

"...y la familia?"

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Final Issue!

Wrapping Up 20 Years of Newsletters



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Family History Blog

Our Mystery Man, Florencio Rivera, Part V: *Life with Otilia Pacheco Arroyo*

Let's recap what we've learned so far about my grandfather, Florencio, in the previous four segments.

Part I: He was the son of Manuel Alejo Rivera and María Dominga Maldonado. He had six siblings, although at least three of them died while Florencio was still a boy. His mother died when he was only ten years old, but Florencio was 27 and already married to his first wife, Felicita, when his father died. **Part II:** Florencio Rivera and Felicita Madera Medina were married on March 10, 1897 when she was 17 and he was 24. Their first son, Nicolás, died on Nov. 19, 1900. Their second son, Andrés, was born on Nov. 20, 1899. Felicita died on March 20, 1901 at the young age of 23, and the fate of Andrés is unknown but it is presumed that he died as a child. **Part III:** Florencio met my grandmother, Ana Cruz García, and she gave birth to a child, Matilde on January 27, 1907, but sadly, the little girl died on Sept. 23, 1908. Their second child, Adela, was by then two months old. They went on to have Oscar (my father), María, Sinforiano, Elena, and Anita. A week after Anita's birth, Ana Cruz García passed away. **Part IV:** By his 30th birthday, Florencio had suffered the loss of up to eight people in his family, including a young wife and toddler son. Part IV tells about Ana and her life with Florencio, plus how she died from a fever in August of 1916. Now Florencio was once again a widower, left with six children. Shortly afterwards, Otilia Pacheco Arroyo came to live with him. He was 44 and she was not yet 19.

It should be clarified that Otilia was *not* the woman that the gossiping neighbor told Ana that Flor had been flirting with.

Otilia was well known to Flor's children, having often been at the home helping out as a nanny of sorts, and undoubtedly had affection for the motherless crew. In those days, poverty played a big part in life decisions, but over the years up until Florencio's death, Otilia was a loving and devoted partner for him. She soon began adding children to the family, starting with Vicente Neri (Sept. 11, 1917—Dec. 27, 1972) and Isidro (May 13, 1919—Dec. 28, 2014).

My father's memories, transcribed from a recording I made of him telling the story of his youth, are this: Florencio worked as a caretaker of a farm in Peñuelas for many years and was replaced in that job by his daughter Elena's godfather. He then went to live on a half-acre owned by Juan José Pacheco (Otilia's father). He made a house there, but bad times came, and he sold the house together with the land for \$100. It was around 1919 or 1920. Somehow, during the move, the \$100 got lost and they never found out what happened to it. They moved to Tibes, to a house which cost \$35, and he worked in the sugar cane fields. From there they moved to Loma Bonita in Ponce. Two more children were born—Angélica (Sept. 27, 1928—Feb. 29, 2016) and Delia (b. May 19, 1934), but in between there were stillborn twins, a boy and a girl. Two other little girls were born and died young: Carmen Lydia (Sept. 10, 1936—Dec. 5, 1937) and Aurea Esther (Mar. 1, 1939—Aug. 20, 1941). I recently located the death record for Carmen Lydia, shown at right.

Florencio died on June 22, 1941, just two months before Otilia lost her last baby. Daughter Delia tells the story of her father in this issue's "I Remember" reprint on page 7.

No. 2281

Para el E. del Registro

1. LUGAR DE LA DEFUNCIÓN DISTRITO 56
MUNICIPIO DE Ponce

GOBIERNO DE PUERTO RICO
DEPARTAMENTO DE SANIDAD
Sección de Epidemiología y Estadística Demográfica

CERTIFICADO DE DEFUNCIÓN

2. NOMBRE Y APELLIDOS DEL FALLECIDO Carmen Lydia Rivera

3. RESIDENTE EN LA CALLE Loma Bonita No. 12 EN EL BARRIO Sept

4. TIEMPO DE RESIDENCIA EN EL MUNICIPIO DONDE OCURRIÓ LA DEFUNCIÓN 1 AÑOS 2 MESES 25 DÍAS

5. SI ES EXTRANJERO, TIEMPO DE RESIDENCIA EN PUERTO RICO AÑOS MESES

DATOS PERSONALES Y ESTADÍSTICOS

6. Sexo H 7. Color o raza Bl 8. Solter, Casad, Viud, Divorciad

9. Edad 1 2 35 10. Fecha de la defunción Sept 10 / 1936

11. Ocupación, profesión u ocupación ma

12. Industria o negocio en que trabaja

13. Fecha en que trabajó por última vez en esta ocupación (mes y año)

14. Año que trabajó en esta ocupación

15. Natural de P.R.

16. Natural de P.R.

17. Natural de P.R.

18. Natural de P.R.

19. Natural de P.R.

20. Esta información es correcta, de acuerdo con lo que he visto y entendido

21. (Certificado de defunción) o (información de defunción)

22. Fecha de la (información) o (información)

23. Inscrito hoy (día, mes y año) 6-11-1937

24. Fecha de la defunción 5 de

25. CERTIFICADO: Que el fallecido desde hasta 1937 y que le vi vivo por última vez en 1937 y que según mi conocimiento y entender la muerte ocurrió en la fecha expresada a las 12 PM.

