

# "...y la familia?"

Volume 20, Issue 3

Dec. '15/Jan. '16

*Needed for  
Future Issues:*

*"Stuff" about  
you and yours...*

## ***Announcements***

*New baby  
Engagement  
Graduations  
Promotion  
New address*

## ***Upcoming Events***

*family parties  
Reunions  
Weddings*

## ***Article, Photos and Fillers***

*Nostalgic stories  
Photos and  
artwork*

*Original poetry  
Vignettes on*

*your im-  
mediate family  
Favorite family  
recipes*

*Cute things your  
kids have  
said*

*Funny stories*

*This is **your**  
family news-  
letter. Fill it  
with things  
about your  
family!*

## *José Lino Medina 1924-2015*



**José Lino Medina Negrón** passed away peacefully on October 6, 2015, after months of loving care at the home of his daughter, Rosa Meddaugh in DeLand. In addition to Rosa (married to Brian), he is survived by his wife, Angélica Rivera, daughters JoAnne (Josefa /"Pepi") McLaughlin (Robert) and Carol Wright (Larry), son José Medina (Donna), grandchildren Poncho Daley (Nicole), Emily Medina, Angie Stickle Matlock (David), and two great-grandsons, Joshua and Zachary Daley.

Born in Juana Díaz, Puerto Rico on August 15, 1924, José was the son of José Medina Ibio and Josefa Carolina Negrón. He was 16 when his father died and 18 when his mother passed away, but much of his youth was spent with his maternal aunt, Casilda Negrón Colón, and he considered his twelve cousins his siblings for all of his life.

José enlisted in the Army in 1943 and for the next twenty years performed a variety of duties as an Anti aircraft Artillery Crewman, Cook, Paratrooper (Airborne), and finally, as a Cryptologic Specialist. He was stationed in the Panama Canal Zone, Germany (occupational forces), Fort Devens, Mass., and Forte Meade, Maryland, rising to the rank of Master Sergeant (E-6) during his final assignment with the Army Security Agency.

*(cont. on p.3)*

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This is a reprint from the Dec. '97/Jan. '98 issue.

## *I Remember...Childhood Memories*

By Delia Finch

As every year comes to an end, memories of my childhood come to mind. When I was growing up in Puerto Rico, our way of celebrating the Christmas holidays was much different than in America.

The excitement in our hearts as we waited for the 6th of January to come was more than we could handle. Coming from a very poor family, when times were rough, as the Three Kings' Day approached, I could not help but notice the pained, worried expression on my mom's face. In our household, there was not such a thing as a steady income of any kind. Having to buy a gift for a child was a tremendous sacrifice.

Mami used to sew fine handmade blouses for a *taller* (small factory) for a measly salary of not even enough for one day's grocery shopping. She did such delicate and fine stitching that each finished blouse was like a masterpiece. Many times we were in such need for money that we helped her sew most of the very minor details so she could finish her work sooner and be able to collect her pay. Yes, indeed! She taught Tita and me to do fine sewing work, also—very fancy work called *fagoting* and *tru-tru*. I still remember how to do some of that work.

Mami always found the way to have a little something for us on Three Kings' Day. As *Las Navidades* (Christmas) approached, our two brothers, Nery and Guar, very gifted and fine woodworkers, got very busy hand making toys. Carefully hand painted and detailed, the finished product was taken to the open market, where it sold very quickly. The money that my brothers made was used to buy toys and needed items for my sister, Tita, Guar's kids, and myself.

At eight years of age, I still believed in the Three Kings: Gaspar, Melchor, and Baltazar. My favorite one was Gaspar. One Three Kings' Day Eve, Mom, Tita, and I had already gone to bed when suddenly we heard a knock at our kitchen door. I opened it, and there was Nery standing with his arms full, waiting to get in. I remember saying to him, "Oh, so you are the kings?" He gently told me to go back to bed. Tita and I, as every other child, had already put our shoe boxes full of green grass under the bed for the camels, and a glass of water for the kings. In the morning, Nery told me that the kings had not brought anything for me because I had been a bad girl. He asked me to look under the bed, but I refused to do so, believing that I did not get anything. He finally pulled out a box with a beautiful doll in it which I then did not want. He felt bad when I refused it.

