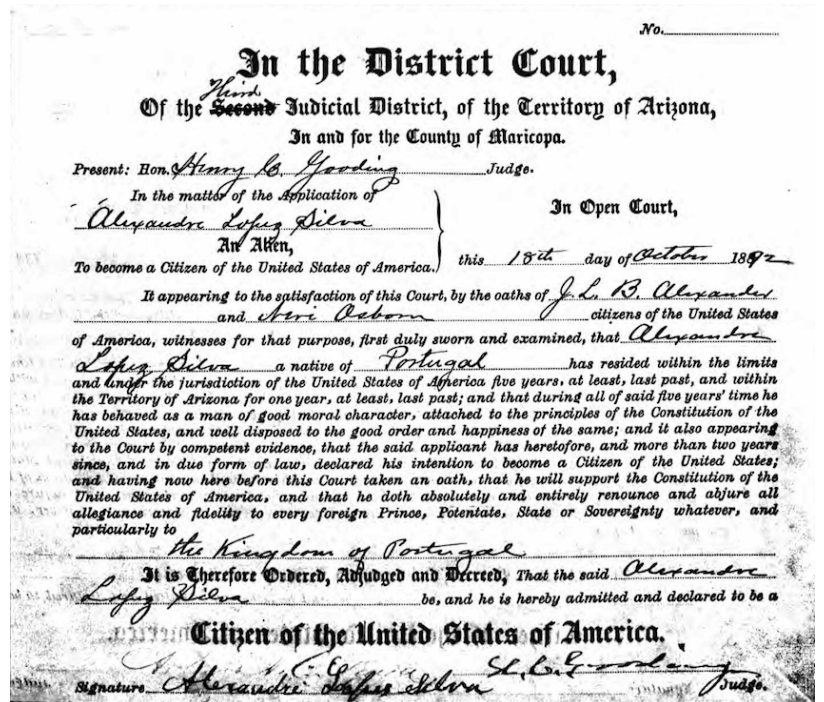


## The Silvas

Alejandro (Alex) Silva and Maria (Mary) Alvarez emigrated to the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when over 30 million immigrants came to America to find a better life. Alex left the Azores off the coast of Portugal when he was 20 and made the long trip to the United States in a ship, traveling around Cape Horn (South America) to San Francisco. At 5 years old, Mary's journey to the US may have been shorter, but her family traveled over 170 miles from Hermosillo, Mexico to the border at Nogales on foot.



Above: Alex Silva's naturalization document. He became a US citizen in 1892, and Mary became a citizen when she married him.

16 PAGES. **The Arizona Republican.** PART 2  
 VOL. III. PHOENIX, ARIZONA, SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 26, 1892. NO. 105.

**No DRAWINGS! No CHANCES!**  
**ATTENTION!**

**FALL AND WINTER ANNOUNCEMENT.**

The GRANDEST DISPLAY of NICE GOODS Ever Shown to the People of Phoenix and Maricopa County

**DRESS GOODS DEPARTMENT.**  
 Full of the Latest Novelties in Imported and Domestic Fabrics. A Full Assortment of Everything in New Trimmings.

**HOSIERY DEPARTMENT.** Running Over With Good Values.  
**LINEN DEPARTMENT.** Cannot Be Surpassed in Any Market for Quality, Assortment and Prices.

**A NEW DEPARTURE.**  
 One Entire Building Devoted to Fine Millinery, Coats, Ready Made Dresses, Waists, Muslins and Knitted Underwear for Ladies and Children.

