

PROUD TO BE CAPE VERDEAN



A LOOK AT CAPE VERDEANS IN THE GOLDEN STATE

A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY MIKE COSTA

54 MINUTES, COLOR

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For the Cape Verdean-American, social identity can never be assumed and is never given. Rather, the issue is continually being reformulated, sometimes at critical personal cost.
-Marilyn Halter, "Between Race and Ethnicity"

SYNOPSIS

Proud to be Cape Verdean: A Look at Cape Verdeans in the Golden State will capture the essence of the Cape Verdean culture in California through an insightful look at individuals and organizations and their desire to maintain their cultural identity. **(Tentative Premiere date of Spring/Summer 2009)**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proud to be Cape Verdean: A Look at Cape Verdeans in the Golden State is a documentary that will capture the essence of a unique Californian, the Cape Verdean, whose distinct classification of African and European roots will be highlighted through an insightful look at individuals and organizations and their desire to maintain their unique cultural identity. It'll show how turn-of-the-century settlers paved the way for many more Cape Verdeans looking to make California their home. Today, the Cape Verdean Diaspora community spans the globe, yet is still heavily concentrated in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and California.

This one-hour documentary as narrated by Actor, Danny Glover¹ will offer oral histories in conjunction with interviews, photographs and re-enactments that will accurately depict the transition of small family gatherings where Cape Verdeans shared their love of their cuisine and music grew, inspired and eventually shaped the formation of four non-profit Cape Verdean organizations dedicated to sustaining the legacy of their racially and linguistically rich culture while maintaining a strong connection to their East Coast ties as well as their home country of Cape Verde. The four California Cape Verdean non-profit organizations are: ***The Cape Verdeans of Southern California (CVSC, Los Angeles), Capitol Cabo Verde Association of West Sacramento (CCVA), Cape Verdean West Association of the Oakland/Bay Area***

¹ Guest Narrator: Actor/Activist, Danny Glover.

(CVWA) and Sociedade Caboverdianos de Norte de California also of West Sacramento SCNC) With these organizations full cooperation and endorsement the program will include the history Cape Verdeans in California and their contribution to its landscape.

From the “Kitchen Dances” to “Community Organizing”: – Cape Verdean families established a California lifestyle, yet maintained a connection to their home country. Antonio Andrade, who eventually settled in Alameda, California was finally joined by his wife, Maria who sailed from Cape Verde in May of 1921. Pioneer families like the Andrades paved the way for many more Cape Verdean families looking to make California their home. It was not uncommon for this close-knit family to host small social gatherings at their home in Alameda in which they shared their love of Cape Verdean cuisine and music to welcome the newly arrived. Over the years in California, these informal social gatherings grew, inspired and eventually shaped the formation of Cape Verdean organizations dedicated to sustaining the legacy of their racially and linguistically rich culture. These four non-profit organizations have been in existence for over three decades; **The Cape Verdeans of Southern California (CVSC, Los Angeles), Capitol Cabo Verde Association of West Sacramento (CCVA), Cape Verdean West Association of the Oakland/Bay Area (CVWA) and Sociedade Caboverdianos de Norte de California also of West Sacramento (SCNC)**. Consequently, these California-based organizations are a common thread that holds California Cape Verdeans together locally, nationally and internationally. Contemporary Cape Verdeans will be featured through oral histories, interviews and photographs as we present the transition of small, social gatherings to large networks of individuals inspired to organize and educate their local communities. The history of these non-profit organizations which have been in existence in California for over forty years will be collectively presented by a variety of individuals (via footage and interviews) who came in contact them over the years, to include notables Dodger great Davey Lopes; actor, Michael Beach; USA Olympic volleyball player and Stanford University standout, Cynthia Barboza; Jazz piano legend, Horace Silver; songstress, Maria De Barros; musician, Paul Pena, star of Oscar nominated documentary **“Genghis Blues”**; and Dr. Kenneth Monteiro, Dean of Ethnic studies at San Francisco State. In addition, **Proud To Be Cape Verdean** is the story of the everyday Cape Verdeans, the teacher, the businessman, the entrepreneur and the mutual camaraderie they shared. We will present their struggles and achievements in the Golden State to preserve their unique identity and history. These are the true unsung heroes who helped contribute to the spirit of California and are positioned to play an important role in the state’s future.

