

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

Eyra Reyes

Sometimes when I look back on my childhood and I think of my parents, and my grandparents, and my great grandmother, I also think of the places where they were born. They were from different places from around the world like America, Africa, France, Spain, and Germany. I thought that maybe if they did not emigrated they would not have met each other, and I would not have been born. Because my relatives migrated from different places of the world and different centuries my father, Rafael Reyes Wendehake, said “we are citizens of the world”. To be citizen of the world is as I turn over in my mind about how the world population and their migrations have a deep and strong influence with their cultures in the lives of other people and countries, changing or melting in different ways their cultures, and the ways of life, and customs of other peoples from different parts of the world.

My family keeps a rich oral story of why, how and when they moved from one place to another around the world. My children and grandchildren ask me about the family, so that was why my children began to interview me.

People who migrate have different kinds of reasons. Sometimes they moved to stay in other places by different purposes. Sometimes is to have a better life, others to study, others of because political problems, others because religion, and so on.

My relatives migrated to search for better conditions to live and protect their family. My great grandparents met, and got married in the first half of the nineteenth century at the border of Germany and France a place well known as the Black Forest, and raised their children in Venezuela and Trinidad and had a family. Around the second half of the nineteenth century, they migrated from one place to another for different reasons. For example they might be social, or

economical, and political crisis began or the weather was harsh and they moved to search for better conditions to live and kept the family together. The relatives on my mother's side, Rosa Amelia Rivas Sotillo, went to America to discover and conquer a new continent. They were Spaniards, and with them came African slaves. On her father's side, my mother's name was Rivas they came from Spain to America and Sotillo was an African last name from her mother's side. So my ancestors came from many places, and my father and mother meet in Panama, and got married to begin a new family.

MIGRATIONS FROM THE FAMILY

From the first half of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th Century.

A migration happens when people move or go from one place to another looking for better living opportunities. Migrations happened in two ways inside Europe from the countryside to the cities, and from Europe to America the continent because some people did not have the right answers to stop their impoverishment and had better conditions to live. People like my great grandparents emigrated but with them they carried their cultures, and many different ways of lives.

My great grandparents, on my father's side Rafael Reyes Wendehake, were Aurelia D'Ancla and Charles Wendehake. They were French (Marseille) and German (Black Forest). Since the beginning of her life my great grandmother Aurelia emigrated because when she married she moved to Germany my great grandpa's country. Because they wanted to have better conditions to live they emigrated and traveled in eighteen forty-three from Germany to Venezuela.

In the Nineteenth Century many waves of Germans and from different parts of Europe also migrated to America. There were many reasons like the beginning of the Industrial

Revolution that increased new professions. Those professions were led by a new social class: The Bourgeoisie or Middle Class. The Bourgeoisie is a social class that was the answer to the new social, economical, and political changes that happened since the Medieval Era until the Industrialism and Capitalism Era. Is a process that began to change when the agricultural work on the country side and the manual work from the guild or the fraternities decreased because of the new technologies, and the factory works in the cities, and the salaries offered new ways to increase the economy of the country men.

The weather was another factor to force peasants to migrate because during the first fifty years in Europe harsh winters caused desolation and hunger. Peasants abandoned the fields to sow because their lives became harsh and difficult. Even before those changes peasants had begun to immigrate to cities but also to America

The social political was another factor because the environment began to change with the “Congress of Vienna in the year eighteen fourteen, and new political coalitions began to appear in order to establish a new balance of power to remake Europe after the downfall of Napoleon.”¹ For example France was restored under the rule of Louis XVIII, and the German states were united in the German Confederation. A new international order began who mostly leaned in the recovery of the old regimes. Those regimes began the modernization and industrialization in Europe and designed the concentration of political and economical power in an emerging social class that was the Bourgeoisie or the new rich.

“The unconformities and violence began in some countries when craftsmen and artisans showed their inconformity, strike the factories and the new technology, and also countrymen claimed for the abolition of their obligations to the feudal lord.”²

¹ Colin McEvedy: The Penguin Atlas of Recent History. Europe since 1815 (Penguin Books 1982) 8, 19-20.

