

Torres Origins

Ruy Ruben Ruschel

3rd Edition

Torres History Characters

Volume II

XI. THE GERMAN COLONY

1 - THE PLANNING

The imperial plan to introduce German immigrants to Rio Grande do Sul dates back to earlier times. However, the detailing of the same, as well as the choice of venues, would depend on the arrival of the 1st effective President after the Independence Day, José Feliciano Fernandes Pinheiro. Then, on February 20, 1824, he entered the province, crossing the Mampituba, and soon talked about it with his compatriot (paulista) Lieutenant Colonel Francisco de Paula Soares, Commander of the Prison. It was on this occasion that he conceived the idea of placing a German colony in Torres. It was, therefore, this first location that he chose, before even taking possession of his governance.

If, for practical reasons, he began to distribute the Germans in other places (1) in São Leopoldo (1824), to take advantage of existing facilities of a failed state company (the flax mill) and 2 in São João das Missões (1825), to use the small town abandoned by the Indians, Fernandes Pinheiro nevertheless forgot his original project, as can be deduced from the letter he wrote on April 22nd, 1824 to the Minister of Foreigners: "When colonists came in overabundance, a small colony on the site called Das Torres. It is a very important point, the key proper to the Province of the northern part: recently, in my passage there, I advised the officer to raise the plan of a space of hoe land for such a foundation".

Commander Soares, the "official" referred to in the letter, sought such a space and came to the conclusion that it would be best to place the immigrants in vacant lands that he was discovering on the banks of the Mampituba River, along the penetration road he built there. This proposal was forwarded to Governor Pinheiro in a letter dated "Piranga" (that is: Baluarte Ipiranga), 01-04-1825: "We now remind you that in this district there are many vacant lands and that better and more it is advantageous for this place to establish a colony in the vicinity on the new road to Vacaria, where there is land for all kinds of crops, for cane for clay, for cassava for sand, for rice and linen for cotton and for food the highs, Matos, the thousands, all this with navigation here." In the same letter he explained that in the first stage of the road it had been opened as far as the Mampituba was navigable; there would be erected a Barracks - Paliçada, that in later letters explained to call itself Fort of Glory and destined to serve of center of German colony. The name was attributed at the suggestion of President Feliciano as a tribute to Princess Maria da Gloria, the eldest daughter of D. Pedro I, as can be seen in his

own handwriting in the margin of another letter he received from Comandante Soares in the same month.

The subordinate's opinion was accepted in full by the president of the Province, as seen in a letter which he sent to the ministry on May 22, 1825, in which he asked for express authorization to accommodate the Germans of the last newcomer "bordering the new road that works by making it practicable between the Torres prison and the inhabitants of the hills, to descend the animals and other products that are exported to the Province of Santa Catarina, and whose lands tell me that they are not so fertile).

This initial project of localization, resulting from the provinces adopted by President Feliciano Pinheiro (future Viscount of São Leopoldo) and by the commander Soares. It ended up being profoundly modified in practice, as will be seen later. But in him it becomes present the care of both to hit. The basic idea was for German farmers on very fertile and productive lands and, at the same time, make them intermediaries between the ranchers of the vacarian plateau and the Santa Catarina coast. Here the settlers would not be isolated: they would easily communicate with the seat of the Prison through river navigation and the road of penetration. However, the planners did not count on the catastrophic floods of the Mampituba of that time, factor that was important for the later alterations.

2. THE TRANSPORT OF IMMIGRANTS

In June 1826, Commander Francisco de Paula Soares was called to Porto Alegre by the new president of the Province, Brigadier José Egidio Veloso da Barbuda (Visconde de Caramuru), who invited him to assume the responsibility of implanting and generating in Torres the planned Cologne German. He reported to the subpoena. With his 29 years of service, he felt old even for the Presidio Command, intending to ask for reform. But the governor insisted, invoking even the interest and authority of the Emperor himself. Lieutenant Colonel Soares had to accept the charge and on 04.08.1826 was appointed inspector of the Torres Colony.

