

CT1AA, Lisbon, Portugal

by

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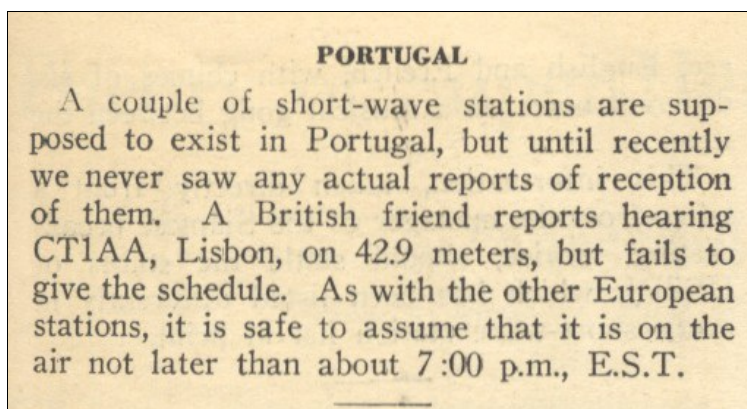
The early shortwave press contains countless references to station CT1AA in Lisbon, Portugal. It was known as Radio Colonial, and from 1930 to 1938 it shows up on just about every list of active stations, and in many DXers' reports of stations heard. It was often well heard. Beyond listings and DX reports, however, there is little information about CT1AA.

The station started out as an amateur operation, call letters P1AA (in the days when a country's initial was often used as the prefix). When standard callsigns were adopted the call became CT1AA. The owner was Abílio Nunes dos Santos, Jr.

Nunes dos Santos appears to be one of Portugal's "fathers of radio." He started his amateur activities in 1923. It was in September of the following year that he became a "broadcasting amateur" on an experimental basis, and March 1, 1925 when he began regular broadcasting. The station operated from the warehouse of his family's business, the Chiados Department Stores, which sold RCA and Phillips radios. Broadcasts were on mediumwave at that time, and the station used the slogan "Radio Portugal." The government closed down broadcasting from May to July 1925. Nunes dos Santos returned to the air on October 25, as CT1AA.

It is unclear if CT1AA was in fact Portugal's "first" broadcaster in time, but it appears that it was first in the sense that KDKA was "first" in the United States—it offered scheduled programming designed specifically for broadcast listening by the general public, and the first to capture a regular audience.

Mediumwave operations ended in 1934. Starting in 1926, Nunes dos Santos also transmitted on shortwave, under the name Radio Colonial. The programs were different from those of the mediumwave service. Shortwave operations continued until 1938, by which time the station's call letters had changed from CT1AA to CS2WA.



The first American reference to the station that I have found is in the Fall 1931 issue of *Radio Design* (left), the house organ of the Pilot Radio & Tube Corp., whose *Wasp* receivers were among the first "consumer" shortwave sets. *Radio Design* contained a lot of short-wave news.

Happily, the station can be remembered through its QSL-cards, which graced many DXers' collections in the 1930s. Here is the card that was used in 1932 for amateur operations.

QRA { **ABILIO NUNES DOS SANTOS JUNIOR**
Avenida Antonio Augusto d'Aguiar n.º 144 - LISBON - PORTUGAL

TO RADIO *W 1 BFA*
UR { SIGS WKD
CARD RCD
ERE ON *6-11* 1932 At TMG
QSA R TONE T QRG MC BAND QSB to

PORTUGAL

CT1AA

REMARKS: *Very nice 2 yd. op!*

PSE QSL-DIRECT or VIA R. E. P. Best 73's es Dx Ob!

Nº *5766* op. *[Signature]*

TRANSMITTERS: 940 KC FONE, 7000 KC SIGS FONE, 14000 KC SIGS FONE, 28000 KC SIGS
RECEIVER: 1-V-1-2, RCA-AR 1496 D



A CT1AA amateur card from 1926 can be seen [here](#).

Reports for broadcast operations usually brought a card (see pgs. 4-6), but here is a letter, from 1930, which appears to be for broadcast operations. It is from Nunes dos Santos to a listener in South Amboy, New Jersey.

