

# Cuban Church Records by Fr. Juan Luis Sanchez

Presented by the Cuban Genealogy Club of Miami, Fl., Inc.

July 14, 2008 – FIU – Green Library – Special Collections Dept.

(Websites updated January 2016)

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## ❖ SECONDARY SOURCES FOR CUBAN GENEALOGY – PUBLISHED WORKS

- Historia de Familias Cubanas by Francisco Xavier de Santa Cruz y Mallén, Conde de San Juan de Jaruco y de Santa Cruz de Mopox
  - 9 volumes
  - First 6 volumes published in Cuba – last 3 published in the US
  - Index available online at <http://www.cubagenweb.org/refs/gens.htm>
  - Jaruco wrote a series of genealogical articles titled “*Del Pasado*” for the newspaper *Diario de la Marina* – they are on-line at:  
<http://cubangenclub.org/cpage.php?pt=6>
- Genealogias Habaneras by Rafael Nieto y Cortadellas
  - 4 volumes
  - Volume 2 contains a bibliography of the other genealogical articles he wrote for such magazines as “*El Boletín de la Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba*” and “*Revista de Habana Yacht Club*”
- Descendientes de Cristobal Colon by Rafael Nieto y Cortadellas
  - Published in Cuba in 1952
- Dignidades Nobiliarias de Cuba by Rafael Nieto y Cortadellas
  - Published in 1954
  - History of the titles given to the families related to Cuba

- ❖ PRIMARY SOURCES ARE THE ARCHIVES – The churches and parish records mentioned below are by no means a complete listing, but rather were picked because of their importance historically, or because of the age of their archives.

## ❖ OLDEST AND MOST IMPORTANT CHURCHES IN THE PROVINCE OF HAVANA

- *IGLESIAS INTRAMUROS (CHURCHES WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE OLD CITY)*
  - LA CATEDRAL – oldest archive
    - Actual name is “*Sagrada Catedral de San Cristóbal de la Habana*”
    - “*Libro Barajas*” refers to a book that contains both baptismal and marriage records
    - *Libro Barajas* – records start in July 1584
    - Oldest baptismal records are from 1590 to 1600 and the oldest marriage records are from 1584 to 1622

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- *Libro Barajas* PDF can be viewed on <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/esss/cuba/transcriptions/transcriptions.php> along with other parish records
  - Archives are in good condition with the exception of the Marriage Bk #4 which is totally destroyed
  - Marriage Bk #4 dates are 1708 to 1724
  - ESPIRITU SANTO – 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest archive
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Book of Marriages dates are from 1674 to 1728
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Book of Marriages is a copy of the original and in very good shape
    - Marriages Bks #2 - #5 are in very poor condition and are not allowed access
    - Marriages Bks #2 - #5 cover 1724 – 1794
    - Books covering the end of 1700's and on are accessible
    - Burials book available at <http://cubangenclub.org/cpage.php?pt=9>
  - SANTO CRISTO DEL BUEN VIAJE
    - 1<sup>st</sup> book covers 1692 – 1718
    - 1<sup>st</sup> book available on line at <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/esss-cuba.pl>
    - This archive is still in very good condition
    - The archive has good indexes
  - SANTO ANGEL CUSTODIO
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Book of Marriages covers 1694 – 1712
    - Baptism and Marriage books are in good condition
    - Good indexes available for these records
    - Index of Marriages (Bk 1) is available on <http://cubangenclub.org/cpage.php?pt=9>
- *IGLESIAS EXTRAMUROS (CHURCHES OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE OLD CITY)*
- JESÚS DEL MONTE
    - Records begin in 1689
    - Donated baptism, marriage and burial certificates from a member's family tree available at <http://cubangenclub.org/cpage.php?pt=89>
  - SAN FRANCISCO JAVIER DE LOS QUEMADOS DE MARIANAO
    - Records begin in 1734
  - NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LA CARIDAD
    - Church's original name was "*Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*"
    - Records begin in 1739