**SHOE DEPARTMENT.**  
 The Largest and Most Complete Line in the Territory. Prices Guaranteed.

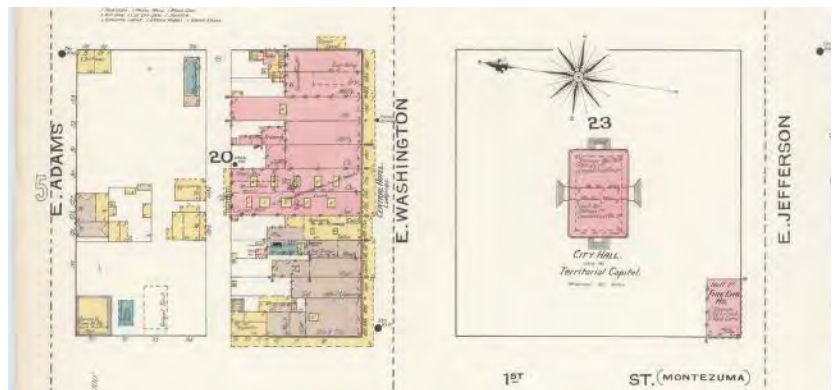
**CLOTHING DEPARTMENT.**  
 The Largest Stock of Men's Clothing and Gent's Furnishing Goods in the Territory. For the Protection of My Customers I Guarantee Prices and Qualities on Purchases.

**HOLIDAY GOODS.**  
 An Entire New Departure in this Line. I will Display Several Lines of these Goods Never Shown in Phoenix Before.

**THE BEE HIVE STORE**  
 E. H. WINTERS, Proprietor.  
 PHOENIX, ARIZ.

WHY DO WOMEN BUY FROM US? BECAUSE WE SELL THE BEST GOODS AT THE LOWEST PRICES.

Mary's family settled in Yuma, and she came to the Phoenix area when she was 15, eventually becoming a clerk and manager at the Bee Hive Dry Goods Store, located on Washington Street across from the Territorial Capitol Building.



Below: The Silva's Orange Ranch, located in the Alhambra District at 43rd Ave and Bethany Home Road, known today as Mary Silva Park.

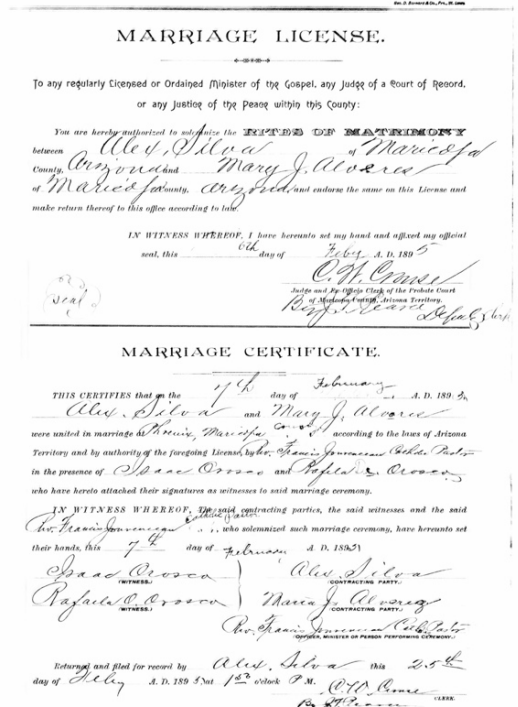
Alex is listed in the 1880 census as a laborer in the San Francisco area. In 1884, after briefly working on railroad construction in Mexico, he settled in the Arizona Territory, purchasing 160 acres of land one mile north of Grand Avenue on lateral 16, which became known as Orange Ranch. On February 6, 1895, Mary and Alex applied for a marriage license and got married the following day.



Left: Alex and Mary Silva's wedding photo, February 7, 1895.



