

**Desigualdade de gênero, pobreza feminina e propriedade no sertão cearense, Brazil,
1845-1889**

or

**Creating Gender Inequality in the Brazilian Northeast: Widows, Property Rights,
and Inheritance in the Backlands of Ceará, 1845-1889**

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With a few exceptions, women—and especially lower-class women—have remained virtually absent in the literature on the social history of the hinterlands of the Brazilian Northeast. The invisibility of poor women in the scant scholarship on the region is due, in large part, to the lack of primary sources available to write their histories.¹ Yet, this absence can also be thought as a reflection of the masculine-centered perspective that orientated many of the foundational texts on the history of the Northeast written since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Júnior has shown, both fictional and scholarly characterizations of the semi-arid backlands or *sertões* produced during those years have discursively constructed the region as a masculine space—a place populated by brave, rough, and honor-obsessed cowboys and landowners. *Sertanejos* (lower-class male backlanders) have also been depicted as responding only with violence and religious superstition to the poverty that has affected their lives since time immemorial.² Some of the fictional works from the same period have focused on *sertanejas*, or lower-class backlands women, and have characterized them as sharing with *sertanejos* a fate of continuous exploitation at the hands of all powerful large landowners. But due to the culture of masculine domination—a trait that is depicted as essential to the region—prostitution and mysticism appear as the only means through which *sertanejas* without families have survived the unvarying penury of life in the drought-prone environment of the backlands. Unchanging class exploitation, drought, and a *macho* culture are thus the only possible causes of the seemingly timeless poverty and suffering of the few *sertanejas* that are visible to us in these works.³ In this context, this paper is an initial attempt at examining the experiences of historically-situated *sertanejas*, with a focus on some of the factors that might explain the rapid impoverishment and even destitution of lower-class widows from the interior of the Northeastern province of Ceará during the late nineteenth century. Drawing on post-mortem inventories and *partilhas* (documents that detail the subdivision of property at the time of death of a wealth holder), this paper analyzes the ways in which the process of succession of property was affected by gender. Furthermore, this essay examines how inheritance practices, coupled with local and legal understandings regarding the “incapacity” of widows to administer the property of their children seem to have contributed to the dispossession of lower-class women of their meager resources (including smallholdings and few animals) at the moment of death of their husbands.

The historical literature on gender and the transmission of wealth and family property in Brazil has focused almost exclusively on political and economic elite families, living in the Southeast of Brazil or in coastal cities of the Northeast during the colonial period and the nineteenth century. The literature has revealed the centrality of women—who were legally capable of both holding and bequeathing wealth—to the various strategies that elite families developed to avoid the fragmentation of inherited resources that followed from the egalitarian principles of the Portuguese and later Brazilian succession systems.⁴ Nonetheless, the scholarship has paid scant attention to the place of women as property holders and transmitters of wealth among the group that Zephyr Frank calls “middling wealthholders”—those for whom economic standing and survival was a much more precarious affair and “for whom wealth was accumulated in a lifetime and then dispersed.”⁵ In a more general sense, the longstanding trend in the

historiography of the Northeastern *sertão* that maintains that great cattle *fazendeiros* retained monopoly over enormous extensions of land and scores of virtually destitute sertanejos has prevented analysis of wealthholding and inheritance among non-elite groups in the region and of the ways in which these practices shaped the specific vulnerabilities of women to dispossession and poverty.⁶