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- JESÚS, MARÍA Y JOSÉ (Known as the Church of Jesús María)
  - Records begin in 1773
- *OTRAS PARROQUIAS (OTHER PARISHES **NOT** IN THE CITY OF HAVANA BUT IN THE PROVINCE OF HAVANA)*
  - GUANABACOA
    - Records began in 1607 but those books are no longer available
    - Marriage records begin toward the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century
  - EL CANO (Near the city of Havana)
    - The church is "*La Purísima Concepción del Cano*"
    - Records begin in 1730
    - The Lima Family is an important family in this area. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Francisco de Borja Lima y Muñoz became the Marqués de Santa Olalla. A family of Portuguese origin that came to Cuba in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Jaruco briefly mentions this family in Vol. 3 of Historia de Familias Cubanas, but it is not complete.
  - EL GUATAO (Next to El Cano)
    - Historically important because of a political incident in 1896 during the Cuban War of Independence – 50 civilians died
    - Records begin in 1765
  - BEJUCAL
    - The church is "*San Felipe y Santiago de Bejucal*"
    - Index available online at: <http://cubangenclub.org/cpage.php?pt=9>
    - Records begin in 1722
    - Town is founded on a property called Bejucal which was owned by Juan Nuñez del Castillo y Piñeiro who came to Cuba from Andalucía, Spain at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. His son became Marqués de San Felipe y Santiago de Bejucal. They received the "*Bara de Administración de Justicia*" or the delegation for administration of justice in that town. This was also known as a "*señorío*".
    - One of 5 "*señoríos*" of Cuba – A "*señorío*" was the equivalent of a feudal lord that had complete authority in the area.
  - SANTIAGO DE LAS VEGAS
    - Records begin in 1720
    - Important area as there were a lot of tobacco farms in this area

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- SAN ANTONIO DE LOS BAÑOS
    - Records begin in 1784
    - The 2<sup>nd</sup> “*señorío*” of Cuba– Agustín de Cárdenas – they received the title of Marqueses de Cárdenas y de Montehermoso
    - Jaruco mentions this family in Vol. 1 of Historia de Familias Cubanas
  - ALQUÍZAR
    - Church is “*San Agustín de Alquizar*”
    - Parish is established in 1806 but records begin at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century
    - Important area because of the sugar and coffee plantations in that area
  - CEIBA DEL AGUA
    - Church is “*San Luis de la Ceiba del Agua*”
    - Records begin in 1763
  - SANTA MARÍA DEL ROSARIO
    - Records begin in 1732
    - The 3<sup>rd</sup> “*señorío*” of Cuba– The Chacon Family, Condes de Casa Bayona
  - SAN JUAN DE JARUCO
    - Records begin in 1762
    - The 4<sup>th</sup> “*señorío*” of Cuba – Ancestors of Francisco Xavier de Santa Cruz y Mallén , Conde de San Juan de Jaruco y de Santa Cruz de Mopox
  - SAN JULIAN DE LOS GÜINES
    - Records begin in 1736
- The 5<sup>th</sup> “*señorío*” of Cuba was located in the province of Oriente in Guisa, not far from Bayamo. The title associated with this town in the Marquesado de Guisa. The family is the Silva Family. This is one of a several Silva families in Cuba which are not necessarily related to each other.
- ❖ OTROS ARCHIVOS (OTHER ARCHIVES)
- *ARCHIVOS DEL ARZOBISPADO (ARCHIVES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HAVANA)*
- ULTRAMARINOS
    - Expedientes de Soltería – Any non-national that wanted to marry a Cuban national needed one of these. ***These begin in 1800.*** Usually the file contains:

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- ✓ Baptismal certificate for the non-national individual (usually the male)
- ✓ Baptismal certificate for the Cuban national or Spaniard living in Cuba (usually the female)
- ✓ Proof that the non-national was single
  
- DISPENSAS DE PARENTESCO
  - Dispensations for persons who were related that wanted to marry. It was required of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins, beyond that it was not necessary although many 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins also got them. Usually the file contains:
    - ✓ Baptismal certificate for the groom-to-be
    - ✓ Baptismal certificate for the bride-to-be
    - ✓ Explanation of how they were related (mini family tree)
  
  - Most of these old dispensations are destroyed – Only the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the 19<sup>th</sup> century are available.
  - *Dispensations are also available for the Archdiocese of Santiago de Cuba (covering the provinces of Oriente and Camagüey). These dispensations are organized by FIRST NAMES not surnames!*
  
- ORDENES SAGRADAS
  - Files for the men that were ordained into the priesthood. Usually the file contains:
    - ✓ Baptismal certificate for the ordained priest
    - ✓ His parents' marriage certificate
    - ✓ His grandparents' marriage certificate
    - ✓ Information on when he became a sub-deacon, deacon and priest
    - ✓ SOME include a "*Limpieza de Sangre*" – a long history of the family
    - ✓ Files exist from circa 1730
  
- CAPELLANÍAS
  - Family endowments left for those individuals in a future generation that might want to study for the priesthood. These are genealogically important because they trace the line back to the individual who set up the endowment. Unfortunately, most of these files are missing. Those files that can be found

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only have the “accounting” information of the endowment and are missing the genealogical data. Now only a few have genealogical data.

