



Mayarí: Name that may have Aruaco or Taíno origin. According to an ancient legend, not very probable, the first Spaniards arrived by the river and were accompanied by local Indians who insistently pointed out: "maya there, maya there", that is, that ahead there were many mayas (textile plant used only to limit rustic properties, because its leaves have spikes, and it develops easily in any terrain - *Bromelia Antelminthica*), this warning with a mixture of their language and Spanish, which heard by the conquerors was translated into "Mayarí".

The ingenuity of this myth is not without an etymological basis if one takes into account that: maya is an aboriginal word and rí or arí is also an aboriginal word, meaning river, or "river of Mayas"... Where it is repeated throughout the island in: Bitirí, Baitiquirí, Ariguanabo, Yumurí, Arimao, etc. Likewise ari is tooth in Aruaca languages (the leaves of the Mayan are jagged, sharp, similar to teeth). And in the same Aruaco ma means no, denying the existence of groups of people. Then Mayarí would mean in aruaca voice, "place where there are no teeth, there is no population". In the Taíno language they say Mayaní is equivalent to Nada, which could be heard and interpreted as Mayarí, that is, that there was nothing, not even population in this remote region when the first aboriginal settlers arrived, fleeing from the Spanish conquest from the Holguín area.

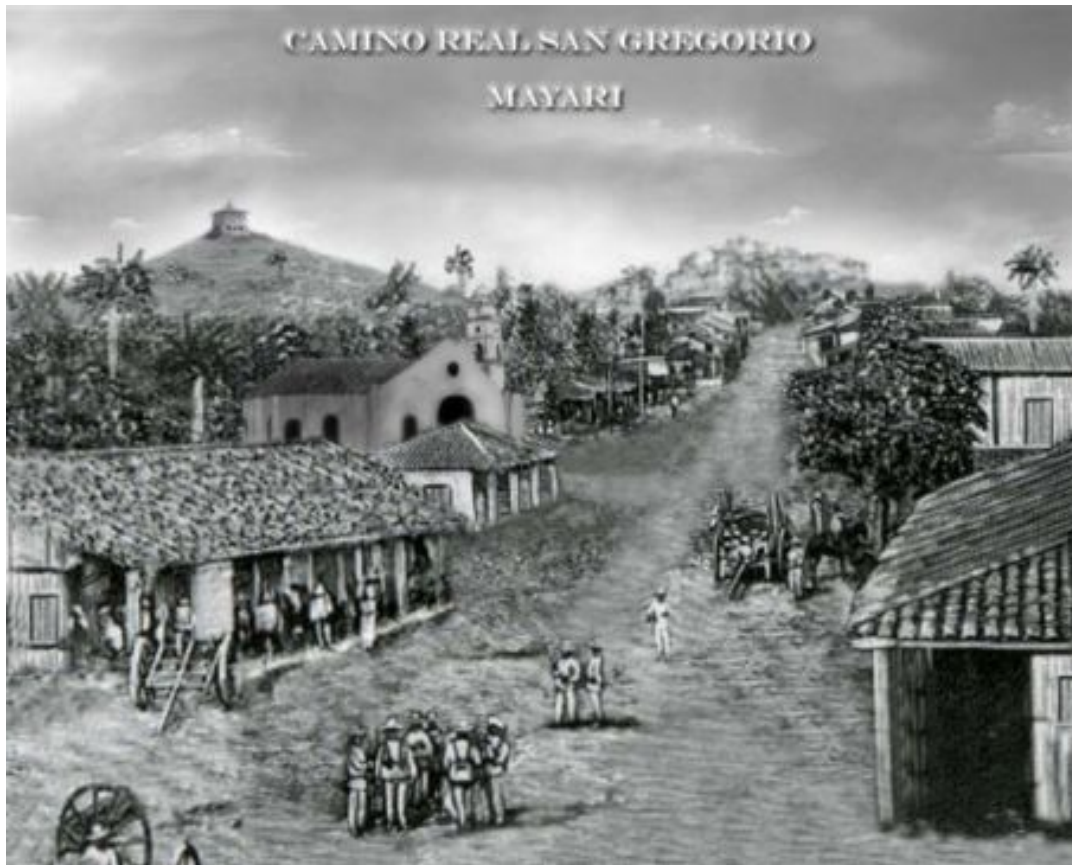
It is curious that this name appears in the mythology of the Philippine Islands that also have a meaning to Mayarí: Mayarí is a Deity, the moon, of feminine sex, in the Tagalog religion.

In Tagalog mythology, Mayari (also known as Bulan) is the beautiful lunar deity who was the daughter of Bathala, the king of the Gods and a mortal woman. She is known as the most beautiful deity in Bathala's court. She is the sister of Tala, the Goddess of the stars, and Apolaki, God of the Sun.

In the Pampangan myth: Bathala died without leaving a will and Apolaki and Mayari fought for who was to take over the land. Apolaki wanted to take over the land for himself, while Mayari insisted on equal rights. The two fought the conflict with bamboo clubs, until Mayari lost an eye. After Apolaki saw what he had done, he agreed that together they could rule the land, but at different times. Mayari began to rule at night, Mayari's light is dimmer (the Moon) because of the loss of his eye. His brother Apolaki(Sun), ruled by day.