Yet, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, tenuously-positioned middling families living in the *sertão* of the province of Ceará during the second half of the nineteenth century did possess small landholdings as well as small herds of animals and even one or two slaves—assets that became inheritable when one of the parents died. These families lived precarious existences as small farmers who took advantage of the growing agricultural economies of cotton, tobacco, and subsistence crops, and who complemented farming with small-scale livestock grazing.⁷ As smallholders who did not enjoy unimpeded access to the local civil and criminal justice institutions and did not control the credit system, this group was extremely vulnerable to indebtedness, bankruptcy and loss of resources. In fact, the last third of the nineteenth century was a particularly difficult period for these very modest families of wealthholders, as large-scale social transformations came to undermine their ability to survive from small-scale agricultural and ranching activities. The decline of slavery brought by the end of transatlantic slave trade in 1850, the forced recruitment of many young men from this group to fight in the Paraguayan War (1865-70), the rapid fall in the prices of cotton that signaled the end of the cotton boom in the late 1860s, and the onslaught of the Great Drought of 1877-79 brought loss of slaves, land, livestock, as well as intense hardship and even conflict to many of these families.⁸ Nevertheless, examination of a sample of fifteen post-mortem inventories and *partilhas* from the municipality of Jucás—a ranching and agricultural township located in the Southern-central region of Ceará—seems to indicate that the moment of death of their husbands left widows from this group much more vulnerable to dispossession of family property than widowers. This vulnerability, in turn, was related to the intricacies of the community property regime that ruled marriages, the succession laws, and the system of guardianship of orphaned minors in place during the Imperial period.

The Brazilian inheritance system—derived from Portuguese laws that were not substantially altered until the adoption of the Civil Code in 1917—established that both spouses held equal shares in matrimonial property. This community property, in turn, belonged to the children after their parents' deaths. As Linda Lewin has argued, the rules of *ab intestato* or *intestate* succession—the major form of devolution in Brazil's inheritance system—sought to guarantee the instantaneous transmission of each parent's property to the legitimate offspring of a married couple. Thus, inheritance took place after the passing of each spouse.⁹ At the time of death of one of the parents, a local judge listed and evaluated the community property, and recorded it in a post-mortem inventory. The judge then presided over the division of the estate: the half belonging to the deceased spouse was passed on to the heirs who received an equal share or *legítima*. By contrast, the surviving spouse (*meeiro* or *meeira*—the holder of one half of the couple's community property) remained in possession of her or his half of the community property until their own death. The division of inheritable assets was then recorded in the *partilha*.

Interestingly, the *partilhas* from Jucás demonstrate that despite the legal guarantee that the *meeiros* would maintain possession of their half of the property, in some cases widows and widowers from the middling group “lost out” to their children, especially with regards to possession of landholdings or other more valuable assets, when the judges divided the community property in halves and allocated inheritable assets to each heir.¹⁰ For instance, upon the death of Damiana Maria de Jesus, her estate and that of her husband João Alves Bezerra totaled a modest Rs. 160\$000. The community property comprised three horses of various ages and two small landholdings. The judges established in the *partilha* that the *meia* or half that belonged to João Alves included the three horses and a minor portion of the landholdings, worth Rs. 40\$000. The three legitimate offspring of the couple, whose ages ranged between two and ten years old, inherited three portions of the landholdings, worth Rs. 26\$666 each, which amounted to almost Rs. 80\$000.¹¹ Why would the *partilhador* or local judge who undertook the division of assets choose to favor the heirs with a larger portion of the landholdings as inheritance, to the detriment of the half of the father? Obviously in this case, the property in all likelihood remained undivided for a few years and under the care of João Alves, as the heirs were minors and by law he would become guardian of his children. Still, when the minors reached 21 years old, they could effectively take possession of their inheritance and force the fragmentation of the land. Yet, the question remains, what explains the specific allocation of a few animals and a small portion of land to the *meeiro*, and only landholdings to the heirs?

According to Lewin, the system of *ab intestato* succession as it emerged in Portugal operated within the logic that “the most comforting position for parents who were joined in legitimate marriage was the secure knowledge that their children were ideally protected when they died without a will.” Moreover, intestate succession intended to “reward members of the blood kindred,” and not a surviving spouse. This is visible in the fact that the laws established that the necessary heirs—those who could not be disinherited—were the legitimate descendants or children of a married couple, and, in their absence, ascendants. In those cases, the law called collateral heirs, ordering them in a ladder that started with the decedent’s siblings, then uncles and aunts, then nephews and nieces, and finally moving to cousins as distant as the tenth degree of collateral kinship.¹² This logic of the inheritance system, in turn, could work to favor the heirs with the devolution of more productive or valuable property, such as a landholding, and to place the *meeiro* at a disadvantage in relationship to his or her children as in the case of João Alves. Crucially, the *Ordenações Filipinas* also established that *partilhadores* should try to avoid the fragmentation of the property of heirs, especially of those assets that were difficult to divide, such as slaves, livestock and lands.¹³