- *ARCHIVO NACIONAL (NATIONAL ARCHIVE)*
  - PROTOCOLOS (WILLS/TESTAMENTS)
  - ESCRIBANÍAS (OFFICE OF THE NOTARIES)
    - Some have baptismal and marriage records.
    - Records not easily accessed
- OFICINA DEL HISTORIADOR (ARCHIVES OF THE HISTORIAN OF THE CITY OF HAVANA)
  - “*Actas Capitulares del Ayuntamiento de La Habana*” – records of the municipality of Havana
    - Sets of volumes
    - Begin in 1555 until 1898
    - People sometimes presented papers, or titles of nobility given in Spain. These were received and filed in this office even though certificates of nobility could not be issued.
- UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA (UNIVERSITY OF HAVANA)
  - University was founded in 1728
  - Archives hold the student records for those who studied there.
  - Most of these include the individual’s baptismal certificate, parents’ and grandparents’ marriage certificates as well as a long history of the family.
  - Records not easily accessed
- ❖ OTHER INFORMATION PRESENTED
  - Matanzas Marriage Records (Book 1 - 1693 – 1765) also available on the site <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/esss-cuba2.pl>
  - Death records (*Defunciones*) are very important as they give the deceased person’s name, his parents’ names, spouse’s name, and children’s names and often they state the Notary’s name. With the Notary’s name you can then go to the “*Protocolos*” section of the National Archives and find the Last Will and Testament for that individual.
  - “*Casa de Beneficencia*” (Orphanage) papers are in the National Archive.
  - The Bayamo archives were burned in 1868 at the beginning of the Ten Years War. Circa 1869 the church records begin again. To reconstruct the lost information you can use:

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- ✓ *“Libro de las Familias de Bayamo”* written circa 1775 by Lieutenant Pedro del Prado. Unpublished book. A copy resurfaced in 1960 and was typed up by Cuban historians from the written manuscript. The copy at the University of Miami’ Cuban Collection is not complete.
  - ✓ The *“Protocolos”* (Wills) in Bayamo
  - ✓ Archdiocese of Santiago de Cuba – *“Dispensas de Parentesco”*
  - ✓ University of Havana archives if the person attended there
- 
- Jaruco’s information is on 4 microfilms at the Mormon Library.
  - Santo Cristo del Potosi Church index is available online at:  
<http://cubangenclub.org/cpage.php?pt=9>
  - At this time (June 2008) Guanabacoa does not have an archivist. No one is available to type up the certificates.
  - Oldest Parishes other than the province of Havana:
    - ✓ Matanzas – established in 1693 – founded by 30 families from the Canary Islands
    - ✓ Pinar del Rio
      - San Rosendo de Pinar del Rio - 1680
      - Guanajay
      - San Basilio de Cacarajicara - 1700’s
    - ✓ Las Villas
      - Trinidad – early 1600’s – Historian of the city, Carlos Zerquera, has copies of most of the books from there
      - Sancti Spiritus – early 1600’s
      - Remedios – early 1600’s – books are in very bad condition
      - Santa Clara – end of 17<sup>th</sup> century
    - ✓ Camagüey
      - Puerto Principe – 17<sup>th</sup> century
    - ✓ Oriente
      - Bayamo
      - Holguín – circa 1740
      - Santiago de Cuba – late 1600’s
  - Protocolos for Bayamo belong to the state.
  - City of Havana has many Civil Registries – They started in Cuba in 1880 and in Spain they started in 1870. Before then there is no civil registry. There are more than 20 civil registries in Havana alone. Parish records are easier in the sense that the person usually attended the parish of the neighborhood they lived in.

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- “*San Francisco de Asis de Guayabal*” – Caimito de Guayabal – records from 1786 – This parish burned during the war and only 20<sup>th</sup> century records are available.
- Archives outside of Cuba important to Cuban genealogy:
  - ✓ Archivo de Indias en Sevilla
  - ✓ Archivo Militar de Segovia
    - Military and personal records (*expedientes*)
    - ***Archivo General Militar de Segovia - indice de Expedientes Personales***, Vols. 1-9, Instituto Luis de Salazar y Castro, Madrid, Ediciones Hidalguía, 1959-1963. If there is a marriage document, the entry will have an asterisk (\*)
    - Above index also available from the Family History Library - book #946M23s