

# "...y la familia?"

Volume 20, Issue 5

April/May 2016

Needed for  
the **LAST** Issue:

"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 art-  
work  
Original poetry  
Vignettes on  
your imme-  
diate family  
Favorite family  
recipes  
Cute things your  
kids have  
said  
Funny stories  
Prayer Requests

**This is your  
last chance!  
The newsletter  
will end  
with the  
next issue!**

## *Angélica Rivera de Medina* *Sept. 27, 1928—Feb. 29, 2016*

Angélica Rivera Pacheco passed away on Feb. 29th at the home of her youngest daughter, Carol (Medina) Wright and son-in-law Larry. At 87 years old, she was the oldest living child of family patriarch Florencio Rivera Maldonado and Otilia Pacheco Arroyo.

Sweet, loving, caring, maternal, warm and affectionate are only some of the adjectives that come to mind when describing this beautiful woman who was loved by so many of us and who will be dearly missed.

Tía Tita, as she was known to her myriad of nieces and nephews, succumbed to gall bladder cancer less than five months after the death of her husband, José Lino Medina. They had been married for 66 years.

Prayers and heartfelt sympathy goes to the Medina family for their double losses this past year.



#### **Inside this issue:**

Angélica Rivera Pacheco.....	1
Needed for the <b>LAST</b> Issue.....	1
I Remember.....	2
The Way We Were.....	2
At This Time in Our Family History.....	2
Tribute to the life of Angélica Rivera de Medina.....	3-5
A Page Out of Our Family History.....	6
2016 Family Reunion Information.....	7
Relatives Respond.....	7
Birthday and Anniversary Greetings.....	8

## I Remember...

By Norma (García) Pettit

*This story contains excerpts from the April/May 2003 "I Remember..." column.*

I remember the summer of 1969, when I first met the Medina family. I was seventeen that summer, and Mom let me travel across the U.S., making stops to visit relatives along the way...Joi in Colorado, the Merritts in Iowa, and the Medinas in Maryland. I'll never forget the excitement and trepidation I felt as I arrived at the Medina home with Auntie Anita Merritt, who had traveled from Des Moines, Iowa to Odenton, Maryland with me on a Greyhound bus. I felt excitement because I was going to meet some cousins that I had known about all my life, and who were close to me in age. At the same time, I felt trepidation because these were the "perfect" cousins that my dad was always raving about. The girls, Pepa, Rosa and Carol used to give my dad scalp massages and manicures. Whenever he returned to California from one of his Merchant Marine trips, if he had recently been to Maryland, he'd demand the same royal treatment from Olga and me. How I resented that! How surprised I was, though, when I met these cousins and could instantly tell that they were *fun*! We had a blast together.

Meeting Tía Tita and Tío José was a special treat, too. Tía Tita was sweet, warm and loving. I adored her from the get-go! Tío José and I bonded over corn. He got on a fresh corn kick and would stop at roadside stands on his way home from work and buy sacks full of corn that I'd help him shuck. The "perfect" Medina kids would disappear when it was corn-shucking time (they were sick of doing it), but I was a city girl, and I thought it was fun. The few weeks that I spent with the Medinas were filled with lazy summer days, frolicking in their Doughboy pool, girl-talk at night, enjoying a Fourth of July picnic, and savoring Tía Tita's delectable cooking.

I am so grateful that Tío José and Tía Tita drove me to New York so that I could see my brother, Oscalito, where he was playing with El Trío de Oro at the Alameda Room. I hadn't seen him in person since I was a small child. On the way, we stopped in Pennsylvania, where the above picture was taken of Tía Tita and me at a roadside statue of an Amish horse and buggy.



### The Way We Were

My dad loved to visit his sister, Tita, and her lovely family in Odenton, Maryland.

This picture is probably from about 1960.

