



Barroso

Garcia-Lavin

Foreword

This essay, booklet, or just a collection of memories is written for my siblings and their successors, the family is a juncture of two families *Barroso* and *Garcia-Lavin*, For the Barroso Family only it will have about 50% interest, and for the Garcia-Lavin it will have about 75%. And I give such numbers because the Garcia-Lavin part is a lot larger than the Barroso's.

I am not pretending to write a literary piece since always literature was farther from my mind. I wouldn't know the difference between Homer and Jesse Jackson. So please do not criticize me, this is not for sale and has no Copyrights.

This essay does not follow a regular pattern, nor it has any "drama" so, for one not interested in either family, this would be very boring. I have tried to include as much as the family that I can, but nevertheless there would be necessarily many errors of omission and commission, since all of the previous generation is gone I had to relay in old family stories, and memories of this generation, that I had access.

I have tried to include some family pictures; some dated in 1868 like our Great-grandmother, there are many more that the "curator of the family archives, (Ferdy)" has, so if anyone is interested, contact him. Of the Families Saavedra, Reyes, Fonts, Barreto, Palacios and Carmichael. I have not been able to gather much material, but if anyone sends me facts, stories, anecdotes, etc I will be glad to include it in the next revision (if there is one). I suppose that some of you will be interested that their descendants know about their families.

At the end I have included some thoughts about how Cuba was at our time, even though my hate for Fidel is intense, I will not try to politicize the contents, it will be some sort of relation of how we used to live there, I will explain what a Bidet is, I will explain about Chaperones, I will not explain about the red light district, and how the blinds closed 10 seconds before the policeman on the beat passed, just to open 10 seconds again after he passed, some things will on purpose left out, because i,How we explain how much we have fun visiting a girl, and some times playing musical chairs? I for myself don't want my children believe that I was, at that time, mentally retarded. We have to remember that in our time we did not have the Beatles, Computers or Marihuana (not in our medium anyway). Comparing with the present generation we were extremely naive.

Pardon my French! But I am writing in English, because the next generation will understand better, since this essay is written mostly for them, since this has been written mostly for the ones who were born there and came too early or those who were born here and did not have the opportunity to know the Cuba we left.

So, perhaps if you belong to one of those families you will be able to read at least part, but I am afraid that for your spouses this will be extremely boring and I do not recommend to read it.

So, I hope you enjoy it, C.

I begin to write all of this at the interest that my children have shown me about the history of our family. I will commence this with the specific note that I will not tell anything about myself since in the first place there is not much to tell, and in the second place I would not like to be boring. Everything you read here are experiences that I personally had or has been told me by witnesses of those events. *If you have not read the Foreword, do so now, otherwise you will not understand many things.*

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My grandfather on my mother's side Jose Manuel Garcia-Lavin y Borges was born in March 1868, I know he worshipped his grandmother named Juanita Arencibia, you will find pictures of both on my computer. My grandmother Andrea (who was worshipped by me) was born in November 1867 so she was older than her husband by a few months. My grandfather worked all his life in the Sugar Industry, he married my grandmother Andrea around 1890 and in around 1891 they had a baby boy that I understand was stillborn (I understand that it is real, although, I can't corroborate it, since there is not one alive that can testify of this), and in 1892 they had the first born girl, and she was named Andrea (nicknamed Nena). Between that time and 1902 they had six more children: Serafina (tia Fina), Gracia (tia Nini), Jose Manuel (tio Pepito), Ramon (tio Moncito), Julia Sylvia (tia Julita) and Dulce Maria (mama). All through' this time he was building a sugar business and eventually he became to own "Central Dos Rosas" (Two Roses Sugar Mill). The independence war was going on at that time but my grandfather was not interested in "liberate" Cuba from the Spanish yoke, and he was more interested in maintain his large family. At that time they were living in Cardenas.

But lets go back to the middle of the XIX Century. Jose Manuel father was Manuel GarciaLavin y Ruiz (in Cuba and all Spanish speaking Countries two (2) surnames are used first the father's follow by the mother's so you all would be Barroso y Menendez, Saavedra y Pasalodos, Reyes y Martinez, etc. so now on whenever I can I would use both names).

Manuel married Maria de la Concepcion Borges y Arencibia, they had 2 children, Jose Manuel y Maria de la Concepcion (Tia Conchita). Jose Manuel grandmother was Juanita Arencibia I never knew her last name (mother's surname), but I knew about her because apparently my grandfather mentioned her constantly, due probably to a great admiration, but unfortunately we have no one to ask about, because that generation already passed on.





Andrea Amaro



Concepcion Borges y Arencibia

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Of Manuel Ruiz I don't know much about, except I remember my grandmother told me the following Story: One day he put a glass of water on top of the night stand and a ring formed in the area that was wet, when my grandmother went to clean it, he stopped her and told her to bring Alcohol because he stated " Alcohol with alcohol is removed", of course the mess was worse, but since then that was a joke in my family, if you did something wrong and wanted to diffuse the problem you said " Alcohol with Alcohol is removed". Also (I don't know if was he or his father) was caught one time by bandits in an attempt to rob him, and they beat him so he would tell them where he had hidden his money, he wouldn't talk so they let him for dead beside the river but he saved his money, he almost loose his life but he saved his money. There are several pictures of my grandparents and

there is one of Juanita Arencibia a picture taken in 1868, probably at the beginning of



Jose Manuel y Andrea Circ.1890

the time that photography was in its infancy, 1868(later on I will tell the story about how we came to have this photograph)

As I understand, Manuel Garcia-Lavin y Ruiz came (either him or his father, that I don't know which one) from Santander, in northern Spain close to France and the Cantabric Sea, he came with two brothers, when the boat arrive in Cuba he decided to stay, the other two brothers, one went to Mexico and the other to Philadelphia and Baltimore areas, One of their ancestors was a fellow named Garcia de Lavin. But at that time (*de* meant of, or belonged to) since that sounded to him like he was some Garcia that belonged to Lavin, he decided to do away with *de* and instead he Hyphen it. They could hang me for all I care, but anyway, that is why all Garcia-Lavin are related. Knowing that Americans change names to go with the circumstances,

like Schneider, means Taylor in German, many Tailors are German descendants of Schneider's. I am sure that the Americans Garcia-Lavin has changed their names, although around 1970 my mother was with my Aunt Julita in Philadelphia and she was in a hotel, and she (my mother) asked the concierge in the main desk of the hotel if my aunt had arrived yet, he said she just left, my mother asked to see the book and found that was another Garcia-Lavin, but could not trace her because she was gone. My mother always believed that probably was one of those lost relatives. We will talk about lost relatives later on.

