

"...y la familia?"

Volume 20, Issue 4

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*Needed for
Future Issues:*

**Announce-
ments**

*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
immediate
family*

Family recipes

*Cute things
your kids
have said*

Helen Correa 1962-2016



On January 12th, the Rivera family lost another wonderful member: Helen Correa, daughter of Milagros Rivera and Juan Correa. She was born in Manhattan on May 12, 1962, and lived at various times in Boston, Mass., Ponce, Puerto Rico, and Laurens, S.C.

In 2010, Helen was diagnosed with colon cancer and underwent surgery in March, followed by six months of chemo treatments. In 2012, she suffered a recurrence of cancer and in the ensuing years went through repeated cycles of chemo until this past fall, when her doctors said, "No more." Helen fought a brave battle, and stayed optimistic till the end. She was a model of strength, faith, and perseverance, and a source of inspiration to all of us.

Helen made the most of her last few years on earth, traveling to Spain in May of 2013, and making other trips to Los Angeles, New York, Orlando, Boston and Puerto Rico. Her love of family, charming personality and sense of humor are evident as you browse through the gallery of photos on pages 3-5. She leaves behind three sons and two grandkids, her two sisters, her parents, and many other family members and friends who will miss her greatly.

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I Remember...

The Fire In the Basement

By Norma I. (García) Pettit
(Reprinted from Apr/May '00.)



The year was 1967, I think, and probably in late February.

My brother, Ruben, was down in the basement, working on Olga's car, trying to get it started. I was bored, so I wandered downstairs to see what he was doing.

The hood of the car was up, and Ruben was behind the wheel. He leaned out of the car and said, "Hey, Norma, look and see if you see anything turning over in the car when I try to start it."

I obediently peered into the engine and saw a flame leap up, reaching almost to the raised hood. I guess I stood there kind of mesmerized, and then I heard Ruben ask, "Did you see anything turn over?"

"No," I answered casually, "but there's a fire in there."

"FIRE!" he yelled, and sprang out of the car. "Oh, no!" He ran over to the sink, grabbed his brand new coveralls that Mom had just given him for his birthday, and used them to start beating furiously at the fire.

I started slowly climbing the stairs. Mom was at the doorway at the top of the stairs, calling down, "¿Qué pasa?"

"Nothing," I replied. "Just that the car's on fire."

"¡Fuego! ¡Fuego!" screeched Mom. "¡Llama a los bomberos!"

"Oh, yeah," I murmured. "The fire department."

We didn't have 911 back in those days, so I dialed "0" and got the operator, and told her we had a fire in our basement. After hanging up, I noticed that Mom was running from room to room.

"What are you looking for, Mom?" I asked.

"¡Mi abrigo! ¡Necesito mi abrigo!"

"Well, look in your closet, Mom. That's where you always put your coat."

So she found her coat, but then she was still running from room to room.

"Now what are you looking for, Mom?"

"¡Las gatas!"

The cats had gotten frightened and had run under the bed. I got them out by spraying some catnip under the bed. They didn't like the hissing sound of the can. Mom grabbed our Siamese cat, Teffie, and I grabbed her daughter, Domino. With the cat in her arms, Mom ran out the front door, and I went back downstairs.



Cradling Domino in my arms, I watched while Ruben beat out the last bit of the flames and collapsed against the car with sweat pouring off of his brow. As he caught his breath, in the distance we both heard the wail of a siren.

"What's that?" he gasped.

"Oh, the fire department. I called them."

"You *what?* Oh, no!"

Just then we heard a frantic pounding on the garage door, and Mom's desperate cries, "¡Brinquen por la empalizada!" ("Jump over the fence!")

Poor Mom thought that the basement was totally ablaze and that we were trapped in there. When I opened the garage door, it took her a few moments to realize that we were fine, and the fire was out. The firemen trooped in, to Ruben's great embarrassment since the dad of one of his buddies was one of the firemen, and he greeted Ruben by name. Even though the fire was out, they insisted on doing a thorough check. I can still picture them crowding around the car's engine to determine what had caused it to burst into flames. They offered Ruben some mechanical advice, too, I think.