² Colin McEvedy,8

Many peasants like my great grandparents decided to move to Venezuela before those intense unconformities became larger, and they began to search for a place where they could have the opportunity to reach for a better way of life. On those times the situation in the rest of the Western Hemisphere was not steady and safe because the Spanish and French colonies in America were changing, and it was common that revolutions and the emergence of new borders were creating new nations. Creoles or Criollos, a new social class who was born in the colonies led the independence movements from Spain's colonies, like Francisco Miranda, and Simon Bolivar in South America, and Jose Cecilio Valle in Central America, and in the Caribbean French colony Toussaint- L'Overture was leading in Haiti the First Black Revolution in the Western Hemisphere. All those Creoles or Criollos had the purpose to build their newborn countries with the ideas of the French Revolution: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

My great grandparents who were living in the Black Forest close to the French border. By my great grandma Aurelia's french relatives knew that since the Haitian Revolution migrations were common because slavery had ended, and white people did not have the slave labor to work in the agriculture so they chose to migrate to Venezuela because they had the opportunity to have a better opportunity to live and raise a family. My great grandparents were farmer peasants so they worked the land by themselves, and not by slavery or paid labor. They sawed and forested by themselves and were not paid people because it was a family labor.

Europeans and most of those like Germans immigrated to many cities of North America like New York to work in the modern factories. Europeans moved also to different places of the American continent as Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, and so on. Europeans came to those new founded countries because with they work their work they began to help the modernization that was the beginning of the wealth of those new countries. That was why my great grandparents

Aurelia D'Ancla de Wendehake and her husband Charles Wendehake instead to migrate to United States of America they decided to migrated to Venezuela, because in eighteen forty eight Don Martin Tovar had made a donation, and invited to the country people from Brisgau and Black Forest of Germany to set up Colonia Tovar a town of German people. The purpose of Colonia Tovar was to bring people from Black Forest and Brisgau to work in agriculture. Those migrants received a piece of land to sow and to harvest products. Those products were raw materials, and they were sold in the International Market, and manufactured in the Industrialized Countries. Colonia Tovar was one of the many examples who were in Latin America at the beginning of the Industrial Era, and like the North and South after the Civil War in the United States of America when the South sold to the North the raw materials to get income to the nation, Latin America countries began to sell their raw material to industrialized countries to get income and elevate the wealth of those new born countries.

My great grandparents Charles and Aurelia lived in Black Forest close to the French border, so they chose to emigrate to Venezuela because they had the opportunity to get some land to work, and improve their economy, and better way of life. They had the opportunity to develop their agricultural activities and kept their customs going in a place that remind them of the geography and the weather of their town.

Aurelia and Charles began a family there and their children were born and raised in a different environment than their parents, and little by little they began to save money. That money came from the profit from the sale of raw material to the industrial countries, and from being peasants they began to own land, and started to belong to the creole class, and that meant that they were white, Europeans, brought their cultures, and their knowledge to new places. "Years later Aurelia's brother, Jose Celestino D'Ancla migrated to Venezuela, and he was a gold

seeker. He discovered a gold mine in Venezuela's rain forest. Besides the gold mine he dived in the river to get the gold. That gold was also sold raw and it was processed. Things were doing better until Charles died, and Aurelia status changed from a marry woman to a widow of five children, and one of them was my grandmother Aurelia Wendehake D'Ancla de Reyes."³



My great grandma Aurelia was a very strong woman. We called her by two different nicknames: Abueli or Mamita. She passed away at one hundred four years. She was tall and liked to speak French and German. She always had a serious face but she liked to talk with me in Spanish, and sometimes she spoke to me in French. I remember that the first French words I learned were from Mamita and my father Rafael. I never saw her long hair because she always had it tide up in a bun. She was always wore dresses with black and white prints, and I never saw her wore dresses with bright colors. My father told me she used to wear black dresses for her deceased husband and her children.



Mamita was disabled, and we visited her at her bedroom, and most of the times we found her praying with a rosary. She could not walk so when I went to visit her I sat in her bed and we talked, and I saw her smile. I noticed she was not a woman with an easy smile but when she saw my father and me she smiled. Sometimes my father carried Mamita to her wheelchair, and we walked around the apartment with her. The wheelchair was made of straw and wood, and the frame at the back and the bottom was made from wood, and in the center to make it more comfortable to her was braided with straw. The wheelchair had two bicycle wheels one in each side, and on the front of the same she put her feet on a rest, and below the feet rest were two little wheels.