Going back to Manuel and Maria de la Concepcion (the mother), I don't know when she died but I believe that was at an early age, because his grandmother Juanita Arencibia raised my grandfather.

My grandfather being son of Spaniards he sympathized with the Spaniards during the Independence, but my grandmother Andrea didn't and when the time arrived that the Spaniards left Cuba she put a Cuban Flag in balcony of their house. My grandmother used to tell me that that was the only time in her life that she disobeyed him (remember the at that time there was not such a thing as "politically correct"), for at that time the marital vows still said, "obey".

My grandmother was born in November 1867 so, that make her few months older than my grandfather, her father was Ramon Gonzales y Caraballo son of Jose Maria Gonzales y Regla Caraballo. Ramon married Maria Luisa Moya and had two children Maria Luisa (famous in our family for her crazy overtures) and Ramon, I never new or heard anything about him, so much so, that many in the family believe at present that he never existed. He (my great-grandfather) became a widower and married the second time to Maria de la Concepcion Amaro and from that marriage my grandmother was born. Maria de la Concepcion died at the age of 28 when my grandmother was less than a year old, so her Aunt Andrea Amaro raised her. The original picture of my great grandmother was in the family mausoleum since she was buried, until sometime in around 1940, when the family sold that tomb in Cardenas and the remains were transferred to Havana. It was this way: Tio Moncito tried by all the legal means to transfer our family (the remains) to Havana, however anyone familial with the red tape in Cuba will understand this, no matter how much he tried they kept sending him from one place to another in different departments so he was not going anywhere, nobody knew what to do, so he decided to do it his own way; one Sunday afternoon he went to the cemetery in Cardenas, and bribed the caretaker, they opened the grave and found a stair that came down to a small room and in the wall were niches where all the small boxes with the bones were. In the middle of the room there was a table and in that table was the picture of our great-grandmother (which Ferdy has the original) and an urn with flowers that looked perfect but as he touched became powder, they had been there for 50 years. He took all the 13 boxes and brought them to Havana in his car, when he arrived from Cardenas with those 13 bodies he took it to the house of Tio Tato, which had a library in a sort of split level, that was in summer and the family was in the beach but my father being a physician couldn't go so he stayed in the house with my mother and I, one night during a big storm, one of the windows of the library came open and my mother sent me to close it. I remember going up there with those 13 little boxes, and being horrified, but I closed the window and sped down in a hurry (I was 12 years old!). The next Sunday he went to the cemetery in Havana and bribed again the other caretaker (Moral: the caretakers are "briable"), and put the remains in our Mausoleum.

Now lets stop here and go to the other side of the family (the Barroso side), since mutual relatives interlace both families.

As far as I know the first Barroso ancestor was Fabian who arrived in Cuba at the turn of the XVIII or early XIX Centuries. He probably had already some relatives in Cuba since his son Tomas married later on his cousin Angela Barroso. Eventually he (Fabian) married a lady whose last name (and I don't know her first name) was Cartaya. As I said above, they had a son Tomas born in 1835 in Guamutas (today named Marti). Tomas married Apolonia Amaro and they had 4 children (Apolonia was a sister of Maria de la Concepcion and Andrea). The eldest Agripina, married later on to Pascual Diaz and emigrated to the United States and except for one time when my father was a child and they made a trip to Cuba and my father met his teenager American cousins, they never heard from them again. The second one was Luis who as we see later was very close to my grandfather. Luis was followed by Alberto (I don't know anything about him but there is a picture of him in Ferdy's "archive"), and the last was Jorge who died during the independence war and was never found, my grandfather and his brother Luis expend many years looking for him in vain. Luis had 4 children Luis, Hortensia, Miguel and Dulce Maria. Miguel died in 1937(at the age of37) Luis died about 1990, and Hotensia about the same time, both in Arkansas.

Apolonia Amaro died leaving Tomas with 4 children, Tomas wanted to marry his single sister in law, Andrea, but at that time in the middle of the XIX Century that was taboo, even though there was no reason, that was consider some sort of incest, so, he waited 2 years trying to convince his sister in law, to no avail, so eventually he married his Cousin Angela Barroso, and they had one child Leandro Fabian, my grandfather. My grandfather was born in March 1868, and on the other side of the family Andrea was born 3 month earlier (you will see the significance of all of this, since one daughter of Andrea married one son of Fabian, {Leandro Fabian, but now on will be Fabian since that was his preferred name }) and those are my grandparents. When Andrea was ready to be presented in Society and being the custom at the time that a gentleman was suppose to be her escort, Fabian was hers. Far from knowing that some day their children would marry. Tomas Died in 1905 in Cardenas, where he was visiting his old relatives, his wife Angela died the same day in Union de Reyes, neither one new of the other death or even that they were sick!

Fabian became a medical doctor graduated in 1888, and in 1895 he went to fight for the Cuban independence with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. After Maceo was killed in1897, he came out of the Army and began to practice medicine in Union de Reyes, Matanzas Province, Cuba. Fabian was born In Guamutas, Matanzas, Cuba. Notice that Andrea and Jose Manuel were born in the same town (as I said above the name today is Marti, and the town has about 2000 inhabitants, since so many of my ancestors were born there, I bet you would think that Guamutas was a large metropolis). At the same time his brother Luis was fighting for Spain with the rank of lieutenant. Later on they would expend together many years looking for their brother Jorge, lost during the independence war.