In the meantime, my godmother's son came to our house looking for me. He asked me to go see what the Three Kings had left for me at their home. When I got there, my godmother handed me another doll, not as pretty as the one Nery got for me, but it was just what I needed at the moment. I kissed my godmother and thanked her for the gift. She gave me a cake and cookies to take home for all of us.

When I got home, I went to the front balcony of our house to show my new doll to a friend who lived to the right side of our house, when I suddenly noticed that the grass we had left for the kings' camels the night before was lying on the ground by the fence. I sort of felt hurt because they did not want our grass. There were no explanations whatsoever as to why not.

Until this day, when the Christmas holidays come, there is always in my mind those unforgettable childhood memories.



*Delia as a child with her mother, Otilia, and Rosita (Hernández) Rivera*



## *José Lino Medina, continued from page 1.*

Tío José married our Tía Tita on July 8, 1949 and they raised their family in Odenton, Maryland. After his military retirement in 1963, Tío José began a twenty year civilian career with the National Security Agency (NSA) wherein he solved thousands of encoded Spanish language messages. Not only did he break incredibly complex codes at the NSA headquarters, he also made perilous trips into foreign countries in order to intercept and analyze enemy communications at close range. Throughout his military and civilian career, he was given some of the highest government awards including the Legion of Merit. Although most of his cryptanalytic achievements are classified, we can view an example of his genius at the Fort Huachuca Army Intelligence Museum in Arizona. This piece of work involved his solution of a century old message concerning the Mexican-US War.

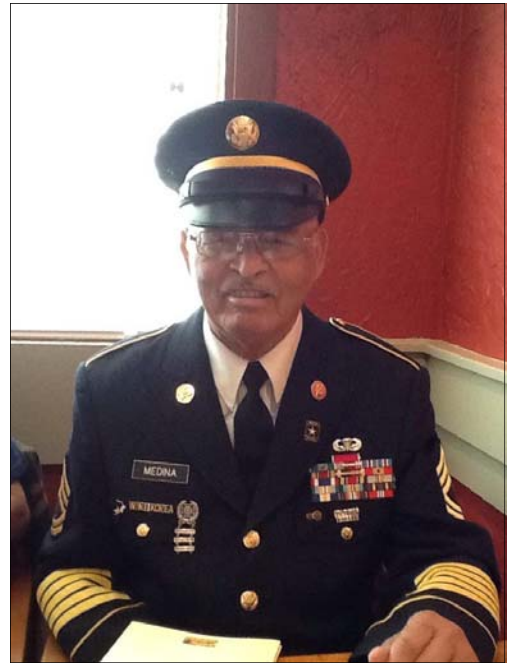
In his youth, Tío José won several bouts as a boxer. Later on, he enjoyed golfing, fishing, growing orchids, studying military history, and antiquing.

*Sources: Much of this information was gleaned from the Obituary for José L. Medina-Negrón, written by Brian Meddaugh. Additional information was added from the Rivera Family History.*

Funeral services were held October 13, 2015 in Boynton, where Tío José and Tía Tita had their retirement home. Cousin Carol states that her father was always specific about his funeral. He wanted to make sure the USA flag draped on his coffin was made in the USA and not China. He wanted a live bugler and not the recording that the National Cemetery is using. He believed that every veteran should have the right to these requests. She adds, “He was a true patriot and earned those rights. I know he was pleased with his ceremony with honors. Perfect it was—Rest in Eternal Peace, Dad, as we salute you.”

Carol also wants to thank everyone who helped lift her family’s spirits during this difficult time. Whether it was a phone call, email, Facebook entry, card, hug, or flowers sent, each meant so very much.