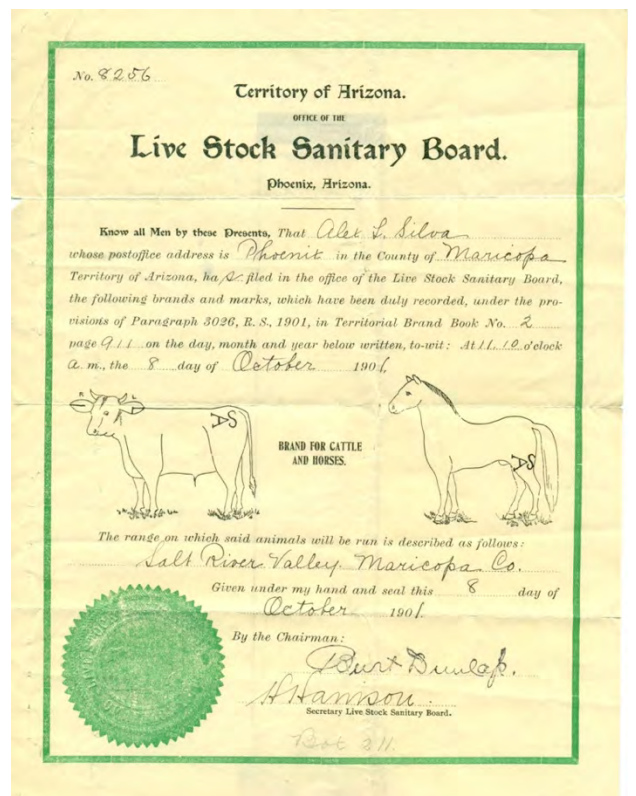
Right: The Silva's marriage license and certificate.



### Orange Ranch

The combination of Alex's agricultural acumen and Mary's business savvy made Orange Ranch very successful. Alex was one of the first local proponents of diversified farming. They grew citrus trees, sugar cane, California wheat, oats, rye, barley, sweet potatoes, and more. The crops did so well, they invested in a warehouse for storage. The Silvas also raised sheep, cattle, and, at one time, the best draft horses in Arizona.

*Diversified Farming: Planting a variety of crops and rotating them from field to field to break insect and disease cycles, reduce weeds, curb erosion, supplement soil nutrients, improve soil structure and conserve soil moisture.*  
 (from the [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education project](#))



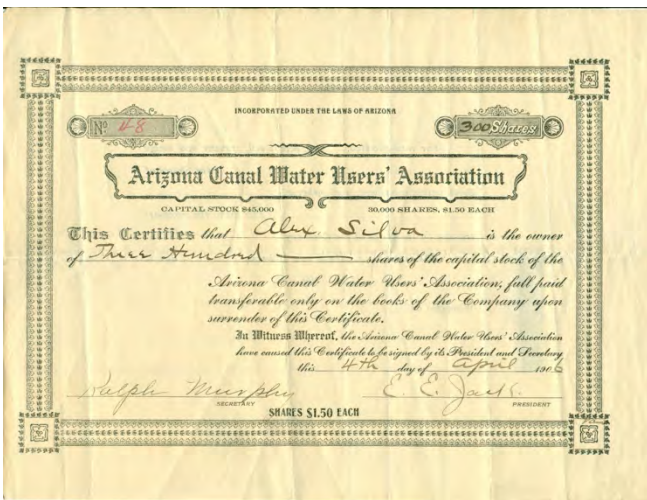
Above: The brands for cattle and horses raised by the Silvas, as recorded in 1901 by the Live Stock [sic] Sanitary Board.

Many of the workers on the ranch were immigrants as well, including laborers who were originally from Mexico and Japan.

Below: A farm machine at Orange Ranch.

Part of the Silvas success was also their perceptive investment in technology and water resources. In August 1913, there was a gasoline plow demonstration at the ranch and he was impressed enough with its performance to buy one – an event unique enough to make it into the local newspaper. The Silvas made the decision in 1903 to join the over 4,000 individual landowners who pledged portions of their land as collateral to fund the Salt River Reclamation Project, building the Roosevelt Dam. Alex was also a member of the Arizona Canal Water Users Association and was their Treasurer in 1907.





Above: A certificate for 300 shares of capital stock for the Arizona Canal Water Users Association.

## Silva House

Alex and Mary Silva purchased 628 E. Adams, now known as Silva House, from the Kirchoff family in 1906. Initially, they used it as a rental property, and different families are listed as living in the house in the census from 1910 and 1920.