LA PRINCIPAL CAUSA DE MUERTE y otras causas de importancia relacionada con la misma, fueron las siguientes:

Principal causa: Broncopulmonia

OTRAS CAUSAS importantes que contribuyeron a la muerte:

26. Sitio donde la enfermedad fue contraída

27. Nombre y fecha de la operación quirúrgica, si la hubo.

28. ¿Qué análisis de laboratorio confirmaron el diagnóstico?

29. ¿Se realizó autopsia?

30. Si es una muerte violenta, dése la siguiente información: ¿Accidente, Suicidio, Homicidio? (Escriba la palabra que corresponda)

Fecha en que ocurrió: 1937

¿Dónde ocurrió? (Especifique el sitio exacto y también si dicho accidente, suicidio o homicidio ocurrió en el trabajo, en la casa, o en un sitio público.)

31. ¿Hubo alguna relación entre la ocurrencia del fallecido y la causa de muerte? Si es así, informe cual

32. Fecha 6 de

33. Dirección Castellón # 2, Ponce, P.R.

PERMISO DE ENTERRAMIENTO (EXAMENADO) EXPEDIDO EN 6-11-1937 POR Salvador Rosendo

At this time in our family history...

- On June 8, 1893, Petronila Pacheco was born. She was a sister of Otilia (the mother of Nery, Isidro, Tita and Delia). Their other sister, Francisca, was born on June 11, 1887.
- Auntie Anita Merritt passed away on June 25, 1998 at the home of her daughter, Kathy Caffey in Nebraska. She had been suffering from emphysema for a number of years. Anita was the youngest child of the union of Florencio Rivera and Ana Cruz García, and was only a week old when her mother died.
- On July 3, 1861, my great-grandparents, Manuel Alejo Rivera Maldonado and Maria Apolinaria Maldonado Rivera were married. Manuel Alejo's mother, Cipriana Maldonado, and María Apolinaria's father, Felipe, were siblings. That means that my great-grandparents were first cousins in addition to being husband and wife. This was perfectly legal and not so unusual in Puerto Rico in the olden days.
- My beautiful and loving sister, Olga María (García) Smith, went home to Jesus on July 4, 2006.
- Angela M. Warren, Olga's second daughter, was born on July 15, 1969. She passed away on Oct. 8, 2007.
- Auntie Adele was born on July 22, 1909 in Peñuelas, Puerto Rico. She was the oldest daughter of the union of Florencio Rivera and Ana Cruz García. She was not quite seven years old when her mother died a week after giving birth to baby Anita.
- Florencio Rivera ("Papa Flor")—our patriarch—died on July 22, 1941.
- My mother, Ana María López Maldonado, was born in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, on July 26, 1911. She was the daughter of Juan López and María de los Santos Maldonado. She had one older brother, Confesor.

¿...y la familia?

2016 Rivera Family Reunion

Stinson Beach, California



WHAT FUN!!! Pictured here are Ruben Quiñones with son Marcel, Ed Rivera, Lisa Quiñones, Garnet Rivera, Vic Stenroos, Carlos Rivera, Tory Pettit, Joi Stenroos, Rex Serrao, Brook Rivera, Austin Rivera, Chris Rivera, Andrew Bilir-Flock, Chrissy Rivera, Robert Rivera, Norma Pettit, Marina Ramos with son Jacob Nelson, Teal Barnes, Michael Barnes, Mirra Quiñones, Raymond Cavino, Kali King, Robert King, Richard Cavino, Shanda King, Dustin Cavino, Robert Cavino, Marlin Barnes, and Alura Barnes. The same people are in the photo below; they just shifted around a bit. ☺



¿...y la familia?

2016 Rivera Family Reunion

Stinson Beach, California



*Thank you Marina, Alura and Tory
for planning and organizing
this reunion!*



*Thanks, Shanda, for making
your grandmother Olga's
famous beans!*



*Thanks to family
from near and far
who came!*



*Thanks for the
jelly bean treats!*



*Thanks to
all who
helped
out!*



Thanks for the wine and prizes!



*Thanks, Marina, for picking out such a great
location, and praise God for the beauty of his
creation. The beach was amazing!*

¿...y la familia?

2016 Rivera Family Reunion

Stinson Beach, California



From raffle winner
Robert Rivera...



...to great
conversation...



...to family time...



...to signing...



...to meeting the
newest family
members...



