

María: a necessary note and something else...

The passage through Puerto Rico of the devastating hurricane Maria affected, like many other families, members of the Mori International Family, particularly in the Yauco area, and which included members of our Board of Directors. We wish by this means to express our solidarity with the members of the family who were seriously affected by the atmospheric event.

This bulletin was also prevented from being published during the months of September and October 2017. Therefore, the date of this bulletin # 9 of year #2 corresponds to those two months plus that of November. Circumstances also forced us to interrupt in this issue the series of *The Historical Corner* that we had been dedicating to the Paula, Melín and Rate Mori sisters because we were not being able to complete the necessary information in the case of the latter. The section *The Board of Directors informs ...* is not included since the Board has not met after the hurricane of September 20.

We take this opportunity to inform you that, by agreement of the Assembly of September 3, the printing of the Bulletin will be limited only to those members who do not have access to technology. Therefore, we need emails from those members who have not sent them. You will be able to read it also in our electronic page and to download it to your mobile, laptop or desktop every month. This is due to the high cost of the publication.

We hope you enjoy this first post-Maria issue and we look forward to the next family get-together (see invitation below).

CHRISTMAS CARD (THE INVITATION IS A PICTURE WITHIN THE CARD)

Text of the card: *The Board of Directors of the Mori International Family wishes all our members a happy Christmas and a joyful Three Kings Day. Celebrate the tradition with a generous and fraternal spirit. That we can carry-even within the current circumstances of our country-a message of Love and Peace at this time of year. We offer solidarity to our brothers!*

What's new in the Mori Family internet page?

- * Bulletin # 8 (August 2017) - w/English text
- * Bulletin # 9 (Sept-Oct-Nov 2017) - w/English text
- * Annual Family Meeting # 23 - 2017 (story, video and pictures)
- * Amendments Assembly and 2017 Summer Family Activity
- * Brief history of descendants of Serafin Morris...

www.familia-mori-internacional.com

International Mori Family celebrates 23rd. Meeting - Annual Assembly

On Sunday, September 3, as is traditional, the International Mori Family carried out edition # 23 of its Annual Meeting - Assembly in the El Naranjo Community Center in Yauco, Puerto Rico, birthplace of this family with Corsican roots.

This meeting was dedicated to Mori families living in the diaspora. Those who attended were granted a certificate on behalf of hundreds of Mori families living outside the Island. Lydia Rodríguez Mori and her daughter Sylvia Marrero traveled for the occasion from Las Vegas, Nevada. Both Sylvia and Lydia, 92 years old, 77 of which she has lived away from Puerto Rico, enjoyed the activity and reaffirmed their Yauco and Puerto Rican identity (see *the Historical Corner* on page 2). Also Ramonita (Ramy) Irizarry Mori traveled from New York with her husband Luis (Cheny) González and her son Luiggi to share this day with the family on the Island.

Another important event was, after the annual report of the Board of Directors, the election of new members of the Board as a result of the amendment to the Bylaws that provides for the creation of 4 new positions: a historian, a sub-treasurer and two other members. For these positions, Lisa V. Mori Rivera, Eneida García Quiñones, Lito Velázquez Padilla and Chelvin Mori Ortiz were elected respectively. With this election, the Board will be composed of 13 members.

Certificates of participation were also granted to the participants of the Generational Relay Workshops that were held during 2017. It was significant that the 4 new members of the Board were participants of the workshops so they have already started to bear fruit. On the other hand, sisters Delmarys, Amarilis and Mariana Mori Rodríguez received a special certificate for perfect attendance.

A very emotional act was the recognition received by young Alexander Morales, descendant of the Pacheco-Mori family for winning two medals in the international Taekwondo competition held in Toronto, Canada this past summer. Nancy Pacheco Mori and Lito Velázquez Padilla also received special certificates for their outstanding contributions in the organization of the meetings and activities that we celebrate routinely.

Of course, we all enjoyed a succulent lunch and the usual Mori fratellanza accompanied by moving rhythms, snacks and drinks, the already traditional raffles, the birthday celebration of family members present and the overwhelming joy that lasted until quite late that afternoon.

Lydia Rodríguez Mori and Sylvia Marrero Rodríguez were distinguished--among others--at this year's Annual Meeting # 23 as representatives of the Mori Diaspora in the United States. For this reason, the Editorial Committee of the Bulletin interviewed these great-granddaughter and great-great-granddaughter, respectively, of the Mori Patriarch, on September 16, 2017, before their return to Las Vegas, Nevada and Hurricane Maria.

Lydia was born in 1925 and left Puerto Rico in 1940 and, although she emigrated to the United States when she was 15 years old, she keeps many memories of those first years of her life in Aguas Blancas and is very aware--at age 92--of her family relationships. Lydia, mother of Sylvia, was the daughter of Justa Mori and Juan Rodríguez. Justa, in turn, was the daughter of Francisco Antonio Mori Román (son of the Mori Patriarch) and Paula Caraballo Feliciano, the Patriarch's long-lived daughter-in-law. This marriage also had other children, besides Justa: Serafin, Antonio Maria, Carmen Mori and Virginia, uncles and aunts of Lydia themselves.