The cases from Ceará demonstrate that the application of this legislation and the recommendations from the *Ordenações* contributed to place younger widows from the group of very modest wealthholders in very precarious positions, and in danger of losing some of the more valuable assets that they and their husbands had acquired, to their children. For example, upon the death of Raimundo Gomes Lima, on July 27 of 1882, his estate and that of his wife Dona Joanna *de tal*¹⁴ was assessed at Rs. 451\$000. Among the most valuable assets that the couple possessed was one landholding located in the Lugar

Canavieira, worth Rs. 100\$000, a smaller plot of land located in the Lugar São Bartolomeu, estimated at Rs. 25\$000, and a number of livestock worth a total of Rs. 336\$000. The *meia*, or portion of the estate that belonged to the widow totaled Rs. 225\$000. The judge allocated two cows, one horse, thirty head of sheep, an old house, the smaller landholding located in São Bartolomeu, and four *braças* of the landholding in Lugar Canavieira to the widow as her half.¹⁵ The five children, who ranged in ages between fifteen years old and seven months old received each a steer and a portion of the land in Canavieira, that together amounted to Rs. 75\$000.¹⁶ Clearly, the local judge who favored the children with inheritance of most of the large landholding divided the estate following the logic of the inheritance system that sought to guarantee the future well-being of the children, instead of the surviving spouse. For in numerical terms, the judge could have allocated the entire landholding in the Lugar Canavieira to Joanna, as well as some livestock, and divide the rest of the animals among the children. This, in fact, would have prevented the future fragmentation of the land in the Lugar Canavieira. As it was, Joanna received as her half only a few *braças* of land in two locations, which in all likelihood were too small to be productive, and thirty sheep, the selling or raising of which would provide a very minimum income.

What made the favoring of the heirs, instead of the surviving spouse, a practice with far more insidious consequences, such as potential destitution, for poorer widows rather than widowers was the system of guardianship of orphaned minors (or the *tutorias* system) that was also legislated by the *Ordenações Filipinas* and that was intrinsically related to succession. According to the law, minor children who had lost at least one parent became orphans. Judges were then required to appoint a guardian (or *tutor*) to these orphans, who took on the responsibilities of caring for the minors and administering their inherited property until they came of age. Crucially, the law established that men as fathers were the most capable guardians of their children's assets and therefore were to be appointed as *tutores* in all cases, except those of mental incompetency. By contrast, widows—even if they were the children's mothers—as a general rule were not allowed to serve as guardians. Mothers and grandmothers of minor orphans were permitted to assume the role of guardians only if they petitioned for this appointment to the local "Orphans' Judge", proved that "they lived in honesty" and that they had not remarried, and pledged their own property as surety or produced a guarantor (*fiador*) for their actions.¹⁷ Thus, in most cases of Cearense widows from the middling group, who as a rule did not possess much wealth or even the connections needed to get a *fiador* and initiate the legal petition of *tutoria*, male relatives, including brothers, uncles, and grandfathers of the orphans were placed in charge of the heirs' possessions as guardians by the State.¹⁸ In the case of Joanna, the paternal grandfather José Gomes da Silva Cajú was nominated legal guardian of her children João, Siriaco, Simplicio, Eduardo and Honorato, and administrator of their inheritances, which included most of the land in the Lugar Canavieira.¹⁹

