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

**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

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

**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**
- 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

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

“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