

The marks of education in the book *O Diário de Vovô Pedro (1912-1986)*

ARTICLE

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to understand the marks of education present in the autobiographical writing of the personal diary of the former mayor of Cuité, Pedro Simões Pimenta, written between the years 1912 and 1986. This is autobiographical research, supported by the new cultural history. The data were obtained from the personal diary of the autobiographer, published under the title *O Diário de Vovô Pedro (Grandpa Pedro's Diary)*. The study focused on three main perspectives: who writes, what is written, and the relationship of writing with education. It was evidenced that Pedro Simões Pimenta, born in 1896 and deceased in 1989, although inserted in a privileged context for his time, experienced a difficult literacy process. As mayor of Cuité, in Paraíba, he prioritized the education of his constituents, built schools, and appointed teachers. It is concluded that the personal diary, as an egodocument, is a fruitful source for elucidating life trajectory, education, professionalization, thus holding educational historical importance.

Keywords: Historical Sources. History of Education. Life Trajectory.

As marcas da educação na obra *O Diário de Vovô Pedro (1912-1986)*

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo foi compreender as marcas da educação presentes na *escrita autobiográfica* do diário pessoal do ex-prefeito cuitense Pedro Simões Pimenta, escrito entre os anos de 1912 e 1986. Trata-se de uma pesquisa autobiográfica, amparada na nova história cultural. Os dados foram obtidos no diário pessoal do autobiografado, publicado sob o título de *O Diário de Vovô Pedro*. O estudo se concentrou em três perspectivas principais: quem escreve, o que escreve e a relação da escrita com a educação. Evidenciou-se que Pedro Simões Pimenta, nascido em 1896 e falecido em 1989, embora estivesse inserido em um contexto privilegiado para a sua época, experienciou uma alfabetização difícil. Como prefeito de Cuité, na Paraíba, priorizou a educação de seus munícipes, construiu escolas e nomeou professoras. Conclui-se que o diário pessoal, como egodocumento, é uma fonte profícua para a elucidação da trajetória de vida, formação, profissionalização, portando de importância histórica e educacional.

Palavras-chave: Fontes Históricas. História da Educação. Trajetória de Vida.

1 Introduction

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Since the 1960s, researchers in the social sciences, especially historians, have been looking at new sources of investigation in the world of culture, in a movement to value multiple practical activities and representations, thus making it possible to understand the ways in which people think and act in other times and contexts (Machado; Nunes; Vasconcelos, 2018).

This new perspective, according to Schwarcz (2009), indicates that other types of sources began to be accessed, in the scenario of the so-called “documentary revolution” in historical research, with what became known as the “return of the subject” after the hegemony of structuralist conceptions, especially in the second half of the 20th century, expanding, from gaps, other possibilities for reading social, cultural and political reality.

Thus, the word “document” came to have a broad meaning, not restricted to the sources of traditional political-military history, as positivism advocated until the beginning of the 20th century (Machado; Nunes; Vasconcelos, 2018). The concept of a document has thus expanded to include everything that human beings have produced in their time, i.e. it is the result of all human activities, whether conscious or not.

In the wake of these new ideas, Machado, Nunes and Lacet (2022) indicate that a document becomes relevant based on the analysis made of it, the formulation of a problem and the careful handling of the tools used to answer it, and not necessarily on an exclusive type of source adopted in research. Finally, for these authors, “[...] the sources only acquire historical significance through the questions that the researcher asks based on a research problem [...] it is at this point that the sources acquire an intelligible dimension” (Machado; Nunes; Lacet, 2022, p. 409).

In the case of the personal diary, considered an egodocument par excellence (Britto; Corradi, 2018), it should be noted that this cultural practice had already reached relevance in the 18th century, as a result of the emergence of the modern citizen and the valorization of self-writing in Western society. But it was in the aforementioned renewed environment of historiographical research, from the second half of the 20th century onwards, that this

artifact came to be conceived as a source of research, given the growing interest of scholars in the humanities and social sciences (Pinheiro, 2017).

Self-bibliographical in nature, egodocuments come from personal archives and exude the personality and intimacy of the author. The personal diary, as an egodocument, places someone's life within its historical context (Britto; Corradi, 2018). For scholars, especially historians of the “Third Generation of the Annales”, the personal or intimate diary is conceived as a product of modern society, which enables the researcher, among other issues, to learn about literate culture and the characteristic ways in which the subject narrates an era, in the record of an individual memory articulated with the collective experience (Pinheiro, 2017).

