A Family History of the Dominican Republic

by

Dylan Thomas Barker

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__Dylan Barker__
Student Name (printed)

__Dylan Barker__
Student Signature

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This thesis is dedicated to my mother’s family, the Bonnelly, Fonseur, Hernández, and Pezzotti lines. A special thanks to my grandmother, Luisa A. Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, my great-aunt, Ana J. Hernández Bonnelly, my aunt, Bianca Pezzotti Hernández, and my mother, Laura A. Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, for the information they have personally provided. I also wish to thank Cosette Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado for the detailed genealogical tree and Teonilde López Bonnelly for referring me to Cosette’s work.
Abstract

The Dominican Republic is a small island country with a varied history. My mother's side of the family has a history of nearly 200 years in this country on some family branches. The purpose of this thesis is not to provide a complete genealogical tree but to highlight members along this tree that have impacted, or been impacted by, the history of the nation. Political, economic, and cultural impacts are recognized. Most of the details in this thesis are ones that have survived in the knowledge of family members, but external sources are used to corroborate where possible.
Introduction

In Spanish speaking countries, it is customary for individuals to have two last names, the paternal surname followed by the maternal surname. A child will take the first surname of each of his or her parents to create their own full name. Upon marrying, in the Dominican Republic particularly, the wife retains both of her original surnames and adds on her husband’s paternal surname. The husband’s surname comes last and is separated by the article “de.” In accordance with this custom, my mother, who was born and raised in the Dominican Republic, would have the full name of Laura Amelia Pezzotti Hernández de Barker. This extended familial nomenclature serves to provide an individual with a larger scope of their ancestry, and falls in line with the traditional Hispanic idea of an extended family. It is my mother’s Dominican heritage that drew my interest as I realized I knew very few details about her family, and thus created the topic of this thesis. The families discussed are the Bonnelly, Fondeur, Pezzotti, and Hernández families.
Chapter 1: The Origins and Arrival of the Bonnelly and Fondeur Families

The Bonnelly family's history begins actually as the Bonelli family in Corsica. Ange-Toussaint Bonelli, also known as Santo Riccio Bonelli, born in Corsica in 1771, was a member of the local military units and transferred to the National Gendarmerie in 1797, eventually attaining the rank of Colonel. His as well as his brother's military accolades are commemorated on a plaque in Ajaccio, Corsica, and Ange-Toussaint even personally helped Napoleon Bonaparte in his escape from Corsica in 1793, receiving 20,000 francs from Napoleon’s will for his aid in the event.

The Bonelli family relocated from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean in the following generation when Pierre Bonelli, born in Corsica in 1798, emigrated to Saint Thomas in the Virgin Islands in 1816. There he married Marie Lroceté Coutin, born in Haiti in 1800 to Haitian and French parents, and the couple had ten children while living in Saint Thomas. Meanwhile, in the Dominican Republic, a global game of king of the hill was unfolding between France, Spain, Haiti, and Dominican independents from 1800 to 1844, with Haiti as the final winner that took control of the entire island of Hispaniola. In 1844, rebellion against Haitian unification of the island began a war for independence, which

1 Silvani, *Le colonel de gendarmerie*, 34-36


3 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” I

4 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” I

5 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 22-24; Metz, *Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 20-21
quickly produced a Haitian surrender. However, the newly formed Dominican Republic had to deal with retaliation from Haiti just one month later, with the Battle of Santiago on March 30, 1844 being the definite stop to the initial Haitian advance on the capital. The Fondeur family begins its prominence in the Dominican Republic with Furcy Fondeur Lajeunesse, born in Paris in 1814, who had moved to the country and took part in the War for Independence, fighting in the Battle of Santiago. Political turmoil between groups within the country continued up until 1861 when the captain general of Cuba General Francisco Serrano and Dominican President Pedro Santana reached an agreement to reinstate Spanish administration of the Dominican Republic, effectively making it a Spanish colony once again. Furcy Fondeur was one of the individuals to sign the Act of Independence on September 14, 1863 that began the Dominican War of Restoration to free the Dominican Republic from Spanish rule once again. He later served as the Ministro de Hacienda y Comercio (Finance and Trade) in 1867 during the short-lived rule of a military junta led by José Antonio Hungría.

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6 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 27-33; Metz, *Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 22-23

7 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 33-35

8 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 7

9 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 45-59; Metz, *Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 27

10 Tineo, “Declaran restaurada la Independencia”

11 Ureña, “Contribución a nuestra historia,” 146-147
The Bonelli Family in the Dominican Republic

The ten children of Pierre Bonelli and Marie Lúcete had all been sent to Europe to attend school and learn to play music, and it was this knowledge of music that would provide the Bonelli family with a favorable start in the Dominican Republic. Sometimes after the death of Pierre Bonelli in 1844, Marie Lúcete decided to move to Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic with four of her children, three of whom (Francisco Ulises, Anne Nelly, and José Arístides) were then part of an orchestra that toured throughout the Caribbean, and it was upon their arrival in the Dominican Republic that the last name Bonelli was changed to Bonnelly. José Arístides Bonnelly Coutin, born in Saint Thomas in 1834, was a particularly talented musician who gave piano lessons in Santo Domingo from 1853 onward and beginning in 1855 was a member of the Ateneo Dominicano, a center for fine arts, as a teacher of various instruments. Also in 1855, the Sociedad Filarmónica was formed and in a concert performed by the Sociedad the following year, José Arístides was featured as a violinist. But perhaps José Arístides’s most impressive talent was his singing, that could penetrate the soul and fill it with sweet melancholy.