Looking back, I realize that I must have been in shock from the moment I saw the flame leap up, and that's why I remained so calm and robotlike throughout the whole thing.

After that, it became a great story to tell and retell, and Mom was able to laugh with us about how she panicked. I think Ruben was the only one who acted normally!

“¿...y la familia?”

Unforgettable Helen



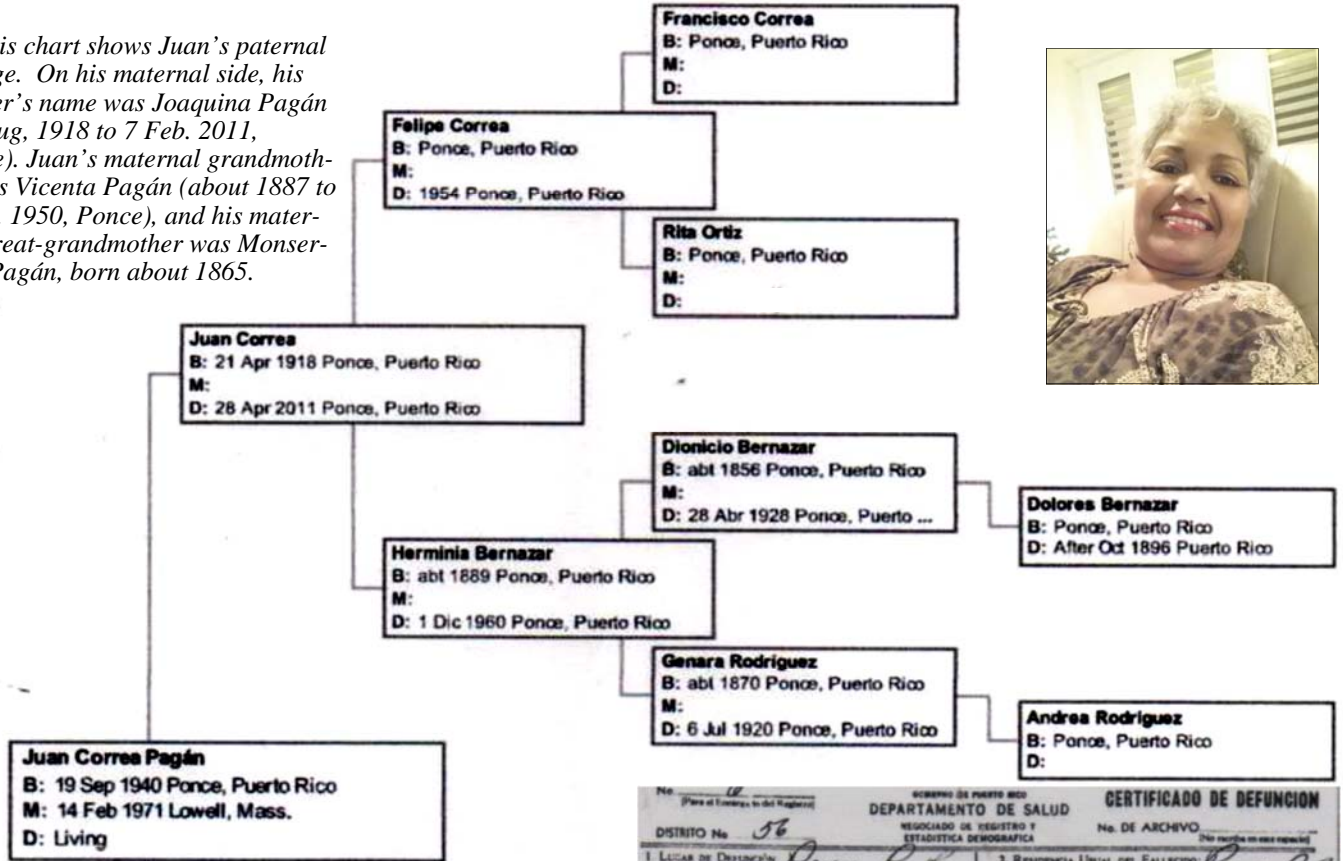
¿...y la familia?