During his short practice in Union de Reyes he met Dulce Maria Pifiar and eventually married her around 1898.

Dulce Maria (for all of us Mamaquico) was the second child of Manuel Pifiar, a Spaniard from Seville who had become rich and had much land in that area, and Carolina Diaz. Manuel and Carolina had 4 children Angelica, Dulce Maria, Marcos and Consuelo.

Dulce Maria was a youngster of 16 when she met Fabian and 2 years later they married Fabian being 30 years old. They had 4 children, Carlos Fabian Born March 8, 1900, Margarita Born in November 1902, Jorge Born in 1904 and Haydee born in 1911, (a tidbit: (for curiosity) is interesting that Fabian was born the same day as the Czar of Russia, Nicholas II and Jorge the same day as the Czarevich). They were taught at home, Carlos, Jorge, Margarita y their cousin Miguel Barroso. Haydee had not been born yet. At the time there were living in Babiney a farm owned by Manuel Pinar. Two large tracts "Babiney" and "La Granja" both within the municipality of Union de Reyes. Fabian was not practicing medicine anymore and instead was working as a Planter since he was foreseeing the production of the land. In 1911 they moved to Havana and the 2 boys were sent to "Belen" School and Margarita to "el Sagrado Corazon", as interns. At that time he bought and began to use a new sugar mill that he called "Santo Tomas" named for his father, in the City of "Ciego de Avila" in the Province of Camaguey. Also their last child Haydee was born.

Lets go back now to the Garcia-Lavin Branch. Jose Manuel had been born as stated above In March 1868, that make him 3 months younger than my grandmother Andrea. He was also born in Guamatás!

By 1902 they had already 7 children, Andrea (Nena) born in 1892, Serafina (Fina) 1894, Gracia (Nini) 1887, Jose Manuel (Pepito) 1888, Ramon (Moncito) 1899, Julia 1901 and Dulce Maria 1902. Around 1906 Jose Manuel lost the sugar mill that he owned, "Dos Rosas" His "best friend" and lawyer last name Reinaldo a known family in Cardenas had betrayed him. After he sold the remaining of his property the family moved to the "Central Perseverancia" Where he became the administrator. Around 1913 his son Ramon was kidnapped for ransom since my grandfather was managing all the money from the sugar mill. As I remember, the story that I was told, at the time there was an internal war that was called "The war of the Negroes" since two Negro leaders (Ivonet and Estenoz) had raised an army of Negroes to fight the government and the Whites. Since Jose Manuel and Ramon were both prisoner and they had to leave one to get the ransom, they would allow my grandfather to go but they would keep his son Ramon, my grandfather convince those people to let both go and to his surprise that was what they did! Few months later he received a wire from the government, that one of the kidnaper had been killed, and for the next few months he kept receiving the same wire until all of them had been killed during that war. The "Central Perseverancia" is located in Aguada de Pasajeros, at the edge of the Bay of Pigs that you probably have heard about. When they moved from Cardenas my grandfather sold the house to the Apostolate nuns where they put a school that in 1959 was still there. The condition of the sale was that all their daughters would have free education, however the only one that eventually went there was Nini, the two oldest already were out of the school, and the two youngest Julia and Dulce eventually went to the American Dominican School in Havana. In 1919 the eldest daughter died in Saranac Lake, N.Y. She had tuberculosis and was sent to a sanatorium there, she apparently died peacefully in her sleep or that was what my grandparents were told. They came from Cuba in a boat to Key West and then a train to NY, by the time they buried their daughter (my aunt Nena) in Colon

Cemetery in Havana one month had passed. There is one thing that we should explain here: in Cuba there is the Spanish custom that no embalming is done, instead they bury the person no more than 24 hours after they have died, they place them first during the immediate postmortem in a special coffin that they call it the refrigerator, because that what it is, you view the body through a glass, just before the burial they transfer the body to a coffin and close the lid. Once they put them in the grave the top is sealed, usually for two years, then they dig the remains and put them in small box that they call it the osary, the space is used for the next. If you go to Spain and go to "EI Escorial" which was the palace of the kings since the time of Phillip II, you will see "The Pudridero" that means the "rotting pit" where the bodies rotten, they put there all Royals and later they are transfer to the definite tomb. In the case of my aunt she was embalmed so they could not remove her for the osary, so when my grandfather died they put him in the same tomb on top of his daughter, later on when my grandmother died on July 26 1939 she was buried in the same tomb, so there are three in the same tomb. I was there when my grandmother was buried and in the moment that they put the coffin, they could not close the lid so they took the coffin out again and one of the funeral home jumped on my grandfather coffin so he could make room for my grandmother, I remember seeing the Knee of my grandfather and hair. If you thing this is gross, it is, but is the custom of immemorial times, and looking closely I feel that this is the better way, because the body is not left forever in that coffin. My grandfather Fabian requested that he be put in the same osary as his mother, and put they both together, and so it is .



Fabian and Dulce Maria
Paternal Grandparents



Jose Manuel, Andrea and 6 oldest
Children (my mother wasn't born yet)

In 1919 was born the oldest of my generation, Dulce Maria Saavedra (Cuquita) the daughter of my aunt Nini and her husband, Rodrigo Saavedra, From 1919 to 1923 my grandfather was still living and "Cuquita" was his only grandchild that he ever new. In 1923 on July 11 my grandfather Jose Manuel died of Anthrax.

In the mean time my other grandfather Fabian was in his last stages of his illness, and being unable to visit his old friend he asked my father to visit the Lavin Family, my father arrived at the house at the same time everybody was crying because my grandfather had just passed away. His cousin, and my mother cousin Hortensia Barroso, who was visiting at the time and staying there, attended him. So he left, and a few days latter my grandfather Fabian asked him to visit the family again to convey his sorrow. When my father arrived again Hortensia attended him, when he was visiting with Hortensia, the most beautiful vision came to my father, my 21 years old mother came and was introduced to him! The following days my father would call his cousin constantly, but Hortensia realizing the reason for his call told him "Carlos, what you really want is to talk to Dulce don't you?" And called my mother to the

phone. That was the beginning of their romance. My father remember that many years before when he was a child of 6 or 7 he was in his house playing soldiers sitting in the floor and this family came to visit, and there was a girl sitting there and watching him playing, that was my mother at the age about 5.

