

The Streets Tell Their Stories

Category: Legends and traditions

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Written by redpinar

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The streets tell their story, it was a section of the Tertulia Pinareña by Gerardo Ortega. It emerged as a space in which Gerardo and Tata Negrín talked about the names that each street in the city has had throughout its history, the events of greatest connotation and the personalities that inhabited it or still live in one of its houses.

Las primeras tres calles según Delgado Villa: La Calle de los Marañoses, Recreo, El camino Real a las Vegas del Cangre

Marañoses Street:

This street was the primitive Camino del Sur. It was an extension of the Vueltabajo road that linked Havana with Pinar del Río. Due to the profusion of cashew trees that bordered this road, it was known as Camino de los Marañoses and later "Calle de los Marañoses".

This name lasted to the street throughout the colonial period and was still known in the middle of the Mediatized Republic, by the old neighbors, even though since 1886 it had been officially named Calle José Vélez Caviedes, name that lasted until after the triumph of the Revolution.

José Vélez Caviedes was a very beloved Spaniard by the old neighbors of Pinar del Río who knew him and treated him; it is said that he avoided, with his influence, that injustices were committed against those who opposed the despotic Spanish Colonialist Government. He was Head of the Conservative Party, President of the City Council, Head of the Provincial Council, etc. He died on 25 January 1886. His daughter was the wife of Leandro González Alcorta who worked so hard for the independence of Cuba.

After the triumph of the Revolution, this street bears the name of Gerardo Medina Cardentey, heroic participant in the Assault on the old Presidential Palace on March 13, 1957, where he fell bravely.

The Calle de los Marañoses (Cashews Street) was extended with that name until Calle Real (Royal Street), later, when it was extended to the South, it was first named Camino and then Calle de San Mateo (San Mateo Street), because this road led to the lagoon of that name, a few kilometers from the city.

Camino de Abajo (Recreo Street).

When the "Camino de la Vueltabajo" forked into two paths, one on each side of the primitive hermitage, of the San Rosendo Parish, which led down the lower part of that area towards the Southeast, it was originally called "Camino de Abajo". This one was prolonged until its junction with the way that led up to the La Coloma wharf. Later its course was changed and it extended beyond the incipient "Calle Real"

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~~of the village.~~

This "Camino de Abajo" was a forced transit of the neighbors of the primitive village of Pinar del Río who were going from the lower part towards the river, one of the few diversions or recreation of that time, according to the wise Tranquilino Sandalio de Noda in one of his Letters to Silvia. From here came the name by which this street was known for many years and even today, not a few neighbors call it so "Calle del Recreo" or simply "Recreo".

In the Session of November 23, 1898 the City Council Pinareño took the agreement to "initiate the appropriate file in order to replace the name that bears the street Recreo by Isabel Rubio", as a lasting tribute to the heroic mambisa vueltabajera that was born in Paso Real de Guane on July 8, 1837 and died on February 15, 1898, (with Captain degree, imposed personally by Antonio Maceo) to consequences of the wounds that the guerrilla of Antonio Lledra inflicted to her, while trying to save the wounded and sick of the small hospital that attended in the place known as "Seborucal", near San Diego de los Baños. Her death took place in the old hospital of San Isidro... In short, the agreement to change the name was not adopted until the session of the Town Hall held on 22 March 1899.

The Royal Road to Las Vegas del Cangre(Calle Real) .

When "El Camino Real a las Vegas del Cangre" arose, which intercepted the Southern and Lower roads, the embryo of what with the passing of the years would be the Calle Real del Pueblo emerged; it began in the lower part of Pinar del Río and went West to the high hill where the Plaza de Armas would later settle.

To the West the "Calle Real del Pueblo" extended until it joined or was confused with the "Camino Real a las Vegas del Cangre", shortly after the old Alameda del Hospital.

Subsequently, in April 1877, the Calle Real was officially called "Calle Mayor" and remained under this name until August 1897, when the Town Hall of Pinar del Río held its session on the 11th, when it was made aware and recorded "the deepest feeling with which the Consistory has seen the crime carried out in the person of the first Spanish of the Spaniards (SIC) Don Antonio Cánovas del Castillo". Among the agreements taken that day appears the following: "Third, wishing to perpetuate in this locality the memory of the illustrious deceased, is put to the Main Street, the name of Don Antonio Cánovas del Castillo.

He kept this name until November 23, 1898, when the following agreement was reached by the Town Hall itself: "Calle José Martí, for

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~~identical considerations...Porta made the same statement with regard~~
to also initiating a file in order to replace the name of the Calle Mayor of this City with that of José Martí, the soul of the current war".