The available documentation does not allow me to determine what exactly the death of Raimundo Gomes and the transfer of the administration of most of the land at Canavieira to the grandfather of her children meant for the life of the widow Dona Joanna. However, it is clear that in this case, as in others examined here, the widow lost

most of the valuable possessions that she and her husband had accumulated over several years of life together, to her children's guardian. This constituted a loss at least of the fruit of the widow's work, for sertanejos used family labor, including extensive women's work in both reproduction and production activities centered in smallholdings. In fact, extensive reliance on women's and children's labor is what allowed some of the most fortunate middling families to acquire an additional plot of land, animals or even slaves.²⁰ It could be argued that, as a member of the extended family of the grandfather of her children, José Gomes da Silva, Joanna's survival would be guaranteed. She could be incorporated into his household, if her family did not already have extensive relationships of reciprocity with the family of her in-laws, and would still enjoy the protection provided by a male relative, as well as access to productive resources. Yet, the loss of more than half of the most valuable landholding in her estate and the fact that Joanna retained only a minimum amount of land did place her in a position of dependence on others, and particularly other men, such as her father-in-law. Moreover, while it is true that in the sertão of Ceará, family members and heirs of large fazendas collectively worked and sometimes even owned landholdings and water sources, these relationships became increasingly strained during the last third of the nineteenth century. As I have shown elsewhere, fierce competition for scarce productive resources increased in the context of the expansion of the agricultural and ranching economies in a drought-prone, semi-arid environment. Likewise, the fragility in tenure of the same resources by people from the middling groups became so exacerbated by the rapid social, political and environmental pressures of these years that they became increasingly unable to share communally-owned resources and even to maintain the reciprocal exchanges and relationships that they had traditionally used to guarantee the survival of all family members.²¹

The social organization of gender in sertanejo communities also appears to have contributed to place widows with very little property of their own and who became dependent on extended families for their survival in very tenuous positions. According to backlands' constructs of patriarchy, men were the appropriate protectors and defenders of women's honor, as well as the effective controllers of their sexuality and labor. In the case of the passing of a husband—the most immediate male authority on a married woman's life—a widow needed to remain under the patriarchal control of other family men, who could vouchsafe for her honor. Nevertheless, as Joan Meznar has argued in her study of small farmers in a Paraíba community, widows who engaged in sexual relations or became pregnant outside of marriage came to be seen as outside of the ordered patriarchal community, and therefore “did not benefit from the security provided by the legally established family.”²² Indeed, merely living outside of patriarchal control for widows who did not remain tied to male family members could earn them the reputation of being sexually unrestrained and therefore a danger to the social order. Under those conditions, the options for widows who lost their property were not that many, as even their acceptance as protected figures in extended family networks was so tightly linked to chastity and honorable behavior.²³

A lot of research is still needed to understand exactly how these widows fared under such circumstances. Nevertheless, it is plausible that the inheritance practices that

avored children over surviving spouses, the *tutorias* system that kept widows from using and administering the property inherited by their minor children, and the social expectations that required chastity from widows in exchange of familial support contributed to the destitution and desolation that poor widows suffered during these years. Contemporary observers writing during the period beginning in the 1860s indicated that poor women, including a large number of widows, roamed in the hinterlands in search of work, housing or other forms of assistance.²⁴ The widespread migration and dislocation occasioned by the Great Drought of 1877-79 and the subsequent droughts that affected the interior during the 1880s further disrupted networks of familial support, forcing widows and their children to confront the horrors of these calamities on their own. For instance, Roger Cunniff's study of the effects of the Great Drought demonstrates an excess of widows in relation to widowers in refugee camps in Ceará and Piauí. Cunniff's analysis of the marital status of refugees aged eighteen and older in relief colonies in Piauí in 1878 reveals a number of seventy-nine widows and thirty-eight widowers. He also demonstrates that these figures are not quite so unusual because widows in Piauí, according to the 1872 national census, outnumbered widowers 5,187 to 3,705. The widowed population in Ceará was also elevated. According to the same census, widows there outnumbered widowers 14,597 to 9,299.²⁵

