



CAPITÁN JOAQUÍN LLAVERÍAS

Capitán Joaquín Llaverías and the *Boletín del Archivo Nacional*¹

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THE name of Captain Joaquín Llaverías and that of the *Boletín del Archivo Nacional* of Cuba may almost be considered synonyms.

He for nearly a half century has served the Archive and Cuban historiography; it for forty three consecutive years has carried forth the message of archivology. Hence with the appearance of an index of the first forty three volumes of the *Boletín*, it would seem to be an opportune time to consider the man and his work as well as to review the accomplishments of the *Boletín* as revealed in the new publication.

Joaquín Llaverías y Martínez was born in Habana on July 27, 1875, the son of Joaquín Llaverías and his wife Rosario Martínez. He was baptized in the Church of Jesús del Monte in Habana. He received the degree of bachelor of arts and began the study of medicine in the University of Habana. Following the outbreak of the War for Cuban Independence in 1895, Llaverías joined the revolutionary forces on December 10 of the same year. He became an officer in the Calixto García Regiment and remained in service until after the conclusion of hostilities on August 24, 1898. During this time he ascended to the rank of captain and served under the orders of Generals Alberto Nordarse and Francisco Peraza and of Colonels Emilio and Rosendo Collazo and participated in the operations in the Province of Habana. It has been said that because of his medical studies, although not a medical officer, he saved the lives of many of his compatriots.

After the end of the War in 1895, the Government of the Intervention, in charge of General Leonard Wood, appointed the young captain to a minor clerical position in the Archive of the Island of Cuba on June 11, 1899. From that humble beginning in the course of nearly half a century of service to his country, Captain Llaverías has risen through his merits and achievements to the position of high honor which he now holds.

The first major contribution of Captain Llaverías to the development of the Archive was his suggestion in 1902 to the director, Dr. Vidal Morales y Morales, for the publication of a bulletin, which would serve

¹ Captain Llaverías is an Honorary Member of the Society of American Archivists.

to reveal the richness of its collections. He immediately became directly associated with the project and has been the editor during the years of its existence. In 1910, he was sent to Brussels as the representative of Cuba to the International Congress of Archivists and Librarians, where he actively participated in the deliberations.

The most outstanding feature of the early years of the career of Captain Llaverías was the publication of his *Historia de los Archivos de Cuba* in 1912. This was the first full length volume of its kind which appeared in the Western Hemisphere. Today it remains a classic in archivology and evidences the breadth of vision of its author. It gives a detailed account of the Cuban Archive from its founding in 1840, with extensive information regarding the many valuable collections of records which had accumulated during the years. Interesting facts concerning the vicissitudes through which the records had passed are all set forth, including accounts of the removals of papers to Spain by the Spaniards and the careless handling by the Government of the Intervention.

The interest and activity of Captain Llaverías in connection with the Archive brought promotion and during most of the year 1913, he served as acting director. Then finally after nearly a quarter of a century of service, he was made Director of the Archive on November 2, 1922. Since that time he has ably and efficiently carried on the multiple functions of the institution and achieved a high degree of success in bringing it to the prominent place that it holds. Today Captain Llaverías is the dean of the directors of the National Archives of the Western Hemisphere and is held in high regard by all who know him and his work.

Since the publication of the *Historia de los Archivos de Cuba*, Captain Llaverías has made many contributions to historical studies as well as to the field of archivology. His long series of articles dealing with the history of over one hundred periodicals of Cuba has given much information regarding these publications and those who directed their destinies. These articles have appeared in the *Boletín*. In 1920, he published *Cartas inéditas de Martí*, which presented new data on the great Cuban hero. In connection with his work of cataloguing and indexing records in the Archive, he prepared the *Inventario General del Archivo de la Delegación del Partido Revolucionario en Nueva York, 1892-1898* (vol. I, 1921), which was the first publication of this type issued by the Archive.

As a result of his historical studies, Captain Llaverías was elected a member of the Cuban Academy of History in 1923. At the public reception on June 14 of that year, he read his work *Facciolo y "La Voz del Pueblo Cubano"* (published by the Academy, 1923), which demon-

strated the care and exactitude he has ever used in the preparation of his historical studies. Since that date he has been most active in the affairs of the Academy. He was called upon to deliver eulogies of a number of his fellow members, including Pedro Mendoza Guerra (1923), Domingo Méndez Capote (1925) and Roque E. Garrigó y Salido (1938). He has prepared and edited numerous valuable publications for the Academy. Among these there may be mentioned: *Diccionario Geográfico de la Isla de Cuba* (1875) by José de J. Márquez (1926); *Actas de las Asambleas de Representantes del Consejo de Gobierno durante la Guerra de Independencia, 1895-1898* (with Emerterio S. Santovenia, 6 vols., 1928-1934); *Papeles existentes en el Archivo General de Indias relativos a Cuba y muy particularmente a la Habana* (Donativo Nestor Carbonell, 2 vols., 1931); and *Centón Epistolario de Domingo del Monte* (vol. 5, 1938). Also the Academy published his historical studies entitled: *La Comisión Militar Ejecutivo y Permanente de la Isla de Cuba* (1929); *El consejo Administrativo de Bienes Embargados* (1941); and *Martí en el Archivo Nacional* (1945). In addition for many years he has served as archivist of the Academy.