12 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 1-2
13 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 2
14 Demorizi, Música y baile, 16-21
15 Demorizi, Música y baile, 16
16 Demorizi, Música y baile, 19
Starting with Carlos Sully Bonnelly Arnaud, the third son of Francisco Ulises Bonnelly Coutin and Buenaventura Carmen Arnaud born in Puerto Plata in 1858, the Bonnelly family began to actively participate in Dominican politics.17 Carlos Sully, along with his younger brother, took part in the politics of Puerto Plata until a local revolt exiled them both from the city and sent them to Santiago.18 It was in Santiago that Carlos Sully accomplished his most notable achievements, including his leadership of the Ayuntamiento de Santiago (equivalent to city hall) and the founding of the Sociedad de la Caridad in 1884.19 It was during his management of the Sociedad de la Caridad that he ordered the construction of the largest hospital in the country, the Hospital San Rafael, now known as the Hospital José María Cabral y Báez.20 Carlos Sully reorganized part of the Guardia Nacional, which then provided civil in addition to military services, in order to found the firefighters of Santiago, of which he was a Colonel.21 Even for all of his political workings, Carlos Sully acknowledged the importance of music and worked to create the Academia y Banda de Música Municipal de Santiago, which operated to teach music as well as provide a band for official events in the town.22

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17 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 4
18 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 4
19 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 4
20 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 4
21 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 4
22 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 4
1862 and younger brother of Carlos Sully, was exiled from his birth town under the same circumstances as his older brother and also went to Santiago, but instead of continuing politics he opted to enter the world of business and created a successful company in the tobacco industry.\textsuperscript{23} It is also with these two brothers that the Bonnelly family and Fondeur family intersect. Carlos Sully and José Raúl married two sisters in the Fondeur family, María Luisa Fondeur Fernández and Ana Julia Fondeur Fernández respectively.\textsuperscript{24} María Luisa and Ana Julia were both daughters of Luisa Fernández Fernández and Furcy Fondeur Lajeunesse, the earlier mentioned fighter for Dominican independence in two separate instances.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23} Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 6

\textsuperscript{24} Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 7

\textsuperscript{25} Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 7
Chapter 2: The Origins and Arrival of the Pezzotti and Hernández Families

The Pezzotti family’s settling in the Dominican Republic was far less intentional than the relocation of the other families mentioned in this paper. Evaristo Dante Pezzotti Salterucci, born in Scalea, Italy in 1884, was a pharmacist on his way to Cali, Colombia to meet with his brother, a doctor, so that the two could carry out a business venture. He traveled by ship from Scalea and the vessel had to stop partway through the trip in order to resupply, and the port in which the ship stopped was Sánchez, Dominican Republic. The ship was anchored in Sánchez for a few days and while attending Mass in the city’s church that Sunday, Evaristo Dante saw a young girl that he decided he would one day marry, and so he told his brother that he would not be meeting him in Cali and put down roots in the Dominican Republic. The girl that Evaristo Dante saw that Sunday was Irene de los Dolores Tejada Guzmán and in fact the two did eventually marry. Evaristo Dante proceeded to create a chain of pharmacies across the country, with his stores being the largest pharmacies in the cities of La Vega, Sánchez, and Santo Domingo.

The Hernández family begins its history in the Dominican Republic with Carlos Leopoldo Hernández de San Nicolás, said to be a descendent of the Christian Saint

26 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
27 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
28 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
29 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
30 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
Nicolas.\textsuperscript{31} Originally from Venezuela, Carlos Leopoldo fled from the country in 1870 and sought political asylum in the Dominican Republic, where he lived out the remainder of his life and married Amelia Bonilla Lopez.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview

\textsuperscript{32} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
Chapter 3: La Era de Trujillo

The Dominican Republic up to this point had been in rebellion against varying nations that sought to control the island country, and in the interims in which there was independence, the Dominican Republic had suffered from fractured governments and a revolving door of leaders. This changed in 1882 with Ulises Heureaux’s rise to power, creating a dictatorship that was the first in the country to have presidents and officials elected to office as figureheads while the caudillo in truth maintained complete control over the government and military.\(^3\)\(^3\) The dictatorship of Heureaux has been described as “the most pitiless tyranny known to the Republics of the American continent.”\(^3\)\(^4\) After Heureaux’s assassination in 1899, the Dominican Republic returned to its cycle of frequently changing leaders and economic instability until the country was given a brief respite in 1906 by the presidency of Ramón Cáceres, an enlightened and effective leader whose term was cut short by his assassination in 1911.\(^3\)\(^5\) After the end of Cáceres’s administration, the Dominican political scene again fell to disorder that brought the country closer and closer to complete governmental dissolution until U.S. Marines landed on the island in 1916.\(^3\)\(^6\) The U.S. had been in charge of administering the Dominican Republic’s customs for more than a decade in order to pay off the country’s foreign debts,

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\(^{33}\) Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 58; Metz, *Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 30-31