³ Eyra Reyes primary source

“Mamita liked to make “flotas” that is dough made with flour, sugar, salt, yeast or baking powder, and water. She mixed all the ingredients and knead with strong hands for many minutes. Because she did not walk, my father Rafael or someone fried it in hot oil. In rainy season, we ate “flotas” with a cup of hot chocolate. I really enjoyed the visits when I went to see my grand grandma because at the end of them was a delight soaked little by little in a cup of chocolate. Great grandma Aurelia taught to everyone in the family to drink a sweet and heavy chocolate with species like nutmeg or cinnamon. She liked to drink it in very fancy cups. Drinking that beverage was a family ritual. It was like a family ritual because great grandma Aurelia’s ancestors used to drink chocolate.”⁴

In many places of Latin America, and the Caribbean widows had a significant influence in their families. For example in “Trinidad and Tobago in the different kinds of family households people had a strong sense of obligation toward their relatives.”⁵

Great grandma Mamita was an example of how, being so gentle but at the same time she having a strong character. She commanded the respect of the whole family. From her bed or her wheelchair she always had the ability of command no matter whom. My father said this was because she raised all her children, and grandchildren on her own, and many of the children from the rest of the family. Her suffering made her a stoic person who saw and struggle against life’s challenges, like an iron lady. It was the only way to survived and keep the family together. For example, is very painful for a mother when she saw her children died, and out of her five children only one survived: Jose Rafael.

Great grandma Aurelia had only one daughter whose name was also Aurelia. She was my grandma, and she died on her fifth delivery. “On the nineteenth and the beginning of the

⁴ Eyra Reyes primary source

⁵ Timothy Gall, Editor : Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life Vol. 2 (Detroit, Michigan, 1998) 426

twentieth century it was frequent that women died delivering, and it did not matter from what group or social class she belonged. Women with their husbands practiced sexual abstinence because it was a way to prevent an early death.”⁶

James Buckingham remarked on his book in the eighteen forty, that most of the husbands survived their wives deaths than wives survived their husbands’ death”.⁷

At the beginning of the twentieth century statistics showed that women situation were still the same. “The United States Department of Labor demonstrated that in the year of nineteenth twenty-one in rural areas of the Union of South Africa, and Chile, and the United States of America like South Carolina the deaths from difficult labor and a lack of medical attention were high. For example in nineteen twenty one at the Union of South Africa the death of women delivering were one hundred seventy eight, in Chile was one thousand one hundred seventy seven, and in the United States in the rural areas of South Carolina were four hundred ninety nine but the total of women death who were classified as due from difficult labor to a lack of medical attention were fifteen thousands twenty seven in the United States of America.”⁸

“When my grandma Aurelia died in her fifth delivery my father Rafael was eight years old and was traumatized. He told me he felt very sad, alone and with a heavy grief in his heart because her mother, my grandma, Aurelia, was a loving and tender mother and her most important priority was her children. Months later my grandpa died my father told it was because he never recovered from my grandma Aurelia’s death.”⁹

⁶ Bonnie Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser: *Historia de las Mujeres: Una Historia Propia*. Volumen 2 (Editorial Critica Barcelona, Espana 1992) 59

⁷ Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress Woman’s World in the Old South* (New York: Random House Inc, 1982) 140

⁸ Robert Morse Woodbury, *Maternal Mortality the Risk of Death in Childbirth and Confinement* (US Department of Labor Circa 1922) 150-158

⁹ Eyra Reyes, interview by Ian Robinson, 3rd February 2009, writing record.

On those times “children who lost their mother they might be separated. The most of the time the husband would get married again. The oldest daughter began to work in the family chores and she was under the control of her mother duties. The most of the times those responsibilities were so much for a girl. The role of the mother in the plantation was multiple she was the loving mother but also had the intelligence and the potential to support the household.”¹⁰ That was why great grandma Mamita before this sentimental and moral worrisome decided to look for an answer to protect the family’s children who were raised and protect her grandchildren because she survived the decease of her daughter. In the same year, nineteen seventeen, and months later my grandpa Rafael died and my father told me it was because he did never got over his wife’s death. Those despairing happenings shocked the life of a nine year boy who was my father Rafael, and also in the rest of the family.