But, it is definitively in the session on March 22, 1899 in which "on varying the names of the streets Mayor and Recreo of this city, by those of José Martí and Isabel Rubio respectively, the City council unanimously agreed to declare definitive this agreement, proceeding, of course, to the placement of the corresponding and respective gravestones when it is desired".

Ceferino Fernández Viñas Street

Today it remembers in his name a recent hero, martyr of the fight against Batista, in 1958. Its first name is difficult to determine because, since it ceases to be a serf, in different segments were different denominations among them all, walking time, however, prevailed the "Street of Virtues". This is how it was known in 1853; in reality it is an ironic name, because part of it was considered a "zone of judicial tolerance".

Around 1880 it would also be known as Calle de Sigaray alternating this name with the previous one because it was the street where the brothers Juan and Norberto Sigaray lived; the first conductor of the Orchestra or ensemble - one of those who animated in the Fiesta de las Bandos - and the second, singer of the group, which, it was said, had a beautiful voice and was very requested, nicknamed: "the mockingbird vvueltabajero".

During this same period it began to be called Calle de "La Chafarina" or "La Sorpresa" establishments that occupied the corners of this street with the current Ormani Arenado and Gerardo Medina respectively.

La Chafarina, cafeteria-bar, bore that name remembering a certain lupanar or brothel near the Spanish prison of Ceuta where some insurgent Pinar del Río people had been confined, during the first war since before 1868 even. And La Sorpresa was the winery that had existed since 1850 on the corner of Gerardo Medina and Vélez Caviedes, where there was more than one tumultuous quarrel. Between the two establishments, the street was nicknamed Calle de la California or Calle del barrio de la California.

But really, together with all these names and the one that would also receive as Calle del Cementerio would be maintained by the population of Calle de las Virtudes.

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~~Even despite the officialization by the City Council of the street~~
name Tiburcio Pérez Castañeda (Marqués de las Taironas), the people continued to stubbornly call him Virtudes.

So, in 1980, the name of the martyr from Pinar del Río, Ceferino Fernández Viñas, became official. The tradition, rebellious, continues calling him Virtues.

Sol Street

This street was once called, at the beginning of its layout as such, Rastro Street and was the urban boundary or frontier of the city to the South, it was so called by virtue of the trace or slaughterhouse that existed in the same at the end or beginning of Recreo Street that began there, had been moved to that place, from its first location on the site where today is the building of Coppelia. This slaughterhouse, that is, the building where the cattle were sacrificed for the consumption of the population, was the one that remained the longest in the memory of the men and women of Pinar del Río. For this reason this street was also called "Calle del Rastro Viejo", even when there was no longer this installation that was erected from the place that today occupies the pharmacy that is located there.

The name of the Rastro or Rastro Viejo lasted to the street until celebrating the session of the Consistorio Pinareño on September 17, 1913 the name was changed to Calle Sol, to the proposal of the councilman Francisco B. Sarmiento Martínez, then secretary of the Town Hall. Although the minutes in which the agreement was taken do not state the reasons alleged to put this name, according to the neighbors, this was because in that street at all hours of the day by virtue of its layout gives sunlight on both sides of the street.

At present and since 1980 by agreement of the Historical Office of the Provincial Political Party Committee, it is named Frank Pais, in homage to the leader of the Alzamiento Santiago, on November 30, 1956.

Gerardo Medina Cardentey Street

It goes from the emergence of the road to Viñales, next to the Clinical Surgical and Teaching Hospital "León Cuervo Rubio" to the proximity of the Galeano Street, it is the oldest road that crosses the city. "Camino del Sur" was the first name of Gerardo Medina, Isabel Rubio and Mariana Grajales.

If in 1841 the name of San Mateo began to alternate with Camino de los Maraños, this was only in the stretch from the intersection with

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~~the Calle del Recreo Social, to the Calle Real de las Vegas which was~~ already called Mayor, today Calle Martí. And it would still be called Arroyo de Galeano, Camino de San Mateo in the future, until this stretch was also called "de las Tullerías" and "Callejón de los Muchachos".

When the streets were labeled in 1858 for the first time, those were the names that alternated and in the session of the Town Hall on February 6, 1886, it was named in all its extension between the Sol Street (today Frank País) and the intersection with Recreo, (it was no longer called "del Recreo Social") Vélez Caviedes. He had been president of the provincial deputation and governor of many social initiatives; and died on January 25 of that year.