It is impossible to know the proportion of widows from the middling group that became completely dispossessed and appeared as beggars in refugee camps during the Great Drought and even less how many of those might have lost their properties to the guardians of their orphaned children. But the available documentation does reveal that at least in some cases the *tutorias* system and the distrust of widows enshrined in the legal code weakened their ability to independently administer their children's assets and disempowered them in struggles over resources with men from their families. For instance, on 24 September 1887, the farmer Venceslau Geraldo de Oliveira filed a petition with the Orphans' Judge from the municipality of Jucás accusing his sister, the widow Quitéria Maria de Jesus, from selling a landholding measuring 65 *braças* and an old house located in the Lugar Barrocas that had belonged to the estate of Quitéria and her husband, the late Candido Bezerra de Jesus, who died in 1877. Through this action, Venceslau noted, Quitéria "had prejudiced the very small inheritance of the orphan Josefa," who was fifteen years old in 1887. Accordingly, he petitioned the judge "as protector of the wellbeing of orphans" to uphold the law and bring justice to Josefa.²⁶ The surviving records do not allow us to know the precise outcome of this petition. However, Venceslau had the law on his side when he denounced his sister. The *Ordenações Filipinas* included a provision that allowed local judges to "take away the entire property" of widows who "after the death of their husbands have squandered what they own" and to place it under the care of an administrator or *curador*. Such measures were justified, according to the law code, in order to protect heirs from the loss of their inheritance caused by irresponsible widows and to compensate for the "frailty of reason of widows."²⁷ In the case of Quitéria, we know that the judge at least initiated the proceedings leading to the dispossession of the remaining property of Quitéria, since an inventory of her assets was taken after Venceslau's petition was filed.

Conclusion

The late nineteenth century was a time of intense economic hardship, social and physical dislocation and even death for many poor sertanejos and for those from the middling groups who lived of small-scale farming and ranching. The preliminary research and analysis presented in this paper suggests that lower-class widows living through these difficult times experienced gender-specific vulnerabilities to social displacement and even complete destitution. Yet, the poorer widows' insecurity in their positions and livelihoods did not derive from a timeless state of poverty, as classic depictions of sertanejo history would have. Instead, the intersection between laws and policies that restricted certain civil rights of widows and local gender practice appears to have created or at least exacerbated the tenuous position of widows from the middling group who had accumulated a minimum of property. The allocation of assets by local judges who applied the logic of inheritance laws to guarantee that heirs, instead of surviving spouses, benefited from family property meant that widows could lose access to and control over the most valuable of the family's assets at the time of death of their husbands. While this policy applied to both widowers and widows, legal inequalities between men and women, which were explicit in the civil law, established that widows in most cases could not be the guardians of their children and therefore could not be the administrators of the newly-inherited assets of their minor sons and daughters. The dutiful application of this law by local judges undermined the ability of widows to survive from the resources that they and their husbands had acquired through a lifetime of shared labor and diminished their potential economic autonomy. Indeed, the transfer of the guardianship over their minor children and the relinquishing of ownership and control over what had been their community property to male relatives or other men placed these widows in a situation of extreme dependence on patriarchal figures or other male community members. A more comprehensive study is still needed into the workings of extended families, fictive kinship and other relations of reciprocity among poorer families, especially within the context of insecurity of survival for many in the late-nineteenth century backlands. But the evidence analyzed here indicates that without control over assets and few chances for economic autonomy, dispossessed or destitute widows did not have much bargaining power within the hierarchical structure of the patriarchal families in which they were inserted. In such a context, public acknowledgement of widows' honorable behavior in all likelihood became even more necessary as a prerequisite for them to remain included in extended family networks. Finally, this initial exploration into the ways in which widows from the middling group lost access and control over family property at the time of their husbands' death suggests that patriarchy, inequality between men and women, and women's subordination to men were gender systems that were constantly recreated through law, policy, and custom, instead of inherent features of backlands' culture and society.

¹ Exceptions are Miridan Knox Folci, “Mulheres do Sertão Nordestino,” in Mary del Priore, ed. *História das mulheres no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 1997), pp. 241-277; Joan Meznar, “Carlota Lucia de Brito: Women, Power, and Politics in Northeast Brazil,” in William Beezley and Judith Ewel, eds., *The Human Tradition in Modern Latin America* (Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources Inc, 1997), pp. 41-52. Some studies focusing on millenarian movements in the backlands have highlighted the roles of sertanejo women in these religious revivals. See e.g., Patricia Pessar, *From Fanatics to Folk: Brazilian Millenarianism and Popular Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

² Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Júnior, *Nordestino: uma invenção do falo—uma história do gênero masculino (Nordeste, 1920-1940)* (Maceió: Edições Catavento, 2003).