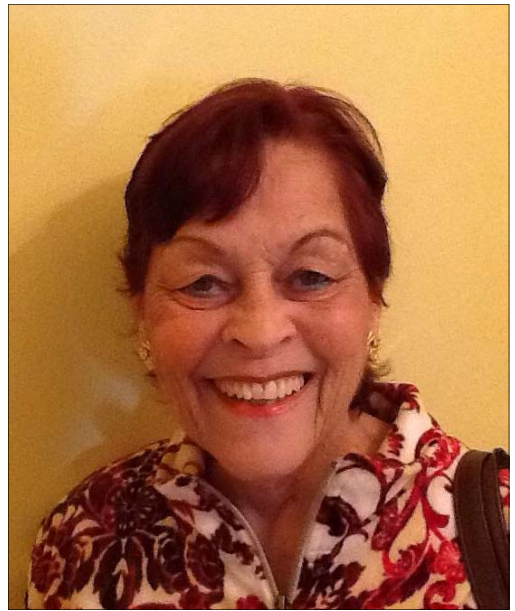


## At This Time in Our Family History

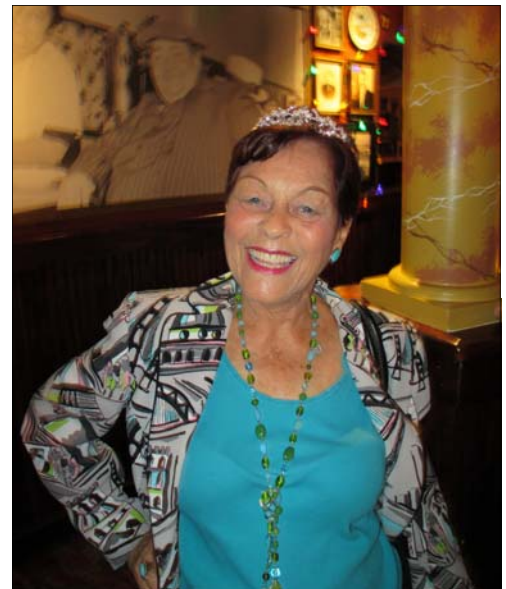
- **April 3, 1875**—Pedro José Rivera Maldonado was born. He was a brother of our family patriarch, "Papa Flor." Pedro only lived for 15 months, though, dying on July 10, 1876.
- **April 9, 1912**—Auntie Marie, baptized as María Perfecta, was born in Barrio Santo Domingo of Peñuelas, Puerto Rico. She was one of Papa Flor's daughters and the matriarch of the Nicholson clan.
- **April 13, 1839**—María Inés Vilá married Marcelino de la Cruz. Her father, Pedro Vilá, was born in Cataluña, España. They were the grandparents of Papa Flor's wife, Ana Cruz García.
- **April 22, 1946**—Oscar Cruz García of Peñuelas, Puerto Rico, married Ana María López Maldonado of Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. They were married in San Francisco, CA, and were the parents of Olga, Ruben and Norma.
- **April 22, 1986**—Sinforiano Rivera ("Guar") died in Ponce, Puerto Rico.
- **April 23, 1995**—Oscar Cruz García died of emphysema in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He was 84.
- **May 5, 1909**—Máximo Cruz, father-in-law of Papa Flor, married his second wife, Genara Maldonado. He was widowed from his first wife, María Engracia García.
- **May 22, 1914**—Elena Sevilla was born. She was Tío Guar's wife, and the mother of René, Roberto, Raúl, Milagros, Lilliam, Reinaldo, Luz, Heriberto and Edwin.