Although around 1922 the population called it "Calle Nueva" (New Street), because it was left as such after its sewage system, the remodeling of its sidewalks -wrapped in metal- kept the name of Vélez Caviedes until in 1980 it received the name of Gerardo Medina Cardentey and was assimilated in its extension to Llamazares (today Raúl Sánchez) and towards the Guamá bridge, making the name of that stretch disappear, which was also called Wifredo Fernández since 1931, (in a show of adulation to the Consolareño Senator who committed suicide in the prison at the fall of Machado and not for his merits as a journalist, legislator and valiant intellectual).

This street, being the oldest in the city, for having been its backbone from 1571 to 1750, marking its first historic center and the lengthening of the village or hamlet of the old herd of Pinar del Río. To arrive at the end of the colony marking what we could call the fourth historical center of the city in its meeting with the Real or Mayor street, today Martí. For having counted among its properties the houses of four European vice-consuls and before several governors or lieutenant governors and four hotels and six inns and three cinemas and two palaces and The Cathedral and printing and barracks. For its junction in the neocolony with the Carretera Central and the Panamericana, reaffirming since then its position of privileged zone, it must be historical patrimony, at least from the bridge over the Guamá to Frank País Street (before Sol). Severe regulations were dictated in this respect. Avoiding the loss of its historical and cultural value. By tightening the vigilance and studying very well each future bidding and inspecting those that are currently underway. And carrying forward the project proposed by the Association of Pedagogues and the José Martí Cultural Society, to rescue the Martí park as Plaza Martiana, recognizing the place as well as the first historical center of the City.

Maceo Street

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~~It already appeared in 1826, in Mariano Casadeval plan, with the name~~
«Calle de la Cárcel» (Prison Street), because it contains the old prison (approximately where the Casa del Habano is today, opposite what was the Cárcel Nueva (New Prison) and today Fábrica de Tabaco Fancisco Donatién (Fancisco Donatién Tobacco Factory); but before it had to be called Camino del Hato Nuevo (New Herd's Way) as can be inferred from texts from the period and Camino del Cuartel (Barracks Way) before being Camino de la Cárcel (Prison Way) and Calle de la Cárcel (Prison Street); although today its extension is greater, first it was a serventía from the street of the Coloma (today Commander Pinares and before Cabada, since the Calzada de la Coloma today Rafael Ferro was later) and until the existing barracks in the corner of Rafael Morales where today there is a warehouse, opposite to the Golden Eagle; then Rafael Morales Street was known as the road to Rio Feo and later Camino a Mantua and then San Juan Street; and as the New Herd of Pinar del Río formed the second historical center of our City, in that square of the barracks or jail square, the old Maceo Street received those first names already mentioned.

Afterwards, it ascended, first until the birth of Galiano Street (today Carlos Tarafa and formerly Camino del Cangre) and then, united with San Rosendo (today Máximo Gómez, ascended to the Terrazas or Loma del Cuní (today Parque de la Independencia). It also extended to the East, crossing the lands of the Del Haya family, extending another four blocks and taking the extension of today.

The name Calle de la Cárcel (Prison Street), which it had in 1826, is not the name it receives when its corners are labelled for the first time in 1858, but that of Cástor Méndez according to some historians and according to others Ross de Olano. I would like to stop here; Thus, in the first book or pamphlet printed in Pinar del Río (9 pages) written by Manuel de Ortega in 1860 and where he refers to the state in which the streets of Pinar del Río are located and the improvements they require - just two years after its labeling - he alludes to it by calling it "the old street of the Prison" and on the other hand Cástor Méndez, the famous Spanish Admiral Cástor Méndez-Núñez dies in 1869, which indicates that it may not be true that, eleven years ago, this street was so called; although, in later documents of Government Notary and in Town Hall Minutes, it is mentioned with that name. Other chroniclers say that this street was also called Ross Street, in honor of Antonio Ross de Olano who would become General of Spanish troops, had been born in Venezuela and was also a soldier, politician and humorist writer in Spain; Count of Almena and Marquis of Guad-el-Jelú and was very prominent in the War of Africa and especially in the Battle of Wad-Rass; We have not been able to verify this and other sources indicate that it was Máximo Gómez who received such a name, which is complicated, since he is called Simón Ross, changing his name

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~~or referring to another much less important character. Even Delgado~~
Villa and Tata Negrín agree in saying that before being called Calle Maceo, and even before being called Méndez Núñez, this street was called Simón Ross.

Thus it reached the year 1899, when, analyzing the proposal of November 23, 1898, it was called, according to the ordinary session of the Pinareño Town Hall on March 8, 1899, Antonio Maceo Street. In spite of it, we have consulted a source dated January 4 of that year in which it is already called Maceo Street, in any way, it is already, with its name, without another change since then, one of the few centennial streets with that characteristic.