France to Haiti to Spain to Cuba to America: Immigration Across Cultures and History

**Background**
- Interested in family history and immigration to United States
- Discovered rich history of family immigration through Cuba, Spain, Haiti, and the USA.

**Purpose**
- Exploring Cuban history, culture, and immigration to the USA
- Gaining a deeper understanding of the rippling effects of major world events across generations
- Investigating interactions of ancestors with major world figures and events

“**In life you have to work hard and be honest and be sensible to those who don’t have much.**” – Fernando Villa

**Methodology**
- Interviews with Fernando Villa, born in Matanzas Cuba in 1925 & other family members
- Literature research to develop understanding around the circumstances of my family’s history, immigration, and culture
- Construction of a family tree and electronic database to preserve, build, and share the knowledge

“**I would like to be remembered as a man who worked very hard for my family and did many free procedures**” – Fernando Villa

Duke and Duchess of Lens flee France during Revolution
Family remains in Haiti until Haitian Revolution, flee to Spain
Jacinto Villa y Martinez stows away to avoid conscription
Marries in Cuba and lives in Matanzas
Jacinto’s son Fernando comes to USA to teach laparoscopy

**Regions of Cuba**
- Perdomo family in Camagüey
- Owned a plantation employing former slaves
- Lens Diaz family in Matanzas
- Family owned distribution business to grocery stores
- Depression forced movement to Havana in the 1930s

**Cuba and the United States**

**“You should have some religion, be knowledgeable in it, you don’t have to be a priest but take it seriously, it will help you be a better person.”** – Fernando Villa

**Summary**
- Ancestors have participated in major world events & complex circumstances led to their eventual immigration to the USA

**Future Directions**
- Continued additions to personal and anecdotal database constructed based on family tree.

**References**
Balfour, Sebastian. Castro. 1990