

David Moreno
Keeping History Alive

A photo holds a thousand words but a family photo holds thousands of stories. It was early January and my mother was getting ready to smile for a photo with her brother and her mother. It was 3 Three Kings Day, A day to gain gifts and praise the three kings for helping Jesus. It was one of the most important days for a Dominican child back then. But what came next to my family was a dilemma and austerity. This artifact will show my family before they were going to become crippled with fear, it shows the power of austerity, it shows the power of family. From the Government trying to strike you down to your family lifting you, I believe that my family and many other Dominican families overcome and even bring joy in desperate times.

My mother and my father remember the best days of their childhood celebrating the three kings day. The Three Kings Day was a day to celebrate, the day Jesus was given gifts on the day of his birth by the three kings. Because of this many Dominican families would have January 6 off to bring gifts to their children. This was important for children because this was the only time other than your birthday and Christmas that they could gain gifts, “More than 20 percent of Dominicans are in poverty ” (poverty.ucdavis.edu). Even with their little money my family and Most Dominican families still tried to bring gifts to their children. That's where my Father's story began, it was January 6, 1982, he only wanted one thing. A toy gun. He and his sister both begged their father for their gifts he responds by saying “ we only have enough money for food” So my father made one of the worst decisions in his childhood life. He said we won't be hungry trust us. So my grandfather went to the store and bought the toy gun. My father played for hours, but when he got home for dinner time he and his sisters didn't have a plate on the table. They looked around and saw their father, they asked if they could get food. My grandfather turned around and said, “Go eat that gun!” and walked away. My father was laughing and hungry. But even with the agreement, my grandfather gave my father he still gave his food for them at night. Even with the problem with money my family and many other Dominicans family alike give to make their families happy.

On August 31, 1984 “President Salvador Jorge Blanco announced that the price of gasoline would increase by 20 cents a gallon, less than had been predicted by leftists and labor

leaders who have threatened a general strike” (www.nytimes.com) this was one of the biggest steps to the cause of economic hardship in the Dominican Republic . Many Dominican people were striking against the government when President Salvador chose to increase the price of gas. Many Dominicans feared that the increase in gas will lead to an increase in costs of transportation, medicine, food, housing, and even education. They feared they will become homeless or bankrupt. “This also led to the nation’s increase of food and medicine prices all the way up to 200%”(NYTimes) Many Dominicans’ worst fears were actually happening. Because of this hundreds of people rioted in “Santo Domingo, Santiago San Francisco de Macoris to the north, where three days of rioting broke out, Estimates of the number of people killed in the riots ranged from 54 to 100”.(www.nytimes.com). These Dominican people were not a high class they were middle and low there the real people of the Dominican Republic, the people who get affected the most. Take for example my grandmother, before the taxes she was a businesswoman with a good home, but becomes of the new taxes and being a single pregnant mom with 2 kids she couldn’t risk losing it all. She chose to live in her salon where she owns the building and made her old home a rental building, that and her job were the only way to stay afloat in life. But she still did live and that’s how my family made it to America, that how my family is so strong. No matter what we stand together through thick and thin.

The best thing I have learned about working with my artifact is that it truly holds so many stories with my family. If I have never chosen this photo I would have never heard of these stories and the power my family has showed. I feel that my family and not just Dominican families have come over many hard challenges, but the idea of family powered them through it. I have always thought of myself and Dominican but now I’m more proud than ever to be Dominican.

Sources

Poverty.ucdavis.edu

<http://casadecampoliving.com/three-kings-dominican-republic/>

[://www.nytimes.com/1984/08/31/world/dominican-republic-makes-austerity-moves.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1984/08/31/world/dominican-republic-makes-austerity-moves.html)