My father Carlos Fabian had gone to the University of Havana and was in his way to become a Physician, in 1919 my grand father sold his Sugar mill "Central Santo Tomas" and went to Europe with my grandmother Mamaquico and the two daughters. They expended 6 months traveling. In France they stayed in "George V". (Many years later I saw the Hotel and I stayed in the "Prince de Gaulle" which is located besides George V). My father Carlos and his brother Jorge decided not to go and stay in New York by themselves. Between 1912 and 1919 they, Carlos and Jorge were in Belen School, during summers my father and Jorge went to "Ethan Allen" military school in Vermont. Since they began to go there and Carlos was 12 and Jorge was 8, they used to come to the US by boat from Havana to Key West. There they took the train to Vermont, all by themselves; that was the same trip that Andrea and Jose Manuel took when they went to NY for the body of their daughter. That year (1919) Carlos entered in the Medical School.

When Fabian, Mamaquico, Margarita and Haydee (8 years old at the time) returned from that extended trip through Europe, a financial depression was full throttle in Cuba. At that point my grandfather lost most of his possessions. Until 1925 when my grandfather died at the age of 55 his health was failing due to Sprue or Tropical Anemia, with the later discovery of Vitamin B12 Sprue today is very benign but at that time was fatal. In the latest years my father who was finishing the Medical School took him to Mayo Clinic In Rochester Minn. After a week there they told my grandfather that there was no cure, that he would have to eat 12 pounds of liver daily and perhaps could survive if that amount were possible. Of course Fabian died in 1925. My father finishes the Medical School and enters in the "National Army" in Cuba as lieutenant. He was assigned to Santiago de Cuba, Oriente Province.

At that time the admission in the Armed Forces was by opposition, means that amongst the applicants they accept the better grades. There were 5 places open there were 83 applicants my father was # 2. The reason that he was sent to Oriente province and they did not keep him in Havana was because the Colonel who was chief of the Military Health Dpt. Was Colonel Horacio Ferrer y Diaz, first cousin of my grandmother and was my father first cousin once removed. The Colonel was very strict and when my father took the examination he took a leave of absence and came to New York and stayed there until the examinations ended, so in case of my father winning there would be no conflict of interest. I will make small parenthesis here for a little story that my father told me: after he took those examinations he was sure of having won one of the places, so being 25 years old and extremely proud of being a lieutenant in the Army he went out and bought his uniform, he put it on and went to the street (to show off) and at the turn of a corner, what he found? Colonel Ferrer, he saluted smartly, and the colonel ask him how he had the uniform on, he replied that he had won the contest so legally he was already in the Army, the colonel told him to go home and take it off because he had not being officially notified, that was the first order he received as a military officer!

After my father was inducted in the Army he got married, and was assigned to Oriente Province. My father left immediately to look for a place, and a few days later my mother followed him, she took the train by herself and my father was supposed to wait in Santiago de Cuba, but he had gone to Holguin to investigate some soldier's murder and he waited for my mother there, when the train stopped there, he got in, and that was a surprise for my mother because she wasn't expecting him in another 6 hours. Between Santiago de Cuba and Holguin they were there about a year. Then he was transfer to Havana, because a friend of the family who was a powerful Congressman, whose name was Ramon Zaydin, transferred him to Havana. Father was ordered to La Cabafia Fortress.

At that time they were living in 14 St #171 between 17 and 19 St. Vedado La Habana (this is a piece of tidbit: The real name of Havana is "San Cristobal de La Habana", that is the reason that we say La Habana and not Hayana). **In** that house were living: my grandmother, my aunt Nini, her husband Rodrigo (tio Tato), their two children Cuquita y Rodrigo, my father and my mother. On March 11, 1928 I arrived at the same house (I was born there). Few years later my brother Ferdy was born there also.

As all of this was happening there were a few of our cousins that were born, I mentioned Dulce Maria (Cuquita) the oldest, follow by Jose Manuel de los Reyes (Manolo), born in May 1924, Rodrigo (Yoyo) Oct 1924, Sylvia, born in 1925, Jose Manuel Garcia-Lavin (Joche) March 1926, Gustavo and Gonzalo de los Reyes (Twins) born in July 1926 and Gloria de los Reyes, born in Sept 1927, Eduardo (Eddy) born in 1928 and died in 1934, Lourdes de los Reyes, born in 1930, and Carlos Garcia-Lavin (Forty), born in 1930. Also there was another born in 1927, Jose Manuel Garcia-Lavin who died while visiting my grandmother at the age of 2 months. **In** the Barroso's side of the family, Jorge Barroso Born in 1930, Virginia, born in 1932 and Raul, born in 1934. Fernando (Ferdy) in June 6 1933. **In** 1941 Andrea Barroso Y Garcia-Lavin and in 1942 Rodrigo Barroso y Garcia-Lavin. **In** 1947 the last two of our generation were born, Ignacio Barroso y Palacios and Jose Manuel Garcia-Lavin (Pastor) y Barreto. How many Jose Manuel Garcia-Lavin'S?

Between the years 1929 and 1933 there was turmoil in Cuba that ended up in Sept 4 1933 coup d'etat. I am not going into this period as to what was happening, because there are enough history books of the era. On that day there was a coup d'etat and the Sergeants on down took over the reins of the Government. The officers were assembled in a large hotel, Hotel Nacional (that still exist, and there is a wall around the hotel that still has the marks of the bullets), the reason they ended up there was that the chief of the Army had surgery and he was recovering there and 500 officers came to this place and stay there, my father entered there on the 5th of September, and the battle was on October 2nd. There were 17 rifles and only a few handguns. The battle started at 5 a.m. and lasted the whole day, but they ran out of ammunitions and surrendered at 6 p.m.