...to little girls
jumping on the bed...



...to laughing...



...to remembering...



...to eating great food...



...to making giant bubbles...

...a great time
was had by one
and all!

Thank you to all
who attended
and made this
such a joyful
reunion. ♥

Photo credits:
Ruben Quiñones,
Carlos Rivera and
Joi Stenroos

¿...y la familia?

Student News



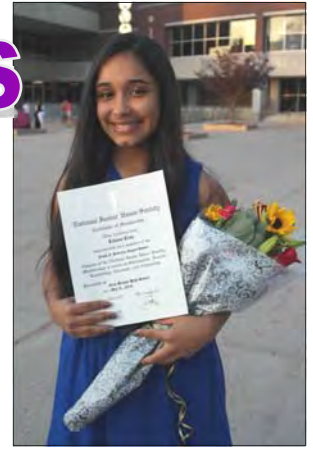
Gabriel Rivera Andujar, 8th grade graduate with High Honors



Veronica Nicholson, high school graduate; sister **Annalise**, 8th Grade



Ethen Stenroos
Officially a 1st Grader!



Lilian Cruz, 8th Grade
National Junior
Honor Society

Other Family News



Cousin **Carlos Rivera** and wife, **Garnet**, took advantage of their trip to California to visit the **Finch Family—Bryan, Cheryl, and Aunt Delia**—on the day before our Rivera Family Reunion. All are looking great!



The day *after* the Rivera Family Reunion, another get together was held at the home of **Edward and Chris Rivera**. Four of the beautiful daughters from the Hernández clan of San José (nieces of Auntie Rosita) are pictured here. We had a wonderful time reminiscing about our childhood years and catching up on our present lives.
Standing: Nancy Sánchez, Edward, Rivera, and Carlos Rivera. Seated: Neida Muñiz, Gladys Kennedy, Emy Granada, and Norma Pettit



The Way We Were

The very last one!! This treasure of a photo was taken about 1951 and shows (from left) Gladys Hernández, Olga García, Nancy Hernández, Edward Rivera, Ruben García, Neida Hernández, and Carlos Rivera.

I Remember...the Dad that I Knew

by Delia Finch

Reprinted from the June/July '05 issue

This morning, as I was laying down with my head upon my pillow, I started thinking about my dad, and how I knew him in a way hardly anyone else did, except my siblings, and my mom. Many stories have been written about him, but no one really knew him the way we did at home.

Dad was hardly ever called by his real name outside our home, and most everyone else addressed him as “El Catalán”. He was a true Catalonian descendant in every aspect of his life: the way he carried himself, the way he cared for others, very tall, slender, and not one curve on his back. He never slept on a bed, only a cot, no pillows of any kind, and no covers. It was his nature. That explains the no curvature of his spine. Blond hair and the most beautiful blue eyes I can remember. To us girls, Tita, Carmen Lydia, Aurea Esther, and me, he was a very caring and wonderful dad. He spoiled us tremendously, and we were like his shadow, following him everywhere! He loved our brothers very much, too, although at times he could be very stern with them. I think that he just wanted to teach them to be tough.

He was very quiet and kept pretty much to himself. He adored Mami, and she loved him very much, too. He took care of us the best way he knew. We went through some rough times and occasionally food was scarce at our table, but somehow we were fed with whatever was available. The annex to our house, his little *negocito* (produce shop), was his escape from his daily job at the *Plaza de Mercado* in the center of our home town of Ponce, where he owned space for selling fresh produce on a daily basis. All the produce was delivered to our house by mules, about 3:00 a.m. weekly. Tita and I would get up along with Dad to receive it, and after putting it away, we went back to bed, and Dad would get up about 4:00 a.m. again to take the fresh produce to sell at the market. Whatever he could not sell, he sold on the way home. In those days, people did not have the money to pay, but Dad, softhearted as he was, gave the stuff to them on credit, but people took advantage of him and never paid back the debt. Dad never kept books of any kind; everything was in his head. We needed the money, too, but nobody could argue with him.

At home, Tita and I minded the shop while Dad took a nap in his rocking chair by the counter every afternoon. He was always worn out and would not even wake up to eat his meal. Our old lady neighbor who lived across the street from us ate his dinner every single day. Later, he would wake up and call, “Otilia, you forgot to feed me.” Mami would argue with him about giving his food away. There was never any leftovers in our house for seconds. Many times there was nothing left for my mom.

Dad loved raising fighting cocks. He owned the best champions in the city of Ponce, and was envied by many of his opponents. He sat in our backyard to groom and care for them, getting them ready for the fights, while Tita and I watched and helped. They were beautiful healthy roosters. One night the roosters were stolen from our yard, along with a big wash tub that Mami had, full of baby clothing and diapers soaking overnight. Mom and Dad were heartbroken because of the roosters, but also the clothes were about all our little sisters had. We were very poor in those days. Later on some man came over to tell Dad he had seen a bunch of feathers matching the color of our roosters, up by the “Caobas”, the oak forest up on the hill from where we lived. We never found out who did it. Dad was furious!