**Photos, clockwise beginning at right:**  
**At Rosa’s wedding, 9/16/89; with granddaughter, Angélica; Easter with Pepi, Carol and Tita; 66 years of marriage; José and his girls—Carol, Rosa, and Pepi.**



*“¿...y la familia?”*



## The Way We Were

Tío José Medina and Tía Tita (Angélica Rivera), visiting the home of my parents, Oscar and Anita García, in Ponce, Puerto Rico. The year is unknown, but probably somewhere in the mid to late 1980's.

*Look What  
I Still Have!*



San Francisco-22-Calif.  
August 26/55.

Hallo Norma, my sweetie pie, .

This is daddy who write to you because daddy think you forgot everything about him. Norma I want to know if you still love mi, I am afraid of you, sometime I think I lost your love, but some times I ~~become~~ become happy because remind you are my mammy and I am your baby.

Did you remember that you left your baby along? Yes, you remember your daddy, as seme daddy remember you Ruben Olga and mamma;

Now Normita, do you can tell mi how much do you like Puerto Rico, I bet you are having fun with the chicks and the mosquitos are happy with you. every boddy happy I suppose. Wel my dolly, I thank you for your letter, and my best wishes for you.

Daddy kiss and love you, kiss olga and Ruben for mi, give a big one kiss to MAMMY on my neme, one for mama Santa to\*  
DADDY LOVE ALL OF YOU\*\* Oscar\*\*

...a letter from my daddy, sent to me at our house in the Playa de Ponce. Padre Noel Avenue still exists, but apparently house #201 does not. Still, I'd like to check out that neighborhood on one of my trips to Puerto Rico.

The picture below was taken on the porch of that house, with my siblings and some cousins on my mom's side of the family. From left: César Olivera, Norma García, Mari Carmen Olivera, Marta Olivera, Olga García, Yuyín Olivera, and Ruben García. Standing in the back is Julio Israel Olivera.





## Family History

This page will be reproduced as a blog entry with a link accessible through our family web page, [www.ylafamilia.org](http://www.ylafamilia.org).

### Our Mystery Man, Florencio Rivera, Part II

In the last article, I explained how I solved the mystery of who Florencio's parents were, and questioned the possible reasons why my grandfather portrayed himself to his children as having been an orphaned child raised by an aunt and uncle. His mother, María Dominga Maldonado Rivera, did die when Florencio was only ten years old, but his father, Manuel Alejo Rivera Maldonado, died on Dec. 7, 1899. Florencio was 27 years old by then, married to Felícita Madera Medina, and himself already a father. I suggested that perhaps Florencio meant that he was left *huérfano de madre* (motherless) at a young age. Although unable to prove anything at this point, I can only conjecture that after his wife's death, Florencio's father had his hands full with several children and his farm, so he sent Florencio to live with an aunt and uncle.

Times were undoubtedly tough, and I'm sure Florencio didn't sit around reminiscing about his youth and sharing childhood memories with his children. A few stories were somehow passed down and told to me by some of his daughters. Here is what was relayed to me:

- Florencio apparently never went to school, but he learned to read and write on his own and was said to have nice penmanship.
- He was tall and thin, had a light complexion, blond hair, and gorgeous blue-gray eyes.
- Florencio reportedly either married or took a common-law wife while he was still a teenager. The young woman supposedly died giving birth, and the child died also. No one knew the young woman's name, and if he was not legally married, there is no way of tracing this. Her death record would list her by her maiden name and no mention of a husband or of the baby's father would have been made.

