this reflects a merger between disparate groups that may have taken place in the past; is revelatory of competing factions; or is a homologue for the same group, is unknown.</p>
Current Number of members	40
Meetings and activities during the year	<p>Meetings are held during the year to plan for the Feast.</p> <p>Activities for the Feast weekend are only held on Sunday. The society meets on the Monday after the Feast to have a members/workers meal with their immediate families.</p> <p>There are other activities as well:</p> <p>Sunday breakfasts are held most months of the year as a fundraiser to help pay for the Feast and to generate</p>

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money for the organization's other activities.

There is currently a pig roast and previously there was always a "Small feast" run by the Women's Auxiliary that focused on children.

There are also weddings and birthday parties held at the Hall, and previously the hall was a meeting point to play cards—*sueca*, and whist—but this is not the case anymore.

In 1951, the society voted to have all members gather and pray the rosary the night before the funeral of a fellow member.

The Fresh Pond Holy Ghost Society also offers their Hall to the *Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo* of East Falmouth to have their Feast every year. The overlap among participants in the two Feasts/associations is substantial.

It is important to note that there is also a marked overlap between the Portuguese American Association of Falmouth and both of the other two Falmouth Feasts. For example, the Portuguese American Association of Falmouth handles the scholarship activities of the society and historically many of the officers have been the same individuals.

Hall

The Hall belongs to the Society.

THE FESTA: GENERAL INFORMATION

Year founded

Before 1900

Date

The Feast is held on Pentecost. There was some discussion about changing the date to later in the summer on a warmer weekend, with factions of old timers—"the traditionalists"—prevailing to keep the Feast on the long standing date.

Azorean Festa ritual model

The 12 founding families of the Feast migrated to Falmouth in a 25 year period prior to 1900 and were all land holders. Many of the members whose origins have been identified are from Pico and Faial, including two Faial whalemens, Perry Rose—who donated the land for the Hall—and Manny Martin. Others in the group were from São Miguel.

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Organization of the Festa	The organizational committee for the Fresh Pond Feast has a group with fixed roles that run the event year in and year out. The current President for example has served in that position for the past five or six years.
Mordomo	Chosen through <i>sorteio</i> .
Number of workers	There are 30-40 people working on the Feast, including both the men of the Holy Ghost Society and the women in the auxiliary.
Crowns	<u>Tio Carassa Crowns</u> There are two crowns that were brought to Falmouth from Faial in 1889 by Jose Silveira de Andrade, aka “Joe Andrews” aka Tio Carassa. <u>The “Small Crown” (traveling crown)</u> The Small Crown was mentioned in Society documents as early as 1935. There is another mention of the Small Crown in 1949 that says that it was donated by another group, but this is all that is known of its history. This crown goes from house to house during the Domingas and is kept throughout the year by whomever draws the First Dominga.
Queens	There is no queen, but a young child will be crowned at the Mass - “an innocent,” usually a girl who is around five years old. One year there was a woman who was sick who was crowned, but it was controversial she was crowned instead of a child.
Crowning	The priest crowns the child.

THE FESTA: RITUAL COMPOSITION

Domingas	The Seven Domingas are selected at the end of the Feast. Previously the names were drawn on Trinity Sunday, but the Holy Ghost Society now holds its <i>sorteio</i> at the end of the Feast.
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The sorteio is a double random drawing: First seven names are drawn from all of those hoping to sponsor a Sunday. These names are then assigned a number, from 1-x, x being the number of participants. These individuals will then draw from a second box in order of their assigned number from 1-x. The lots in the second drawing will either have the numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 written on it, or will be blank. Those hoping for a Dominga will then continue to draw until all of the Domingas have been assigned —sometimes trading with one another for a more desirable outcome.

Responsibilities of the Domingas

The host's house is open to visitors during the entire week of their particular Dominga. On the actual Sunday the host family will typically serve pastry and refreshments like, coffee and soda (but not full dinners).

At the Domingas, participants will usually gather and say prayers in Portuguese and English, including saying a terço.

There are crowns present at the Domingas, but no crownings at the home altar.

There are some specifications for this altar, which has to be a wooden table, for example, with traditional rules/obligations determining how each family is expected to organize and perform a Dominga.

Fundraising to held the festa

To raise money for the Feast, there are two auctions, one public and the other private. The auction always includes donations of sweet bread, home made wine, food items, shellfish, and other kinds of items like umbrellas with the Portuguese flag, *azulejos* and etc.

The meat for the meal is usually donated although sometimes it is bought by the Society. Often times when someone has a close loved one that has passed away, such as a wife, then that person will donate the meat in honor of the deceased.

They also accept donations for the *sopas*.

Musical accompaniment during the festas

The Feast previously had full bands, but now has the kind of “one-man-band synthesizer keyboard

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singers” that have become popular at other area Feasts. When there was a band, the band would be the first to eat.

Parades and Processions

There has not been a parade since the 1960s.

When there was a parade:

The parade route would wind from Fonseca park around the corner from the Hall.

Marching to the Hall in the procession were the host families of the *Domingas*, including children on floats, cars and trucks, usually decorated with paper flowers.

The women’s auxiliary would march behind an image of a giant rosary, which they would also pray as they marched up the street.

Younger girls would walk behind them wearing “tongues of fire” on their heads, then behind that would be all of the Society’s members.

There are Portuguese and American flags at the Hall as well as an Azorean flag along with flags from Brazil and Mozambique. These flags, however, were flags put up by the East Falmouth *Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo* for their Feast.

Local selectmen have participated, along with State Representatives, and other local politicians.

There is a broad overlap among the families participating in the two Falmouth Feasts and to a lesser extent in the Santuit Feast. There is also some participation from Taunton, Massachusetts, where the long time president of the Fresh Pond society has family.

Holy Ghost soup

The Fresh Pond Holy Ghost Society sopa is made with beef roast, whole pickling spices

Cabbage, hortelã, salt and spices

Portuguese bread. A base is made from cooking onions, cabbage and spices for twenty four hours.

Then the solid bits of onion and cabbage are thrown away and the broth saved. The beef, new cabbage and onions are then cooked in this stock for the sopas. Day/several day old sliced bread is added along with hortelã.

The sopas is still served from the same copper pans that they had at the original feasts at the turn of the

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20th century.

The origin of the sopas style is unknown, but there is always an argument about changing them, with factions of traditionalists squaring off with those who have newer ideas. The traditionalists feel that doing things as they have done them before is necessary because “it’s what defines us, it’s what makes us unique.”

The newer group has succeeded however in adding linguíça during the meal over the last couple of Feasts. The addition of linguíça reflects the recipe of the East Falmouth Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo. Given the popularity of that Feast, there has become an expectation among newer attendees at Fresh Pond about what the soup should be, and this includes linguíça. The traditionalists allow that the sopas tastes better with linguíça, but argue that it should not be included because it is not authentic to the original Fresh Pond Holy Ghost Society sopas recipe.

Number of people who participate in the open distribution of sopas 200

Other

There is no sweet bread handed out.

There is however an auction for home made *massa*, and like Stonington, there is an awareness among the members of who makes the better loaves, and who earns the biggest bids for their baking.

Number of people who attend the Festas 200 now. Previously the Feast had about 400-500 participants.

Additional information

Lewis A White.

2012. Sopa: a brief history of Portuguese islanders, the Cape Cod town of Falmouth, and the Feast of the Holy Ghost. Falmouth, Massachusetts. Amerazor Publishing Company.

Society prayerbook/handbook. “O Ritual das Sete Domingas (Ritual for the Seven Weeks of Prayer).” Holy Ghost Society of Fresh Pond. 4p

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