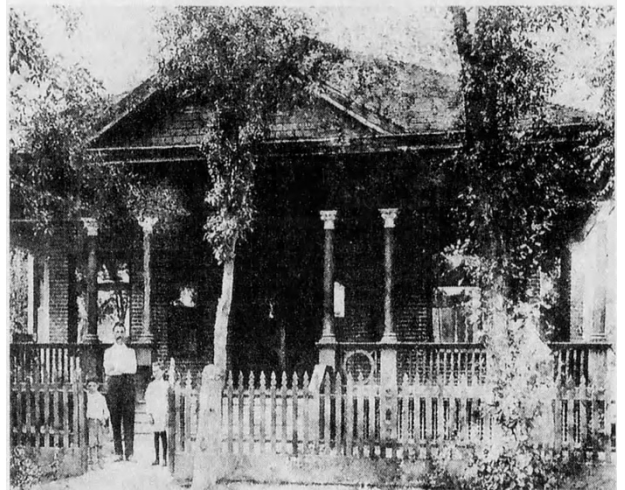
In 1925, however, Alex's health had taken a turn for the worse, and they were advised by his doctor to move in town, closer to the hospital. Before they could get him settled in the home, he passed away, December 10, 1925. Mary continued to manage Orange Ranch after Alex's death, deciding to remain at Silva House with their nieces, Frances Miramon and Marian Silva.

Though Alex and Mary never had children together, they did welcome several children from their families to their home, even traveling with them on vacation to the coast or to Mexico when they could. Frances is listed in the 1920 census living at Orange Ranch along with her two younger brothers. When Frances and Marian lived with Mary at Silva House, she was involved in their education – though records show the highest grade Mary completed was 6<sup>th</sup> grade, both Marian and Frances finished high school.

Phoenix Union High School										
Report of <u>Silva, Marion</u>		No. <u>2227</u>		I Semester		Date <u>1926-27</u>				
Subject <u>Beg. Typing 1</u>		Instructor <u>E. A. Brock</u>								
Mark will be made upon progress										
Term Reports	First Semester					Second Semester				
	1	2	3	Ex.	Av.	1	2	3	Ex.	Av.
Progress					/					/
Scholarship										
Initiative										
Attitude										
Individual Improvement										
Social Consciousness										
No. Days Present										
No. Days Absent										
Passed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>		1		No <input type="checkbox"/>		1	
Condt.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>		2		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		2	
Parent's Signature <u>Mary J. Silva</u>										

Above: Marian Silva's Phoenix Union High School term report for Beginning Typing, 1926-27.

Along with their financial support of SRP and the Arizona Canal, the Silvas also invested in real estate, in the Southwestern Sugar & Land Company, the Phoenix Public Market, the Valley Bank Adjustment Company, and other local businesses. They bought war bonds in 1917 and 1918 to support the US Armed Forces during World War I, and supported the dedication ceremony of Glendale High School with a barbeque.



Above: The Silva House, built in 1900 for the Kirchoff family. We believe this picture is of AFC Kirchoff and two of the Kirchoff children.

Below: Mary Silva (left, with her nieces Frances Miramon (middle) and Marian Silva (right).)



A devout Catholic, Mary attended St. Mary's Basilica as a parishioner for many years, supporting the Latinx community when the church relegated all Spanish-language sermons to the basement. She donated to the newly formed Mexican Catholic Society, toward the establishment of the Immaculate Heart Church, dedicated in 1928. She passed away on July 29, 1948. Mary and Alex are buried together at the St. Francis Cemetery at 2033 N. 48<sup>th</sup> St., Phoenix.

Alex and Mary Silva took risks as immigrants just to get here, and as pioneers to establish themselves in this new country that wasn't always friendly to those from foreign countries. Alex was able to establish a ranch, using his determination and knowledge to make it

incredibly successful. Against the odds, Mary was strong businesswoman, not only as a Mexican American immigrant, but also as a woman. Their investments in their community helped themselves and their ranch, but also many others. Their support of SRP continues to help us today.