\(^{34}\) Welles, *Naboth’s Vineyard*, 444

\(^{35}\) Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 61-62; Metz, *Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 33-36

\(^{36}\) Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 62; Metz, *Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 36-37
but the Marines sent in 1916 were there for the purpose of U.S. occupation and the subsequent rule of the Dominican Republic under martial law due to the lack of a popularly elected leader capable of agreement with the United States.37

When the U.S. departed from the country in 1924, it was with the hope that a stable democracy had been successfully initiated with the election of Horacio Vásquez as president.38 However, the U.S. Marines had also trained the Guardia Nacional during the occupation and by the end of that period it had become a structured and formidable national army.39 And it was the man in command of that army, Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, who would come to define the next epoch in Dominican history. Rafael Trujillo had enlisted in the Dominican military during the U.S. occupation and had climbed the ranks from Second Lieutenant to Brigadier General in under ten years.40 The U.S. did not suspect him of any political aspirations, as he had previously refused suggestions to run for the Dominican Senate, and disregarded accusations that claimed otherwise, believing that Trujillo "will probably support the constitution."41 In 1930, Trujillo saw an opportunity in one of Vásquez's political rivals, Rafael Estrella Ureña, and with him plotted a coup that was

37 Bell, Dominican Republic, 61-63
38 Bell, Dominican Republic, 63
39 Crassweller, Trujillo: Life and Times, 47
40 Crassweller, Trujillo: Life and Times, 51
41 Crassweller, Trujillo: Life and Times, 56-58
carried out in February of that year and successfully deposed Vásquez.\textsuperscript{42} Although Estrella Ureña was the one to take the office of president, Trujillo held most of the power by virtue of his command of the army, which he used more and more frequently to intimidate the general population into compliance with his orders, such as a countrywide arms round-up.\textsuperscript{43} This all led up to elections between Trujillo and two other presidential candidates in May of 1930 in which the Central Electoral Board resigned and was replaced with supporters of Trujillo and the announced number of votes in the election was greater than the number of voters registered in the country.\textsuperscript{44} As another branch of the Dominican government attempted to void the elections and declare them to have been illegal, men armed with machine guns interrupted the meeting and put an end to the process, allowing Trujillo to be inaugurated that August.\textsuperscript{45}

Era's Impact on the Families

Jafet David Hernández Bonilla, born in Santiago in 1881 to Carlos Leopoldo Hernández de San Nicolás and Amelia Bonilla López, had started a law firm in his birth town in which two future presidents of the country were to start their careers as lawyers.\textsuperscript{46} Jafet David also served in the judicial branch from 1940 up to his death in 1950

\textsuperscript{42} Crassweller, \textit{Trujillo: Life and Times}, 66

\textsuperscript{43} Crassweller, \textit{Trujillo: Life and Times}, 67-69

\textsuperscript{44} Crassweller, \textit{Trujillo: Life and Times}, 69-70

\textsuperscript{45} Crassweller, \textit{Trujillo: Life and Times}, 70

\textsuperscript{46} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
as a part of the *Tribunal Superior de Tierras*, the second highest court of the country (above the *Tribunales de Jurisdicción Original* and below the Supreme Court of Justice).*47 Although he served under Trujillo in a time period when dishonest practices abounded, Jafet David always maintained a high degree of moral fortitude. This characteristic was exemplified by the fact that citizens often gave him amounts of land in the Dominican Republic as payment for his services as a lawyer.*48 He had never capitalized on this because it was difficult to legitimize this form of payment, and although he could have easily done so during his time as judge in the *Tribunal Superior de Tierras*, he refrained from doing so in order to avoid any suspicions that he was abusing his title and power for personal gain.*49

Rafael Trujillo was also infamous for his dislike of the Haitian population, in what could only be described as less than subtle racism. Despite being of Haitian descent himself, he declared the Dominican Republic to be an officially white nation and frequently used makeup to lighten his skin.*50 In 1937, Trujillo ordered the killing of thousands of Haitians living within the Dominican Republic.*51 Ana Julia Bonnelly Fondeur, born in Santiago in 1901 to José Raúl Bonnelly Arnaud and Ana Julia Fondeur Fernández, married Jafet David Hernández Bonilla and moved with him to Santo Domingo in 1930. During this Haitian

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*48 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview

*49 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview

*50 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 12

*51 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 12
massacre, José Raúl and Ana Julia had a Haitian maid in their household, and Ana Julia hid this woman, her husband, and the couple's two children in the house for seven months to keep them safe until there was an opportunity to send them back across the border to Haiti.  