¿...y la familia?

On Dec. 19th, Helen, brought by her father, Juan Correa, came to spend the night with Randy and me at our vacation home in Yabucoa. Weak as she was, already on morphine, and not able to ingest anything but liquids, she insisted on going to the beach and getting into the water. The next day, she wanted to go back to the beach! In between, we spent hours researching her father's side of her family tree, and Helen was so thrilled and excited to reach back several generations. She kept calling her dad on her cell phone every time we found another ancestor, or to try to get more facts from him. She told me this was something she had wanted to do for a long time. Because of her eagerness to discover her father's family tree, I am printing out our discoveries here. It meant a lot to Helen, and it is important information for her children and grandchildren, as well as for her sister Jackie's descendents.

This chart shows Juan's paternal lineage. On his maternal side, his mother's name was Joaquina Pagán (16 Aug. 1918 to 7 Feb. 2011, Ponce). Juan's maternal grandmother was Vicenta Pagán (about 1887 to 2 Jan. 1950, Ponce), and his maternal great-grandmother was Monserate Pagán, born about 1865.



I didn't find the death record for Helen's great-grandmother, Vicenta Pagán, until after I returned home to California. By then, Helen had entered the hospice center in Laurens, so I wasn't able to communicate the information on this document to her, which is just as well since it says that Vicenta died of stomach cancer. (Helen started out with colon cancer, but it had metastasized into stomach tumors, which were what prevented her from eating toward the end.) Note that Vicenta lived on Calle Acueducto, #50, and that her death was reported by Helen's maternal grandfather, Florencio Rivera.

DEPARTAMENTO DE SALUD NEGOCIADO DE REGISTRO Y ESTADÍSTICA DEMOGRÁFICA		CERTIFICADO DE DEFUNCION	
No. DE ARCHIVO		No. DE ARCHIVO	
DISTRITO No. 56		Municipio de Ponce, P.R.	
1. LUGAR DE DEFUNCION		2. RESIDENCIA ÚNICA DEL FALLECIDO	
(a) Municipio de Ponce, P.R.		(a) Municipio de Ponce, P.R.	
(b) Zona Urbana Calle Acueducto #50		(b) Zona Urbana Calle Acueducto #50	
(c) Zona Rural		(c) Zona Rural	
(d) Nombre del Hospital o Institución donde ocurrió la Defunción		(d) Tiempo de Residencia en este Municipio: 63 años	
(e) Estrada en dicho Hospital o Institución		(e) ¿Es ciudadano de país extranjero? No	
(f) Si lo es, especifique el país		(f) Si lo es, especifique el país	
3. (a) NOMBRE Y APELLIDOS DEL FALLECIDO		Vicenta Pagán	
(b) Si es Veterano, nombre de la Guerra			
(c) No seguridad social			
4. Sexo		20. Fecha de Defunción	
(a) Masculino		Mes: Enero Día: 2	
(b) Femenino		Año: 1950 Hora: 3:30 Minutos: P.M.	
5. (a) Estado Civil		21. Por la presente Certifico que:	
(b) Viudo/Divorciado		(a) Análisis fallecido desde: Calle Acueducto #50	
6. (a) Fecha de Viudo/Divorciado		(b) No se aser el fallecido y esta Certificación se hace a base de información suministrada por:	
(b) Fecha en que trabajó por última vez en esta ocupación		(Nombre del informante)	
7. Nació en: Ponce, P.R.		en su carácter de: (padre, madre, hermano, amigo, etc.)	
8. Edad: 63 años		del fallecido	
9. Natural de: Ponce, P.R.		Causa inmediata de la muerte	
10. Ocupación: Comerciante		Debido a: Enfermedad del estómago	
11. Natural de: Ponce, P.R.		Otras causas:	
12. Natural de: Ponce, P.R.		Duración:	
13. Natural de: Ponce, P.R.		El Médico sub-rogará la causa que crea debe ser considerada para la clasificación Estadística	
14. Natural de: Ponce, P.R.		22. Si la muerte fue violenta tiene los siguientes apartados:	
15. (a) Firma del Informante: Florencio Rivera		(a) Asesinato, suicidio u homicidio	
(b) Domicilio: Calle Acueducto #50		(b) Fecha en que ocurrió	
(c) Comenzó donde fue enterado: Calle Acueducto #50		(c) Sitio donde ocurrió	
(d) Fecha de Inhumación: Enero 3, 1950		(d) Especificar la lesión y el arma o instrumento que la causó	
16. (a) Firma del Agente Funerario: Florencio Rivera		(e) Nombre del médico: Dr. Federico O. Jimenez	
(b) Dirección: Calle Acueducto #50		(f) Firma del médico: M.D. Jimenez	
17. (a) Inactivo hoy: No		(g) Fecha: Enero 3, 1950	
(b) Encargado del Registro: José Torres		(h) Dirección: Calle Acueducto #50	
(c) Permisos de Enterramiento: (Fallecido) expedido en: Ponce, P.R.		(i) Por: José Torres	