Moreover, great grandma Mamita with the grief of her daughter’s death, and the death of her son Carlos Guillermo who died in an underground dungeon in Puerto Cabello Castle when the dictator Juan Vicente Gomez incarcerated him and expropriated all of his properties, and also expropriated the gold mine from her brother Jose Celestino D’Ancla. The only son from great granma that survived was Jose Rafael who presented the examinations before the Instruction Council of Venezuela, and received a medical doctor degree from the State University of Caracas. Jose Rafael obtained the medical doctor degree years after Juan Vicente Gomez closed the University. Since then he began to fight against Juan Vicente Gomez. Because his participation in the students insurrections before Juan Vicente Gomez he was deported from Venezuela.

Before these happenings my great grandma Mamita and the rest of the family ran away to Trinidad for two reasons: Trinidad is close to Venezuela and her son in law my grandpa Rafael

¹⁰ Clinton, Plantation, 139-140

lived there with his children who were not be able to face the death of my grandma Aureli. “The family had an hotel whose name was Hotel Miranda. It is here where she hosted the rebels who where against the dictator Juan Vicente Gomez who ruled with strong hand in Venezuela for more than thirty years from nineteen eight to nineteen thirty five.”¹¹

The motto of Juan Vicente Gomez’s government was Union, Peace, and Love. I always listened all my relatives said in Venezuela that Union was in prison, peace in the cemeteries and, work on the roads. “Gomez began the modernization in Venezuela. He supports the foreign investments in Venezuela most of all were the Venezuelan natural resources like the coffee, and the oil. Most of the properties that Gomez was expropriated increased his wealth, and his close relatives and friends. Gomez was the most cruel and longest dictatorship in Venezuela and in the rest of Latin America history in the first fifty years of the twentieth century. Venezuela’s people under the government of the dictator Juan Vicente Gomez lived in extreme poverty, suffered humiliations, and imprisonment many people in the Rotunda jail and the Castle of Puerto Cabello. He disrespects people’s Human Rights.”¹²

Because Juan Vicente Gomez persecuted my uncle Jose Rafael Wendehake he run away to New York in search to look for a peaceful and a better condition of life, and in that way the rest of the family could moved but he did not find anything. The political situation was so hard that my father Rafael and my granduncle Jose Rafael, by the decision of great grandma Mamita traveled to Paris to live and study there. Grand grandma Aurelia stayed with her fifteen grandchildren and the rest of the family in Trinidad.

¹¹ Eyra Reyes primary source

¹² www.rena.edu.ve/segundaetapa/historia/dictadura.html

MY GRANDPARENTS' WEDDING

With the independence of Latin American countries a new social class was born: The Creoles, Creoles or middle class. They were like the growing Bourgeoisie from Europe. Because the Creoles struggled against Spain to reach their independence many of those families had properties that inherited from their Spanish ancestors. Because the Spain's kings were Apostolic Roman Catholic, here in America their subjects, had to be from the same religion.

The parents of my grandpa Rafael were Bartolome Reyes and Simona Oscano. My grandpa Rafael was a Spanish Creole.

The Creole people had Spanish ancestors but they were born in America and not in Spain. Most of the creoles had white or tan skin because they were mixed blooded and that was why



they received the name of mestizo. They struggled for the independence of the Spanish colonies, and also began a new and strong social and economical group in Latin America.

“The Coat of Arm for the Reyes family reveal that the origin of the last name Reyes was from Spain, and was established by Gonzalo de Reyes from the House Bocirios in the kingdom of Gundamero in the year 611. People of the House Bocirios came from Spain to help colonize Spain territories.”¹³ The Oscano last name was Native American from the Maquiritari tribe.