Thus, even though it is a self-referential writing, this source makes it possible to understand broader dimensions of society in time-space and in a chronological perspective that is not always linear, since diaries as sources reveal the opportunity to research in depth the daily representations of what is happening in the political and social sphere of an era, understanding that “each personal memory can be seen and studied as a perspective of collective memory” (Welk, 2013, p. 35).

Still on this subject, Pinheiro insists that:

[...] the diary, as a source, is an open field for history [...] it allows us to reflect on the modalities of the language used, the characteristic ways of narrating at a given time, the types of appropriation of language, the relationships between orality and formal writing, the different degrees of literacy, action, etc. (Pinheiro, 2017, p. 17).

This is the example of the autobiography of the former mayor of Cuité, analyzed in this text. For 74 years, the author carried out the task of recording memories of what he considered to be relevant in his life, in different spaces and times, revisiting much of what was destined to be forgotten. A particular political episode is emblematic, which Pimenta took care to write down on August 25, 1950: “The women's wing of the Partido Social Democrático (Social Democratic Party – PSD) of Nova Floresta came to visit Cuité and was attacked by the women's wing of the opposing party. Another absurdity committed by

the União Democrática Nacional (National Democratic Union – UDN), which didn't know how to welcome the visitors” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 46).

Pimenta's annotation expresses a personal concern on the part of the former mayor of Cuité with the local political belligerence, situated in a broader state context of the electoral clash in Paraíba between the forces represented by the groups UDN and PSD for the command of power and which, in the end, turned into an unprecedented war in the state's political history, with impacts and conflicts in several cities (Carneiro, 2011).

The highlighted paradigm of a political record and, in this particular case, of an event marked by conflicts, was Pimenta's personal exercise in selecting recent memories, with precise dates, notes and annotations, about everything he thought needed to be remembered in the dimension of his individual and daily experience of a time.

However, the personal diary cannot be taken as a finished product, or the status of an individual truth, but as the “[...] result of the effort of historical societies to impose on the future – voluntarily or involuntarily – a certain image of themselves” (Le Goff, 1996, p. 548). Therefore, the autobiographical writing present in the personal diary requires the researcher to reflect on the actual conditions of its production, considering society, culture and context.

In this way, even though it is a writing of the self, the product of a subject who narrates and emphasizes his personal life (Lejeune, 2003) in the form of remembrance or testimony, diary writing with an autobiographical bias does not escape the perspective of “imposing” or “defending” a truth coming from an individual experience of the past (Rago, 2013), as Pedro Simões Pimenta reveals in his writings when justifying the production of his personal diary over 74 years: “[...] my ideal has always been to speak the truth” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 22).

Finally, warns Rago (2013), it is up to the researcher, in possession of this type of document, not to expect from this cultural discursive practice an exact reconstruction of what happened in the past, but as a reading of the individual on the collective historical processes experienced and their possibilities for interpreting a given historical reality.

Given this situation, the objective is to understand the marks of education present in the autobiographical writing of the personal diary of the former mayor of Cuité, Pedro Simões Pimenta, written between 1912 and 1986, in order to question how education is presented in the autobiographical writing of his personal diary. In order to elucidate this research problem and achieve the objective formulated, an investigation was carried out, as detailed in the next section.

The study, by taking an autobiographical approach and considering the personal diary as a privileged space for records and notes of the subject's own writing or testimony about himself, having as its central reference his existential trajectory in the form of narrating what was experienced over 74 years, constitutes a fundamental source of research for understanding issues of his time and space, as well as the practices of his time.

The text is structured in four sections: 1) the theme, problem, objective and relevance of the study are presented; 2) the methodological option is specified; 3) The results and discussion are reflected on through the prism of who writes (the autobiographer), what he writes (his diary) and the autobiographer's commitment to education; 4) non-terminating considerations are made, which return to the research problem, summarize the most seminal results and point out the limitations of the research and suggestions for future studies.

2 Methodology

The research is autobiographical (Fialho; Santos; Sales, 2019), anchored in the theoretical-methodological current of new cultural history (Burke, 1992) and chooses as its historical source an egodocument (Britto; Corradi, 2018), *O Diário de Vovô Pedro (Grandpa Pedro's Diary)* (Pimenta, 1986).