Rafael Danilo Bonnelly Fondeur, born in Santiago in 1917 as one of Ana Julia's brothers, opposed Trujillo's dictatorship and became involved with one of the various small rebel groups set up across the country. Rafael Trujillo maintained a list of all the people he wanted eliminated both within the country and without, and it is said that Rafael Danilo was on this list twice (under slightly different variations of his name). Rafael Danilo understood the danger this posed to him and knew he had to leave the country, but was unable to board a ship or plane without being noticed by the authorities and arrested. His only alternative was to stow away, and that is what he did around 1937 aboard a ship heading from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico, from whence he traveled to New York and then to Cuba. It was in Cuba that he was trained as a guerrilla fighter to combat Trujillo, but this was one of many half-hearted attempts at overthrowing the regime which never saw fruition, and he eventually returned to New York where he lived until his death. Although one may be lead to think that Rafael Danilo was safe from Trujillo the

52 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
53 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
54 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
55 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
Family History of Dominican Republic

moment he was past the Dominican border, this is not necessarily the truth. Trujillo’s influence extended far past the Dominican Republic and ensured that a publicly open enemy of Trujillo could not rest easy, even within the United States. The most publicized incident of this type was the disappearance of Jesús Galíndez, a Basque nationalist who had published an extensive work on the brutalities of the Trujillo regime, who was kidnapped from his apartment in Manhattan in 1956 and is believed to have been sent to the Dominican Republic where he was confronted by Trujillo and killed.56 Although the disappearance of Jesús Galíndez was the most publicized, it was not the only instance of such an event happening, with similar disappearances taking place in New York and in Havana, Cuba.57

Rafael Trujillo used excessive violence to repress any opposition, as demonstrated by the Galíndez incident. But the Galíndez incident occurred around a man living outside of the Dominican Republic, and if such a fate could befall a person geographically separated from the center of this violence, then the brutality must be even worse at its center within the country. And the one place to see more of this brutality than any other single location in the country may very well have been La Cuarenta, the jail where most of the men Trujillo had arrested were taken to be tortured and potentially executed.58 Several of Ana Julia Bonnelly Fondeur’s first cousins once removed were sent to La Cuarenta, namely Carlos Sully Martínez Bonnelly, Carlos Sully Bonnelly Valverde, Federico Carlos Bonnelly Valverde, Federico

56 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 5-9

57 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 6

58 Espaillat, *The Last Caesar*, 42
and Rafael Francisco Bonnelly Batlle, and upon being fortunate enough to be released from La Cuarenta, it was with broken bones and missing teeth, one of them in a wheelchair and unable to walk.\textsuperscript{59} Ana Julia was protective of all her children during the reign of Trujillo, and did not allow any of them to practice subversive activities for fear that they would be subject to fates similar to those of her brother Rafael Danilo or those of her cousins’ children. The daughters of the family were not allowed to attend any parties or gatherings where Trujillo or either of his sons was supposed to be in attendance for fear that the young ladies would draw their attention.\textsuperscript{60} Interaction with the Trujillos was not entirely avoidable though. Ana Josefina Hernández Bonnelly, born in 1940 as the youngest child of Ana Julia and Jafet David, attended the private school Luis Moñoz Rivera with Rhadamés Trujillo, Rafael Trujillo’s youngest son, for six years.\textsuperscript{61} Rhadamés was the only student who was not punished for not wearing the school uniform and was also three years younger than everyone else in the class.\textsuperscript{62} All members of the Trujillo family traveled with escorts consisting of at least five separate cars filled with people, and when members of the Trujillo family traveled in this way, pedestrians and other cars were obliged to stop in order to let the Trujillo family member and his or her escort pass. When Ana Josefina was fifteen years old and walking around the Avenida George Washington (el Malecón) with cousins and

\textsuperscript{59} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview

\textsuperscript{60} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview

\textsuperscript{61} Hernández Bonnelly, interview

\textsuperscript{62} Hernández Bonnelly, interview
sisters, the convoy of one of the Trujillos appeared and everyone cleared the path to allow the vehicles to drive past. The convoy happened to be Rhadamé’s and as he drove past he noticed Ana Josefina on the side of the street, and stopped the entire procession of cars to roll down his window and tell Ana Josefina she could cross the street before saying “see you tomorrow at school.” Ana Josefina was even invited to parties by Rhadamés, and although the family typically abstained from attending events with the Trujillos, it was not possible to politely refuse every invitation and Ana Josefina along with her aunt and cousin were obliged to show up to one of Rhadamé’s birthday parties that they had been invited to. At the party, she sat at Rhadamé’s table and Ramfis, older brother to Rhadamés, saw her and asked her to dance. Ana Josefina danced with Ramfis, but Rhadamé saw that this had made Ana Josefina extremely nervous (for obvious reasons) and told Ramfis that she was with him. Although nothing more came of the event, it did show that Ana Julia’s fear for her daughters was well-founded.

However, even a dictatorship as cautious and ruthless as Rafael Trujillo’s would have to end eventually and this end was precipitated by several events. The U.S., which had up to that point been a key supporter of Trujillo’s rule in the Dominican Republic due to his

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63 Hernández Bonnelly, interview
64 Hernández Bonnelly, interview
65 Hernández Bonnelly, interview
66 Hernández Bonnelly, interview
67 Hernández Bonnelly, interview
uncompromising stance towards Communism, expressed its disapproval at the murder of an American pilot in 1956 and the poorly executed cover up that followed.68 Trujillo had formed an alliance with the Catholic Church by donating large amounts of money and constructing new churches across the country in exchange for positive sermons highlighting the good that he and his government were doing.69 The Church’s betrayal in 1960 was due to the deportation of several high-ranking clergymen on the grounds that they were suspected of involvement in an assassination plot, and this was the start of the unraveling of local support for Trujillo.70 Also in 1960 was the failed attempt to assassinate Venezuelan President Rómulo Betancourt by car bomb, which prompted condemnation from the entire Organization of American States in the form of economic sanctions and the severance of diplomatic relations.71 Three of the four Mirabal sisters, who were married to leaders of a Dominican rebel group in which they too participated to plot the overthrow of Trujillo, were murdered in November of 1960, further polarizing public opinion against Trujillo.72 These events created more strain than Trujillo’s administration could handle with the usual tools of violence and money, and on May 30, 1961 he was assassinated.73

