

Moré and Pujals -- Three Generations of Family History

Beginning with the Cousins named Vicente.

In the late 16th century, the Council of Trent decreed that Roman Catholic churches throughout the world must maintain detailed records of their baptisms, marriages, and burials. Almost immediately, the priests of the parish church of San Vicente in the little fishing village of Tossa on the Catalan coast of Spain complied, and over the centuries kept safe their precious little books. So today, we have a remarkable record of the vital data for the families of that parish. This has allowed us to trace many of our Moré, Vidal, Jalpi, Esteva, Ruir, Pujals, Molins, and Ferro ancestors back to before 1600. The men of these families fished, owned ships, worked as seamen, were dealers in both seafood and supplies, maintained other businesses, and transported

the fruits of the sea to inland towns. There were even a few priests among them. In short, they were unremarkable members of a rather close-knit urban society almost totally dependent upon the sea.

Tossa is now a tourist center on the Costa Brava known as Tossa de Mar. But, it has been continuously inhabited since the first century BC. Castle walls, towers, and the sea surround the old town. In medieval times, the monastery of Ripoll owned both the castle and the town. A part of the old town is shown at left.



The First Generation. The traditional harbor side life of fisherman and merchants ended in the late 18th century for two young cousins -- Vicente Ramon Esteva Moré and Vicente Damia Jaume Pujals (their mothers were sisters) -- they set out on an adventure to the Spanish colony of New Granada (now Colombia) in South America. They were both obviously educated men ... because both ended up as royal officials in the important city of Santa Marta. Vicente Pujals became the royal tax collector, and Vicente Moré was an officer of the Urban Militia, second in command of the Spanish military there. His official titles were royal sub-prefect of the city and a deputy in the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Being Spanish-born, they lived a privileged life in the colony, which probably contributed to their strong royalist stance when the wars for independence came. While they were living in Colombia, the children of another cousin of Vicente Moré, including Antonio Juan Domingo Moré, emigrated to Cuba ... more on these Moré's later. At right is a photo of the cathedral at Santa Marta.

We don't yet know when the two Vicente's arrived in Santa Marta. Probably Moré, the elder, came first. He likely married Maria Magdalena de la Bastida in the early 1790s. His wife was from a prominent colonial family -- the de la Bastidas' go back to the days of Columbus in South America. In fact, Roderigo Bastidas (pictured at left) founded Santa Marta in 1525 as the first Spanish city on the mainland of South America. The cathedral of Santa Marta is shown at right.



In 1803, Vicente Pujals married Magdalena's sister, Maria Gertrudis in the Santa Marta cathedral. It is important to note here that José Gregorio, the older brother of Magdalena and Gertrudis, was a prominent priest and later Vicar General of the diocese of Santa Marta. The two Vicente's were not the only family members from Tossa to emigrate to Santa Marta. Francesca, daughter of a cousin Antoni Moré, and her husband Libori Darder came to Santa Marta, as did her brother Nicolas Moré, a priest. We also believe a sister of one of the Vicente's -- both had sister's named Sabina -- also came to Santa Marta and married a de la Bastida brother ... but this is yet to be verified.

Each of the cousins had several children with their respective wives, all born in Santa Marta. Actually, there is evidence that each of them also had children with slave women. Two 1814 baptisms attest to this fact. I am told that openly fathering children with slaves was not uncommon in colonial Colombia. In fact, Colombian children are said to sing, "we are all coffee, cream, and honey" in recognition of the mixture of the African, European, and Indian races in their ancestry.