Trans-Atlantic Connections: West Africa to America – Historical maps, rare photographs and footage will present a visual postcard of a rare jeweled necklace, the ten islands that make up the Republic of Cape Verde. Re-enactments enhanced with an old-style sepia look for added texture supplemented with a collection of rare stills are the audience’s guide along the journey traveled by Cape Verdeans as they began immigrating to New England since the mid 1800s to escape a harsh environment of drought and famine, in pursuit of work opportunities and a better life. A racially diverse group of people, most Cape Verdeans share a blend of both African and Portuguese ancestry; these historical roots are reflected in all facets of their cultural legacy.

Sodade: The Journey Abroad. Like their ancestors before them Cape Verdeans journeyed across the United States to the West Coast, some to Hawaii sugar plantations but the majority came to California. A combination of narration and re-enactments will document the movements of a Cape Verdean man, Antonio Jose Andrade, who left the island of Brava, Cape Verde, in 1914 for New Bedford, Massachusetts² and then headed to California. His footsteps will be re-traced to where he worked as a cook on passenger ships sailing between San Francisco and Hawaii until he joined the Army in 1918. He served at Fort Lewis, Washington, until discharged in 1919. Antonio then moved to the Bay Area and worked for the California Transportation Company river boats between San Francisco and Sacramento, including the ships, *Pride of the River* and the *Capital City*.

“Be tenacious in what you do and love”³: California Settlement 1900-1940. Archival footage, artifacts (such as letters) and vintage photographs will transition the film to settlement activities of Cape Verdean pioneers in California at the turn of the century. Cape Verdean fisherman, Francisco Silva, who organized the first Festa do Espírito Santo⁴ in La Playa, on San Diego Bay in 1909 in which his daughter Rose was the first queen of the festival will be featured. Nearly five years later in 1914, the Sociedade Cabo Verde was organized in San Francisco to benefit Cape Verdean men. Eventually, a significant number of Cape Verdeans would settle in Sacramento area to work as railroad hands for the Southern Pacific Railroad in the 1920’s, making it the largest Cape Verdean colony in California.

² New Bedford, Massachusetts is one the largest settlement of Cape Verdean immigrants in Massachusetts.

³ Excerpt from the Film, “*O Testamento do Senhor Napumoceno*”

⁴ Translated as the “Festival of the Holy Ghost” was a traditional, religious celebration

EAST COAST CONNECTION

Many California Cape Verdeans have strong connections with their Northeastern counterparts. Proud to be Cape Verdean not only retraces their footsteps from the East Coast but also serves as a map to the golden promise land. We are collaborating with a team of humanities experts, to include the scholars of Cape Verdean identity, migration and contemporary life. Drs. Kathleen Sanchez, Gina Sanchez-Gibau and Anthony Lopes bring a diversity of expertise to the documentary project. As a team, they will be responsible for interpretation of the growing body of ethnographic literature on influences of Cape Verdean identity, historical and ongoing migrations and contemporary life in California. These three key elements will inform the design of the interviews; the layout of the written script of the “untold story” and the acquisition of relevant archival footage, photographs and raw footage of current events and selected individuals throughout the state. These scholars will be actively involved in all phases of production (via teleconference and/or on-site meetings) which will translate into an accurate portrayal of the historical roots, present day contributions and future roles this community will play in California. PTBCV is an inspirational message for all Cape Verdeans nationwide. Many California Cape Verdeans have strong connections with the East Coast where a major percentage came from. As we re-trace their footsteps hoping to show the way for other Cape Verdeans to follow.