68 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 7, 14-19

69 Espaillat, *The Last Caesar*, 1-2

70 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 36-37

71 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 36-37, 43-46

72 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 35

73 Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 113-118
Chapter 4: Life Without Trujillo

Trujillo's son Ramfis would take control of the Dominican Republic long enough to find and kill the majority of the conspirators involved in the assassination plot before leaving the country as the rest of his family had done.\(^{74}\) Joaquín Balaguer then took responsibility for the organization of the government and formed the *Consejo de Estado* (Council of State) on the first day of 1962.\(^{75}\) The Council of State seemed like a turning point for the Dominican government, with the OAS lifting its economic sanctions and resuming diplomatic relations, but the tradition of rebellion had set in within the month in the form of a military coup led by General Pedro Antonio Rodríguez Echavarría.\(^{76}\) General Rodríguez Echavarría had all of the Council members except for Balaguer arrested and attempted to set up his own government.\(^{77}\) The end of his ephemeral rule was signified by public riots, the arrival of a U.S. warship, and his arrest, all of which occurred within two days after his coup.\(^{78}\) The Council of State reconvened, but this time without Balaguer as leader, creating the need for someone else to take charge who would not attempt to abuse the title or develop a lust for power.\(^{79}\)

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\(^{74}\) Diederich, *Death of the Goat*, 250-251

\(^{75}\) Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 78

\(^{76}\) Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 79

\(^{77}\) Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 79

\(^{78}\) Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 79

\(^{79}\) Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 79
The man to rise to this occasion would be Rafael Filiberto Bonnelly Fondeur, son of Carlos Sully Bonnelly Arnaud and Maria Luisa Fondeur Fernández, born in Santiago in 1904. Rafael Filiberto graduated from the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo with a law degree in 1926. From there he returned to Santiago where he worked as a lawyer alongside Balaguer in the law firm of Jafet David Hernández Bonilla from 1931 to 1944. It was in 1944 that he made the decision to move to Ciudad Trujillo (the name for Santo Domingo at the time, renamed by the dictator himself) where he would serve the city's namesake in a variety of government positions, including: Diputado al Congreso Nacional (Member of the National Congress) from 1930 to 1932; Senator from 1942 to 1944; Secretary of the Interior from 1944 to 1946; Secretary of State for Work from 1946 to 1948; Procurador General de la República (Attorney General) from 1948 to 1949; Secretary of State for Justice from 1951 to 1954; Secretary of State of the Presidency from 1953 to 1954; Secretary of State for Education for a few months in 1954; Dominican ambassador to Spain from 1954 to 1956; Dominican ambassador to Venezuela from 1957 to 1959. Despite holding such an extensive list of posts answerable to Trujillo, he was not a wholehearted supporter of Trujillo and still expressed his disagreement with the

80 Bonnelly Betances de Maldonado, “Familia Bonnelly,” 5
81 Rodríguez Gómez, “Muere Ex Presidente,” 15
82 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview; Rodríguez Gómez, “Muere Ex Presidente,” 15
83 Rodríguez Gómez, “Muere Ex Presidente,” 15
government's violent actions during his multitude of services, regardless of the danger that this could pose to him and his family.84 In addition to his political career, he was also ardent in the field of education. Throughout his work in the government between 1945 and 1963 he was also a professor of constitutional and civil law in the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo and from 1949 to 1953 he even served as dean of the university.85 RafaelFilberto had served as the vice-president of the Council of State from its inception in January of 1962, and with Balaguer gone, he naturally ascended to the top spot. Rafael Filiberto served as president of the Dominican Republic for a very short time, only from January 18, 1962 to February 27, 1962, but in that time he created an enduring legacy as a champion of democracy.86 He wrote twenty laws that benefitted Dominican society, including law number 5880-62 which made it illegal to take part in any activities that promote Rafael Trujillo or his family.87 Of greater import is the fact that Rafael Filiberto, as president of the Dominican Republic through the Council of State, organized the first democratic elections the country had seen in over thirty years.88

84 "Museo Memorial Resistencia rinde homenaje"

85 Rodríguez Gómez, “Muere Ex Presidente”

86 Rodríguez Gómez, “Muere Ex Presidente”

87 “Museo Memorial Resistencia rinde homenaje”

88 “El Licenciado Bonnelly;” “Museo Memorial Resistencia rinde homenaje”
Democracy Anew?

