



ARCHIVAL PROJECT: INFORMATION ABOUT HOSPITAL-COLONIES

1 – Name of the Institution:
Espaço de Convivência Antonio Justa

2 – Historical Overview:

In December of 1942, the Colônia São Bento was inaugurated. Shortly after, it was renamed Colônia Antonio Justa, in posthumous homage to the doctor and *sanitarista* who dedicated his valuable services to the fight against Hansen’s disease, in the first decades of the 20th century. Situated in Maracanaú, the colony was destined to shelter close to 500 of those diagnosed with Hansen’s malady, “providing excellent farmlands and pastures, a dam with capacity for 6 million cubic meters of water, a well-treated and extensive sugarcane field, an orchard, and carefully constructed spaces for raising birds and other small animals.”

According to newspaper headlines of the period, regarding the construction of the colony: “this fact [the founding of the colony] represents one of the greatest fulfillments of the promise of true patriotism that the public authority can bring to Ceará.”

The Colônia Antonio Justa followed the same divisions of space that were practiced in the other colonies spread throughout Brazil, obeying a rigorous standard of isolation. This model led to the division of the large area of the colony into three zones: sick, intermediate, and healthy. In the healthy zone, there were homes for the director, employees, and administrators. The intermediate zone consisted of a gate, a police post,

administrative and observation buildings, the residence of the nurses and the Sisters of Terceiras Capuchinhas, responsible for tending to the sick.

The buildings that belonged to the actual leprosarium were in the sick zone, consisting of: a parlour, where visits were held; a house with a changing room, chapel, and general clinic; kitchen and cafeteria; a recreation pavillion, where there was a games room, a cinema, and a theater. There was also a dormitory for single men, one for single women, one for children, and another for couples. These divisions facilitated vigilance and control of the patients, according to Raimundo Severo, a survivor of internment in this colony.

The colony began with these structures. Later, construction would begin on houses for offices, schools, a city hall, a prison, a retiree house, an incinerator, a morgue and cemetery, installations that were included in the original plans.

In the beginning, the colony had only six patients (among them Manoel Jacinto and Lolô, who still live there). At the time, it was also used as a military barracks.

Beginning in 1980, the colony went through many transformations, owing especially to the presence of MORHAN, that became a great ally in the combat against Hansen's disease and the prejudice suffered by those with the disease. One particularly momentous occasion was when the walls of isolation were knocked down (not officially registered), which had a strong symbolic significance, even though it allowed a disordered and inappropriate occupation, a reflection of the social problems that we constantly face.

Discussions about reconstructing the Colônia Antonio Justa began in the 1990s, involving the community, religious officials, representatives from the state and municipality from diverse areas, and Morhan. Finally, through the law Decreto-Lei nº 23000-9, on the 12 of January, 1994, it was stipulated that the "The Hospital of Sanitary Dermatology Antônio Justa is designated as a Hospital of Rehabilitation, with the name Hospital of Rehabilitation Antonio Justa..."

The law was developed and elaborated into Projeto Hajusta, with the basic purpose of redressing the destruction suffered both by the municipality of Maracanaú, from the process of a disorganized organization, as well as patients, from the process of

compulsory isolation. The area was designated to be transformed into a neighborhood of Maracanaú where the basic priority would be a good quality of life for its inhabitants. In spite of these discussions, the reconstruction of the Colônia Antonio Justa was not a priority for the administration that took control in 1995, and nothing was done.

The first MEETING OF RESIDENTS OF ANTONIO JUSTA took place between the 19th and 21th of April, 2005, organized by MORHAN in partnership with the Secretary of Social Assistance and Citizenship of Maracanaú, with the objective of “raising awareness among authorities of the municipality, the state, and the judicial and executive branches of the federal government, to the problem relating” to the reconstruction of Antonio Justa. The conference was designed to discuss the current social reality and find new ways to create a dignified and just society. It was through this conference that I was introduced to Colônia Antonio Justa.

The facts of this report come from the documents belonging to MORHAN, the state, newspapers, journals, and the few bibliographic references that can be found in the public libraries of Ceará. Unfortunately, the only documents that are to be found in the hospital are the medical charts of the patients, in the hospital archives. Though they are very delicate and ill-preserved, it is possible to find the charts of every patient, beginning with the very first. Other than the medical charts, there are a few photographs spread throughout the hospital that portray the original structures of the colony. A few buildings have completely lost their original character, either due to reforms or the actions of land invaders.

Dr. Flavio Feitosa, Chief of the Technical Section of the hospital, has a good number of documents regarding the colony.

The following technical team consisting of:

- General Director– Dr. Olívia Maria Mendes Aragão
- Chief of the Technical Section– Dr. Flávio Feitosa de Carvalho
- Chief of the Administration and Finances -financeiro – José Valdeam Frota de Carvalho.

has made themselves available to cooperate with the project, although Dr. Olívia noted that coordination of the hospital is in transition.

3. Current Situation:

Today Antonio Justa is a neighborhood of Maracanaú that has suffered various social and infrastructural problems, principally the disorganized occupation that began in the 1980s.

There are still close to 20 survivors of compulsory isolation living in the former colony.

INFORMATION ABOUT DOCUMENTS & MEMOIRS

4 -Type of documentation:

(X) textual (X) Iconographic (X) bibliographic (X) oral

() other: specify: _____

5 - Approximate quantity of documentation: (units; boxes of archives, volumes: *specify maximum*)

- 1. Textual: _____
 - 2. Iconographic: _____
 - 3. Bibliographic: _____
 - 4. Oral: _____
 - 5. Other: _____
- (X) Unknown quantity

6 -Is there some kind of preservation of documents?

() yes (X) no

7 - If yes: What kind of preservation?

- () Museum
- () Memorial
- () Center of Documentation
- () Library
- () Other: specify: _____

8 –About the place where documentation is kept:

8.1 It is in the institution

yes no

8.2. It is in satisfactory condition:

yes

no

12 – Human resources involved (*quantify and qualify*)

The following people are involved in this work: Marcelino Plácido dos Santos, history student (UECE), Maria Eleny de Freitas, history student in the Universidade Estadual do Ceará.

14 – The community in the colony knows about the work that is being done:

yes

no

14.1. The community is involved in the work:

yes

no

How:

The community has been a great ally in this work, through their leadership we have been able to mobilize people to locate documents and objects that give a sense of the history of the colony.

15. Is there some kind of work to being done to recover the experiences of residents of hte Colony through Oral History?

yes

no

In reality, my thesis is an oral history project, and I plan to publish it as soon as possible, according to the scientific parameters of a historical work.

16. Is there some kind of work about the history of the Institution?

(academic, institutional, etc.)

yes

no

16.1. If possible include a reference:

I did not find any historical work, but the closest thing that I did find was a work done in Social Service, a thesis written by the former director Silvia Pingarilho, "Hanseníase: uma história do preconceito?"

Responsible for the information provided:

Maria Eleny de Freitas.