The appropriation of autobiography is due to the fact that it is the writing of one's own life, differing from biographical studies only in terms of who did it (Fialho; Santos; Sales, 2019). In autobiography, with freedom of thought, the subject himself narrates the

circumstances of his journey in various dimensions, including education (Costa; Holanda, 2021). In other words, although the academic-scientific and social results are similar, in biographical research, a third party researcher reconstructs, interprets and publishes someone else's life trajectory.

Autobiographical studies are particularly useful for the History of Education because, with critical reflexivity, they broaden the reading of the world and allow the identification of obscured trajectories (Costa; Holanda, 2021; Fialho; Machado; Neves, 2021; Neves; Machado, 2024; Peixoto; Sales, 2023), it is configured as a source that goes beyond personal limits and penetrates the educational phenomenon and its intersections with other social aspects. (Silva, 2021).

The new cultural history, by choosing unofficial sources as worthy of historiographical attention (Burke, 1992) and making it possible to intertwine them with other sources (Neves, 2021), is in line with egodocuments, since these, although they lack the official institutional seal, materialize the self (ego) of their author, allowing the historian to shed light on facts that were in the shadows of history (Britto; Corradi, 2018).

Data was collected by reading the diary of Pedro Simões Pimenta, whose manuscripts were typed and published as an authorial work on August 1, 1986, under the title *O Diário de Vovô Pedro*, by Editora União Artes Gráficas, in João Pessoa, Paraíba state. It was launched in celebration of the autobiographer's 90th birthday.

This publication was coordinated, revised and prefaced by Marisa da Luz Alverga, an educator and author of several poetic works that are part of the Encyclopedia of Brazilian Literature, published by the MEC, and the Dicionário Literário da Paraíba (Literary Dictionary of Paraíba), published by the Conselho Estadual de Cultura (State Council of Culture), as well as the *1ª Antologia de Poetas e Escritores Brasileiros (1st Anthology of Brazilian Poets and Writers)*. Marisa da Luz Alverga is a member of the União Brasileira de Escritores (Brazilian Writers' Union) and of poetry academies in several states, as well as a corresponding member of various cultural academies, including those abroad.

For the purposes of analysis, we selected excerpts from the diary about Pedro Simões Pimenta's own schooling experience, as well as what the diarist understands and

records as his legacy or commitment to education throughout his career as a regional political representative.

3 Results and Discussion

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3.1 Grandpa Pedro: who's the person writing?

Pedro Simões Pimenta was born in the Malhada da Cruz farm, in the territory of Cuité, on August 1, 1896, at the dawn of the Republic. He was the son of Joaquim Simões Fernandes Pimenta and Josefa Constância das Mercês. His parents had twenty children, of whom only seven survived: João, Mariana, Ana Amélia, Cândida, Maria Cesária, Veneranda and Pedro (Pimenta, 1986).

When he was still six years old, he moved with his family to Nova Cruz, a town in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. According to him, the move came about because his father, Mr. Joaquim Simões Fernandes Pimenta, “had bought a property for 700,000 réis and at the age of twelve I began my career as a worker” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 19).

Because of his tradition of working in the fields from an early age, over the years he acquired large tracts of land and established himself as an important rural producer. The politician recorded his memories of that time in his diary:

Memory takes me to the big house. In the main room there was a brick that my father had made and which, at the age of six, I put my foot on and the mark was left there. My father thought it was funny and sat the brick down, like a trophy to show off to visitors (Pimenta, 1986, p. 20).

Pedro Simões Pimenta was taught literacy at the age of nine by his mother's stepmother, Josefa Alves Frazão. This education continued precariously until he was eighteen, when he lived in Araruna, in the countryside of Paraíba, and finally learned to read, write and count.

On September 5, 1923, he married his cousin Francisca Olindina, and from that union their children were born: Maria, on July 19, 1924; Geraldo, on July 8, 1928; Rivaldo,

on August 2, 1929; Francisca, on July 25, 1933; José Simões, on October 18, 1934 and Honorina, on September 30, 1938.

In his journey between Rio Grande do Norte and Paraíba, Pedro Simões Pimenta recognizes that he has had a victorious history, because, according to him, he has been almost everything in life: “cowboy, cemetery janitor, merchant, cattle breeder, manager of an agricultural cooperative, 1st deputy judge, president of the PSD, councillor and mayor” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 21).