*¿...y la familia?*

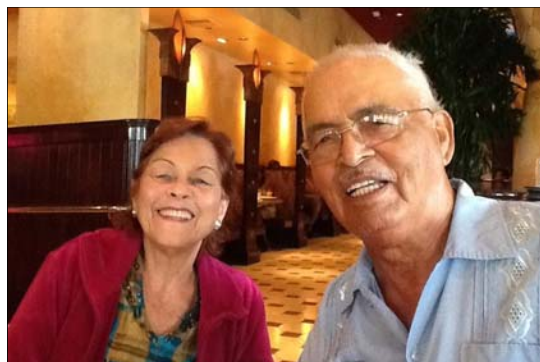


*Images of our beautiful Tía Tita: The first two are as a teenager, above with her mother, Otilia, and sister, Delia, and below with her brother, Isidro. Lower right, celebrating her 86th birthday.*





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# Celebration of Life

Angélica (“Tita”) Rivera Medina left her earthly bonds on February 29 after 14 months in the loving home of her daughter Carol and son-in-law, Larry Wright in Jensen Beach. She was born Angélica Rivera Pacheco on September 27, 1928 in Ponce, Puerto Rico to Otilia Pacheco Arroyo and Florencio Rivera Maldonado. She had ten siblings that lived to adulthood: Adela, Oscar, María, Elena, Sinforiano, Anita, Vicente Nerí, Isidro, and Delia. She spent her first twenty years in Ponce, Puerto Rico before marrying José Lino Medina on July 8, 1949. They resided in Puerto Rico, the Panama Canal Zone, Fort Devans, MA, and Odenton, MD, before retiring in 1990 to Boynton Beach FL. She was preceded to heaven by José on October 6, 2015.

Angelica's loved ones fondly remember how she always gave them affection, compassion, and encouragement when they most needed it. Angelica had the most beautiful green eyes and megawatt smile. She also greatly enjoyed 40's music, singing, playing the guitar, bowling, dancing, cooking and watching her television soap operas. She was a highly accomplished hair stylist. She maintained her stylist license for over 40 years. She was a member of St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Boynton Beach as well as St. Martin de Porres in Jensen Beach.

Angelica is survived by daughters JoAnne McLaughlin (Robert), Rosa Meddaugh (Brian), Carol Wright (Larry), and son Jose Medina Jr. (Donna) and surviving sibling, Delia Finch. Grandchildren: Ponch Daley (Nikki), Emily Medina, Angelica Rosa Stickle-Matlock (David). Great-Grandchildren: Joshua and Zachary Daley.

At her funeral, the family in attendance honored her by wearing her favorite shade of blue. The funeral director said he had never seen family of the deceased wear color-coordinated clothes, like in a wedding, but it made a striking impression.

Angélica’s smiling face will be missed by many friends, nieces and nephews. She was interred next to José at the South Florida National Cemetery. Please keep the Medina-Rivera family in your prayers as they grieve the loss of both parents in such a short time span.



*David Matlock (Angie's husband), Josh Daley (JoAnne's grandson), Ponch Daley (JoAnne's son), Brian Meddaugh (Rosa's husband), Bobby McLaughlin (JoAnne's husband), Larry Wright (Carol's husband), and cousin Carlos Rivera (son of Isidro and Rosita)*



*Angie (JoAnne's daughter), Nikki Daley (wife of Ponch), Carol (Tita's youngest daughter), Emily Medina (Tita's granddaughter, daughter of José Medina, Jr.), JoAnne (Tita's oldest daughter), and Rosa (Tita's middle daughter)*



## Our Mystery Man, Florencio Rivera, Part IV: *Life with Ana Cruz García*

By his 30th birthday, my grandfather, Florencio Rivera, had endured the deaths of up to eight people that were close to him, including a young wife and a toddler son. In the last blog, I revealed that his second wife, my grandmother, Ana Cruz García, had a baby girl named Matilde, born on January 27, 1907. Presumably, Florencio was the father, but since they were not married, Matilde's death record only says that Matilde was Ana's illegitimate child. Sadly, the baby died on September 23, 1908, just two months after the birth of her baby sister, Adela. 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).

Ana Cruz García was of medium height, white complexion, dark eyes and long, long hair that went past her waist, but which she usually wore in a bun. My father, Oscar, said that his mother looked something like María Nicholson. Great-aunt Carmela, who was Ana's half-sister, remembered her this way: Ana was feisty. She would argue with Flor and she would leave and go to her father's house, taking with her all the children, and the cows and all the other animals. Oscar said that he remembered this. But Carmela also remembered that Ana was serviceable. She liked to help people--to be of service to them. If she heard that someone was sick, she would go to help them right away. If they wanted to borrow money, she would lend it immediately. She loved to raise animals and had many animals to sell and with which to raise money.