My grandparents got married in Venezuela on September eight of nineteen one under the blessing of a Catholic Apostolic Roman priest. “My grandpa Rafael was thirty four years old and he was seven feet and eight inches. My grandmother Aurelia was seventeen years old, and she was five



¹³ Eyra Reyes information from her key holder

feet five inches.”¹⁴ On those traditional societies the size of the man was important and the male representation of a tall man represented the authority and control of the women and the rest of the family. My grandparents like in many patriarchal cultures met in Venezuela and their parents arranged their marriage. They were an example of how was the institution of marriage of most of the Creole people who lived in Latin America and the Caribbean region and their parents arranged their marriage to make their families strong economically and socially. “The arranged marriages happened when the contracting parties were Catholic Apostolic Roman, and the consort’s ages had differences, and they were from the same social group. Arranged marriages were common.”¹⁵ “In the most of arranged marriages the differences of ages were usual and it was common that the husband was married with a young girl. For example like my grandma Aurelia was seventeen years old and my grandpa Rafael was thirty four years, and “the differences of ages was a semblance of a refined or high social level matrimonial pattern.”¹⁶

Rafael and Aurelia lived for a while Puerto Ayacucho, and Ciudad Bolivar in Venezuela. My aunt Maria was their first child, and she was born in the year nineteen two, and my Father Rafael was born on July 5th of nineteen eight in Bolivar, a city that was built to honor the independence leader Simon Bolivar. Years later, they moved to Trinidad Island because my grandpa was a Spanish Creole whose ancestors lived and had properties there like a stone pit, and lands to gather the tobacco, and Indian-rubber, and cacao. There were many Spanish, and French, and English creoles in Trinidad because the island belonged to Spain, then to France and Netherland, and at the end it was colony of England.

“In Trinidad many cocoa farmers were French, and years before my grandparent’s marriage, by eighteen eighty and eighteen ninety were decades of relative affluence of the “third

¹⁴ List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port Arrival

¹⁵ Timothy L. Gall, Editor: Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life Volume 2, 1998 p. 426

¹⁶ Clinton, The Plantation, 59

generations” of French creoles.”¹⁷ When my grandparents moved there, the environment was familiar to them because “most of cocoa farmers were French, and Spanish. By the end of the century, cocoa was predominantly controlled by French creoles, and many of them were owners.”¹⁸

“My grandpa Rafael Reyes Oscano was a farmer and a merchant.”¹⁹ He sold the cacao and the bananas that he dried in a tin roof with the sun, and he also sold other products in the international market of New York and England. My father Rafael Reyes Wendehake and my uncle Marcello Reyes Wendehake said that my grandpa Rafael always was traveling for business from Santa Cruz where the plantation was to Port Au Spain. Sometimes he sold the cacao there to some trade intermediary, and that person sent to England but sometimes he traveled to New York, England and France and got better prices. My father Rafael and my uncle Marcelo said that my grandmother Aurelia stayed at home, and she was in charge not merely of the house and all the domestic chores like food and, clothing. “She was aware of everything of her family, the servitude, her husband’s laborers or workers, and the ranch.”²⁰

“Sometimes the travels of my grandpa Rafael were not for business, and were for pleasure, and the family Reyes-Wendehake traveled to France or, like for their tenth anniversary of their wedding they went to the United States of America. My father Rafael traveled since he was a little boy. I believed he kept those beautiful memories and did not want to forget and that was why my father had in many places of our home photos, posters from France, Saint Michel,

¹⁷ Bridget, Brereton, 111

¹⁸ Ibid, 92

¹⁹ List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration

²⁰ Clinton, Catherine, *The Plantation Mistress. Woman’s World in The Old South*(New York: Random House Inc.1992), 18

Germany, Italy and many parts from the world, and also copies from the French Impressionism.”²¹

THE PLANTATION MISTRESS

“The plantation mistress is the female representation in the agricultural society. She was the wife of the landlord. Plantation mistress as existed in the United States of America during the Antebellum Period but also in the rest of Latin America, and the Caribbean. She was the link or connection between her husband who was the landlord, and the slaves.”²² There were differences between the plantation mistress from the United States of America and from Trinidad Island in the Caribbean. For example because there were no slavery in Trinidad, and West Indies the slaves who worked in sugar, tobacco, and cacao plantations were met by the subsidized immigration of laborers from India. By eighteen ninety-nine, British administration combined Tobago and Trinidad. West Indies is largely underdeveloped and dependent upon foreign assistance, often from the former colonizing power.²³

At the end of the nineteenth century the universe of the plantation mistress from the West Indies did not agree with the slavery and instead the paid labor of cullies from India supplied the slave work labor. By eighteen sixty five the Civil War ended in the United States of America, and the Southern states sold their raw products to the North states that became industrialized by a new technology, and people from Europe migrated to have better conditions of life. Meanwhile Trinidad continued as a plantation colony, and laborers from India migrated to the underdeveloped world to supply the slave labor. The raw products were sold to the industrialized countries.