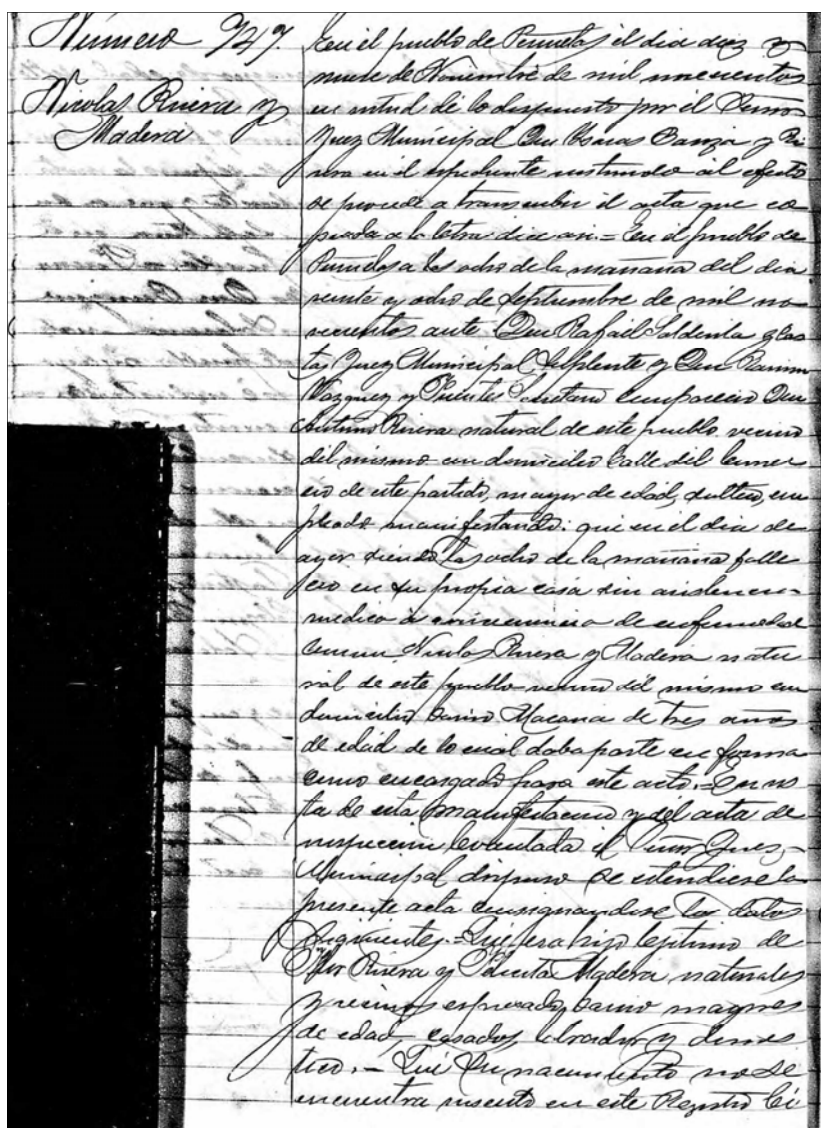
In my genealogical research, I have come across documents showing that Florencio had another family before the one he had with my grandmother. This is something that my father, aunts and uncles never mentioned, presumably because they didn't know about it. Florencio was 24 years old (although the marriage record says he was twenty) when he married Felícita Madera Medina on March 10, 1897 in Peñuelas, Puerto Rico.\* She was seventeen, and apparently pregnant, since their son, Nicolás died on Nov. 19, 1900, and the death record (a portion of which is pictured here) states that he was three years old. The record also says that his birth was never recorded in the Civil Registration. That seems unusual, but who knows? Maybe it happened frequently in those days.

Florencio and Felícita also had another son, Andrés, who was born on Nov. 20, 1899. I have not yet discovered whatever happened to this child, but his mother, Felícita, passed away at the young age of 23 on March 20, 1901. The cause of her death is listed as *enfermedad común* (common illness).\*\*

It is mind-boggling to think of how much loss Florencio suffered in his life before he reached his 30th birthday. He lost a brother when he was a young child and another one when he was 13, his mother when he was 10, possibly a teenage woman who was pregnant with his child before his 20th birthday, his father when he was 27, a son when he was 28, and his wife when he was 29. How does all this suffering and loss affect a man's character? Was Florencio's heart hardened by so much tragedy? Or did it create in him a strength that helped him endure the other hardships that came his way in the ensuing years? Some things may forever remain a mystery.

\*[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), Puerto Rico Civil Registrations, Peñuelas, Matrimonios 1885-1910, Image 524.