In honor of his 90th birthday, held on August 1, 1986, in Cuité, together with his family, he decided to publish his personal diary, containing, according to him, joys, victories and some pain, “which are also part of life” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 36).

Pedro Simões Pimenta died at his home in Praça Barão do Rio Branco, number 393, in Cuité, at the age of 92, on April 25, 1989, of respiratory failure, having received countless tributes from the people of Cuité for the public recognition of his legacy.

His name has been given to a number of urban spaces in Cuité: the street, the vaquejada park, the airfield and, more recently, the Japi barrage, in a “fitting tribute” to the man who conceived it (Araújo, 2022). In 1989, under the state government of Wilson Braga, a street in the capital of Paraíba was also named after the politician from Cuité.

3.2 O Diário de Vovô Pedro (*Grandpa Pedro's Diary*)

Pedro Simões Pimenta's personal diary became public on August 1, 1986, on the occasion of the celebration of the former mayor's 90th birthday.

The title suggests that the book will be about a man's experiences as a grandfather, memories and stories with his grandchildren. However, the book does not deal with narratives of this kind. The diary records various events, sometimes more personal and sometimes more public, which the author considered important throughout his career. It can be understood, then, that the title was attributed much more to the time of its publication, when its author was already of mature age – a period in which it is common to experience living with grandchildren – than to the events narrated by its author. On the

other hand, there may clearly have been an intention as to which memories about himself grandfather Pedro Simões Pimenta would like his grandchildren to preserve and disseminate, thus guaranteeing the self-image he built.

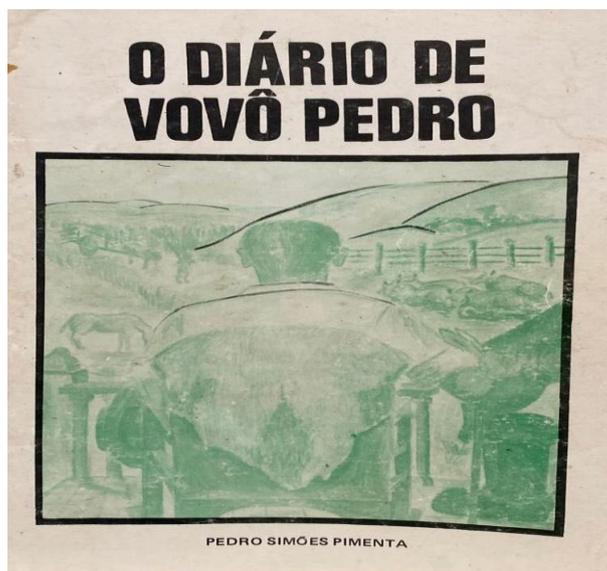
According to Artières (1998), the intimate diary is one of the artifacts used to archive one's life, in which we record some events and omit others, with the possibility of revision, making cuts or additions. The publication of these daily records, transforming them into an autobiography – considered “the most finished practice of this archiving” – is the moment of selecting events and ordering the narrative, when “the meaning we wish to give to our lives” (Artières, 1998, p. 11) is defined.

In addition, when the diary was turned into a book, it was revised and added to, such as the comments from family members, which also include the opinions of sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters, emphasizing their feelings about their experiences with their grandfather. The presence of these family members in the organization of the text in its version for publication, inserting short narrative/opinion texts about the author, probably influenced the choice of title and made it possible to ratify the image desired by Pedro Simões Pimenta for posterity.

The aforementioned work contains 87 pages and features a graphic artwork by Elias dos Santos on the cover, which is very representative of Pimenta's relationship with the green years of rural life, as he points out in his diary: “I miss the countryside. Everything there was peace, softness, an eternal invitation to tranquility” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 24).

The work, rich in memories, thoughts, poems and images, is set in the period between 1912 and 1986, the date marking the politician's 90th birthday. It was published at a ceremony attended by family, close friends and guests.

Figure 1 – Cover of the book *O Diário de Vovô Pedro*



Source: Pimenta, 1986.