The Napoleonic Wars in Europe resulted in rival "kings" in Spain and the absence of effective government in the Spanish colonies of America. In May of 1810, the first revolutionary disturbances in New Granada began in Cartagena. In 1811, the independence movement spread rapidly through much of New Grenada. The Spanish viceroy was expelled. Col. Tomás Acosta, as commander of the Urban Militia, restored royalist domination in Santa Marta, with his deputy Vicente Moré. But, many areas of New Grenada declared independence by November. In 1814, with the defeat of Napoleon, Ferdinand VII was restored to the throne in Spain. By 1815, virtually all of New Grenada was a group of independent states, but Simon Bolivar's patriot offensive against Santa Marta in February was repelled; it remained the only royalist stronghold in New Grenada. Early that year, General Morillo arrived in Venezuela with a royal army and orders to recapture the colonies for Spain. In July he moved his headquarters to Santa Marta. In 1816, Morillo recaptured Bogota for the King and brought much of the country back under Spanish control. In 1817, British "volunteers" begin assisting the remaining patriot forces and by 1819 had reversed the situation. The patriots in 1819 declared the Republic of Gran Colombia, which included present-day Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. Bolivar and Morillo established a six-month truce, and in 1820 Morillo and his army returned to Spain. In 1822, the U.S. recognized Colombian independence. Finally, in January 1823, patriot General Montilla captured Santa Marta, the last Spanish sanctuary in South America.



This was obviously a trying period for the Moré and Pujals families of Santa Marta. We are just beginning to understand the details of their situation, and parts of this paragraph still need to be verified. We understand that Vicente Moré was deported from Colombia in 1820 with his family. The boat on which they traveled, while on its way to Puerto Bello, Panama was shipwrecked. They lost a daughter, named Candelaria, to the sea but most of the family was picked up and sheltered on a Spanish warship. José Gregorio, the priest and brother of Maria Magdalena, helped them to return to Colombia. But, with the final victory of the patriots, all their possessions were confiscated and they were expelled from the country for good. They sailed to Cuba in poverty, where Vicente Moré continued to serve with the Spanish army. He was awarded the *Royal Order of Isabella the Catholic* for his loyalty to the king. [This order was reserved for Spaniards who showed extreme loyalty to the king during the period of the wars for independence in America. The insignia of the order is shown at the left.] He died in Havana, some years later. In the early 1820s, Vincente Pujals was still identified as a businessman in Santa Marta, but his family was also expelled to exile in Cuba, settling in Santiago de Cuba. We believe their cousins, the family of Antonio Juan Domingo Moré, who lived in that city, helped both the Moré and Pujals exiles on their arrival.

The Second Generation. One of the Pujals children -- Vicente Pio -- returned to Spain where he became a well-known intellectual, writing on both philosophy and mathematics. In his 1844 book *Filosofia de la Numeracion* he explored the practical and philosophical advantages of the base-12 number system. We know little of the life of another Pujals son, Santiago, after his arrival as a boy in Cuba. Obviously he and his family prospered in their home in Santiago de Cuba. But, we will follow-up on one of his sons in the next generation.

Of the children of Vicente Moré, at least one daughter married and probably remained in Colombia. The oldest son, Vicente Manuel, like his father served in the Spanish army. Army records indicate he was promoted to *Subteniente* (2nd Lieutenant) in Santiago de Cuba in 1834. Another son, Francisco, was a postal official in Havana. Additional records about his work are likely to be found in the official Spanish archives. His descendants now live in the Dominican Republic and the U.S. Hopefully they will be able to provide more information about their Moré line. A daughter, Rosalia, married Juan Bautista Quintana y Navarro, from another prominent Colombian family that also went into Cuban exile. But for now, our principal focus in this generation will be on the youngest son, José Eugenio Moré who became a wealthy planter and philanthropist in Cuba.



José Eugenio Moré was born in Santa Marta on 06 Sep 1808. We believe he was imprisoned with his father – probably just prior to the family’s expulsion from Colombia. He and his family arrived in Cuba and met the family of his second cousin, Antonio Juan Domingo Moré, who had immigrated to Cuba with his siblings a few years earlier. These families were very close throughout their lives. José Eugenio married well and took advantage of the opportunities presented. But, he and his wife Maria Mercedes de Ajuria had no children.