\*\*[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), Puerto Rico Civil Registrations, Peñuelas, Defunciones 1900-1907, Image 319





# “¿...y la familia?” Relatives Respond

First, here is an excerpt from a letter from my nephew, **Juan González**, one of Oscarito's sons. In a letter dated Oct. 21, 2015, he wrote: “I received your Newsletter and once again found the opportunity to share with my distant family the joys and grief, the adventures and small disappointments. It's sad that no one has responded or at least showed some kind of support or encouragement to prevent the final issue from materializing. Instead, I thought maybe you'd get flooded with messages, stories, poems, pictures or other materials to move on and continue with your passion.” *Fear not, dear nephew! I received the loveliest letter from **Cousin Joi**, which I am printing below in its entirety.* ☺

October 14, 2015

Ahhhhh, bittersweet to see the Newsletter waiting for me on the table when I got home from work last night. I sat down and read it right away since the “headline” said “The Last October Issue!” I knew this would be the last year for the actual Newsletter, but it was still a shock to see it come up so fasat! I “sniffed” right along with you!

I could feel your heart bursting with memories as I skimmed through the articles. What a gift you have given our family over the past 20 years! Priceless! Like you, as you know, I have saved every printed issue in binders, and that will be passed on to Ethen so he will have and see our family history...seeing his Dad as a young boy and his adventures and accomplishments as he grew up. All those issues are better than any scrapbook I could have possibly put together with family photos!

For me, it keeps in our hearts all of our times together, reunions, visits, adventures and those we have lost over the years. The issues just don't sit in the binders, either, as many times I have flipped through them to look up some event or search for a specific photo, or just to take a look back in time. What a treasure to have, for sure! Even in this electronic age where everything can be accessed over the Internet, there is just something extraordinary to be able to flip through nearly twenty years of our family history. More importantly, the issues cover over 100 years of our heritage, and that only is because of your passion for genealogy! How lucky are we?

Also, the Newsletter has been a keepsake photo album of all my photos I have taken and you have included!

So, please accept a hearty and grateful Thank You from me and the Stenroos family for your dedication, commitment and precious time spent on each and every issue of the newsletter. As it comes to a so called “end,” I believe the Blog will bring new excitement and continued readership — just keeping up with the times! The “bursts” of news as your time allows will be a pleasant arrival in our e-mail inboxes. A big Thank You, also, to Cousin Carlos for his suggestion for the Blog and helping you set it up, as well as his continued support of the family website. His contributions and dedication is not to be forgotten, either!

Again, hopefully the awards presented to you over the years and the thanks you have received truly express the family's appreciation and gratitude we have for you! You are a special treasure in our lives and we love you very much!

Huglets, Joi



*It dawned on me when I read Joi's line, “there is just something extraordinary to be able to flip through nearly twenty years of our family history,” that while all those newsletter stories were being reported, they were current news, but as the years have passed, they have become history. My goal from the beginning was to keep the family informed of happenings across the miles that separate us, and as technology and social media have taken over and made this goal obsolete, the reality still remains that those archived issues are now a window into a 20-year slice of the Rivera family's history, giving more than facts...giving voice and heart to the events and the people who shared them. The “I Remember” columns and the family history pages, of course, cast glimpses into even further reaches of our family history, but the 120 issues of “current” events contain memories that we have personally lived through, and as such, reflect a part of our family history to which we can truly relate. Perhaps our grandchildren and great-grandchildren can have a greater insight into the Rivera Family history between 1996 and 2016 if they somehow continue to have access to these twenty volumes of newsletters.*

*Thank you to all who have expressed your appreciation over the years. Many thank you notes have been published in “Relatives Respond” columns throughout the years, and the two special plaques given to me by the Rivera Sevilla family are wonderful treasures—the first one I keep here in my office in our Placerville home, and the second one (with a beautiful flamboyán tree) graces the wall in our new home in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico. I've been blessed beyond words.*

