

TALKING THROUGH MY HAT

Cuba Pays Tribute To Mendoza Family

To talk about Cuba without mentioning the Mendozas is like drawing a map of the United States and omitting Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon or the Mississippi River. Just now the Mendozas are the center of interest of the whole Island, which momentarily has forgotten politics and sugar problems to salute the "Bufete Mendoza" (Mendoza Law Firm) on its first centennial. Mendozas are not like your Smiths, even though everytime you turn the pages of a phone directory the name Mendoza jumps in front of your eyes. The difference lies in that your Smiths have no connection with each other. But 500 living Mendozas are first cousins. Imagine that! Also they form a very closely knitted family. The Mendozas reach into every branch of business, industries and the professions, and they honor Cuba in every one of them. They work hard, they live right; they make a grand old family.

Nestor is now the present head of the "Bufete" in which two of his sons, Nestor, Jr., and Enrique, and two nephews are working. The night of the public testimony to Nestor in the Vedado Tennis Club you could not even get near Calzada. Traffic had to be diverted for blocks around the Club. The decorations were exquisitely carried out under the supervision of another of Nestor's sons, Carlos, famous interior decorator. It was a night that wrote a golden page in the history of this city of Havana. The front pages of all news-

papers, long articles in every magazine of Cuba, editorials and columns by well known writers in English and Spanish (leading U. S. papers sent reporters to cover the event) have been devoted to the achievement of the Gonzales de Mendozas (for brevity they have shortened their family name.) But the Mendozas greatness lies in their family life, in the bringing up of children and grandchildren; and because of that life they have been able to grow with Cuba, help build a free Cuba, give Cuba a proud record of their accomplishment.

Amargura 205, the present address of the "Bufete Mendoza," was the same address where Don Antonio Gonzalez de Mendoza lived with his wife, three daughters, five sons and 53 grandchildren. In the ground floor of this same building he established his law office. Don Antonio, in 1879, was named by the two major political parties of Cuba (liberal and conservador) Mayor-President of the City Council of Havana. In 1899, General Brooke named him as the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Cuba. Yet he found more pride in showing his home and family to the American personalities that visited Cuba.

That home had two huge dining rooms, and an enormous kitchen where the 100 pints of milk a day consumed by family and servants were placed in specially built ice-boxes. It never failed to amuse Don Antonio to observe the amazement of those visitors when, from every door of every one



Mar Del Plata, Argentina, March 20—"America's Sweetheart," Blanca Estrella Pickford, right foreground, is the sweetheart of the Argentinos as they surround her at the International Film Festival at this Argentine sea resort. Left center is Argentine President Juan D. Peron, who welcomed the silent movie star and behind her is her husband, Buddy Rogers.—AP Wirephoto.

of the rooms of the house, the flood of children and nurses interrupted their conversations. Big families, like the Mendozas, lived like that without a fuss or fight among themselves, in the beginning days of the Republic. At the door of the house the porter kept small change to pay the fare of every carriage arriving with visitors either for the office or the home.

As the grandchildren grew, Don Claudio, the son succeeding Don Antonio as head of the "Bufete", moved to "Torrecillas", a lovely "finca" in the outskirts of Havana. There he kept the family tradition by living with his whole family—wife, six sons, and 23 grandchildren. His three daughters died young. When the first one perished by fire, he changed the name of the property to "Villa Rosa" in her memory. At the death of the second daughter in an auto accident, he built the Chapel of Santa Elena in her name (the chapel is a miniature replica of the Church of the Madelaine of Paris, and has magnificent imported stained glass windows). A chaplain celebrated daily

Mass there, attended by all the family and servants. Weddings and baptisms for the poor were performed free. Don Claudio's wife, Dona Maria Teresa Freyre de Andrade, and her beautiful young daughters-in-law, gave catechism lessons each year to 50 children preparing for their First Communion.

After the death of his third daughter, Don Claudio built, in her honor "Las Mercedes", a public school affording free instruction for 100 children. English was among the subjects taught in the school.

Many of the Mendoza boys have gone to Choate and Yale, the girls to the Sacred Heart Schools of New York and Philadelphia. You can see what strong ties of friendship (besides business connections) the Mendozas have with our big northern neighbor, the United States.

At present only three of the children of Don Claudio are living: Nestor, head of the "Bufete Mendoza", Luis, broker and sugar expert, and Alberto, in real estate. Today instead of talking through my hat, I have taken my hat off to the Mendozas.

BLANCA ESTRELLA

POR 'TAM



FRANCISCO A. presidente del "R. tronomico" de Cu cio esta semana qu primeros dias del zará la construcción derno "Hotel Hilton se levantará en "L" esquina a 23, dado de La Habana veintiocho pisos de ra ofrecer todas l didades imaginables ristas que visiten pais en cualquier año.

Segun afirmó Ag Arquitecto Arroyo cargo se ha encesa importante obrevo "Hotel Hilton terminado en veir para ser inaugurado primeros dias de 1955 proximo. L