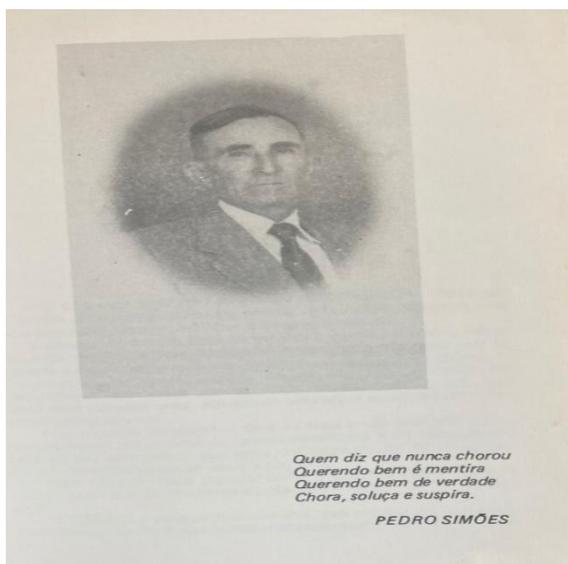
On the back cover, it is described as “autobiographical” writing. Its proofreader and coordinator is the Paraíba educator and writer Marisa da Luz Alverga. According to her, *O Diário de Vovô Pedro*, published in book format, is a literary page (Alverga, 1986).

On the opening page, there is a photograph of the author from the time he governed the city of Cuité, in the early 1950s¹, and a poem² that marked his career.

¹ Pedro Simões Pimenta was the second elected mayor of Cuité after the advent of the Second Republic and governed the city between 1951 and 1955.

² Whoever says they've never cried / Maybe it's a lie / Maybe it really is a lie / They cry, they sob and they sigh.

Figure 2 – Opening page of the book *O Diário de Vovô Pedro*



Source: Pimenta, 1986, p. 2.

The work is divided into six parts: preface, comments by family members, biography, prologue, reminiscences and political diary, and is dedicated to his wife, Francisca Olindina Simões, who died on December 28, 1967, and to his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In an effort to summarize the work that narrates his own trajectory, the author says: “my story is like so many others [...] I have patiently recorded, day by day, all the events that have marked my ninety years of existence [...] and from this record was born the book that I now offer you” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 23-24).

Finally, the author highlights the reason for publishing his personal diary, which he built up over 74 years: “my children decided to publish my diary and suddenly I became a writer” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 85). Pedro Simões Pimenta concludes his memoir with verses that are nostalgic and representative of an autobiographical style of writing, marked by memories that have marked his life, already recognizing the weight of time in his 90s:

Today I feel my youth slipping away
Like foam down the stream
And taking, with it, sadness
Old age, weariness, longing
(Pimenta, 1986, p. 85).

The verses reflect the lament for lost youth and point to the concrete conditions of the subject in the present time, with the awareness that the only possible action is to remember, at the moment when life irreversibly escapes him.

3.2 Education in *O Diário de Vovô Pedro*

In the preface to *O Diário de Vovô Pedro*, Alverga acknowledges that Pedro Simões Pimenta:

[...] he doesn't have a doctor's ring on his finger or a diploma. The university he attended was the school of life and there, yes, he graduated with distinction, getting a perfect ten in all his subjects, which are summed up in a single discipline, life (Alverga, 1986, p. 12).

With this observation, the preface begins the presentation of the work as a kind of justification, as Alverga understands that writing practices have conventionally been delegated to “well” educated subjects, holders of institutionalized and “superior” knowledge, and therefore these are the only holders of a condition or status of mastery of a literate culture.

Growing up in a rural environment, as was common, meant that children had to work in the fields with their parents from an early age, something that was no different for Pedro Simões Pimenta in his traditional family. No wonder he confesses that he began his apprenticeship working the land, facing adversity, difficulties and suffering.

His father, Joaquim Simões Fernandes Pimenta, in his son's words, despite the hard daily life in the countryside to provide for the family, “was the only man in the region who could read and write. He had learned from the priests [...] and was endowed with exceptional physical strength. Intelligent and hard-working” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 19).

However, despite the exhausting and routine work in the field, the author reveals in his diary that, unlike many, with the support of his family, he had the privilege of being educated during times of great educational difficulty:

At the age of nine I went to a private school in Malhada da Cruz and it was there that I learned to read from Josefa Alves Frazão, my first teacher [...] When I was eighteen, I went to live with a friend of my father's [...], in Calabouço, in Araruna, to study. The school was six kilometers away [...] a journey we made every day [...] Our teacher, Brandão, was a thin, brown-skinned young man with a very strong personality but little culture, but he taught me everything he knew and I still revere his memory today (Pimenta, 1986, p. 21).