TALENT

Mike Costa, (Director/Producer/Writer) will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of project development and production for the duration of the project period. Mr. Costa has been a professional writer for over 11 years in California and is a member of the Writer's Guild of America - West. Mr. Costa's credits include ***The Steve Harvey Show, In the House, Roseanne and The Gregory Hines Show***. His interest and experience in documentary film making has resulted in collaborative works with other Cape Verdean film makers. He formed his own production company in 2000, ***Side Door Entertainment*** produced a short film entitled, ***Hot Date***, which is being distributed in film festivals around the country. Lastly, Mr. Costa is one of the founding members of the ***Cape Verdeans of Southern California (CVSC)*** and has served as an Executive Board member numerous times over the years. In April of 2007 Mike Co-Produced a television pilot, "Women on Top," with John Aquirre, Alan Schafer and Eugene Lebowitz.

Kathleen M. Sanchez, PhD (Academic Scholar/Director of Research/Co-Producer) Dr. Kathleen Sanchez will serve as one of the academic scholars and assume the role of project's Director of Research. In this capacity, she will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing all phases of research and evaluation activities associated with the project. Dr. Sanchez is an academic research scientist whose research studies have been funded by the ***National Institutes of Health***, her work has focused on the impact of culture and ethnicity on the psychological wellbeing of diverse populations in California. She gathered together a qualified research team for this project which reflects a combination of academic and community expertise that will provide the project with an inclusive and authentic portrayal of Cape Verdean communities in California. Lastly, Dr. Sanchez has served on the Executive Board of the CVSC in a variety of positions since 1992.

Danny Glover, Narrator. The acclaimed actor and activist has starred in a variety of film, stage, and television roles. In addition, Mr. Glover has been a live and voice actor in many children's movies. He has won five NAACP Image Awards, for his achievements as an actor of color and sits on the Vanguard Public Foundation's advisory board. In addition, Glover currently serves as board chair of the TransAfrica Forum, "a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the general public — particularly African-Americans — on the economic, political and moral

ramifications of U.S. foreign policy as it affects Africa and the Diaspora in the Caribbean and Latin America." In March 1998, he was appointed ambassador to the United Nations Development Programme. He also serves on the Advisory Council for TeleSUR, "Television of the South", a pan-Latin American television network based in Caracas, Venezuela. It began broadcasting on July 24, 2005.

James J. Lopes (Consultant) Currently, Mr. Lopes is a television producer and a Harvard-trained entertainment lawyer based in New York City. Mr. Lopes served as a Producer of ***Race to Execution***, an examination of the administration of the death penalty in America and how it is impacted by race. It was produced with Rachel Lyon and ITVS, NBPC and Independent Lens production and will be broadcast on PBS in Spring of 2007. With Joan Kaufman, he is producing the documentary "***We Light the World***", a work in progress which tells the story of the Cape Verdean whaling families of New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Dr. Gina Sanchez Gibau (Academic Scholar) Dr. Gibau will serve as the academic, humanities scholar on the project. In this capacity, she will provide her expertise on the ethnic identity and migration patterns of Cape Verdeans residing in the U.S. As a published author at ***Indiana University-Purdue University at Indiana (IUPUI)***, Dr. Gibau's work is internationally recognized and respected. Her works include "***The Politics of Cape Verdean American Identity***"; "***Contested Identities: Narratives of Race*** and "***Ethnicity in the Cape Verdean Diaspora***". Lastly, Dr. Gibau is a member of several Cape Verdean organizations and community groups.

Anthony Lopes, PhD (Community Scholar) Dr. Anthony "Tiny" Lopes will serve as the community humanities scholar on the project. In this capacity, he will provide his expertise and connections to key stakeholders in the Cape Verdean communities at the local, state and national level. As an educator, Dr. Lopes is a well-known, respected advocate in the community for several decades. He is one of the ***founding members of the CVSC and CVWA***, served in the capacity as ***CVSC President*** over the years.