This was a period of frenzied expansion in the sugar industry of Cuba. José Eugenio Moré was president of, and with his in-laws owned, *Moré, de Ajuria and Company* which operated sugar mills and plantations in the Sagua la Grande area, about 140 miles east of Havana. The company’s plantations included Santísima Trinidad, Indio, Labrador, San Isidro, San Jacinto, Pepilla, and Abrcu. There he became known as a great philanthropist and benefactor of that town. He donated \$200,000 to the School of Agriculture, and was responsible in 1855 for the construction of the railroad that connected Sagua la Grande to the main Havana-Santa Clara line and to the nearby port he constructed. In 1856 he was elected to the 12-member Board of Directors of the newly formed *La Banca de Emisión en Cuba*, the bank that was responsible for the Cuban money supply from 1856-1898. The history of that bank tells us that Moré was “one of the wealthiest men of the colony” at that time. Moré is shown above in a photo that probably dates to about 1880.

Shown here is the Moré-Ajuria home in Sagua (now a community center) from a 1903 postcard, and below are pictures of the main house, a slave cottage, and part of the sugar mill on one of the plantations owned by José Eugenio Moré near Santa Clara. These buildings are now part of a historical park.





Moré remained firm in the royalist views of his father. At the end of the *Ten Years War*, the compromise permitted elections and Cuban representation in the *Cortes* -- the Spanish parliament. Moré, in 1878, was among the founders and was the first leader of the *Constitutional Union Party*. This was the most conservative party represented in the elections, its aim being to maintain Cuba always as a part of Spain. He was elected a Senator from the province of *La Habana* -- the family maintained homes in that city throughout his life. (In fact, one of his homes was recently reopened as the *Hotel Florida* in Havana.) He served as a Senator and member of the *Cortes* during the entire decade of the 1880s (excepting 1883) -- though we do not know to what extent he actually was present in Madrid and participated directly in legislation.



In 1879, he was given the title of Conde de Casa Moré by the king, probably to honor his continuing support of the Spanish crown and its rule in Cuba. A small enclave on the coast of the Carreño district of Asturias province that had been called “Casa Moré” since the 18th century henceforth represented the “seat” of Conde Moré’s domain. The map at left identifies the location of *Casa Moré*.

José Eugenio Moré died in 1890 in Cuba. A statue of him in front of his city’s railroad station honored his memory (shown here in the 1940s) -- subsequently, it was removed by the Castro regime and relegated to a junk heap. Recently, in its somewhat damaged condition, it was re-erected in the garden of the Moré-Ajuria home in Sagua la Grande, which now is the “Liceo” or Lyceum ... the community center.



The Third Generation. In our direct ancestral line, Juan Bautista Moré represents this generation. He was the son of Antonio Juan Domingo Moré, was born in 1837 and died in 1897. We know little about him except the name of his wife, and the fact that he must have been very close to the childless José Eugenio ... since some of his descendants mistakenly believed he was his son. Juan Bautista married Maria Dolores Bellido de Luna, daughter of a prominent Havana family who lived in the bayside community of Regla (see photo at right).



Her grandfather, Gumersindo Bellido de Luna was an immigrant from Jaen in Andalucia, Spain. Her father, Miguel José, was a medical doctor and the oldest in his family. Miguel Jose's first wife and five of their eight children were found dead in the ruins of their home following the devastating hurricane of October 1846. Maria Dolores was a child of his second wife. Among Miguel José's younger siblings were several who were prominent in the Cuban independence movements. The Spanish executed one brother, others ended up in exile in the U.S. Significant information about the Bellido de Luna family can be found on the Internet.



Vicente Pujals Puente (1843-1901), pictured here about 1890, was the son of Santiago. He departed radically from the family tradition of support for the Spanish king. In December 1868 he joined the *Mambi* (rebel) forces near the beginning of the *Ten Years War* and was commissioned a Lieutenant on the staff of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, a sugar mill owner who led the rebellion in Oriente province. Céspedes had captured the city of Bayamo and there proclaimed a "Cuban Republic in Arms." Later, Pujals served under the command of Major General Maximo Gómez. The rebellion met with considerable success in the eastern provinces, but was had little support in the west. Rebel activity peaked in 1872-1873 when Spain had to deal with an uprising at home. Gómez took command of the

entire rebel force in 1873, and in 1875 attempted an invasion of the western provinces. Pujals fought in Las Villas province and on 24 June 1876 was promoted to Commandante (Major). The western initiative failed and the war dragged on with the Spanish gradually regaining power.