Access to education and literacy in a “residential school”, even in precarious conditions, as was common at the time, in itself set him apart from his contemporaries who lived in the countryside in adverse conditions. According to Pimenta, at that time “there was no comfort, school didn't exist” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 20).

In this scenario, insists Pimenta, “everything was difficult [...] the means of communication were remote. There were no roads and the only transportation available was the ox cart or the back of a horse” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 24). Although the autobiographer refers to the adversities of his schooling at the beginning of the 20th century, Nunes, Machado and Sousa (2021) found that this inhospitable scenario persisted for decades. Given that illiteracy prevailed in the state of Paraíba, especially among the less well-off classes, which was aggravated by the precariousness of the school network and the shortage of qualified teachers.

However, due to the fact that he had the opportunity to attend primary school and therefore knew how to read, write and count, Pedro Simões Pimenta was able to access spaces of power in the countryside and in the city, as he himself recognizes when he says about his rise to the position of councillor in 1937³, deputy judge in 1945 and mayor elected and sworn in 1951, when at the time it was still forbidden for people without schooling to exercise these political rights.

³ He was elected councillor on June 16, 1937, receiving 470 votes.

The author's appreciation of education led him, at the age of 38, to record a significant event that took place in 1934: the founding of an educational institution on his own initiative, on the grounds of his property in Malhada da Cruz:

[...] a private school in Malhada da Cruz and D. Vicência was the first teacher, a resident of Araruna who was later replaced by Domiciano Alves de Queiroz, who lived in Cuité (Pimenta, 1986, p. 27).

The choice to set up a primary school in Malhada da Cruz can be justified by its place of origin, where the Simões Pimenta family lived, but also because it is a considerable geographical area. At that time, according to Pereira Sobrinho (2008), many residents of the rural region of Curimataú had no contact with the district headquarters or even knew about the urban center of Cuité, and were thus totally excluded from the scarce public policies. On this issue, Pinheiro also stresses that, in Paraíba in the 1930s, “schooling in rural areas was hampered by the precarious living conditions of subaltern social groups located in rural areas” (Pinheiro, 2023, p. 70).

As a councillor elected on June 16, 1937, Pedro Simões Pimenta began to circulate in political circles and establish contacts with influential regional leaders of social and economic power. In his diary, some of the letters he received in response to his requests are transcribed. An example of this is the letter received from the then state deputy Pedro de Almeida on October 21, 1946, in response to an educational request:

Tell the Board of the School Group to collect the adult education teachers' report cards and send them for payment. Without this, they won't be paid [...] Hugs from friend Pedro de Almeida (Pimenta, 1986, p. 36).

The epistle implies that he was speaking as a political representative, acting to unblock bureaucratic issues that prevented the city's teachers from receiving their salaries.

At another time, already invested with the status of constitutional mayor, elected on August 12, 1951, Pedro Simões Pimenta notes in his diary some of the works carried out during his administration and, among these, he highlights two initiatives aimed

exclusively at municipal education: “the construction of a School Group in the town of Telha [...] and aid for the students' school in João Pessoa” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 52).

He also notes in his diary some visits aimed at setting up schools in areas further away from the municipal headquarters, as he pointed out on February 5, 1953, when he said that he had gone to Serra do Damião to discuss “the construction of Rural Groups in that area” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 55).

It should be noted that, during the 1950s, the city of Cuité had only one school in operation in its urban core, as a result of the slow transition from isolated residential schools to the “modern” school group model created in 1943 in the city (Lima; Pereira Sobrinho; Araújo, 2020). The construction of a school in rural areas helped to reduce inequalities in access to public education.

In his diary, education also features in the demands presented at some of the institutional hearings held by the mayor of Cuité with the governor of Paraíba, José Américo de Almeida⁴.

In 1951, Pedro Simões Pimenta recorded two of these meetings in his diary. On January 15, the politician wrote: “I visited Governor José Américo de Almeida in Campina Grande at Luiz Mota's house [...] we agreed on the conclusion of the Cuité School Group. Everything was resolved” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 48).

On September 30 of the same year, this time on a visit to the governor in the capital of Paraíba, Pimenta noted:

We discussed matters concerning the municipality of Cuité [...] and we talked about the appointment of three teachers to the Cuité School Group, with the names of Maria Anita Coelho, Manoel Furtado's daughter and Bezinho's daughter coming to mind [...] All the requests were granted (Pimenta, 1986, p. 53).