Due to the limitations of this essay I wont be able to write much about this. But anyway there are as many interpretations as people living in that era, but I relay of all that my father told me. After they surrender they were taken to Castillo del Principe prison. I will make a parenthesis here to explain more about my father's role in all of this. As I previously stated my father entered in the Army in 1925 as a lieutenant in the medical corps, and was assigned to Oriente

Province, in the "Guardia Rural" that was a Corps form in the Army for the countryside, that corp. was founded after the Hispano-American war by an American General following the guidelines of the Canadian Mounted Police, and what they were doing was trying to preserve peace in the countryside of the Island. During those times my father acted as physician, but also had to act as a Judge in many military trials for minor things, as prosecutor in others, as Coroner, etc. some times he was away for a month, in the mean time my mother was alone, either living in Santiago de Cuba o en Holguin. During that time (from 1925 to 1927) the family in Havana was mobilizing all the family contacts and influence to bring my father back to Havana. As I explained before he was eventually transfer to la Cabana Fortress. When that happened they went to live with my grandmother and with my aunt Nini and my cousins. A few months later I was born there. Lets go back to after Sept 4,1933. On October the 2nd, when the "Hotel Nacional" was attacked, my father was captured, and after 3 days in "Castillo del Principe" where a new officer of the new government whose name was Franco Granero, used to bring a machine gun and take them to the execution wall and at the last moment laugh about it, he was "only kidding"(he later committed suicide), he was transfer to "La Cabana Fortress" and was there he was a prisoner for 4 months. While my father was in prison the governments kept changing depending of the will of Colonel Batista. During the first few months the President was Ramon Grau. One day the President called my uncle Jorge and offer him an appointment as Ministro de Hacienda (Secretary of the Treasury) My uncle, of course, refused on account that his brother was in prison, the answer of the President was that it had nothing to do with it, that show the morality of one that some day would be President.

During our time in exile (1959 to the present) my father was very reluctant to talk about all of this because he was afraid that the American mind would not understand he being in prison. He did not understand that instead of being degrading that was a mark of pride, since he was prisoner for political reasons. I remember my mother took me once to see him in prison, and still see it clearly, I was 5 years old, in our way back I told my mother "mom, poor daddy", and that was the last time my mother took me there.

A few days before September 4, on August 12, the President resigned and the populace went to the streets and began to murder and ransack, a total chaos and we (the family) went to Santa Fe, a beach where we had a house, so we would be away from Havana. Across our house in the beach was the summerhouse of a Senator (Rafael Guas) very close to the government and his house was ransacked, I still remember how the mob was taken their furniture and burning the house. At that time while we (my grandmother, my aunt Nini, my Uncle Tato, my cousins

Y oyo and Cuquita, my 1 month old brother Ferdy, my mother, my aunt Aurora, my uncle Ramon and Joche) were living there I remember one day I was in the porch, Laura (Ferdy's nanny) was there holding Ferdy and I think Rodrigo was there too, a man came in the street on my right side and on my left there was a fisherman who was very well liked by all in the family, although this was in the street, from the front porch to the street was only a couple of yards. The fisherman whose name was Enrique Rodriguez was dressed in white pants and a white Guayabera, a panama hat and had a cane, the other man had black pants and white shirt with no hat. The man had a revolver on his right hand and began to shoot his revolver to Enrique Rodriguez, he put all his six bullets in him, and we were there paralyze, (except Ferdy, he was a month old). When he finished he ran away (one way I ran the other) I remember Enrique Rodriguez dying in front of me. I was 5 years old, and I can still remember every

detail. My uncle Tato and my uncle Moncito came out took Mr. Rodriguez in their car and sped up to Bauta (that's the closest town) but when they got there Mr. Rodriguez was dead. The main Street in Santa Fe is named after him, Enrique Rodriguez Avenue.

Since 1929 we began to expend summers in Santa Fe, which was a rocky beach and probably not much of a beach, but for all of us was something, I assure you that anyone in my generation would love to return even to retire there if that were possible or if our wives wouldn't kill us first. We all have unforgettable moments of Santa Fe.

In 1936 the family built a house a little farther down the road (in Santa Fe), at the same time my uncle Gaston and aunt Julita built another and all the families began to go to the new houses. My grandmother was living with us, and we began expending all the summers there.

Santa Fe was really a fisherman village, and at the time was a remote area, where several families were living there as a summer visitors like ourselves. There was no electricity we used alcohol and gasoline lamps, at nights we the boys used to go out with a flash light because the street were not lighted, behind the village was a jungle, and we used to go to "explore", and we all had a lot of fun staying out exploring. As we grew older so our taste grew, so we began visiting young ladies, and began going parties since we all were between 20 and 15 years of age there was tastes for everybody.

There was one family in Santa Fe that had a house in front of the sea and, since once in a while, there was an stray shark that had lost his bearings (because was not much to eat in Santa Fe, and the sharks are very stupid, I detest them) he decided to fence his area and would charge families to swim in his fenced area, as expected nobody took his offer and could not find any customers, so he had the brilliant idea to go deep in the ocean and fish a shark, and so he did. He caught a large shark and exposed it in his pier and allowed everybody to come and see it, after a few days the shark began to rotten and the stupid man threw it outside his fenced area. The dead shark began to float with the current. We (all the cousins) were together in the pier of a family that lived across the street and one of us Gloria decided to swim, we were in the pier and when we looked down we saw a very large shark beside Gloria, we began to scream to her with desperation, and she was laughing thinking that we were kidding, and suddenly she felt something touching her in her leg, when she looked she saw the shark against her leg. Fortunately by then we had realized that this was the dead shark, and jumped in the water and "rescued" Gloria who by then was almost dead with fear! Since then we believe the story of the wolf, but for us is the shark!

As I previously explained this writing has no drama or sequence, you can read it starting anywhere. I have told you about the family, at this writing the previous generation is gone (except I still have one aunt), and now, the older generation is my generation.