CT 1AA
POSTO ~~PIAVA~~
DO AMADOR
Abilio Nunes dos Santos Junior
EMISSOR
Avenida Antonio Augusto d'Aguiar, 144
TELEF. 89 N.
STUDIO
Avenida Duque d'Avila, 86 r/c E.
TELEF. 234 N.
X^oX

Lisboa, de May 1st de 1923^o

Ex. no Sr. Fletcher W. Hartman
365 John Street
South Amboy,
New Jersey

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of February 21st I inform you that my Call Letters are CT 1AA. My Station transmits on Fridays from 22.00 to 23.15 G M T in the wave-length of 43 meters.

I also transmit on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays in the wave-length of 320 meters from 22.00 to 24.00 G M T.

Trusting that this report will be of value to you

Yours faithfully/
Abilio Nunes dos Santos

CT 1AA
POSTO ~~PIAVA~~
DO AMADOR
Abilio Nunes dos Santos Junior
EMISSOR
Avenida Antonio Augusto d'Aguiar, 144
TELEF. 89 N.
STUDIO
Avenida Duque d'Avila, 86 r/c E.
TELEF. 234 N.
X^oX

Ex. no Sr.

Fletcher W. Hartman
365 John Street
South Amboy,
U.S. AMERICA
NEW JERSEY

5313



The two cards shown below were the regular QSLs sent by CT1AA for broadcast operations. Look carefully and you will see that they are not exactly the same. The 1932 card contains no mention of the slogan, Radio Colonial; the address and telephone information is different; and all pictures but the one in the upper right are different views (of the same scenes).

Studio N.º 1

Amplificadores e controle

Studio N.º 2

Emissor de ondas curtas

**ESTAÇÃO RADIO
CT1AA**

ABILIO NUNES DOS SANTOS JUNIOR

Aspecto parcial

STUDIO: Av. Duque de Avila, 86 r/c, Esq. — Telefone Norte 234
EMISSOR: Av. Antonio Augusto de Aguiar 144 — Telefone Norte 89

LISBOA - Portugal

1932

Studio N.º 1

*Amplificadores e controle
Amplifiers and controle room*

Studio N.º 2

*Emissor de ondas curtas
Short-wave transmitter*

**ESTAÇÃO
CT1AA**

(Rádio Colonial)

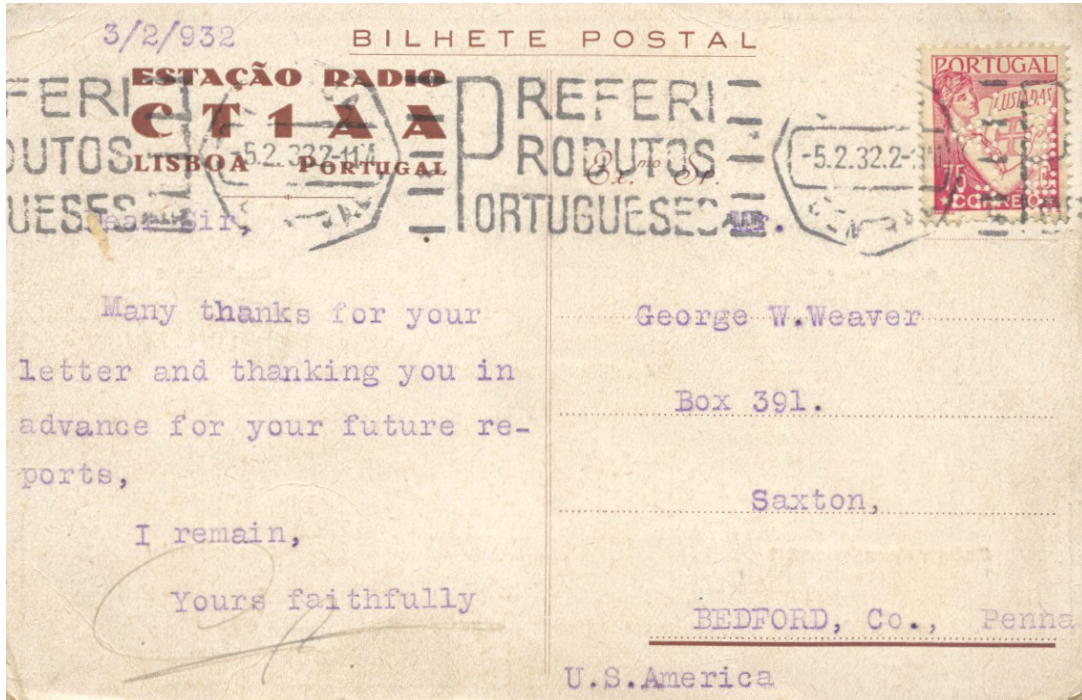
ABILIO NUNES DOS SANTOS JUNIOR

*Aspecto parcial
Parcial view*

STUDIO: Av. Antonio Augusto de Aguiar, 136, r/c. d. Telefone 4 0593 LISBOA
 EMISSOR: Av. Antonio Augusto de Aguiar, 144 Telefone 4 0594 Portugal