³ See e.g., Rodolfo Teófilo, *A fome* (Fortaleza: Gualter Silva Editora, 1890), Domingos Olímpio, *Luzia-Homem* (1st ed., 1903; Fortaleza: ABC Fortaleza, 1999), José do Patrocínio, *Os retirantes* 2nd ed (São Paulo: Editora Três, 1972); for further discussion of representations of women in Northeastern fictional works from various periods, see Teoberto Landim, *Seca: a estação do inferno: uma análise dos romances que tematizam a seca na perspectiva do narrador* (Fortaleza: Editora UFC, 2005), pp. 209-235.

⁴ See e.g., Muriel Nazzari, *Disappearance of the Dowry: Women, Families and Social Change in São Paulo, Brazil, 1600-1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), Alida Metcalf, “Women and Means: Women and Family Property in Colonial Brazil,” *Journal of Social History*, 24, 2 (Winter, 1990), pp. 277-298 and “Fathers and Sons: The Politics of Inheritance in a Colonial Township,” *HAHR* 66, 3 (1986), pp. 455-484. See also Kátia Mattoso de Queirós, *Família e sociedade na Bahia do século XIX* (São Paulo: Corrupio, 1988).

⁵ Zephyr Frank, *Dutra’s World: Wealth and Family in Nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), p. 2.

⁶ See, e.g., Djacir Menezes, *O outro Nordeste: Formação social do Nordeste* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1937); Hamilton Monteiro de Mattos, *Crise agrária e luta de classes: O Nordeste brasileiro entre 1850-1889* (Brasília: Horizonte Editora, 1980); Robert Levine, *Vale of Tears: Revisiting the Canudos Massacre in Northeastern Brazil, 1893-1897* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), chap. 2; Frederico de Castro Neves, *A multidão e a história: Saques e outras ações de massas no Ceará* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2000) and “A lei de terras e a lei da vida: transformações do munda rural no Ceará do século XIX,” *Estudos de História, Franca* 8, 2 (2001): 37-58; Sylvia Porto Alegre, “Fome de braços—questão nacional. Notas sobre o trabalho livre no Nordeste no século XIX,” *Revista de Ciências Sociais UFC* 20/21, 1/2 (1985/1986): 105-142; see also, Denise Soares de Moura, “Andantes de novos rumos: a vinda de migrantes cearenses para fazendas de café paulistas em 1878,” *Revista Brasileira de História* 17, 34 (1997): 119-132; for a critique of this enduring paradigm, see Manuel Domingos, “The Powerful in the Outback of the Brazilian Northeast,” *Latin American Perspectives* 31: 2 (March, 2004), 94-111.

⁷ Martha S. Santos, “On the Importance of Being Honorable: Masculinity, Survival, and Conflict in the Backlands of Northeast Brazil, 1840s-1890,” *The Americas* 64, 1 (July 2007), pp. 35-57.

⁸ Santos, “‘Sertões Temerosos (Menacing Backlands):’ Honor, Gender, and Violence in a Changing World. Ceará, Brazil, 1845-1889” (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 2004), chap. 3.

⁹ Linda Lewin, *Surprise Heirs I: Illegitimacy, Patrimonial Rights, and Legal Nationalism in Luso-Brazilian Inheritance, 1750-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 29-32.

¹⁰ From the inventories, it is difficult to establish for sure whether the lands of middling Cearense families were grazing or agricultural lands. Nevertheless, the fact that they often possessed very small rural properties (of less than one hundred hectares) indicates that those lands were used for small-scale farming, and therefore were more expensive than grazing lands. Moreover, the degree of conflict for land among poorer groups in the interior of Ceará, which I illustrate elsewhere, demonstrates that land was a highly contested, and therefore valuable resource, and that this competition increased from the mid to the late nineteenth century. See Santos, “Sertões Temerosos,” chaps. 2 and 6.

¹¹ Jucás, Arrol., 5, 43: 9, 1880, Arquivo Público do Estado do Ceará (hereafter APEC).