I will say some words or stories about our uncles and aunts that many of you either never met or don't know. In page 14 of this writing there is a picture that most of you are familial with; is about this generation and the previous one. Except for Cuquita and Eddie who died a few years later, everybody is present, other than that, our whole generation is present, but all the older

generation ended on July 2001 when my father died at the "tender" age of 101. Here is our grandmother her five living children with their respective spouses (see page 15).

My aunt Margarita had a beautiful lyric soprano voice. In the 1930s she was the lead singer of the "Pro Arte Musical", which was the sponsor of the operas and Symphonic Orchestra in Havana. In 1931 during the opera season she sang and played the role of Mimi in Bohemia, she was largely acclaimed by the critics, and two weeks later Bohemia was again sang by Lucrecia Bori who was and still is considered one of the best divas of all times, and all the critics agreed that Margarita had been superior.

About tío Tato (Rodrigo Saavedra) is very difficult to write anything because I am not trying to write an Encyclopedia, there was an article in Rider's Digest about "my most unforgettable character" written by another of his nephews, but that was what he was, unforgettable. I bet that anyone that met him has some stories to tell, not only the stories but the way they were, I find impossible to write about them because I would not know to even approach the reality. Is enough to mention without to try to repeat them. In 1934 while he was reviewing a building that was suppose be erased in Chacon St., there was an implosion and the building fell down. He was at the time in the 4th floor and he fell two stories and got hang in a rafter by his right armpit in the second floor. They took him to the Emergency Hospital, but they saved his life, He died in 1968 in West Haven, Conn. At the time he was teaching Math in Sacred Heart School in West Haven, I remember in his funeral how many people were there, everybody, all his students, hippies, motorcycle gangs, priests, pimps, politicians, bishops, etc, he was loved by anybody who ever met him, his witticism is well known by everybody. Only one story: One day he was "dying" (every time he had fever he pretended to be "dying") and this Spaniard who was working in one of his projects came to visit him, and this man was known for having a large Hydrocele (which is water in the testicles) and was very noticeable, the man came to visit him because he knew he was sick, he had passed through an empty lot full of thoms, and all his pants were full of thoms, my uncle pretending as usual that he was dying and in the last stages of the agony, kept telling him: "be careful with a flat, be careful with a flat.". And my aunt and mother had a hard time keeping straight face.

Gaston (Gaston de los Reyes) was the father of all my six Reyes cousins. Well Known by all of us with the alias of "Eileen de la Metro". Because like the Metro Goldwyn Lion, he roared but never hurt. When we were children we were horrified because his straight face (he seldom smiled) however he was one of the kindest man we had the good fortune of meeting. Gaston was architect and engineer, he was very secretive, we never knew his activities because he was very reserved, but he was one of our favorite uncles (once you loose the fear).

Aurora Fonts, she was the wife of my uncle Ramon, she was always the soul of every reunion, when we had a party, for instance on November 4 every year for my father Patron Saint Feast, my mother counted with our Tia Aurora of directing everything. When we went to Santa Fe Aurora went with us and she was the one directing everything and taking care of all of us. She was very genteel and very attached to our family (one note of tidbit: Since she died in 1971, my uncle Ramon always used black tie, and in Cuba, black tie means mourning, until he died in 1983; he had been mourning her for since).

I wish I had a better gift of a writer, I could tell many more stories of the family, but since my space, and mostly brain, are limited, I will only mention the people that at one time or another served the family. Mamayiya, that was Yoyo's (Rodrigo Saavedra Jr.) nanny, Matilde, her daughter my nanny, Laura the other daughter, Ferdy's nanny, Carmen had been in my house forever, Maria, Andreita's nanny, Obdulia with the Reyes, her grandfather Tito, I have to mention Nolasco who new how to do everything, he could fix the electricity in our house, fix a bicycle, build a room, or teach us to swim, I bet that if I had to court a girl he could give me some pointers. Sinsin, that was Nolasco brother, he did not know how to read but in playing Dominoes he was very sharp, he could count those dominoes and add them just looking, he was a fisherman and always was bringing fish to us, I will make here a parenthesis to tell you small story from this family, their mother (Marunga) once during the time that my father was in prison won \$2000.00 in the lottery, she took all this money and gave it to my mother (she was that grateful to my father) of course my mother would not take it and after a big argument she settle for \$600.00, their family were my father's patients, and she didn't want the family to go "hungry!" and that was a very poor family.

Tata, Nolasco cousin, was a fireman and a very good wood carver (we used to ask him to do small baseball bats 3 inches and take them to school to sale them or change them for marbles). Nico, her brother, he was our gardener, our handyman, told us outrageous stories, but he had been in my house one time or another since my mother was 3 years old. Julian Fiallo the music writer who was tio Tato plumber, Paulina who washed our clothes, Manolo el Bobo, her son, who had smelling feet, and was caught for communist, because he was doing a favor to someone. Minervino who used to work for my mother and wanted to be paid with "Redecillas"(woman head net) and he was black with no hair.

O

There was a Cuban custom called "piropo", something that American mind never understood, the "piropo" was a compliment that the boys told a beautiful (or not so beautiful) girl, It usually went something like this, a pretty girl was passing by, and he would put a very sad face and say: "sabrosura, tienes un ciclón en la cintura" tell your folks to translate, one time I saw the following, we have a relative that was very very (more than twice) pretty (Mirta) and when she went by this gentleman he literally kneeled and kissed the side walk where she just passed. That was Class!! Like any other thing there was a good "piropo" and a bad piropo. A good one like the one above was OK a bad one was downright vulgar, however nobody ever heard a Cuban lady complaining about Piropos as a matter of fact if the lady receive no piropos she would be sad and depressed. One of the best went something like this "Your hips look like a flan in a nervous hand"(go and figure). When she heard a piropo you could see her slightly smiling.

There was a feature in the bathrooms that was not understood by our American friends. The Bidet, even though they were manufactured in USA, they had never seen it, when we were asked by a American friend what this was for, we used to kid them telling that was for watering

Martinis, or that was for a foot bath and when told straight face they would believe us. They could not understand why we were so primitive, that we did not know that the water for a highball could be taken from the refrigerator.