Lydia tells us that her grandmother Paula was the midwife of the first 13 children of her mother Justa, but for the birth of the youngest, Paula could not arrive in time so Aunt Maria, wife of Serafin, had to do as midwife. Maria did not know how but Justa was directing her. Grandma Paula did not arrive on time because she lived in Duey, where Lydia's father went to look for her on foot.

Lydia does not know how old was her grandfather when he died and she only remembers her grandmother Paula. His mother, Justa, who was the oldest of the five, told him that grandma Paula was going to work at Juan Pietri's house and was with them all the time, since Aunt Carmen was already married to Pascual Pietri.

Lydia also has her version of the story of Patriarch Mori. He tells us that his grandmother Paula never spoke to him about the Patriarch, but, according to his mother Justa, his grandfather left Corsica where he left two children, although now they say there were three. According to him, Ignacio came by ship and met a lady who was traveling with a girl. They say that when he arrived in Puerto Rico and he had children with that lady. After the lady died, she raised the daughter and also had children with her.

The school started at age 6, but her mother sent her to school with the brothers from age 4. Before they went to school they had to go to a stream to collect water because there was no drinking water or electricity in Aguas Blancas. Her father's house had a roof covered with bushes. The mother and all the girls slept in one room and the father and brothers in other room. Among the siblings of Lydia there were: Jorge (1909), Onofre (1911), Enrique (1914), Leopoldo (1918), Herminia (1920), Mario (1923), Juanito (1924), Celia (1927), Awilda (1930) and Eliza, who was the oldest. Lydia remembers that she lived for 15 years on the "cerro" of Aguas Blancas, near Arsilio, where the Matteis, the Juliás and the Ruizés, owners of the land, also lived.

Regarding the emigration of the family to California, Lydia tells us that her older sister, Eliza, was the first to emigrate to California. She says that she would be 2 - 3 years old when Eliza and her husband, who was 58 years old and worked burying the dead at the cemetery, embarked for Pleasanton, California.

A year after Eliza left, her brothers Jorge and Nofre left. The latter met a Greek guy who had a cheese factory, where he worked for nearly 30 years. Shortly after arriving, the Greek guy bought Nofre a 7-room house to bring his family. When Nofre had saved enough money to send for them, he brought Enrique (Henry), Herminia, Leopoldo (Paul), Mario and Lydia. Jorge was already married and had two children. Eliza separated from her husband, then married a musician and moved to San Francisco.

Lydia arrived in California in 1940, after 6 days on a boat from San Juan to New York and 6 days more in the Greyhound bus to California. She remembers that she enjoyed the boat trip because there were two girls and a boy and his brother was in love with the girls and she with the boy. They spent every night drinking and smoking.

They experienced a culture shock in the bus when Mario, Lydia's brother, went to the back of the Greyhound to smoke and was prevented because it was the bus area designated for the blacks, but they went back with the blacks and it did not matter to them because they did not have that prejudice. They did not understand the racism of the United States.

She remembers that they had to wash, iron and cook because they had 5 brothers. They went to school at night, from 7 to 9 p.m., to take courses aimed at people in the process of acquiring citizenship. Lydia went to school from the time she arrived in Pleasanton until after she was married and still holds the diplomas. She learned English but had problems with pronunciation.

Eventually, she went to San Francisco with his sister Eliza who left her taking care of her two children because her husband was a musician and she had problems with him. Herminia also left later for San Francisco. Jorge, Mario, Enrique and Juan were in the army. Enrique received a bullet and he was very affected. Nofre could not enlist for being ill and Leopoldo for a broken arm badly cured by Justa after having fallen from a mango tree in Aguas Blancas.

While Lydia was living in San Francisco, she met the man who would be her husband, Juan Marrero Negrón (known as Perfo), a native of Morovis but raised in Manatí. Perfo worked as an apothecary. She had three daughters with him, including Sylvia. He died in 2007 after 57 years of marriage.

Lydia did a variety of jobs in California: packing at Hunt's, bottling wines at Livermoore, ironing at a laundry, at a candy store, and at Planter's Peanuts as packing inspector. He also worked at Mace Company, affiliated with Macy's.

Lydia visited the island at Christmas 1963-64 where she traveled with the youngest daughter, who turned 1 in Puerto Rico. She points out that the most she likes about Puerto Rico is the Christmas season due to the joy of the holidays. On that trip, Lydia was able to see her

grandmother Paula, who died a year later. They arrived in Yauco by public car by way of the *piquiña* (Cayey). Lydia tells that grandmother Paula told Aunt Carmen, with whom she lived then, to clean the house because a daughter of Justa was coming. When Lydia arrived, Aunt Carmen made the sign of the cross when she saw that Grandmother Paula was right.

Lydia and Sylvia went to Hawaii to visit a niece, Irene, who was married to a Japanese guy who cooked very well. They participated in meetings of the Mori Family in Hawaii. She recalls that they have a tradition by which everyone brings a plate of food for the meetings.

To this day, Lydia is 92 and she has 3 daughters, 6 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. She and Sylvia live in the city of Las Vegas in Nevada and say goodbye, stating they will return because Lydia still has a lot of life and spirit left.

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