

Rogero



*What's in a name? That
which we call a rose; by any
other name would smell so
sweet."*

William Shakespeare

Because you are a ROGERO, you inherit this fine family called ROTGER — pronounced "Roe-hare". It takes you back to Menorca during the 16th century and gives you a depth of heritage that is unique.

Consider this famous Isle of Menorca for a moment. Situated in the Mediterranean Sea, it is one of the Balearic group, an archipelago of five islands; its natives go back in time to a period prior to the year 1550. They are descendants from the Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Vandals and Moors!

Menorca was closely allied to the province of Catalonia; the language, customs and culture were all intimately connected with that of the CATALAN people. In parts of Menorca, as small as it is, even the words are pronounced in a different fashion, as to make some part of the lingo wholly Minorquin!

On this Isle in the year 1767 came the first news of the so-called *British colonial experiment*. The Islands had just passed back into the hands of the British after seven years of welcomed French possession. France tried this ploy as a way to urge Spain to offer aid in the latest European wars and so held out Menorca as a temptation. It did not work and England returned in 1763. Because of that, Dr. Andrew Turnbull used Mahón, a city and port on the southeastern side of the island, as a gathering place for those people going to his proposed colony in what would become Florida.

From all parts of the Isle, they came to Ciudadela, its largest town. Some came from Alayor and Mercadel, some from Fornells and some from villages, to Mahón. They came "en-masse" to join the *New World Adventure!*

RAMON ROGERO and CATALINA LLINA were here. FRANCISCO VILA and MARIA FERRER were waiting. ANTONIO USINA was present, too. MIGUEL VILLALONGA and his family had gathered. JOSE POMAR and his bride, JUANA LLINA, were anxious to board ship. JOSE HERNANDEZ and MARIA MIER were eager to join the rest. PEDRO and JUANA RIOLA HERNANDEZ were with the group as well. All — everyone — our direct ancestors — came slowly together over a period of *Two Hundred and Thirty Two Years* in order that **ALBERTO ROGERO would wed ANTONIA VILA in 1782 in ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA**

*"Eight tiny ships on the vast Atlantic
ocean...carrying over 1,440 Colonists...in the
spring of 1768...and your forebears were there."*

—Eleanor Philips Barnes

So, in April 1768, they set sail for Florida. Possibly only a few knew they were heading for a former Spanish province, now one of the British Colonies. And none knew that in nine years they would leave the settlement to which they were coming to make their homes in the sleepy Spanish presidio, whose origins were deep in the 198 year history of this town, San Agustin.

It was a time of change! The threads of our heritage were beginning to be woven once more. Florida, discovered by the intrepid Ponce de Leon in 1513, and San Agustin, founded by Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles in 1565, were bustling with English activity in 1768.

But, with the rebellion in 1777, the British colonial experiment ended and each of your families began to seek their fortunes and find their places in the sun in British Augustine! Another war in Europe, another treaty and once more Florida passed into the hands of the Spaniards. The MENORCANS were jubilant because these incoming settlers were blood-brothers; no matter that lingos were a bit different. These old Floridianos, these Cubans, these Spanish settlers, all were understood by the Catalan speaking MENORCANS. Maybe some spoke in Cuban Spanish; others, perhaps, spoke in a South American tongue. Some spoke in Mexican, a few Castillian, a few

Gallego, even a few Asturiano, but after all — *they knew each other!*

Our ancestors settled down to everyday life, living very close to one another. They were a very close-knit group, friends and neighbors, but relations as well.

You could see their places of residence as you walked along the walled area from the great Land Gates to the Bulwark. There are Grandpapa VILLALONGA's groves and fields near the outer wall and Grandma SEGUI's house on Spanish Street with its rose bushes. Granny VILA lived near her, up closer to Cuna Street. She could see the backyards of Grandpa HERNANDEZ where MARTINA lived. And next door, where JUAN POMAR dwelled, there were grape arbors, fig trees, and giant moss-hung oaks!

Up near Cuna on Spanish Street was the great house of Grandpa ROGERO. It was white and bigger than the others. Across the street were the long fields of Grandfather USINA, and over on St. George Street was another of his homes. It was so nice to see their yards, their children and to know their little joys, such as horse racing, fishing, cooking picnic style on the beaches, fiestas, and feasts of the CHURCH, processions of the Rosary and wedding receptions! Easter and the "*fromajardis*" and the masquerades!!! All were a part of our ancestors' lives.

Down Cuna alley toward the Campo Santo and the creek bed, near the old Cemetery, was one of the three or four places held by Grandfather ANDREU.

Turn back now and walk over the Bayfront down Cuna. Here on the circle is the CERCOPLY property. But Granny JUANA HERNANDEZ PEREGRI lives there. And, there too, lives her daughter, JUANA RODRIGUEZ DE LEON! Someday, she will be wooed and won by BENITO SEGUI, from over on Spanish Street. On that special day they will walk to the new CHURCH to be wed!