²¹ Eyra Reyes, interview by Ian Robinson, 3rd February 2009, writing record

²² Cinton, *The Plantation*, 40

²³ *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* Vol. 11 (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 2007), 927

My grandma Aurelia or Aureli that was her nickname was the mistress of the plantation, and most of the time she stayed at home. “Within plantation society, as in most patriarchal culture, and the father represented “real”, the mother “false” power. Although a mother had direct, daily supervision of the children, the women’s influence was domestic, limited, and subordinated to paternal authority.”²⁴

Women like grandma Aureli lived isolated, working in her private space, and subordinated to the patriarch of the plantation who was my grandpa Rafael. Petrica Alvarez one of the relatives from the extended family of my grandpa Rafael, and who lived in the plantation said that everybody loved grandma Aurelia. Grandma Aurelia was gentle and also a hardworking. She used to be in that way because her religious beliefs were to help the weak, and she was in charge of the servants who were at home and of the welfare of the plantation workers but everything was linked to keep control of raising the familiar income and the bounds between my grandpa and the rest of the workers. The servants were sometimes the relatives or closest friends who received at least a nominal income and also if they did not they lived together under the protection of my grandpa Rafael. For example theoretically, I believed that Petrica Alvarez a relative of my grandpa Rafael received a kind of compensation for helping my grandma Aurelia with domestic chores, and that was usual in the plantation world, and traditional agricultural communities, and paternal cultures.

The private world of the plantation like my grandma Aureli was organized. She delegated, and instructed the servants, and also she managed every activity in her private world, like food, arrangement of the family clothes, and details like to put natural essences of little twigs from Vetiver or lavender when she was folding the clean clothes. She was in charge of the care, culture, and education of her children. She taught her children about her culture, the food, the

²⁴ Clinton, The Plantation, 40

preference in their tastes, and the experiences of her ancestors, and some days she played the grand piano to the delight of the family. “All those activities were done, and their assiduous activity kept plantation mistress busy: gardening, dairy activities, mixing medicines, bedding, and salting pork, preserving fruits and vegetables, and so on.”²⁵

“The house had spacious rooms on the ground floor. All the social rooms like the dining and music rooms were located to the central hall; and bedrooms and nurseries, were located in the house but far from the social rooms.”²⁶

There were many towns in Trinidad. Port Au Prince was the capital. Some of the towns were around the island. My grandparents lived in Santa Cruz a place that was surrounded with a beautiful green forest. The weather was not so hot because it had the constant breeze that came from the sea.

Grandma Aurelia like many other plantation mistresses lived isolated in a sizable house that was in a hill, and had only one floor that was on the ground. The house was filled with beautiful furniture like a grand piano and other beautiful things that they’d brought from other countries. Grandma Aureli enjoyed playing the piano for her children, relatives or friends, and this was the most common way of entertainment. With the beginning of the English control they began to have other entertainments like the horse races and the cricket games at the Grand Savannah.

The house of my grandparents was on the top of a hill. From the house people saw the entire plantation. The house only had one level. The house had a garden and grandma Aureli and her children Aunt Maria and Aunt Emma were gardening and taking care of the plants. Years

²⁵ Ibid, 21

²⁶ Ibid, 18

later when I visited Trinidad, Aunt Maria was selling flowers and assorted plants, and the income of this familiar business helped her to aid her economy.²⁷

The garden and the trees around the house kept a cozy place to the open halls or verandas, and in the verandas were hammocks hanging for Grandpa Rafael. This is a tradition that sometimes my grandpa or the patriarch of the plantation worked and then lie down on a hammock.

A TRIP TO NEW YORK

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century times were changing and the industrial era was in its preeminent moment. The commercial trade was between the industrial countries that processed the raw materials that came from countries that did not have the technology to process them. It was a beginning of a new international order because it was the trade between the powerful countries and the new emancipated countries who had been colonies from Spain, France or England for a hundred years.