¹² Lewin, *Surprise Heirs I*, pp. 20, 29.

¹³ Candido Mendes de Almeida, *Código Phillipino ou Ordenações e Leis do Reino de Portugal*, 14th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia do Instituto Philomathico, 1870), Livro IV, Tit XCVI, pp. 957-88.

¹⁴ In his study of the backlands of Inhamuns, Billy Jaynes Chandler noted that adding *de tal* to a given name in official documents indicates that a person’s last name was not known, or perhaps more commonly, that his or her social status, and that of their family, was so insignificant that it was not worth mentioning it. Billy Janes Chandler, *The Feitosas and Sertão dos Inhamuns: The History of a Family and a Community in Northeast Brazil, 1700-1930* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1972), p. 93.

¹⁵ One braça is equivalent to 2.2 meters.

¹⁶ Jucás, Arrol., 5, 43: 19, 1882, APEC.

¹⁷ Almeida, *Código*, Livro VI, Tit. CII, pp. 994-1004. For a study of the effects of the tutorias system on the welfare of propertyless orphans in a Northeast community see Joan Meznar, “Orphans and the Transition from Slave to Free Labor in Northeast Brazil: The Case of Campina Grande, 1850-1888,” *Journal of Social History* 27.3 (Spring, 1994), pp. 499-515.

¹⁸ See e.g., Jucás, Arrol., 1, 39: 28, 1853; Arrol., 1, 39: 30, 1853; Arrol., 1, 39: 38, 1855; Arrol., 1, 39: 34, 1854; Arrol., 1, 39: 41, 1856; Jucás, Arrol., 2, 40: 10, 1859; Jucás, Arrol., 5, 43: 15, 1881; Arrol., 5, 43: 29, 1883; Arrol., 5, 43: 65, 1888; Arrol., 5, 43: 56, 1887; Arrol., 5, 43: 27, 1883, Arrol., 5, 43: 8, 1880, Arrol., 5, 43: 63, 1888; Arrol., 5, 43: 17, 1882; Arrol., 5, 43: 61, 1887, APEC. Two cases of women of more means who successfully petitioned to be tutoras of their minor children are Jucás, Arrol., 5, 43: 58, 1888 and Arrol., 5, 43: 30, 1883, APEC.

¹⁹ Jucás, Arrol., 5, 43, 19, 1882, APEC.

²⁰ Santos, “Sertões Temerosos,” chap 2.

²¹ See “Sertões Temerosos,” chaps. 2 and 6 and “On the Importance of Being Honorable,” pp. 35-57.

²² Joan Meznar, “Deference and Dependence: The World of Small Farmers in a Northeastern Brazilian Community, 1850-1900,” (Ph.D. diss, University of Texas at Austin, 1986), p. 42.

²³ On the place of women alone or unprotected women in backlands’ society, see Santos, “Sertões Temerosos,” chap. 5.

²⁴ Juvenal Galeno, *Lendas e canções populares*, 2 vols. (1st ed., 1864; Fortaleza: Imprensa Universitária do Ceará, 1965), 1: 34; Eduardo Hoornaert, *Crônicas das Casas de Caridade fundadas pelo padre Ibiapina* (Fortaleza: Museu do Ceará-Secretaria da Cultura do Estado do Ceará, 2006), 75. See also, Ralph Della Cava, *Miracle at Joazeiro* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p.19; María Verónica Secreto, “Ceará, a fábrica de trabalhadores: Emigração subsidiada no final do Século XIX,” *Trajetos: Revista de História UFC* 2, 4 (2003): p. 59.

²⁵ Roger Cunniff, “The Great Drought: Northeast Brazil, 1877-1880” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1970), pp. 236, 238; Brazil, Directoria Geral de Estatística, *Recenseamento da população do Império do Brazil a que se procedeu no dia 1o de Agosto de 1872*, 21 vols. (Rio de Janeiro: 1873-76), 4: p. 176.

²⁶ Jucas, *Arrol.*, 5, 43: 56, 1887, APEC.

²⁷ Almeida, *Codigo*, Livro IV, Tit, CVII, pp. 1015-1016.