Family History

This page will be reproduced as a blog entry with a link accessible through our family web page, www.ylafamilia.org.

Our Mystery Man, Florencio Rivera, Part III

Our Mystery Man Part I established Florencio's parentage and speculated on the reason he had told his children that he had been orphaned as a child. Part II exposed all of the suffering that Florencio experienced before his 30th birthday: the deaths of up to eight people that were close to him, including a young wife and a toddler son. We ended with the question of whether all this tragedy had hardened Florencio's heart or had created in him a strength that helped him endure the other hardships that came his way later on in life. The answers may never be fully known, and speculation varies depending on who remembers what about Florencio.

Florencio was born in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico on August 9, 1872, but moved to Peñuelas at some point. I researched all his aunts and uncles on both sides of his family, and only one of them was living in Peñuelas—Victoriano Rivera, a brother of Florencio's father, Manuel Alejo. If it is true that Florencio went to live with an aunt and uncle following his mother's death in 1882, Victoriano might possibly be that uncle. That would explain why Florencio was living in Peñuelas as a teenager, where he reportedly got involved with a young woman while still in his teens. That unidentified young woman is rumored to have died in childbirth, and Florencio's baby died as well. The only uncle on his paternal side that my father ever mentioned to me was Victoriano, who was actually his great-uncle. Dad said that when he was a child he would sometimes encounter Victoriano on a path in Santo Domingo, the mountain barrio in which they lived, and that he was always a little afraid of the old man.

But back to Florencio...he married Felícita Madera when he was 24 and she was only 17, but she died four years later. They had two sons: Nicolás (1897-1900) and Andrés (1899- ?). I am presuming that Andrés also died very young. He then met my grandmother, Ana Cruz García, while working in the country, on the Lugo property in Las Alturas, Peñuelas. Ana already had a little daughter, Angélica, who was a niece of the Lugos. Angélica is said to have died young, from tuberculosis. Florencio and Ana's first child that they presumably had together was Matilde, born on January 27, 1907, but sadly, the baby died on September 23, 1908, just two months after the birth of her baby sister, Adela. (See death record below). It's amazing to me that none of my aunts and uncles, or even my father, ever mentioned that the oldest child in their family was named Matilde. We were always told that Adela was the oldest. Did they not know about her? It seems strange that Florencio and Ana would never have talked to their other children about the first baby that they lost. By now, though, Florencio had lost three (or possibly four) small children. Maybe at some point you just stop talking about the pain.