It may truly be said that the central theme of the administration of Captain Llaverías was the need for a new, modern and adequate building to house the valuable records which through the years had been deposited in the Archive. His desire for the building became in fact a crusade. The final solution of this pressing problem came in connection with the celebration of the centenary of the Archive which served to emphasize the absolute necessity for a remedy for the unsatisfactory situation with respect to the archivalia. As early as 1931, Captain Llaverías began to call attention to the propriety and fitness of the celebration. Aided by many friends both in and out of the Government, the program was gradually formulated. The year 1940 arrived, however, before definitive action was taken with respect to a new building. An elaborate celebration of the centenary was held in January, which served to call attention once again to the importance of the collections in the Archive and gave opportunity for many tributes to the zeal and efficiency which Captain Llaverías had displayed through the years in preserving and making known the treasures under his care.

Finally on May 7, 1942, a law was passed providing the sum of \$300,000 for the construction of a new building, the funds to be derived from a special stamp tax. This was also a general law affecting records, their preservation and use. Plans were drawn for the building and construction was begun on the site of the old edifice. Then on October 12, 1942, the corner stone was laid.

The high point in the career of Captain Llaverías was reached on September 23, 1944. On that date, in the presence of a notable gather-

ing including especially the directors of the National Archives of the Caribbean, the new building was dedicated. A model building, well adapted to the purposes for which it is intended, it stands as a monument to the nearly half century of service which Captain Llaverías has given to Cuba in the care of the records which relate to the trials and vicissitudes, the achievements and progress of the Pearl of the Antilles. The satisfaction and emotion which he must have felt upon this memorable occasion can readily be understood.

With the new building, the Archive acquired its own press and has been supplied with funds to undertake a most extensive program of publication. The labor through the years of Captain Llaverías in preparing catalogues and indexes is now being put into printed form, so as to make them available to investigators and to serve to reveal more amply the richness of the documentation in the Archive. Likewise documentary publications of important groups of papers are currently being issued. All these volumes have appeared under the active direction of Captain Llaverías, who has done most of the cataloguing, selecting and editing, since the Archive has never had more than a very small staff to aid the director. The catalogues cover the papers of the Real Consulado de Agricultura, Industria y Comercio and la Junta de Fomento (1943), of Florida (1944), of the Liceo Artístico y Literario de la Habana (1944), of the Comisión Militar Ejecutivo y Permanente de la Isla de Cuba (1945) and of the Junta Superior de Sanidad de la Isla de Cuba (1947). The documentary publications include *Correspondencia Diplomática de la Delegación Cubana en Nueva York durante la Guerra de Independencia de 1895 a 1898* (5 vols., 1943-1946) and *Antonio Maceo, Documentos para su vida* (1945).

With this rich heritage which Captain Llaverías has builded, he can spend his days with a full measure of satisfaction, knowing that his contribution to archivology will long be remembered. So it is that on the celebration of the silver anniversary of his appointment as director of the Archive, November 2, 1947, the Archivo Nacional and the Government and people of Cuba can congratulate themselves for him who has been such an outstanding servant of his native land. May his days be many and happy indeed is the wish of his friends from everywhere.

As has already been indicated Captain Llaverías made the original suggestion for the founding of the *Boletín del Archivo Nacional* and has been its editor from the beginning. The first number appeared in 1902 (Mar.-Apr.) under the title *Boletín de los Archivos de la Isla de Cuba*. This was changed to *Boletín de los Archivos de la República de Cuba* with the second issue, which was retained until vol. III, no. 4 (July-Aug., 1904). Vol. III, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct., 1904) appeared as *Boletín de los Archivos Nacionales* and with the following number (Nov.-Dec., 1904) the title became *Boletín del Archivo Nacional*, which it has since

retained. A bi-monthly publication, because of the vicissitudes of the times and the lack of adequate funds, for a number of years the six issues have appeared as one issue and the publication has been considerably delayed. However continuous publication has been maintained, the last issue being the one corresponding to 1945.

In connection with a School of Archivology conducted by the Archivo Nacional in 1945, Dr. Fermín Peraza y Sarausa, Cuba's leading bibliographer and the director of the Municipal Library of Habana, gave a course in bibliography. As a part of the instruction, the students collaborated in the preparation of index cards for the materials in the issues of the *Boletín* from 1902 to 1944. These cards were made in conformity with the style employed by the Library of Congress.

Dr. Peraza arranged the cards in alphabetical subject order and prepared an analytic index of names and subjects to make the information readily available. The Archivo Nacional has included the work in its Publications under the title *Indice del Boletín del Archivo Nacional* (Habana: Talleres del Archivo Nacional, 1946. Illus., xxiii, 188 pp.). There is an introduction giving information about the index and the methods employed. The preface comprises a reprint of an article prepared by Captain Llaverías, entitled "Historia del Boletín del Archivo Nacional," which was published at the conclusion of its first quarter century in 1927, together with an addition covering the history of the years since that date. This article summarizes briefly the materials which have been included in the *Boletín* during the forty three years of publication.

The index itself gives a complete survey of the contribution made to archivology by the *Boletín*. The many articles, the texts of documents and the indexes of records in the Archive cover a wide range of interest. Every item has its corresponding entry. To appreciate fully the wealth of materials which has been included in the *Boletín*, it is necessary to consult the *Indice*, since any listing of titles would make this article too extensive.

However, it may be interesting to mention three special issues of the *Boletín*. Volume 39, 1940, was dedicated to the celebration of the centenary of the Archive; volume 41, 1942, comprised a complete report on the First International Congress of Librarians, Archivists and Curators of Museums of the Caribbean and included the text of the Law of 1942 dealing with archives and their records; and volume 43, 1944, contained a detailed account of the events in connection with the dedication of the new building for the Archive.

The *Indice*, therefore, serves to reveal the treasures included in the *Boletín* and at the same time pays a tribute of homage to Captain Joaquín Llaverías y Martínez, who has been its guiding spirit through the years.