

# The Portuguese in Bethlehem

The Bethlehem Gadfly Bethlehem Moments, Fun Stuff, Local Color, Portuguese, the September 29, 2019

*(The latest post in a series on local color and Bethlehem Moments*

*and first in a series on the Portuguese)*

A couple weeks ago Gadfly made an off-hand remark about lack of knowledge about the Portuguese in Bethlehem.

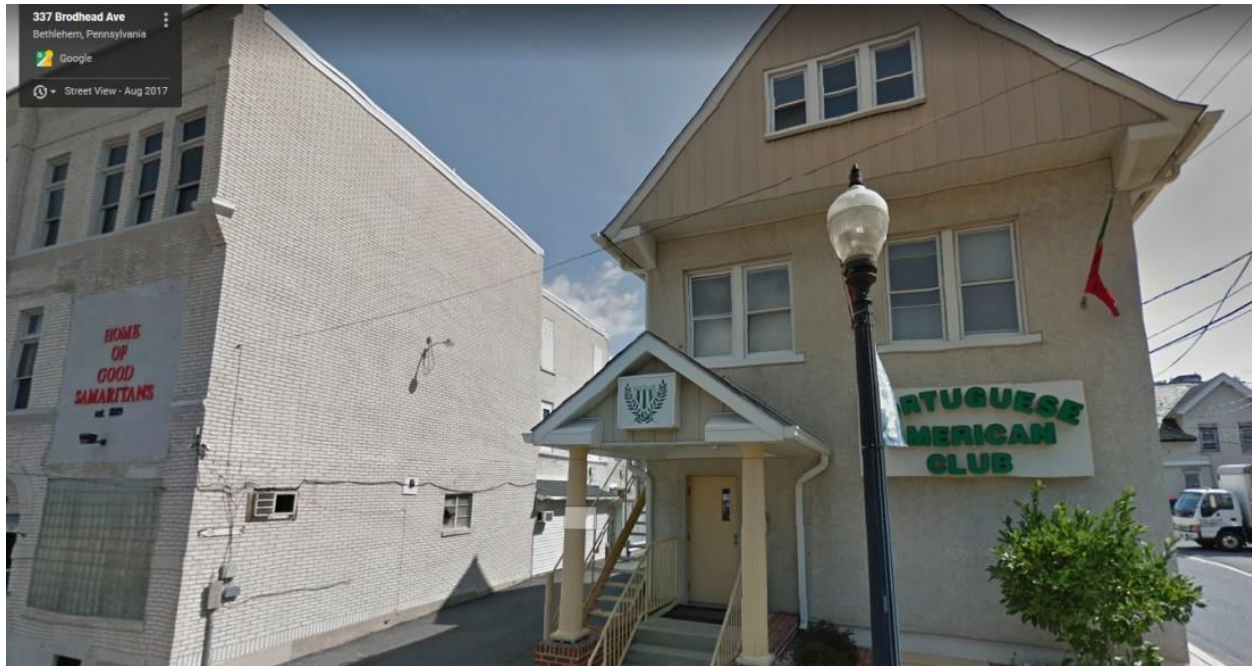
His curiosity was triggered by [Olga Negrón's Bethlehem Moment](#) on the arrival of the Puerto Ricans in 1948.

Sure, we associate Puerto Ricans with Bethlehem, with the Southside.

But Portuguese?

I had seen references in old *Globe-Times* files to political meetings at the Portuguese Club, which must have meant the Portuguese were once prominent politically.

Follower Dana Grubb pointed out that the Portuguese American Club is still operating at 337 Brodhead Ave. Is it just a social club?



Then Negron wrote:

*Holy Infancy Church (yes, Southside!) has the biggest diverse congregation! That's why we do a Multicultural Fest every year! (see flyer below). We have mass every weekend in Spanish, English and in Portuguese (see [bulletin attached](#)), and our weekly bulletin it's tri-lingual as well. The English-speaking community is a mix of the ambassadors of our parish (Irish, German, Pennsylvania Dutch, etc.); our Spanish speakers are from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Mexico, South and Central America; and our Potuguese are from Portugal and Brazil! Beside the Multicultural Fest, my favorite part is having tri-lingual mass, it's an amazing experience to be in mass surrounded by people speaking 3 different languages! We also have many events through the year that involve all of our communities, it's beautiful!*

MY PARISH, MY FAMILY

MI PARROQUIA, MI FAMILIA

MINHA PAROQUIA, MINHA FAMILIA



PANCHO BONGO




ON FIRE BAND

**FRIDAY, JUNE 14<sup>TH</sup>** 5:00PM  
10:00 PM

**SATURDAY, JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>** NOON  
10:00 PM

**WHERE: HOLY INFANCY SCHOOL**  
4<sup>TH</sup> AND WEBSTER STREETS  
GREENWAY BEHIND SCHOOL BETHLEHEM, PA

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO  
[www.holyinfancychurch.com](http://www.holyinfancychurch.com)  
or call 610-866-1121



Far out! Who knew?

And then follower Kim Carrell-Smith gave me some leads that I haven't followed up yet but that I record here so that they don't disappear and in case anybody wants to use them or can add:

*You might want to talk with Tony Traca, the Asst Principal at Liberty about the history of Portuguese folks in Bethlehem. I know that*

*Armando Souza [is] the godfather of the P. community, [but I] am not sure Armando is still alive. So Tony might be a good source; he's been a big actor (and one of the youngsters) in the local Portuguese community . . .*

*One more possible source would be the Holy Infancy jubilee books (or any anniversary books). Local churches, esp the ethnic ones, often include brief histories of their ethnic communities. Since HI has been so multi-ethnic throughout its history, they might have provided those stories in the celebration books, perhaps? And I can't remember, but this one might help, too: *Journey of Faith: A Brief History of Bethlehem's Religious Communities* (1992) at BAPL, call no. 974.822*

Gadfly loves learning more and more about the history of our town.  
Don't you?

He sees a Bethlehem Moment here. Anyone interested?

Gadfly is thinking of a Moment analogous to Negron's Puerto Rican one.

When did the Portuguese come to town and why? Same story or different?