Florencio and Ana's surviving children were as follows:

Adela (1908-1976), Óscar (1910-1995), María (1912-2009), Sinfioriano (1913-1986), Elena (1913-1999), and Anita (1916-1998). Life was simple and poverty abounded, but my father re-

Maybe at some point you just stop talking about the pain.

<p>Número 129</p> <p>Matilde Cruz</p> <p>B/</p> <p>En Peñuelas a la una de la tarde del día Veinte y Ocho de Septiembre de mil novecientos ochos años Ante Don Jue B. Sotay y Torres Secretario Municipal encargado de este Registro Civil Comparecen Emilianos Cruz y García Natural de este Pueblo Vecino de barrio Santo Domingo, Mayor de edad, Soltero de oficio labrador, Manifestando: que el día de ayer a la una de la mañana falleció en la Casa de la madre, Ana Austeneria Medica a consecuencia de Entenidos, Matilde Cruz, natural y vecina del barrio indicado, de un año, veinte meses y veintiseis días de edad, de color blanco, de lo cual daba parte en forma como las de la finada.</p> <p>En vista de esta Manifestación y de la certificación parafirmada presentada, el Registrante</p>	<p>No dispomos de estandarte la presente Consignandose en ella los datos siguientes</p> <p>Que era hija ilegítima de Ana Cruz y García de esta Vecindad</p> <p>Que en nacimiento figura inscrito en este Registro Civil en el Tomo 26, folio 7 Vueltos y Número 109, donde se pone la nota correspondiente</p> <p>Que a su cadáver se le dará sepultura en el Cementerio de este Pueblo</p> <p>Presencia de los señores Don Antonio Rosado y Don Bartolomé Santos Ayala de esta Vecindad</p> <p>Leída esta Acta y encontrandola conforme la firman los testigos y el Compareciente y se estampa en ella el sello de este Registro Civil ante mi de doy fe</p> <p>Emilianos Cruz Ant. Rosado Bartolomé Santos Jue B. Sotay</p>
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membered that his mother kept animals and there was always food. This would all change in 1916. A week after the birth of baby Anita, Ana Cruz García passed away, and life for her children would never be the same. The saga continues in the next blog.

2016 Reunion Information

Date: June 24-26, 2016 Place: 2001 Hunsaker Canyon Rd., Lafayette, CA 94549
Hosted by: Marina (Ramos) & Dennis Nelson; Tory Pettit
Check out more photos at



www.schneiderresidency.com

If you are planning to attend the reunion, PLEASE

contact Marina at (925) 207-2686 or via Facebook to let her know. You can also let me know (530) 559-5612 or by e-mail at mamanony@sbcglobal.net.

Relatives Respond

I was pleased to receive the Dec/Jan issue of "...y la familia?" Thank you for always including me in your thoughts and for allowing me to share the information you offer which brings our family together in spirit. May God continue to bless you and your family with health and prosperity.

The story about José Lino Medina was inspiring and heartfelt. His experiences, contributions and achievements makes him the epitome of strength that all of our family members should emulate. May God bless him and may his example serve for our younger generation so they too could contribute and become part of that legend. I also send my condolences and blessings to the family who were closest to him. I advise that the tears they shed shouldn't be for the pain of loss alone, but for the joy of sharing a part of his beautiful life.