The winner of the elections held at the end of 1962 was Juan Bosch of the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD) and he was sworn in by February of 1963. Bosch had formed agreements with the U.S. under the Kennedy administration through Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, but Bosch wasted no time in securing more financing from European nations for various projects throughout the Dominican Republic, as a part of his much broader plan to expand the Dominican Republic's base of economic aid and dependence. Bosch also drafted a new constitution to go along with the newly founded democracy, but all throughout his busy first months as head of state he had to deal with antagonism from Haiti's president Francois Duvalier (who was in reality another Caribbean dictator) in the forms of assassination attempts and the invasion of the Dominican embassy in Haiti due to its granting asylum to Haitian rebels that had failed an assassination attempt on Duvalier. Bosch submitted a complaint to the OAS, in the same fashion Venezuelan President Betancourt had as response to Trujillo's assassination attempt, and the Dominican Republic seemed to be truly united behind its president. Bosch then tried to expedite Haitian action with a bluff in the form of a feigned military invasion of Haiti, which "would cost not

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89 Bell, Dominican Republic, 79

90 Bell, Dominican Republic, 79-82

91 Bell, Dominican Republic, 84-85

92 Bell, Dominican Republic, 85
a single drop of blood" if it went according to plan. However, a lack of coordination among the military leaders along with several tactical flaws in Bosch's plan (after all he was a civilian, not military) resulted in his planned bluff failing. Resentment of Bosch within the higher ranks of the military for this incident, along with dissatisfaction from several key groups about specific articles within the new constitution and growing rumors of Communist tendencies in the government, led to a military coup in September of 1963 that ousted Bosch.

A triumvirate was set up to take the role of presidency and among the first things done was the reversal of most of Bosch's work as president, including the annulment of his constitution. One man would come to stand out most in the Triumvirate, Donald Reid Cabral, and would eventually function as the Dominican Republic's sole leader (with continued support from the military). Despite popular opinion turning against him in the face of economic distress and a huge government deficit in 1964, Reid Cabral attempted to consolidate power by heading the Ministry of the Armed Forces himself and suppressing democratic elections that he had promised earlier on. Instead of the typical military coup

93 Bosch, *The Unfinished Experiment*, 185-186
94 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 86-87
95 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 84, 88; Metz, *Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 44
96 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 89
97 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 90; Metz, *Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 44
98 Bell, *Dominican Republic*, 92
that followed an inept leader, however, the Dominican Republic would this time face a larger-scale civil war.\textsuperscript{99} Two separate military coups along with a general public eager to riot, all at the same time, quickly expelled Reid Cabral in April of 1965.\textsuperscript{100} The more liberal of the two military groups, in support of bringing Bosch back and restoring his constitution, then occupied the presidency and the capital city while the more conservative group, with aims to create new leadership for the country, gained more support from the military forces that were not yet participating and convinced the U.S. ambassador that the Constitutionalists were a Communist threat.\textsuperscript{101} Primarily because of this unsubstantiated claim, the U.S. then invaded the Dominican Republic where a stalemate was reached between the hugely outnumbered Constitutionalists and its varied aggressors, which led to international involvement from the OAS member countries and the UN.\textsuperscript{102} A failure to resolve the situation with military action gave rise to a diplomatic agreement in August of 1965 between the opposing Dominican forces that set up a provisional government headed by Héctor García Godoy until democratic elections could be organized once more.\textsuperscript{103} García Godoy's rule of a little less than a year was troubled by remnants of the previous military

\textsuperscript{99} Bell, \textit{Dominican Republic}, 92; Metz, \textit{Dominican Republic and Haiti}, 45

\textsuperscript{100} Bell, \textit{Dominican Republic}, 92

\textsuperscript{101} Bell, \textit{Dominican Republic}, 93

\textsuperscript{102} Bell, \textit{Dominican Republic}, 94-95

\textsuperscript{103} Bell, \textit{Dominican Republic}, 95; Metz, \textit{Dominican Republic and Haiti}, 45
coup but ultimately successful in this goal, and in July of 1966 Joaquín Balaguer of the
Partido Reformista (PR) was elected president.\textsuperscript{104}

Balaguer Again

Balaguer was not a military man and so he did not try to interfere much in military
affairs, instead personally administering all of the civilian agencies.\textsuperscript{105} In a manner similar
to Trujillo, he placed himself as the chief (and only) representative of the government and
its ministries.\textsuperscript{106} Balaguer’s first term was largely peaceful and fair, with the only friction
to arise during this time being within his own political party on the matter of the PR’s next
presidential candidate.\textsuperscript{107} Notwithstanding the internal fracture, Balaguer secured the
nomination of the PR and went on to be reelected for a second term in 1970, which was
considerably less peaceful than his first.\textsuperscript{108} Despite the demonstrations, violent terrorism,
and two distinct coup attempts, Balaguer stood for reelection in 1974 and won yet
again.\textsuperscript{109} His third term proved to be the low point of his career as the economy began to
struggle and oppressive actions by the police became rampant, including political
imprisonments, and the consequent elections were the culmination of his authoritarian

\textsuperscript{104} Bell, Dominican Republic, 97-98

\textsuperscript{105} Bell, Dominican Republic, 99

\textsuperscript{106} Bell, Dominican Republic, 99

\textsuperscript{107} Bell, Dominican Republic, 99

\textsuperscript{108} Bell, Dominican Republic, 99-100

\textsuperscript{109} Bell, Dominican Republic, 100-101
tendencies. The outcome of the 1978 elections became apparent to all as a clear victory for the PRD over Balaguer and the PR, but on May 17, 1978 the vote counting process was halted by Major General Neit Nivar Seijas, openly in support of Balaguer, before completion. Balaguer was quick to feign ignorance of Major General Nivar Seijas’s actions and even tried to blame the PRD for the fraudulent events of that day.