In September, Porto Alegre sought out the new residents of the district. Having organized the list of those who were in Sao Leopoldo, but willing to move (or because they had not yet received lots, or because they did not like the ones they received), he sent them to the Viscount, scythes, and pans, as well as horses and cattle, which should be given to each. The role consisted of 352 people, being 77 families and 40 unmarried singles. The tools and utensils were calculated in 530 and the animals needed in almost 700. But as the "Generosa" summa has arrived in Porto Alegre with another wave of immigrants, these were also destined for Torres. The inspector Soares immediately sent the supplementary list of 66 more people, being 9 families and 24 odd; for such, 143 instruments of use and almost 200 animals were foreseen.

In his office of September 24, 1826, Soares requested the immediate supply of the means of maintenance on the road and the objects to be given to the settlers. He further suggested that oxen, cows, horses and mares to distribute should be bought in Mostardas and Cima da Serra (São Francisco de Paula). He took the opportunity to request that the surveyor of the district of Santo António da Patrulha immediately go to Torres in order to measure the lots.

The same four ships that brought the settlers of São Leopoldo, via Rio dos Sinos, and another with the last arriving, left the capital at the end of October, 1826, descended the Guaíba (Guaiba River), entered the Lagoa do Casamento (Wedding Lagoon), and landed in Capivari in the following November. In this place the overflow of everything for the 26 carts that had been requisitioned to Vilas de Santo Antônio and Conceição do Arroio.

After 24 hours of rest, on day 5 the long caravan of carts followed the fields towards the Tramandaí River. As the tools, pots and pans did not fit all, some families would be left behind, but it seems that a dozen kilometers earlier, in Quilombo, the problem was solved: Inspector Soares left his own private luggage there and arranged more wagons to accommodate the all. To guide the carts, he used his slaves. As for the cattle of the supply on the road, he was being touched by prisoners who had been supplied to him in Porto Alegre.

Already on day 7, they arrived at Tramandaí. The crossing of the river took about 5 or 6 days, more than planned, because the commander of Conceição do Arroio had not provided canoes in time.

The march of the great caravan continued to the fields of the coast, old way that now coincides approximately with the Rota do Mar road (RS 386). There was a moment when the Germans could see the ocean, behind which they had abandoned their old homeland.

Finally, on November 17, 1826, tired of fatigue, they arrived at the locality of the Torres (Towers). The inspector accommodated them provisionally and counted: they numbered 421, being 237 Protestants and 184 Catholics. Thus ended the adventure of his transportation. The painful process of its settlement was about to begin.

3. THE COLONY TRES FORQUILHAS (THREE FORKS)

When the Germans arrived in Torres, they did not think to locate any of them in the Valley of the Three Forks. Thus, the historians who premeditated the radical separation of the Protestants, as well as those who narrate their coming directly from Porto Alegre to that valley, are mistaken. According to the original project in execution, all Protestants and Catholics would be installed on the bank of the Mampituba River with support in Gloria where a garrison of Guaraní soldiers, defensive against the bugres (indian), and where they would be the policing, the school, the evangelical temple, etc.

That year of 1826 it rained a lot, the Mampituba flooded its banks and the demarcation was delayed. The immigrants camped in Torres began to become impatient: some wanted to return to São Leopoldo or Porto Alegre. It was only in the summer of 1827, months later, that the demarcations were made. The surveyor Frederico Carlos Voges was also a German, wanted in São Leopoldo especially to serve as "helper of rope" (auxiliary) of the "pilot" (official surveyor) of Santo Antônio da Patrulha, João José Ferreira. The hard work of opening stings in the bush was done by a few sentenced at the disposal of the command and by 40 settlers who took turns every Sunday. In the choice of places divergences arose. The land was low and subject to floods, for the taste of the Germans, there was bush and too bathed. The Inspector Francisco de Paula Soares himself, who had imagined receiving only 200 settlers (and not twice

as much), seemed to be a small land, for it was not lawful for him to cross Mampituba and invade the province of Santa Catarina.

General dissatisfaction has created impasse. Lieutenant Colonel Soares sent the surveyor Voges to Porto Alegre with a proposal to divide the settlers into two groups, suggesting some alternatives. From there came the government's solution: in Mampituba only Catholics would remain, to be within the immediate reach of the Chapel of St. Dominic (Capela de São Domingos); as for the Protestants who were accompanied by a pastor and a doctor of their own - the immigrants Carlos Leopoldo Voges and Jorge Elias Zinkgraff - would be accommodated on the fertile shores, further away, from the Three Forks River.