As circumstances of life oftentimes dictate, we must all experience bouts of hardships and tribulations. I have been there and am still there. Needless to say, my path has not been joyful, but bitter and cold. Which leads me to the question you posed: "How does all the suffering and loss affect a man's character?" You were inquiring about Florencio's heart, whether it was hardened by so much tragedy... You see, for the last two and a half decades I've been living confined in a prison cell. Not only am I suffering a miscarriage of justice, but have lost all my finances, property, friends, and a lot of family members...Nothing joyful about being here except of course, for the brief moments or hours when a letter or visit appears or even a package which alleviates some pains of hunger, but never the gloom of despair...But a fire always burned deep down inside of me...a torch that defrosts the cold and bitter heart... You don't even realize that by reaching out to me in the darkest moments of my life, when I was just a stranger but family member by name and blood alone, while fighting my demons in the solitude of my confinement, your letters and newsletters opened up a window of hope in this desolate world of mine. It allowed me to peer out at a sunshine that I anticipate to enjoy one day outside these prison walls. You have taken me on mental journeys through memory lane to peek into the lives of strangers who are my familia, where I dared smile, laugh and even cry because of the mixed feelings attributed to the different situations each faced and experienced, from births, weddings, birthdays, graduations, to death...For that, I am grateful, and share Cousin Joi's sentiments when she stated, "You are a special treasure in our lives."

I am unable to reward you with plaques or even a bouquet of flowers for that matter because of my present circumstances. However, know that my heart reaches out to you and given the opportunity in the near future, I will show my gratitude with every breath I take. My time is coming near and I pray that I'll be welcomed in some family reunions so I can eat pasteles, do the salsa, and meet my beautiful family and most of all give you, Tia Norma, a big hug for being that spark which keeps my torch from burning out.

Your nephew, Juan González, a.k.a "Taino"

“¿...y la familia?”

c/o Norma I. Pettit
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E-mail: mamanony@sbcglobal.net

Visit us on the Web at www.ylafamilia.org.

Birthday Greetings

Eduardo Medero (28) -
Feb. 2

Juan González (55) - Feb. 2

Katherine García (51) -
Feb. 4

Brook Rivera (37) - Feb. 5

Angela Nicholson (49) -
Feb. 6

Maritza Rivera (53) -
Feb. 11

Alessandra Carrasquillo
(12) - Feb. 13

Melissa González (30) -
Feb. 15

Nicole García (20) - Feb. 16

Jaysli Barbosa (14)- Feb. 17

Nathaniel F. Vázquez (3) -
Feb. 17

Ruben García (67) - Feb. 21

Felícita Soto (60) - Feb. 21

Leilani Isabel Sua (3) -
Feb. 23

Heriberto Rivera (64) -
Feb. 24

Gwendolyn Rivera (14) -
Feb. 27

Jennily Oquendo (18) -
Feb. 27

Dustin Yager (31) - Mar. 3

Adam Campos (21)- Mar 3

Miguel González (23) -
Mar. 3

Matthew Hargraves (16) -
Mar. 3

David Trinidad (43) - Mar 4

Marcel Antonio Quiñones
(7) - Mar. 5

Gabriel O. Rivera (16) -
Mar. 5

Stephen Nicholson (19) -
Mar. 11

Jayrick Barbosa (15) -
Mar. 12

Karen Rivera (37) -
Mar. 15

James Caffey (74) -
Mar. 15

Jenny (Nicholson) Reinke
(78)- Mar. 17

Joi Stenroos (66) - Mar. 18

Raynell H. Díaz (35) -
Mar. 19

Veronica Nicholson (18) -
Mar. 21

Michael Rivera (17) -
Mar. 22

Mackenzie Eddy (23) -
Mar. 24

Todd Anthony Springer
(14) - Mar. 24

Sonia (Quiñones) Rambo
(38) - Mar. 26

Barbara Nicholson (70) -
Mar. 26

Julian Alexander Rivera
(6) - Mar. 27

Milagros Rivera (73) -
Mar. 28

Lisa (Finch) Warner (50) -
Mar. 28

Jennifer Oquendo (30) -
Mar. 31

Anniversaries

Sheila Andujar and
Edwin Rivera (19)
Mar. 15

Frankie and Amy Valentín
(13) - Mar. 29

Sonia (Quiñones) and
Jake Rambo (14)
Mar. 30

TRUE
LOVE