Rafael Filiberto Bonnelly Fondeur wasted no time in coming to the defense of democracy and his country by way of a letter on May 18 addressed to Balaguer that evolved into a written debate between the two, published in all of the major national newspapers. In Rafael Filiberto’s first letter, he describes the interruption of the vote counting by members of the Armed Forces and urges Balaguer to take action and coordinate a solution (as he was indeed capable of doing). Balaguer did not present any kind of response, but on June 1 the president of the Junta Central Electoral (Central Electoral Board, JCE) was recused by the PR, essentially calling for his resignation, and a plan to conduct “complimentary elections” was announced. Rafael Filiberto along with two others revealed the fact that the Gaceta Oficial (official voting place) 9434 had been

\[110\] Bell, Dominican Republic, 101; Metz, Dominican Republic and Haiti, 47

\[111\] Bell, Dominican Republic, 103; “El Licenciado Bonnelly”

\[112\] Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia”

\[113\] Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia;” Jerez, “Actuación Bonnelly en Crisis”

\[114\] Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia”

\[115\] Jerez, “Actuación Bonnelly en Crisis”
altered by Balaguer through law 600, one article of that law specifically transferring special privileges of the *Junta Electoral del Distrito* to the JCE so that the results of the polls could be changed through "complimentary elections" as planned, notably with a new president at the head of the JCE. Balaguer still refrained from responding to Rafael Filiberto's claims but asked the JCE to bring in external specialists to investigate and observe the previous elections in an effort to prove them fraudulent and validate the upcoming "complimentary elections." On July 7, the JCE made its *fallo histórico* (historic mistake) and replaced four senators of the PRD with supporters of Balaguer by allocating the votes of those who did not cast ballots largely to these PR members. In another letter on July 10, Rafael Filiberto suggests that this issue be appealed to the Supreme Court of Justice and once again implores Balaguer to rectify the unconstitutional events. On July 13 Balaguer finally responded to the criticisms of the *fallo histórico* and the events that led up to it in a broadcasted speech, still claiming a lack of involvement with the Armed Forces' interference in the vote counting process and hinting that the critics of these events (Rafael Filiberto) were well-versed in this type of intrigue. Rafael Filiberto's reaction to Balaguer's claim came on July 15 in a letter titled "Hemos sido usted y yo alguna vez

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116 Jerez, “Actuación Bonnelly en Crisis”

117 Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia”

118 Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia”

119 Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia”

120 Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia”
golpistas?"121 In this document, Rafael Filiberto alludes to the coup of 1930 against President Vásquez led by Estrella Ureña and states that both he and Balaguer were among the group to plot this takeover. The letter then proceeds to November 1961, when some of the remaining Trujillo family members had planned a coup to reestablish the regime but were dissuaded by the arrival of a U.S. aircraft carrier.122 This rallied General Rodríguez Echavarría to initiate a military movement aimed to exile the Trujillo family from the Dominican Republic for good, a movement in which Rafael Filiberto admits participation.123 However, Rafael Filiberto then goes on to mention the coup of 1962 against the Council of State and claims that Balaguer was the one at the head of this rebellion.124 It is perhaps because of this that Balaguer did not return to lead the Council of State once it was reinstalled. Rafael Filiberto had called on all of his experience as statesman and educator in his conduct thus far. All of his letters up to this point had been well-written and extremely polite, referring to Balguer as "señor Presidente," praising his skills as a diplomatic writer, asking him to act responsibly on behalf of the country's democratic institutions, and identifying both himself and Balaguer as golpistas (conspirators in a coup) in an effort to reduce the negative connotation of the term and

121 Paulino Ramos, "Polémica con sabor a Historia"
122 Paulino Ramos, "Polémica con sabor a Historia"
123 Paulino Ramos, "Polémica con sabor a Historia"
124 Paulino Ramos, "Polémica con sabor a Historia"
salvage some of the president’s pride. Balaguer’s direct response to Rafael Filiberto on July 17 would show none of these same courtesies, as he called Rafael Filiberto a *trujillista* (supporter of Rafael Trujillo), claimed the letters had been written by someone else, and asserted that the Trujillo family had not planned any hostile action in 1961.

General Rodríguez Echavarría then came to Rafael Filiberto’s defense on July 20 affirming that the Trujillos had indeed planned a takeover in conjunction with the officials of the San Isidro Air Force Base.

**From the Antepenultimate Generation to the Present**

Luisa Amelia de las Mercedes Hernández Bonnelly was born in Santiago in 1927 and is the older sister to Ana Josefina Hernández Bonnelly. After her family moved to Santo Domingo, Luisa Amelia began to work at age 18 in the *Palacio de Justicia* as a secretary and then as a stenographer for congressional meetings. She continued to stay in Santo Domingo after marrying and was living there at the time of the civil war that overthrew Reid Cabral (an event that most Dominicans refer to as a revolution), but the family moved out of Santo Domingo to La Vega during this time for the safety of the children. The

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125 Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia;” Jerez, “Actuación Bonnelly en Crisis”

126 Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia”

127 Paulino Ramos, “Polémica con sabor a Historia”

128 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview

129 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview

130 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
house was later found to have bullet holes in the front porch and on two separate occasions, a dead body was found in the back yard. Past the revolutionary period of the Constitutionalists, her work ethic and the legacy of her father, Jafet David, was sufficient to entice President Balaguer to personally ask her to work as the private secretary of Rafael Bello Andino, who was serving as his Secretary of State of the Presidency at the time in 1974. Bello Andino eventually trusted Luisa Amelia with the most delicate of matters, including typing Balaguer’s personal letters and handling some of the most secretive documents. Her work under Bello Andino was so satisfactory that he found her a job as secretary for the Compañía de Seguros San Rafael (San Rafael Insurance Company) after the end of Balaguer’s presidency where she worked until retirement.