As you walk a little farther on Calle San Jorge (St. George Street), one of the so-called Royal Roads of the Spanish period, you soon come to the beautiful Treasury area. JUANA's papa, RODRIGUEZ DE LEON, the Government Notary, lived there a few years. Walk down to the water and the market place and up the street of SAN CARLOS. Look at the great towers of the Castill. As you continue to walk, turn once more into the Crusada Segunda (all streets were numbered and called this way). Walk up to Cuna again. Here, on St. George Street, is the lot upon which

SEBASTIAN OLIVEROS will build a house for Great Aunt LENA. Next to it lives Grandfather PELLICER. Notice how closely they all resided. Everyone knew everyone else's business!

In 1782, ALBERTO ROGERO, son of RAMON and CATALINA LLINA ROGERO, took ANTONIA VILA as his bride and began rearing a family. Little CATALAN MARIE came into the world in 1783, followed by a brother in 1785. He was named RAMON JUAN. He was followed by another brother in 1788 and a sister, MARIA MARGARET ROGERO, in 1790. She was followed by FRANCISCO CRISTOBAL in 1801. There were others, but this relatively small family lived well down on Cuna Street and FRANCISCO had only to step across the street to see his lady love, JUANA POMAR. Her father, JUAN POMAR, some years earlier, had only to jump the fence to woo the lovely MARTINA HERNANDEZ, next door on Cuna. After JUAN married MARTINA, they moved across Cuna near both Mama HERNANDEZ-VICTORI and Mama HERNANDEZ-CARDONA. It was here that JUANA POMAR was born in 1799, and grew into a beautiful young lady, who sometimes past the afternoon looking out her room window, where she saw the swooning swain, FRANCISCO ROGERO!

The Revolutionary war was over! The loosely bound union was becoming the *United States* and casting eyes on the long *Spanish* coastline, owned by His Catholic Majesty. Spain had never been able to maintain order on her borders and it is presumed that after a weary 38 years of a second Spanish occupation, His Catholic Majesty was glad to give it up to the U.S.A.

FLORIDA became a territory before 1821, but the actual act of possession took place in July 1821. Think of that for a moment. You consider yourself an American, forever, past and present, but it was not until those births after 1821, that we can say our "great, great, etc." was an *American!*

RAMON and his son ALBERTO were Menorcan. ALBERTO's children were *Spanish of Menorcan descent*. FRANCISCO CRISTOBAL was twenty years old when the *American flag* first fluttered in the breeze over the Castillo. JUANA POMAR was 21. They never spoke a word of English! The same is true for the USINA family and others. All were Spanish of Menorcan descent. It was not until after 1821 that their children were born *Americans*. FLORIDA became the 27th state, but not until 1845.

It was a requirement in Alberto's children's time that the man had to post a bond before he could marry. There are handwritten records to this effect among the many records available on our ancestors. The diary of Father Camps, now referred to as the "Golden Book of the Menorcans," is still in surprisingly good condition and preserved in the Archives of the DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE, located in Mandarin, Florida near Jacksonville (corner of Old St. Augustine Road and Loretto Road). This diary contains a record of births, marriages, and deaths of many who lived in the early colony and in St. Augustine.

Father Camps is buried beneath the present CATHEDRAL. A bronze sculptor of him, and the families who came over with him, is just outside the West side entrance of the CATHEDRAL.

Golden Book of the Menorcans: No. 5, Page 27:

(Father Camps diary of records)

Marriage of Alberto Rogero and Antonia Vila

"October 6, 1782, I, who sign below, received the mutual consent of ALBERTO ROGERO, single, son of Ramon Rogero and Catalina Llina, natives, all of Mahon, Isle of Menorca...with ANTONIA VILA, single daughter of Francisco Vila and Maria Ferrer of Ciudadela, Isle of Menorca

*Witnesses: Bartolome Femanias
Francisco Pellicer.*

Fr. PEDRO CAMPS, Priest "

** Father Camps listed this and other entries in Spanish and Latin.*

Rotger / Rogero

by Stephen A. Rogero Sr

There were many different spellings of the family name (i.e. RUGER, and that is the way it is spelled in much of Spain, Madrid in particular. Florentino ROGERO is a native of Madrid, a professor at the University of Madrid. He visited this country recently at Marshall University in Huntington, WV. Jerry Rogero, whose wife works at the University, had him as a guest in their home.

ROGERO, RUGGERA, etc. We must remember that many of the people at that time in history, did not read or write, some among the Minorcan Colony signed with an X. ROTGER, it appears, was the Catalan spelling use in Minorca.....and it probably was pronounced ROW-HARE, possibly a French influence. ROGER would be pronounced the same way.

ROTGER appears to be the most common spelling in Minorca, even now. Newton Gibbs Rogero, who lives in California, recently did a tour of Naval duty in Spain. He ended this duty with a six hundred mile walk in Spain, finishing in Madrid. While there he was a guest of Florentino and his family. My brother Roy corresponds with a ROTGER, who lives there today. ROGERO became the Americanized spelling of the name.