Life in Havana was 24 hours a day affair, at 3 o'clock in the morning you can go to any restaurant and get a hot meal, when at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning you finish dancing in a ball you usually go to a restaurant to eat breakfast. The Cafe in 23 and 12 Streets in "El Vedado" was the usual place to find everybody that had been in the party. Many preferred to go to Down town Havana to eat Chinese rice in a very dirty place Called "Plaza del Vapor" which was filled with the lowest class, however that was "chic". In any case when you party, you party all night There were several "Clubs" 3 or 4 were very high class, I will name only 3 "Havana Yacht Club", "Havana Biltmore Yacht and Country Club" and "Vedado Tennis Club". In the first two clubs they had also beaches, Vedado Tennis even though was in front of the sea did not have beach. In those places you suppose to have a membership so it was not open to everybody. You could go and find friends there, play tennis, basketball swim in the ocean or in the pool like in Vedado Tennis. You could sail a boat, you could play cards you could get in the bar and talk with a friend, you Bowl, you play Handball, the Biltmore had Golf course (only one of the two in Havana) and Stable for horses, there was Rowing, and you could go dancing and help to prepare a dance, anyway there was a myriad of things you could do. There were clubs for everybody, from the most expensive Like the Yacht Club, to the least expensive like "La concha" although those were the most fun.

The "Dancing Academies" were a very important institution, you were suppose to go there to learn to dance, but I never knew anybody going there who didn't know how to dance. Usually they advertise "Gentlemen \$1 Ladies by invitation". There were many in Havana and very respectable institutions.

I cannot remember anyone that had life insurance, go to a nursing home, pay a doctor or was rob by an automobile mechanic. But anyone making \$500.00 a month was considered high middle class, and more than a thousand a month was considered wealthy. The house servants grew older in your home and they became an institution, you wouldn't consider sent them to live anywhere when they could do no more, I remember a song, sang by Abelardo Barroso (no relation) called " Na Teresa, no pueo tranbaja" (tell your folks to translate). I remember in

1948 one of the old hand in my house passed away, she was very old black woman and when the funeral came I of course went to the funeral and the family asked me (being the only white) to say a few words in her honor, I have never been public speaker, but I had to say my peace. Trinidad (her name) used a turban all her life and nobody ever saw her without, but me. One day on kidding her I pulled her turban and found out that she was bald! The only thing she did in my house was to seat behind the door (it had a glass) and watch the street and wait until Mr. Llano passed, the next door neighbor, who was a member of the Supreme Court, a tall man with white head very distinguish, because she had a crush with him (both were about 80), and open the door for anyone that call. She was old but we never considered sending her to live with her relatives. And same thing happened to all of us, we never planned for the future, because the future was secure to all. I never knew where the "Bolsa de La Habana" (stock market) was, the economy in Cuba was different, and that is why our generation took sometime to understand American way.

Havana was a city of 1,000,000 but everybody in our family lived there so we were in contact with everyone. I could see my cousins almost daily, it was a rare week that we did not see each other, since everybody lived and worked in the same city we were no strange to each other. You lived in your own home until you get married and even after getting married (sometimes we lived "in family"), and if you didn't get married you never leaved your home, so the bonds were stronger amongst the relatives. Some of you, on reading this paper will find many relatives that you even didn't know existed.



This picture was taken as far as I Know on November 4 1930, although I am not sure. I know was taken on November 4 because that is the date of St.Charles feast and I was told by my mother many years ago, that it was that day. The year I suppose this, it had to be before September 4, 1933, because my father is in his military uniform. My grandmother had a baby in her arms, which is Lourdes, since Forty, Eddie and I are accounted for. Lourdes was born in March 1930, and in the picture she is a baby of a few months old. The difficult part to prove that is because at that time Forty would be a year old Eddie the same and I would have been 2. And all of us looked older than that.

The following few years were the years of The Depression, and that was also felt in Cuba, however we didn't feel it because we were too young to understand. But there were happy days. No matter how in need we were there was always some one helping.

If you got this far and had not yet committed suicide I will tell you some serious things about Cuba.

Cuba is a tropical island of 111,111 square Kilometers surrounded by about two thousand (2,000) smaller islands and keys. There are 3 large cordilleras (mountain ranges) and two small ones. In between them there are two large plains (in Spanish, Sabanas). The land is very fertile, Cuba produced the best tobacco in the world, and in sugar, Cuba was the largest exporter in the world. There was in Cuba a very well known millionaire, who own large cattle ranges, and fruit farms, and also happened to be a politician, that they called him the king of pineapples because he cultivated the largest pineapple plantations in the Island. He knew the American market was using Hawaiian pineapples (Dole) and he decided that since the Americans liked the Hawaiian pineapples he would plant the same. So, he imported the Hawaiian seeds and planted in Cuba, the Americans still did not like them because they were *too sweet*. He did not realize that the Cuban soil was *too good*. Cubans loved that pineapple.

The western part of the Island was Mountainous, Organos Sierra, Beautiful Countryside lots of mountains and jungles many Royal Palms (the Cuban National Tree). Eastern to that sierra was Havana and Matanzas, they were flat although in Matanzas there are some hills; the best known was *The India Dormida* (the sleeping squaw). In the center is Escambray mountains, follow by a large plain (Sabana) in Camaguey, known for the large cattle ranches and easternmost part of the Island Oriente (we don't have "states" we have Provinces). Oriente was the largest, two mountain ranges: Sierra Maestra (where the "Pico Turquino" the tallest mountain in Cuba, 1840 mts. Is located) and Sierra Cristal. Cuba is a lot larger than Hawaii, have no Volcanoes, the land is sweeter and the beaches superior. The Cuban peasant is very

friendly at any time you get to the house he will offer coffee in half of a coconut shell, that serve as cup. Also the Cuban peasant is very superstitious, I remember one time I was expending a weekend in a farm, and about two in the morning I was summoned to one of the peasant huts, and when I got there I found all the neighbors of tree leagues around had come to the place because the lady of the house was in labor and had just delivered a baby, however the placenta was stuck, so the husband believed that if the placenta was stuck that meant that the baby was not his. He was sitting in the porch with shotgun, and waiting. I was called because if I didn't remove the placenta somebody would be killed. I went to work and in the moment I removed the placenta, this dog that was under the bed came out took the placenta from my hands and sped away. Everybody, including me ran out to catch the dog so the peasant wouldn't kill his wife. We caught it!