⁴ Almeida (1887-1980) was a Brazilian writer and politician. His work *A Bagaceira* started the “Northeast Regionalist Generation”. He was elected to the Brazilian Academy of Letters on October 27, 1966, occupying chair no. 38. A regional leader in the Revolution of the 1930s, he was twice a minister in the Vargas governments, as well as a senator and governor.

Figure 3 – Visit by Mayor Pedro Simões and PSD allies to then Governor José Américo de Almeida at Redenção Palace in 1951



Source: Museu do Homem do Curimataú.

It is clear that the municipal manager, as well as presenting an educational request aimed at serving the families of his supporters, was at the same time seeking to favor the Grupo Escolar André Vidal de Negreiros (André Vidal de Negreiros School Group) with new professional teachers to meet the growing demands of regional primary schooling. The aforementioned institution was to become “an educational reference facility” (Lima; Pereira Sobrinho; Araújo, 2020, p. 193).

According to Machado, Nunes and Lacet (2021), the aforementioned institution was inaugurated during the administration of the federal intervener, Rui Carneiro⁵, by Decree No. 337 of December 22, 1942 and Decree No. 52 published in the Diário Oficial on December 23, 1942, but it was only in 1943 that it was actually legally recognized. At the time, it was the only institution serving the city and other districts.

Contrary to the patriarchal dictates that determined women's invisibility in 20th century Paraíba (Machado *et al.*, 2023), on January 16, 1953, Pedro Simões Pimenta made

⁵ Rui Carneiro was a federal deputy, senator and federal interventor in Paraíba during the Estado Novo regime.

a point of recording in his diary the presence of the women who were carrying out educational activities at the Grupo Escolar André Vidal de Negreiros (André Vidal de Negreiros School Group) at that time, many of whom were already in the process of training at the Curso Normal Regional (Regional Normal Course) at the Instituto América (America Institute): “Maria Anita Coelho, Nautília Furtado, Nailda Rocha, Noêmia Campos, Mirtes Venâncio, Maria das Mercês, Ismália Fonseca (Student inspector), Maria Lica Macedo (Janitor), Camélia Pessoa, Eliza Macedo, Maria José” (Pimenta, 1986, p. 56). This list of teachers included some of the names indicated in his petition to Governor José Américo de Almeida.

About Instituto América (America Institute), Machado and Nunes (2019, p. 30) report that:

had an ephemeral existence in the city's school system. Created in 1952, it operated until the end of 1970, when it gave up its space for the establishment of the Colégio Estadual de Cuité (State College of Cuité – CEC) in the 1971 school year, which was later called the Colégio Estadual Orlando Venâncio dos Santos (Orlando Venâncio dos Santos State College), and today is called the Escola Cidadã Integral Estadual de Ensino Médio Orlando Venâncio dos Santos (Orlando Venâncio dos Santos State Citizen Integrated High School).

In the last year of his government, on June 7, 1955, Pedro Simões Pimenta documented the visit of Governor José Américo de Almeida to Cuité, with the institutional mission of inaugurating the new headquarters of the Grupo Escolar André Vidal de Negreiros (André Vidal de Negreiros School Group), an important milestone at the end of his administration and a historic struggle for the population, which had been waiting since 1943 for a modern structure to run the school:

Governor José Américo and his party, including his brother Augusto de Almeida, mayor of Guarabira, paid a visit to Cuité and were my guests. The governor inaugurated the Vidal de Negreiros Group and his portrait was hung in the town hall (Pimenta, 1986, p. 57).

The new building that was inaugurated had more than 600 square meters, with a covered area, four large classrooms, administrative offices, a recreation area, a kitchen and an attached residence for teachers (Lima; Pereira Sobrino; Araújo, 2020).

Even though the institution had received total financial support for its construction from the state and federal governments over more than a decade, Pedro Simões Pimenta sought to identify this laborious achievement in his memory as an accomplishment and success that marked his administration in favor of regional education, particularly due to the alliance and friendship established with the then governor of Paraíba, José Américo de Almeida.