Everyone concurred that Ana loved to have neighborhood dances, and no one dared start a fight at one of them. She just wouldn't let it happen. Great-Uncle Angelito said that Ana was tough--she had a very strong character. Right after she gave birth to Anita Merritt, someone told her that Flor had another woman. She got out of bed in a blind fury and ran outside of the house. She got rained on, came down with a fever, and died. She was only 34 years old. Life for the Rivera-Cruz children would never be the same after that.

Auntie Marie told me many years ago how she never forgot the day that her mother was being carried away in a hammock to be buried. I've carried in my mind the image of a little girl standing in the dirt *batey* of her front yard watching her mother being taken away down a mountain path.

During our time in Puerto Rico for the 2005 Rivera family reunion, cousin Joi and I were standing at an upstairs window in cousin Annie Meléndez's house in Peñuelas. Annie pointed out a mountain in the distance, stating that it was Santo Domingo, the barrio in which Ana and all of her children were born, and where Ana had died. Later, Annie graciously took us on a driving tour of Peñuelas, where she pointed out *the end of the mountain trail*, now a paved road, that leads down from where our forefathers lived. To clarify things in my own mind, I asked Annie, "So you mean to say that when my grandmother was carried down the mountain in a hammock to be buried in town, this is the end of the road they traveled on?" Annie said that was correct. This brought Auntie Marie's story full circle for me, and was, inexplicably, a very moving moment. That fall, back in California, as my sister, Olga, cousin Joi and I were looking at reunion pictures, Olga declared, "I want us to go up that mountain the next time we go to Puerto Rico." We planned to return in four years and do just that, but tragically, Olga died in 2006.



The 2009 family reunion was held in Peñuelas and hosted by cousin Annie and her family. Fulfilling Olga's desire, a group of twenty family members led by cousin Millín (far left in the photo), traveled as close as we could get to the spot where Tío Angelito's house had been on land that he had probably inherited from my great grandfather, Máximo. It was to Máximo's house that Ana used to go with her children and farm animals in tow whenever she and Flor got into an argument, so she must have lived nearby. Otilia Pacheco Arroyo, mother of Isidro, Nery, Angélica, and Delia, also lived nearby as a girl. In fact, the 1910 census shows that Máximo and Genara's house was #59 on the enumeration listing, Florencio and Ana's house was #55, and Juan Pacheco and Manuela's (Otilia's parents) was #61.

Walking the land that our ancestors lived, worked and died on and gazing upon the spectacular views (all the way to the Caribbean Sea) from that pinnacle of verdant land was an incredibly spiritual experience.

After Ana's death on August 22, 1916, and after the typical novena of rosaries customary in the Catholic religion, Otilia Pacheco came to live with Flor as his common-law wife. He was 44 and she was not yet 19. Florencio's oldest daughter, Adela, 8, and second oldest daughter, María, 4, were farmed out to other homes as live-in help. Auntie Marie told me she remembered having to do work—sweep, wash dishes, help with laundry, and fetch things—in exchange for room and board plus 75 cents a month. With a catch in her voice, she told me that during that time she only saw her father once a month, when he came to the house where she was staying to collect the 75 cents. He would give María a nickel and keep the rest. She said she grew up not knowing the warmth of parental love. The newborn baby, Anita, was raised by her grandfather, Máximo, and Genara (his second wife) until the age of seven, at which time she returned to live with Florencio and Otilia. Oscar, Sinfioriano ("Guar"), and Elena remained at home, and were soon joined by younger siblings from the union of Flor and Otilia. *Next blog: Florencio's life with Otilia*

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# 2016 Reunion Information

Due to some family concerns, the reunion location has changed. Final stop:

**24 Calle del Sierra, Stinson Beach, CA**

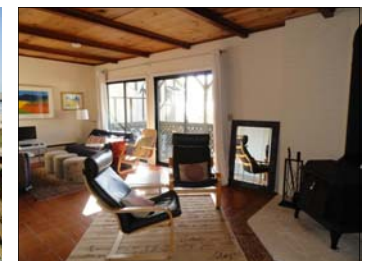
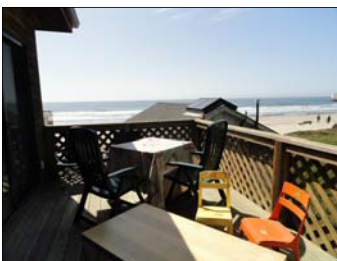
Hosted by Marina Ramos and Tory Pettit

Date: Saturday, June 25, 2016

*Love the  
homey feel  
of this house!*

For more information, visit the 2016 Rivera Family Reunion Facebook page.

***Photos of the house:***



*As you can see, the place is literally two houses from the beach. Bring your towels and sun-screen. Good food, music, family and fun await you!*

## Relatives Respond



*I was surprised to receive a card in the mail from Cousin Carol with this note and a check for \$100. This issue starts and ends with precious Tía Tita. ♥*

*Dear Norma,  
Mom wanted me to send you \$100.00. She appreciated all your loving dedication to the family "Rivera" newsletter. She would read it cover to cover and repeatedly.  
Love + Hugs,  
Carol, Rosa + Pepi*



# “¿...y la familia?”

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

## Birthday Greetings

<b>Michael Barnes</b> (53) - April 1	<b>Emilio Meléndez</b> (61) - April 21	<b>Nicholas Rivera</b> (26) - May 5	<b>Stephanie (Krause) Thompson</b> (39) - May 29
<b>Emilio Maldonado</b> (85) - April 1	<b>Liliana Marie Tokar</b> (4) - April 21	<b>Kaliana Grace Maskell</b> (3) - May 6	<b>Cristina Cruz</b> (13) - May 30
<b>Michael A. Feliciano</b> (50) - April 3	<b>Vic Stenroos</b> (68) - April 22	<b>Ryan Reinke</b> (20) - May 12	
<b>Catherine Rivera</b> (39) - April 5	<b>Dalie Delgado</b> (24) - April 23	<b>Ted Reinke</b> (79) - May 13	
<b>Dustin Cavino</b> (25) - April 4	<b>Naïome Campos</b> (12) - April 23	<b>Roberto I. Rivera</b> (65) - May 16	
<b>Wilma E. Roig</b> (31) - April 6	<b>Raymond L. Cavino</b> (17) - April 25	<b>Alexis Valentín</b> (31) - May 17	
<b>Marlynn (Merritt) Krause</b> (68) - April 6	<b>Hayli Frosheiser</b> (20) - April 26	<b>Kirstin Frosheiser</b> (44) - May 21	
<b>Tiana J. Rivera</b> (21) - April 6	<b>Daniel Campos</b> (22) - April 27	<b>Riley Hargraves</b> (14) - May 22	
<b>Ana V. Pettit</b> (31) - April 8	<b>Luz E. Sánchez</b> (10) - April 28	<b>Heriberto Rivera</b> (29) - May 26	
<b>Tom Smith</b> (78) - April 13	<b>George Rivera</b> (43) - April 29	<b>Ada I. Rivera</b> (39) - May 26	
<b>Jayden Daniel Valentín</b> (5) - April 14	<b>Mirra Noemí Quiñones</b> (6) - May 1	<b>George Nicholson</b> (71) - May 27	
<b>Elienith Dessus</b> (28) - April 21		<b>Lucas R. Pettit</b> (30) - May 29	

## Anniversaries

Jana and Orlando Rivera (7)  
April 12

Carmen (Feliciano) and  
Maximino Carrasquillo (41)  
May 16

Cathy (Rivera) and  
Eric Montalvo (19)  
May 24

Marlynn (Merritt) and  
Paul Krause (46)