The Cuban national sport was not Baseball was Cockfighting, there were not Bullfights since the independence war, the bullring was converted and became La Beneficiencia, (that was sort of asylum for poor children, ran by Charity Nuns) and it was located in the comers of Belascoin an Infanta, across was the Academy of Superior Mathematics, run by my uncle Tato. This assylum was located there since the end of the independence war. Children that were unwanted were left there through a very well designed gadget, they called "The Torno" it was some sort of revolving small door that had an opening to the outside, the mother came with the child and put him there and the "Torno" turned and the child came inside. The nuns took him in, and they never saw the mother or whoever put him there. That was the abortion solution in Cuba. We (my father baseball team "The Pirates") used to ply there because the director of the "Beneficiencia" was the father of our Star Pitcher (can you believe that our star 2nd base was our own cousin Rodrigo?)

Back to Cuba, because is important that the next generation knows about it, some of the customs were totally different, in Cuba we had what we called "Chaperona" usually the mother who was constantly watching both of you, I guess that is the reason that we liked so much the slow American music of the time (Glen Miller, Tommy Dorsey, etc.) you could kiss your girl, **Only** when nobody was watching, but when we were slow dancing we could sneak a little kiss now and then.

The cock fighting was really the National Sport, of course that was in the countryside, even though there was a "valla" in Havana (as a matter of fact was in el Vedado, in 14 and 19 St.). That was really something to see, I guess that was the cruelest of the sports. The cocks fight to death, although the Bullfight is about the same, but when you were in the countryside on Sundays you could not miss one of them. I think you can put a bomb to Castro, shoot him with a powerful rifle, throw him a grenade or put him in front of a cannon, and nothing will happen to the rascal, but if you prohibit the cockfights that would be the end of him.

Cuba is a narrow island, so, staying in some places you could see both coasts. In Babiney there was a little hill behind the house and during a clear day you could see both, the north and the south coasts. Life in Cuba was easy, you never heard of the IRS, the 15 of April was one more day, Sprint did not mean anything, Spring last a year, and when finish the next day started the new one. Always green, always shade, always breeze.

Cubans believed in the "toalla" (what they throw to a boxer when he is down), you always have a friend that will keep you out of trouble, or you know somebody who knows somebody who is a friend of the brother of someone who has political influence, and that is all you need to be out of trouble. We called it "Amigismo" a word invented by Cubans that not in the dictionary of the Real Academy of Spanish language, but it worked in the Cuba that we lost.

There is a fallacy that in Cuba was some kind of debauchery, because you can buy liquor in any corner and at any age, and yet public drunkenness was unknown, there were casinos, but you see them empty, and in a capacity crowd in the adjoining room, lottery tickets and yet nobody ever went broke because lottery and yet, we can almost see daily the American press talking about the debauchery in Cuba before Fidel!

In our Cuba we have many diseases unknown to the rest of the world, like "Alferesia" (that was my aunt Julita when somebody was mad (I guess she was thinking in Stroke), empacho, mufieca abierta, patatu, etc., there is an encyclopedia somewhere that explain all about that. But those maladies affect only Cubans. We had to wait 3 hours, if we eat or drink anything but water, before we took a bath, or we can get "embolia". This is an exclusive Cuban disease.

Politics in Cuba was a national pastime; there he was "The National Capitol" Copy stone by stone of the Capitol in Washington, and I am sure many Senators never went there and some of them even didn't know where it was. Political parties were numerous, but they never kept the same name so you couldn't say what you were; Democrat, Republican, Conservative, Progresista, Unitario etc., names of the political parties were changing constantly, they were very bombastic (although never worked), but the only one that never changed was the "Partido Socialista Popular" which was the communist Party. They never changed its name because was not necessary, everybody knew it and nobody cared.

This brochure could have been much extensive if I had been lucky enough to have input from all of you, but the distance imposed in all of us by our destiny, make difficult to get it. I apologize for the many important things that I have forgotten, but my brains are softer and softer.

C,



TIOS Julita, Moncito, Pepito, Tini, Fina y Nena



My Mother



My Father and
my uncle Jorge



Tio Tato



My grandmother



Tini



My aunt Haydee



My uncle Ramon



My father



My uncle Pepe



Tia Margarita



The countryside

Mi tia Aurora



Mi tia Julita
19



Mi tio Gaston



Varadero



The Family

Obituaries (After 1930)

1934 Eduardo de los Reyes and Garcia-Lavin

1939 Andrea Gonzales viuda de Garcia-Lavin

1959 Hortensia Barreto de Garcia-Lavin

1968 Rodrigo Saavedra y Pierra

1971 Jose Manuel Garcia-Lavin y Gonzales

1971 Aurora Fonts de Garcia-Lavin

1971 Gaston de los Reyes y Pro

1973 Dulce Maria Pifiar viuda de Barroso

1976 Dulce Maria Garcia-Lavin de Barroso

1977 Jorge Barroso y Pifiar

1977 Julia Garcia-Lavin viuda de Reyes

1981 Gracia Garcia-Lavin viuda de Saavedra

1982 Herman Camichael

1983 Ramon Garcia-Lavin y Gonzales

1984 Sara Freixas de de los Reyes

1985 Virginia Palacios viuda de Barroso

1985 Virginia Barroso viuda de Novoa

1995 Margarita Barroso y Pifiar

1998 Jorge Barroso y Palacios

200 1 Carlos Barroso y Pifiar