“At the turn of the century, the staunch nationalism that led United States of America to take over Cuba and The Philippines encouraged New Yorkers in their aspirations for greatness”²⁸ Also in the Caribbean islands like Cuba, and in the rest of America’s continent the policies of the United States of America showed that its economical and political power were growing.

In the Caribbean some islands were under the control of the United States of America and other under the control of England. In Trinidad Island lived many people who kept commercial connections with Europe and America. In that island lived the relatives of Frank Woolworth the man who founded in New York the Woolworth building and stores in the United States of America. Mamita, my grandparents Rafael and Aurelia, and the rest of the family had a fight

²⁷ Eyra Reyes primary source

²⁸ Francois Weil: A History of New York (New York: Columbia University Press 2004) 167

relation with that family. Because they were creoles, they had lands and properties in the island that belonged to the same social and economical group. They went to the same parties and shared their tastes and experiences about things and happenings. They said they belonged to the same family.

By 1911 the dictator Juan Vicente Gomez had been in power for three years. In that year, great grandma Mamita, her children and other relatives were still living on the unmerciful and uncertain place that was Venezuela during that dictatorship. One of her son Jose Rafael Wendehake begun to study medical doctor at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, and Jose Rafael like many Venezuelan students began to fight against the dictator Juan Vicente Gomez.

In 1911 my grandparents Rafael and Aureli celebrated ten years of marriage. Until that date they've had had two children: Rafael and Maria. Grandpa Rafael decided to give grandma Aureli and his two children the opportunity to go with him on this business trip. It was a trip to the city of New York and in that way they could meet new places and enjoyed the Big Metropolis more. "Rafael Reyes, his wife Aurelia de Reyes, and his two children Rafael Reyes and Maria Reyes departed from Port Au Spain in Trinidad in the ship Coppername and arrived at Ellis Island in the Port of New York on June nineteenth of nineteenth eleven. In Ellis Island quarantine my grandpa Rafael declared at the immigration service that he was a merchant and with him was his wife Aurelia de Reyes and their two children Maria Reyes and Rafael Reyes. My grandpa had gray hair and was crippled and both grandparents were able to read and write. All the four family members were in good mental and physical health condition. All the members of the family stayed in the Hotel America whose address was in the ninety one of Worherseeh in New York." ²⁹

²⁹ List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port Arrival. New York June 19, 1911

Traveling to visit New York City was for the whole family a great experience because they went from Trinidad a rural, and underdeveloped island, and an English colony to know one of the most modern and biggest city in the United States of America, and also America's continent.

“At the end of the century, the staunch nationalism that led United States to take over Cuba and the Philippines encouraged New Yorkers in their aspirations for greatness.”³⁰ “The city was at the center of the modern times, and the first in technical advances like to provide electricity to all of Manhattan's railroad line”³¹

“New York was the mayor manufacturing center: the city's workshops and factories put 420,000 New Yorkers to work in 1900.”³² “The City remained the heart of the new economy thanks to the incomparable advantages if offered in regards to the circulation and distribution of information, administrative and financial structures, and technical and theoretical expertise.”³³

The members of my family really enjoyed the trip because they experienced from first hand how it was lived in a city who had the advantages of modernity.



To pose for a photo on a car in some location of the New York Central Park was part of the fun so grandma Aurelia with her two children Rafael and Maria posed for a photo and had a souvenir from that trip. The photo price was five dollars. Grandma Aurelia pretended that she was driving a car and the photographer used to take photos to people or tourists. The car was from circa the

³⁰ Francois Weil: A History of New York (New York Columbia University) 167

³¹ Ibid 168

³² Ibid 165

³³ Ibid 171

year nineteen nine because the car was similar to the “Hupmobile model who was a little car which was designed by Robert C. Hupp and it sold without the top for seventy hundred fifty dollars.”³⁴