Luisa Amelia married José Marino Pezzotti Tejada in 1956. José Marino was born in 1917 to Evaristo Dante and Irene de los Dolores. Like the Mirabal sisters, he was born and raised in Salcedo, and his sisters attended the same school as the Mirabals (el Colegio Inmaculada Concepción) in the city of La Vega. At 19, José Marino went to medical school at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo to become a dentist and after

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131 Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
132 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
133 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
134 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
135 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
136 Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
Family History of Dominican Republic

graduating he moved to the United States to complete his graduate studies in Maxillofacial Surgery.\textsuperscript{137} It was after this time while he was still in the U.S. that he joined the U.S. Army as an oral surgeon from 1942 to 1952, and served in World War II.\textsuperscript{138} Upon returning to the Dominican Republic, he married and began working in his own private practice as well as teaching first at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo and then at the Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña.\textsuperscript{139} After his teaching career, he began working for the Hospital Darío Contreras in the department of maxillofacial surgery and also performed dental services in the Penitenciaria Nacional de La Victoria (a federal penitentiary).\textsuperscript{140} His charitable spirit was perhaps his greatest facet, as shown by the free dental services he provided to the leper colony of Nigua and his trips to small Dominican villages to donate toothpaste and toothbrushes and teach proper dental hygiene as well as perform free dental services.\textsuperscript{141} Upon his death in 2013, dozens of these poor villagers approached Luisa Amelia to pay their respects, despite the fact that she had not ever met any of them.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{137} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview

\textsuperscript{138} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview

\textsuperscript{139} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview

\textsuperscript{140} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview

\textsuperscript{141} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview; Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview

\textsuperscript{142} Hernández Bonnelly de Pezzotti, interview
Bianca Pezzotti Hernández, daughter of José Marino and Luisa Amelia, was born in Santo Domingo in 1959. In 1979, she began working for the National Theatre as the secretary to the Governor of that organization and one year later she was promoted to assistant to the Administrator. In 1982, she began working for the Dominican branch of the charitable organization Save the Children. Save the Children is an organization that works for the benefit of youths in countries all around the world, and in the Dominican Republic the charity aims to provide better nutrition and clean water, facilitate public education, and promote sanitary and hygienic practices. Bianca worked for this organization until 2015, at which time she was General Administrative Director.

Laura Amelia Pezzotti Hernández was born in 1957 and is the older sister of Bianca. She attended the Universidad Nacional de Pedro Henríquez Ureña and graduated in 1979 with a degree in Interior Design. Laura Amelia became well-known throughout the Dominican Republic for her artwork, with two solo exhibitions sponsored by the Voluntariado del Museo de las Casas Reales, an organization dedicated to promoting art.

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143 Pezzotti Hernández, interview
144 Pezzotti Hernández, interview
145 Pezzotti Hernández, interview
146 www.savethechildren.org/DominicanRepublic
147 Pezzotti Hernández, interview
148 Pezzotti Hernández de Barker, interview
domestically and internationally. The first exhibition in June of 1990, *Donde Habitan los Colores* (Where the Colors Live), showcased an artistic style that fused traditional African elements with a Caribbean aesthetic of vibrant colors to create pieces that could serve as works of art while simultaneously serving functional purposes in the home. The second exhibition in March of 1992, *Detalles de Colores* (Details of Colors), was Laura Amelia’s opportunity to showcase more than her artistic skills specifically in the furniture displayed, that she both painted and designed.

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150 Esquea, “Laura Pezzotti”

151 D’Leon, “Detalles de colores”
Conclusion

Family histories are often a complicated ordeal of names and familial relations, often becoming a challenge to simply keep up with how many "greats" precede an individual's title or how far removed a cousin is. Although the value of family history is undeniable, it becomes more prudent to emphasize the history that occurred within a family member's lifetime rather than emphasizing the endless list of names and dates that make up one's family tree. This thesis has attempted to do just that, focusing on individuals that have had unique impacts on the history of a single nation or perhaps several. However, the focus has not been solely on political persons. One does not have to be president of the country to have an impact, at least on some part of the population. Philanthropy, charity, or an interest in the arts are also ways to leave one's mark in history, and are influences that a family can look back on with pride.

This work is not meant to be an all-inclusive one, and doubtlessly there are other members along the Bonnelly, Hernández, Fondeur, and Pezzotti family trees that have made significant contributions to the history of the Dominican Republic or even the world. I have simply compiled the information that I was able to find and verify and through this I hope to have preserved these details. For it is only through such effort by the generations to come that family history survives, and this document is meant to be a part of my effort toward this aim.
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