

FESTAS DO ESPÍRITO SANTO

The Holy Ghost Society of Santuit and Cotuit, Cape Cod, Massachusetts

BROTHERHOOD

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| Brotherhood | Predominantly autonomous, but linked to the Church. The Society used to be connected to Saint Jude's Chapel and then the feast was moved to Our Lady of Assumption in Osterville. |
| Year founded | The society held its first Festa do Espírito Santo in 1891 and a Feast has been held every year since. |
| Current number of members | About 40. Although this number swells during the actual Feast to "around hundreds." |
| Azorean origin of the members | Difficult to determine. Portuguese migration to Santuit and Cotuit was among the first on Cape Cod with populations reportedly settling there as early as 1836. Mrs. Bennet said her grandfather was from Pico, and the area is populated by other settlers from São Miguel. According to Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, many of the new members are not even practicing Catholics. Some of the members however are adamant about retaining the Feast's link to the church. |
| Year round activities | The club executive board has meetings and the club puts on occasional dinners as well as a rummage sale. There are a number of other civic participation activities as well, including society scholarships. A five hundred dollar scholarship is given annually to a student of Portuguese descent. The Society also makes two or three at-large civic donations during the year on an ad hoc basis, for example when money was donated to a church that had burned down. |

THE FESTA: GENERAL INFORMATION

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| Year founded | 1891 |
| Date | The Feast has been held on Fathers Day weekend, a date chosen to avoid conflicts with <i>Festas do Espírito Santo</i> dates in nearby Fresh Pond and East Falmouth. |

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| Azorean Festa ritual model | The Festa is of unknown or forgotten origin. |
| Organization of the Festa | The Society in general with approval from a board of directors. A small group of members composing a permanent Executive Board. |
| Number of workers | 30-40 |
| Number of crowns | 2 (two) |
| Origin of the crowns | The Society has two crowns. <u>1933 Faial Crown</u> One was “donated by John Dutra in memory of his Uncle Joe Dutra of West Barnstable.” His Uncle had originally purchased the crown in Faial, Azores in 1933. This crown was only donated to the society however in 2012. <u>The Original Crown</u> The origin of this crown is unknown but it is estimated to go back at least 70-75 years. A crown is displayed on the altar of the church during the mass. The mass however is sparsely attended by members of the Feast with only about a half of a dozen attending before the <i>Festa</i> . |
| Queens | There are no longer any queens. There used to be queens but when the Society no longer held a <i>cortejo</i> , the queen tradition was also stopped. There was one queen |

THE FESTA: RITUAL COMPOSITION

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| Pensões | There are no pensões. The Society’s fundraising is accomplished through concessions on the day of the Feast, solicitation from area businesses, and private donations. |
| Domingas | There used to be Domingas, but not any more. The Society used to have 7 Domingas, with gatherings held at the hosts home, but this was disbanded when the Society moved to their new hall. |
| Musical accompaniment during the Festas | There are no filarmonica bands although in previous years there had been. The brass band from Cape Cod’s merchant marine school, the Massachusetts Maritime |

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Academy also played at the Feast one year.

Parades and Processions

When there was a *cortejo* the parade route went from Saint Jude's Chapel then to Main street Santuit along the way to the hall accompanied by a police escort.

The priest of the church participates in the Festa Espírito Santo but he is not Portuguese.

A Holy Ghost flag and the national flags of Portugal and the US are present, but there is no Azorean flag.

Previously the police, and town selectmen from Falmouth.

Previously there was participation with members of the two Falmouth feasts, the Fresh Pond Holy Ghost Society and the Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo of East Falmouth, but not in an official capacity.

Arraial

On the weekend of the Feast, the grill has hamburgers, hotdogs, *linguiça*, sausage, corn on the cob, beef (not pork) *caçoila* sandwiches, ice cream as well as beer and wine.

Holy Ghost soup

There is *sopas*, but nobody knows the island of origin.

Number of people who participate in the open distribution of sopas

Overall there are a couple of hundred that come over three (3) sittings of around 60-70 people.

Number of people who attend the Festa

A couple of hundred.

Additional information

Additional documentation provided by John D. Medeiros

1991. "The Holy Ghost Society of Santuit and Cotuit." 8p. illus.

1979. "The Portuguese Amongst Us." The Historical Society of Cotuit. 6p.

Holy Ghost Society of Santuit & Cotuit Newsletter. June 28, 2012. 2p

2009/10 Holy Ghost Society of Santuit & Cotuit mailer.

Website: www.cotuitholyghost.com

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