Outside the Pampangan myth, the first owner of the San Gregorio de Mayari Abajo ranch was named Bartolomé Sánchez Bahamontes, probably from Venezuela, great-grandfather of General Arcadio Leyte Vidal Delgado, the marble man planted in the park of our town, who began to exploit these lands around 1750 approximately. Bartolomé settled in the area of La Pedrona, there he built a Trapiche but the houses of the first settlements were scattered. Bartolomé married María de los Ángeles Díaz and with her he had a daughter, Gertrudis, who received this great inheritance and married the Santiago doctor Francisco Soria y Quiñones. Doña Gertrudis Sánchez Díaz conceived 4 children, (Rafael, Juan Neponusemo, María de los Ángeles and María Asención) This last one, María Asención Soria, married the First Adjutant of the Plaza de Santiago with functions of Sergeant Major Don José Leyte Vidal Toledo, Arcadio's grandfather. When Don José became a widower, between him and Rafael, older brother of the deceased, they bought the rights to the other two co-heirs, so Mayari was divided between Rafael Soria (from the Guayabo stream to the South and from the Mayari River to the East, that is, Seboruco and Chavaleta) and Don José Leyte Vidal, obtained North and West (San Gregorio).

The town arises



The town of Mayarí was planned by Don José to be built in Juan Vicente, but time and the death of this great enterprising man, which occurred in 1849, erased from the minds of the Mayariceros the devastating floods, so that since the distant 1850 a long and winding hamlet was growing, with only one street or Royal Road bordering the ravine of the main river. By 1858 it was already a more or less concentrated hamlet, that is why the church was moved from the Cocal to the place it occupies today, a priest's house, jail, a cemetery and an infantry barracks were built. Mayarí was born as a town.

In colonial times Mayarí had two stages of economic boom due to the warlike confrontations between Creoles and Spaniards. In the first stage, during the war of 1868, Mayarí gained something in its rustic and urban wealth due to the effect of the concentration of forces in that point, which became a Brigade of the Army of operations. In 1878, at the end of the Ten Years' War, Mayarí was constituted as a Municipality (1879) with its first Mayor, Don Juan Grau, who was in charge, among other things, of building a dock in the Pontezuelo for the fluvial navigation where all the mercantile operations were carried out, the only way of entrance and exit with greater security. The first Mayor, as it was said, was Don Juan Grau y Pratt, followed by Don Faustino Braña - of whom a somewhat fantastic treasure story is told - Don Juan Vinardell and Don Rosendo Torrens.

At the end of the war of 1968 the commercial activity declined and together with the poverty of its people, typhus, smallpox, cholera and the endemic malarial fever decimated its population. In the following war for the Homeland Independence, from 95 to 98, second stage in this cold economic analysis, the foreign penetration is accentuated, mainly North American, and to the triumph of the Mambo Revolution and beginning of the Republic, 1902-1958, that is to say, in fifty so many years, the changes in all Cuba make flourish the economy and the population grows, the social Institutions and the political parties are born, new streets arise and masonry houses are made, the internal commerce advances. Some streets are paved, the road to Nicaro, road to Holguin, some bridges, public lighting system, water and sewage, etc. are made.

The first Mambí Mayor was Don Francisco Mastrapa Leyte Vidal, followed by Don Ciro Troncoso - also Mambí and audacious man - Don Delfín Aguilera - who was called the traveling Mayor - Don Fey Ramos, Don Pepe Reyes - illiterate in spite of occupying the position. And as an exercise of memory I leave to you the names of the following Mayors, until January 1, 1959, when our last Mayor, still alive thanks to God, Don Braulio Lecusay, was deposed from his position, and as an example of that great era that "emasculated" us. Throughout the Republic, sugar cane, coffee, tobacco, wood, honey and minerals made it possible for the local bourgeoisie to form, although without ambitious pretensions. The Republican period passed slowly with some achievements and mistakes, and Mayari became a town of enterprising immigrants, a peaceful town tucked between sugar cane fields, the Cristal Mountains, the Pinares and the Bay of Nipe. But within this period of the newly created Republic, important international events took place that led to an external and encompassing event, the First World War. Older neighbors say that someone once lit his tobacco with a twenty peso bill. The image may be exaggerated, but it shows us a period of fat cows that Mayari also enjoyed due to the high price of sugar in the world market. New local industries were born, and the giant Central Preston Company ruled in the East, and the Felton Company exploited the mineral extracted from the mountains to the maximum.

The next conflagration, World War II, stimulates the economy, although dependent on foreign interests. The United States began to build Nicaro, which provided work for hundreds of men and put a lot of money in circulation, so that commerce was stimulated, new roads were opened, bus routes appeared, small airports operated in Nicaro and Preston as well as two private hospitals, etc., etc. etc. etc.

Independently of the war, a human disaster that we should abhor, and whose actions lead to deaths and diseases, the wealthy families of the territory knew how to promote their external and internal businesses, so that Mayari was already a prosperous and picturesque town when Fidel Castro's Revolution triumphed on January 1, 1959. Prosperous and picturesque as a result of the drive of its middle class, the works of its mayors and the industriousness of its humble and hardworking people. And although it may seem frivolous to list the commercial, institutional, charitable and religious centers, I will list them because I think that, ultimately, they made and make possible the life in society and give us reliable information, taking into account quantity and qualities, of how the health and welfare of a people and the progress it has achieved to benefit the nation.