Dad was a champion at domino games, too. They had no money to play for, but they bet drinks by the shot glass. He always took us with him, to give Mami a break. We sat there watching until they were finished. At the end of the game, Dad was so drunk that he could not hardly walk back to the house. He always carried me, because I was so small my legs could not keep up with his long steps. He fell down often but we never got hurt.

He was quite a guitar maker and player. He hand made two types of guitars called *el tres* y *el cuatro*, a bit smaller than the regular guitar and with less strings. He did an amazing job on them, and after the finished product was ready, he and his friends would test them by playing and watching the ladies dance to the beat of the music. We all had a good time.

He was never a churchgoer, but Mom was very religious, and we had to go to church with her, sometimes three times a week, depending on which events were going on. When it was time for us to leave, Dad would say to Mom, “*Traeme un pedacito del cura.*” (“Bring me a little piece of the priest.”) Mami would do the sign of the cross, and say, “*Muchacho, que Dios te perdone.*” (“God forgive you.”) He watched the babies while we were gone. That was Dad, all right. Never a dull moment in our lives! One day I acted naughty and stuck my tongue out through the crack of our living room door, and he caught me in the act. He was charging toward me like a bat out of Hell. I saw him and took off running so fast that I ended up almost all the way to El Vigía, but he never could catch up with me and went home. I was so afraid to come back home that I waited until dark, and Mami picked me up over the backyard fence and put me under the bed where she fed me, and then got me into bed and told me to be very quiet and close my eyes. Later, I heard him say to my mom, “I’m very worried about my little girl. It’s dark out there and she is not home yet.” Mami said for him not to worry, that I was safe in bed already asleep. He never punished me for what I did, and never again did I pull another stunt like that one.

We missed him tremendously after he passed away. We were too young to be without a dad, and it was hard on Mami to have to raise us alone. It was hard on all of us, especially me, because he used to rock me to sleep every night, and all of a sudden he was not there for me anymore. I wanted to share this part of our lives with the rest of the family, as I know that many of you never had the privilege of knowing him personally. He was a very kindhearted man, and always ready to help those who were in need. He was one of a kind.



“¿...y la familia?”

c/o Norma I. Pettit
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Visit us on the Web at www.ylafamilia.org.

Birthday Greetings

Jayden I. Feliciano (14) - June 5	Meryem Merritt (65) - June 19	Lilliam Rivera (73) - July 11
Máximo Carrasquillo (40) - June 5	Enid Rivera (31) - June 20	José Medina (66) - July 11
Jeremy Carrasquillo (39) - June 5	Norma (García) Pettit (64) - June 20	Kayla N. Reinke (17) - July 15
Nellie Feliciano (56) - June 9	Laurie Jimenez (57) - June 21	René Rivera Jr. (54) - July 21
Annette García (33) - June 10	Tommy González (46) - June 21	Vickie Jimenez (56) - July 22
Aluna Howell (5) - June 11	Jason Pineda (39) - June 22	Christina Krause (38) - July 23
Joyce Montalvo (16) - June 12	María L. Feliciano (33) - June 24	Annalise Cruz Rivera (12) - July 24
Alicia Rivera (34) - June 12	Scott Hargraves (51) - June 25	Cynthia Feliciano (38) - July 25
Leslie Feliciano (31) - June 13	Cindy Nicholson (45) - June 29	Ada Rivera Segarra (36) - July 25
C.J. Burch (27) - June 14	Alura G. Barnes (23) - June 30	Rachel Nicholson (16) - July 26
Emily Medina (38) - June 15	Angel Feliciano (21) - July 2	Fernando Vázquez (26) - July 28
Garnet Rivera (71) - June 15	Elizabeth Rivera (20) - July 5	Paul Krause (71) - July 30
Kimm (Reinke) Hargraves (53) - June 16	Eric R. Stenroos (33) - July 7	Ethen R. Stenroos (6) - July 31
Ken Reinke (53) - June 16	Carmen Nydia (Feliciano) Carrasquillo (60) - July 7	
Nelson Rivera (52) - June 17		
René Rivera (77) - June 19		

Anniversaries

Jenny & Ted Reinke (55) - June 18
Angela & David Nicholson (18) - June 21
Garnet & Carlos Rivera (29) - July 14
Cindy & Christopher Nicholson (23) - July 17
Joanne & Robert McLaughlin (19) - July 21
Marina & Dennis Nelson (5) - July 23
Randy & Norma Pettit (34) - July 30



And so ends the final issue of
¿...y la familia?
As Porky Pig would say,

“That’s All Folks!”

¡Feliz Cumpleaños!