Pujals was part of a small group of rebels under Calixto García who rejected the Pact of Zanjón, which was intended to end the war in February 1878. He was appointed to proclaim a new provisional government in Baraguá on 15 March 1878. There he was named chief of staff of that government with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In May of 1878, he was dispatched to Camaguey and Las Villas to solicit support for continuing the war, in which task he failed. On 28 May 1878, the *Ten Years War* was over, primarily due to the rebels inability to bring the war to Habana and the western provinces and the opposition of the U.S. government to Cuban independence.

In the 1895-1898 *War for Independence*, Pujals again served his old commander Máximo Gómez. At right is a photo of Gómez' *Mambi Cavalry*.



Pujals immediately joined the *1895 War for Independence* as a member of the expedition that landed on 19 November 1895 at La Mora Bay, on the south coast of Oriente, under the command of Brigadier General Mariano Torres . That force marched westward to meet Gómez in February 1896 near San Antonio de las Vegas . Pujals joined Gómez' staff with rank of colonel. In April of 1896 he was given the task of defusing the tense situation between rebel leaders Calixto García and José Maceo, and ended up being named commander of the eastern district. He was promoted to Brigadier General on December 11, 1896. In the second half of 1896, and during 1897, he participated in almost all the fighting led by Gómez. From April 6, 1897 he was Chief of Staff to Gómez. After the U.S. military intervention (ie. what we call the Spanish-American War) Pujals held a modest office in the municipality of Santiago de Cuba .

Summary. A key piece of evidence that these families remained close in Cuba is the 1899 funeral notice seen below, which was published in Havana's *Diaria de la Marina* for an elderly maiden lady, Manuela Quintana y Moré, a niece of Conde Moré.

Note the list of “brothers, nephews, and friends” who published the notice. Here are some of the families and how they are related to Conde Moré. Quintana y Pujals: probably a nephew, half-brother of Manuela; Moré y Moré: grandsons of his brother Francisco; Moré y Bellido (our family): grandsons of his second cousin Antonio Juan Domingo; de Ajuria y González: sons of brother-in-law Ramón; Garcia y Carbonell: husband of his sister-in-law Mariana. The closeness of many members of the the Moré, Pujals, de Ajuria, and Quintana families went on for at least four generations.

So, this was a summary of the three generations of family history that brought our family from Spain to Cuba. Clearly there is much more to learn ... which is unlikely to happen so long as the present government is in power in Cuba.

MARTES, 12 SEPTIEMBRE 1899 – EDICIÓN DE LA MAÑANA

ANUNCIOS FÚNEBRES:

E.P.D. – La Señorita **MANUELA QUINTANA Y MORÉ** ha fallecido después de recibir los Santos Sacramentos y dispuesto su entierro para las cuatro de la tarde de hoy, Martes, los que suscriben, hermanos, sobrinos y amigos, suplican á las personas de su amistad se sirvan concurrir á la casa mortuoria, Trocadero número 14, para de allí acompañar el cadáver al cementerio de Colón; cuyo favor agradecerán. Habana, septiembre 12 de 1899. *Antonio Quintana y Pujals – Jorge, Ignacio, Carlos y Gustavo Moré y Moré – José y Leocadio Fernández y Ruiz – Antonio, Juan, Gerardo, José, Eugenio, Francisco y Angel Moré y Bellido – Mateo Fernández y Otero – Laureano Fernández y Ruiz – Jorge, Manuel, Ramón, Pío, José Eugenio y Juan de Ajuria y González – Narciso Gelats y Durall – Francisco Tiant – Vicente Benito Valdés – Juan Bautista Landeta – Juan García y Carbonell.*