**Three issues to go!!**

## **At this time in our family history....**

- **María del Carmen Rivera** died in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico on December 6, 1896 at the age of 54. She was an aunt of our family patriarch, Florencio Rivera.
- On December 10, 1897, **Otilia Pacheco** Arroyo was born in Barrio Santo Domingo in Peñuelas, Puerto Rico. She was the mother of Neri, Isidro, Angélica (Tita), and Delia.
- On December 15th, 1852, **María de Jesús García** was born. She was a sister of my great-grandmother María Engracia García.
- Also on December 15th, but in 1884, my great-uncle **Eugenio Cruz García** was born.
- **Timothy Michael Warren**, son of my sister, Olga, was born on December 26, 1974. He died at the age of fifteen months.
- **Juan M. García**, a brother of the above-mentioned Maria Engracia García, was born on January 2, 1858.
- On January 15, 1907, my great-uncle **Gilberto Cruz Maldonado** was born. He was the son of Máximo Cruz and Genara Maldonado. He was the uncle of Adela, Oscar, María, Elena, Guar, and Anita.
- On January 21, 1820, my great-great-grandmother, **María Inés Vilá de la Cruz** (Máximo's mother) was born. María's father, Pedro Vilá, was born in Cataluña, Spain.

## ***The 2016 Rivera Reunion***

*Co-hosted by Marina (Ramos)/Dennis Nelson and Tory Pettit*

*Dates: June 24-26, 2016*

*Location: 2001 Hunsaker Canyon Rd., Lafayette, CA 94549*

*Check it out at [www.scheiderresidence.com](http://www.scheiderresidence.com)*

*There is only one room left that has not been snatched up...hurry  
and reserve with Marina via the Facebook private page,  
2016 Rivera Family Reunion.*

***His name shall be called...***

***The Prince of Peace... Isaiah 9.6***

May all the joy of that first Christmas  
remain with you throughout a peaceful new year.  
Remember that Jesus is the reason for the season!

Love and blessings from  
Randy and Norma



## *“¿...y la familia?”*

c/o Norma I. Pettit

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*Visit us on the Web at [www.ylafamilia.org](http://www.ylafamilia.org).*

## *Birthday Greetings*

*Monica M. García (Muñeca Osorio) (41) - Dec 2*

*Christopher Nicholson (46) - Dec. 4*

*Emma Kathleen Thompson - (12) Dec. 5*

*Yanelis Aisha González (13) Dec. 9*

*William A. González (23)- Dec. 14*

*Ryan Rivera (36) - Dec. 16*

*Jonathan F. Segarra (18) - Dec. 17*

*Kaden Amir (3) - Dec. 18*

*Kelsey Pombo (26) - Dec. 21*

*Arlene González (34) - Dec. 22*

*Joshua Omar Cabán (10) - Dec. 22*

*Cama Klene (48) - Dec. 25*

*Michelle Harrell (49) - Dec. 30*

*Vanessa Braddock (43) - Dec. 31*

*Oscar González (56) - Jan. 1*

*Mary Lillian Pérez (53) Jan. 6*

*Robert Paul Cavino (11) - Jan. 9*

*Ada (Pacheco) Rivera (61) - Jan. 10*

*Marlin R. Barnes (20) - Jan. 10*

*Edward Rivera (67) - Jan. 11*

*Bélgica González (35) - Jan. 12*

*David Nicholson (52) - Jan. 18*

*Sylvia (Atiles) Lovelace (78) - Jan. 18*

*Angeleena Ketcher (4) - Jan. 23*

*Timothy Ketcher (4) - Jan. 23*

*Amber Nicholson (20) - Jan. 24*

*Zachary David Nicholson (9) - Jan. 30*

*Larry Wright (67) - Jan. 30*

*William Roig (83) - Jan. 31*

*Happy New Year,  
Everybody!!!*

### *Anniversaries*

*Ada (Pacheco) and  
Heriberto Rivera (37)  
- Dec. 10*

*Joi (De Nardo) and  
Vic Stenroos (35) -  
Dec. 26*

*Kathleen (Merritt)  
and Jim Caffey (30) =  
Dec. 26*

*Michelle (Rivera) and  
Jason Su'a (9) -  
Dec. 30*

*Ruben and Lisa  
Quinones (15) - Jan. 6*

*Sephania (Krause)  
and Scott Thompson  
(15) - Jan. 6*