1937

Here are the backs of the cards on the previous page. The 1932 card is a “no data” thank you card. The 1937 card contains date and frequency, but lacks a verification statement. Nonetheless, finding either of these in your mailbox would be a very good day.

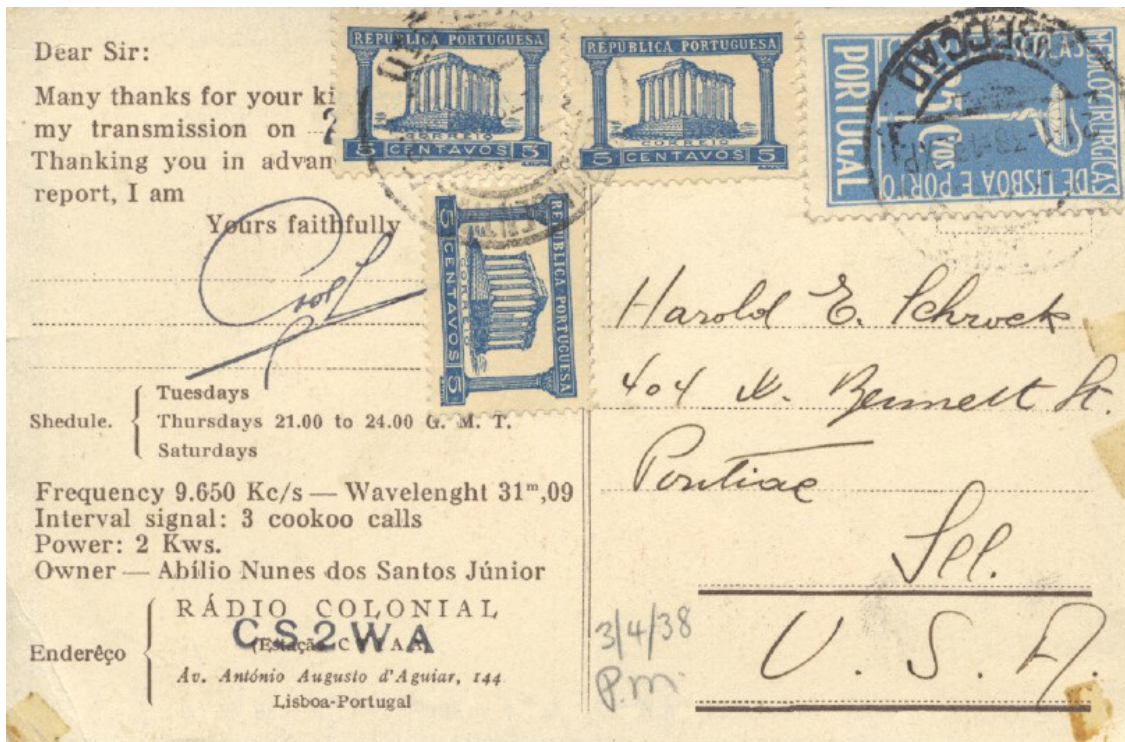


1932



1937

By 1938, CT1AA had become CS2WA, and it had a new QSL.



PORTUGAL

Members report that the call of Radio Colonial CT1AA of Lisbon, 9.650 kc/s, has been changed to CS2WA. This station, heard with a strong signal in the east, leaves the air too early to be heard well on the West Coast. Its identification signal—a cuckoo call thrice—is one of the most readily distinguishable on the air.

Quixote Radio Club,
December 1937

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### SOURCES (\* = online English translations)

Pié de Avillez, "Amateur Radio in Portugal," [\*QST\*](#), October 1932, pg. 46.

"Fado Museum, Lisbon, Portugal" \*

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"Os Pioneiros da Rádio em Portugal (1924-1939). Alguns Elementos Sociológicos e Históricos" (2006) \*

<https://industrias-culturais.blogs.sapo.pt/os-pioneiros-da-radio-em-portugal-3065178>

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April 3, 2022