It is important to emphasize that Pedro Simões Pimenta's relationship of friendship and commitment to the author of *A Bagaceira* remained alive even after their terms as public administrators ended. No wonder Pimenta visited the immortal writer from Paraíba whenever he could at his home in Tambaú, as memorialist Maria de Lourdes Lemos Luna tells us: “Curimataú occasionally made its presence felt with the likes of Pedro Simões (Cuité), José Diniz (Barra de Santa Rosa), Eugênio Vasconcelos (Picuí) and Sizenando Monteiro (Cubati)” (Luna, 1994, p. 119).

Now no longer in public life, Pedro Simões Pimenta noted and celebrated the inauguration of the Colégio Estadual de Cuité (State College of Cuité) on March 10, 1971, but without forgetting that this building, even though it had been delivered during the administration of Governor Ernâni Sátiro⁶, was a proposal from ally and predecessor João Agripino Maia⁷.

⁶ He was a deputy, writer and governor of Paraíba.

⁷ He was a deputy, minister, senator and governor of Paraíba.

Figure 4 – Governor Ernani Sátiro and Mayor Neuza Bezerra at the inauguration of the Colégio Estadual de Cuité (State College of Cuité), on March 10, 1971



Source: Museu do Homem do Curimataú.

The demand for a secondary school united the entire political class in Cuité. So, on the occasion of the bicentenary celebrations in 1968, this request was taken to Governor João Agripino, who was taking part in the activities in the city.

The space was built on the structure donated by the Instituto América (America Institute), after some negotiations. According to Lima, Pereira Sobrinho and Araújo (2020, p. 198), the Colégio Estadual de Cuité (State College of Cuité) “had as its first director the Paraíba lawyer Roosevelt Vita and as its secretary, the civil servant Maria José Dantas”. The following implementation of Law 5.692/1971, on August 11, satisfactorily converged with this period, abolishing the infamous Admissions Exam and thus enabling the expansion of this level of education offered at the aforementioned educational institution in Cuité.

4 Conclusions

This research investigated: how is education presented in the autobiographical writing of Pedro Simões Pimenta's personal diary? With the aim of understanding the marks

of education present in the autobiographical writing of the personal diary of the former mayor of Cuité, Pedro Simões Pimenta, who wrote it between 1912 and 1986.

The book *O Diário de Vovô Pedro (Grandpa Pedro's Diary)* allowed us to make an analytical incursion into the autobiographical narrative of former mayor Pedro Simões Pimenta's notes with precise dates on individual and collective experiences, at different times and in different spaces, over the course of 74 years.

The publication of the intimate manuscripts, the personal diary, an egodocument, in book format, launched on August 1, 1986, conveyed to a wider public in the region a memory that had previously been strictly personal and unknown. As a result, we got to know Pedro Simões Pimenta beyond his political career or the imperative of economic power over large tracts of land. In other words, as a person concerned with recording different facts, Pimenta left his impressions and testimonies of what he experienced, especially in his hometown of Cuité, to subsequent generations.

And, in the specificity proposed in this research, we identified, in this autobiographical narrative as a whole, some marks of education that deserved to be noted and pointed out by Pedro Simões Pimenta, at different moments in his long career, “in the context of a cultural history of self-records” (Castro; Lemos, 2009, p. 10).

Education is recalled in his diary, from the difficult years of his primary literacy at the age of nine, when he started working in the fields with his father and began the literacy process with Josefa Alves Frazão, his mother's stepmother. This schooling continued in Araruna, consolidating the challenge of learning to read, write and count, an undeniable privilege in that context.

As an adult, in different spaces and at different times in his life, as a citizen and, above all, as a representative of his people, Pedro Simões Pimenta showed in his records and notes that he was concerned about meeting the demands for education in his land, from building schools to demanding the appointment of teachers at a time when public policy was totally neglected.

Memories, even individual ones, move through the collective and bring it to the surface; thus, Pedro Simões Pimenta's diary, transformed into a book, points to other

subjects who, contemporaries of his, also constituted education in the municipality of Cuité, although they experienced it in a different and personal way. The names of the teachers mentioned by the memoirist confirm their relevance in education and are important clues that can contribute to others researches.

As this is an autobiographical, singular study, generalizations are not recommended. However, education is present in *O Diário de Vovô Pedro (Grandpa Pedro's Diary)*, in order to contribute to the preservation of the history and memory of education. For future studies, we present egodocuments, such as personal letters and diaries, which are qualified as eloquent sources for the History of Brazilian Education.

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