

# Chapter IX

POWER OF THE SPIRIT

**HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
ARTESIA



# HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH

ARTESIA

## EARTHQUAKES, HORSE BEANS, AND COWS

**I**t was early on a spring day in 1906 and António Jacinto Machado had just gotten up ready to walk to his job picking horse beans (*favas*) in San Carlos. Suddenly a great wave struck the house and António was thrown to the ground. For many seconds António was unable to get to his feet and escape from the creaking and swaying of the building. Finally he scrambled up right and ran out the door. He knew that he had experienced an earthquake. Azoreans are no strangers to earthquakes, but this was the kind of earthquake of which legends are made. It was close enough to where young António lived in San Carlos for him to feel much of its brute force. With fear and wonderment, when the tremors of the ground on which he stood stopped momentarily, he saw the ashes fill the air around him. António looked north and later saw the billows of smoke rising from the devastating destruction of the San Francisco earthquake and fire of April 18, 1906. António's comments about this experience to his adult children many years later underscore the traumatizing events of that time on a young teen far from his family in the Azores. This might have been reason to return to the Azores, as many others did, but he stayed on, making the United States his home.

António was born to Joaquim Jacinto Machado and Maria de Jesus, on November 1, 1892, in Ladeira Grande, Ribeirinha, Terceira, Azores. On May 11, 1905, António came alone as a young teen to the United States on the ship *Peninsular*, docking in Rhode Island. It was an arduous and frightening journey. António continued on to California, to join his brother and find work.

António's first job in San Carlos was picking horse beans, a Portuguese favorite. He listened and learned English slowly, as he interacted with others. As time went on, he performed whatever work he could find to make a living, until 1913. In that year, while at a fraternal lodge picnic in San José, he saw an attractive young Portuguese woman. He approached her and with his innocent and earnest pick-up line asked, "Can you cook Portuguese beans?" She looked at this handsome, young, single man, and smiled. Her Yes! answer solidified his interest. A short time later, António married the wise and lovely eighteen-year-old Laurentina Borges Toste, from Fonte do Bastardo, Terceira, Azores, in July 1913 in San José, California.



Newspaper clipping about the great San Francisco earthquake in 1906. More than 3,000 people lost their lives in the original event and aftermath.

(Opposite)  
Holy Family Church, Artesia.

Antônio and Laurentina moved to the San Joaquin Valley to be near their extended families, in Hanford and Riverdale. His brother, Joaquim, had some time before abandoned his dream of life in America and returned to the Azores. Antônio worked for others, doing any farm work and other manual labor he could find. His

confidence in his ability to make a living grew, and he began operation of a livery stable with his older brother-in-law, João Cardoso Pires, on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, in downtown Hanford, Kings County, California.

The Cardoso Pires-Machado enterprise was needed at the time they formed their partnership. The streets of downtown Hanford bustled with wagons and horses. Kings County teemed with Portuguese from the Azores. A livery stable of that time carried single, double, and teams of horses for sale or trade. Livery stables also sold wagons and buggies for transport of goods or passengers.



*This is a typical photo of a group of young dairy workers, a prevalent occupation for the recently arrived Portuguese immigrants of the 1920s and 1930s. Photo courtesy of The Holy Family Church Yearbook, 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.*

Antônio Machado and João Cardoso Pires fared well in their new enterprise, until there was a decline in a need for their services. After this decline, both sought opportunities working for others, to support their growing families. Some of this work involved working on dairies, milking cows. They had saved a little money from their business and wanted to own land when the time was right.

About this time, while still in Kings County, Antônio applied for citizenship. When he was finally naturalized as a citizen, in 1921, his wife also was granted her citizenship status automatically.

Stories came to the Portuguese in the Central Valley of opportunities in Southern California. Groups of these Portuguese left the role of laborer for the dream of having their own land, their own farm. A new wave of opportunity for immigrants was reaching its peak. In Southern California, one could choose between working for others, renting a dairy, or realizing the dream of land ownership and what was seen as the riches of being an owner. From Kings County, Antônio moved his family to Artesia, where there was a demand for milkers to support the expanding dairy industry.<sup>1</sup>



*Main Street, Artesia. Early 1900s. Photo courtesy of The Holy Family Church Yearbook, 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.*