In the photo grandma Aurelia was dressed with the last modern fashion. It was the summer of nineteen eleven so grandma Aurelia decided to wear a dress that matched the New York last fashion. The fashion was according to a new feminine image: The Gibson Girl. This was a representation of a new woman who wore a dress with style. The dress and the hat that grandma Aurelia wore was bought in one of the many shops or showrooms that were in New York. She wore a hat with a wide brim, and instead of a dress, she wore a blouse with medium length sleeves and around the shirt collar had inserted piece or like a necklace of knitted fabric or lace. The photo showed her two children to her left side, and she was in a seat pretending she drive the car. “The automobile contributed to her emancipation feeling.”³⁵ “The city had major market in clothing, finance, commerce and was the principal pike for American literature, music, theater and publishing.”³⁶ For grandma Aurelia this was an amazing experience to purchase a dress according to the latest fashion. She went with her children to a store. The store was crowded and she began to fit many dresses and hats that matched with the same style. In one second she noticed that her little child Rafael was missing but my grandpa found his little son in among the people. Since that day my grandparents decided to shift the care of their children to avoid that traumatizing experience for them and for their little child Rafael. My father Rafael said that was the worst experience of that trip.

³⁴ Robert Peary: *Automobiles of Yesterday*. (Mead and Company. New York.) 1962 65

³⁵ Florence Richards: *The Ready to Wear Industry. 1900-1950*. (Fairchild Publications Inc. New York N.Y. c 1951)

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³⁶ Stanley I Kutler: *Dictionary of American History*. 3 edition (New York) 80

My grandparents Rafael and Aurelia and their children Rafael and Maria stayed in New York for two weeks. They visited some relatives who were living in New York, and they shared with them their experiences about the city. They said to their relatives they did not like to see the slums and all the poor people who lived there. Instead my grandparents like the modernity, the progress and vitality of New York.

This was a real experience for all the Reyes-Wendehake family and they enjoyed from those advantages. For weeks my grandma Aurelia changed her role from a Plantation Mistress that had to work in the agricultural field to the Gibson Girl with her image of “The New Woman” who was competitive, sporty and emancipated as well as beautiful³⁷ so two different worlds were before her the traditional or conservative of the eighteenth century and progressive or modern of the nineteenth century.

My grand parents never went back to New York, and instead the whole family visited many times Europe. Years later my grandparents Rafael and Aurelia deceased, and great grandma Mamita whit her son Jose Rafael fled from Trinidad because the dictator Juan Vicente Gomez wanted to imprison her son Jose Rafael.

Great grandma Mamita, her son Jose Rafael, and her grandchildren moved to France and to New York to began a new and safe life but he did not stay on those places. In the year nineteen thirty-three the family arrived in Panama and they began a new chapter in the country because then my parents met and got married. My parents had three children: Eyra Marcela, Maria Querube and Rafael. When I born my parents decided to baptize me with the name Eyra because is a Teutonic or German name and belong to the Health goddess. The priest said that they should had to add a Christian name so they did and they added the name Marcela for me. This incident had a special meaning because taught me how important it is to learn, to

³⁷ [fashion era.com/La Belle Epoque 1890-1914_fashion.htm](http://fashion.era.com/La_Belle_Epoque_1890-1914_fashion.htm)

understand people with different backgrounds and cultures in order to build an understanding to society.

Conclusion

Since the prehistoric primitive men and women migrated in groups from one place to another to reach better places to survive adversities. Since then, people were citizens of the world because they moved from different places of the world sharing their experiences. My ancestors like prehistoric people and also people from different epochs moved from one place to another that became different and depended of the circumstances. Because my ancestors migrated from different places of the world help us to learn and understand about the life styles, customs, and cultures of other people, and in that way be more tolerant with people.

On this time of globalization this project taught me that to be citizen of the world is to be a product of globalization and the best example is me because I am like the melting pot or a mix from people who have different backgrounds, and all together they are a part of my anatomy and my physique.

My ancestors migrated from one place to another across the world and when they got married they are reach not only their genes (DNA) but also their cultures, experiences, customs with their descendants and people from different societies. Maybe they did not know but now in the present with the progress of science we know that they were furnished to build a new humanity with a new world without borders, and the consequences will be contribute for make strong the common good of the world for a better understanding.

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Photography from grandmother Aurelia Wendehake de Reyes. A visit to New York. 1911

Photography from a tool of daily life a rosary from great grandmother Aurelia D'Ancla de Wendehake.

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