On 05-27-1827, the surveyor João José Ferreira and his assistant Voges demarcated lots on both banks of that river. And soon in June the Protestant families began to move there, using carts they rented at "4 mil réis" (4 thousand réis - old currency) each (three families per cart). They followed the stretch of the field (today Rota do Mar - Sea Route Road) to the Sanga of the Cornélios and from there, through the Terra de Areia to the destination.

In the meantime Inspector Soares arrived from the Capital, where he had gone to seek instructions; even when he was ill, he drew lots to the settlers and arranged for those who were still to travel. In August 1827 the Protestants completed their regular settlement. In December they made the initiative to the Government of the Empire, in French, a letter of thanks in which they proudly said:

"for some months we have owned this beautiful area and planted what we want - fruits and vegetables, both in Brazil and in Europe."

The German Three Forks colony had been the first to settle.

4. THE COLONY OF SAO PEDRO DE ALCÂNTARA

There remained the problem of locating the Catholic Germans on the banks of the Mampituba, but they continued to refuse these low and semi-lands. In July 1827, six of them, with the surveyor Frederico Carlos Voges, went to confer. They returned discouraged, murmuring that they too should be taken to Three Forks, where the lands were superior. Twenty-eight Catholics came forward to petition the provincial presidency, land in the Tramandaí camps or elsewhere.

Inspector Lieutenant Colonel Francisco de Paula Soares was called to Porto Alegre where the settlers' claim was rejected. It was then decided to look for leaner lands, a little to the south of Mampituba, between the Jacaré and Morro do Forno Ponds, where Soares himself had a sugar plantation. The surveyor Voges went there to search for it.

Almost a year after the arrival of immigrants, on 02-11-1827, Voges presented his report. There were good and high lands there, enough for up to 400 couples, not counting the marshy riverside that could be donated in part. The problem was the lack of access road.

The inspector put the Catholics on the wall: either they accepted the new proposal or they would be crushed in the Valley of the Three Forks, where the best lots were already in the

hands of the Protestants. A commission from four of them went to examine alternatives among the ponds, and liked it. Then the surveyor came to demarcate land.

In February 1828 the first 40 lots were raffled, while the demarcation of others was completed and an access road for carts was opened, a work that was done by sentenced persons. Some 15 families soon occupied their land, built houses, planted beans. But, contrary to what Soares imagined, the German godo knot was not "unleashed."

Twenty other families gave up the lands and threatened to beat the acceptors and burn the houses. They learned that they would be subject to the attacks of the bugres hidden in the bushes in Morro do Forno (Hill of the Oven). The rebels were led by a Frenchman, Louis Marie Boudier, who had come alone with Germans and one such Magnus.

Convinced that the real cause of the revolt of some was the intention to temporize to continue receiving the cash subsidy that came from the Crown while not seated, the inspector banked energy. He arrested the seditious Boudier (when he almost received a shot from the settler Johan Kratz) and sent him to Porto Alegre with the recommendation to enlist him in the armed forces. The German surveyor went along to give explanations 09-03- (1828).

The Providential Government decided to cut the rebelliousness by its roots. The General Council (Legislative Assembly of then) stopped the payment of the subsidies to the settlers in May, which was fulfilled from June. But the mutiny of the rebels did not cease. Some went to protest in the Capital. The authorities collected two of them from the "Presigangas" (Prison ships used by the Brazilian and Portuguese governments in the 1830s and 1860s and administered by the Navy. Its name would come from the English term press-gang): Matías Deutsch and Antônio (possibly Kreuzburg). It was cold water in the boil.

Pressured by such measures of force, after all in July 1828, a year and a half after their arrival, the last Catholic settlers occupied their plots, the most displeased fled to St. Leopold or elsewhere.

The name Sao Pedro de Alcântara (Saint Peter of Alcantara), which was a Spanish saint (1499-1562, founder of the barefooted Franciscans) was initially applied to the German Colony of Torres as a whole, as an indirect tribute to the Emperor, also called Pedro de Alcântara. However, it ended up only for the Colony, although later (1847), its chapel was erected with another invocation: Nossa Senhora do Amparo (Our Lady of the Amparo).