

= Luis Muñoz Rivera =

Luis Muñoz Rivera (July 17 , 1859 ? November 15 , 1916) was a Puerto Rican poet , journalist and politician . He was a major figure in the struggle for political autonomy of Puerto Rico .

In 1887 , Muñoz Rivera became part of the leadership of a newly formed Autonomist Party . In 1889 , he successfully ran a campaign for the position of delegate in the district of Caguas . Subsequently , Muñoz Rivera was a member of a group organized by the party to discuss proposals of autonomy with Práxedes Mateo Sagasta , who would grant Puerto Rico an autonomous government following his election . He served as Chief of the Cabinet of this government .

On August 13 , 1898 , the Treaty of Paris transferred possession of Puerto Rico from Spain to the United States and a military government was established . In 1899 , Muñoz Rivera resigned his position within the cabinet and remained inactive in politics for some time . In 1909 , he was elected as Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico and participated in the creation of the Jones @-@ Shafroth Act , proposing amendments before its final approval . Shortly after , Muñoz Rivera contracted an infection and traveled to Puerto Rico , where he died on November 15 , 1916 . His son , Luis Muñoz Marín would subsequently become involved in politics , becoming the first democratically elected Governor of Puerto Rico .

= = Early life = =

Luis Muñoz Rivera was born in Barranquitas , Puerto Rico , to Luis Muñoz Barrios and Monserrate Rivera Vazquez . He was the couple 's first child and a banquet was offered in celebration . He came from a middle @-@ class family and was not part of Puerto Rico 's elite . His father came from one of the first patriarchal lines in Puerto Rico 's politics .

(His Paternal Grandfather) decided to make his career in the army and received several recognitions after participating against Simón Bolívar during the Admirable Campaign , and followed his commanding officer Miguel de la Torre to Puerto Rico . He settled in a 400 @-@ acre (1 @.@ 6 km2) farm in Cidra , Puerto Rico , married María Escolástica Barrios and fathered twelve children . He became the town 's first mayor from 1818 to 1820 and again in 1840 to 1850 .

During Muñoz Rivera 's childhood , Barranquitas was a small rural town . The family 's house was moderately large for the time ; it was built with wood and its roof was made with zinc . When he was four , his mother home @-@ schooled him with books from a private library owned by his father . By the age of ten , Muñoz Rivera completed the education offered in the town 's school , and finished first in his class . He was educated in Spanish and French , and took music classes with Jorge Colombani . His father hired private tutors to continue his instruction . Muñoz Rivera was a serious student with a strong interest in Miguel de Cervantes ' works , in particular Don Quixote . Other authors that he studied include Fernando de Herrera , Tirso de Molina , Luis de Góngora , and Lope de Vega .

When Muñoz Rivera was twelve years old , his mother fell ill and died . By this time , the family had grown to include nine more siblings , whom he taught . By the age of fourteen , Muñoz Rivera was managing legal documents , working with the local church clergy , and helping in his father 's store . There were no institutions of higher learning on the island at that time , and most families sent their children to Cuba (University of la Habana , founded in 1728) , Spain or North America to complete their university education . Muñoz Rivera wanted to travel to Spain and study law , but his father wanted him to take care of the family 's business .

= = Political career = =

= = = Early involvement in politics and poetry = = =

Early in his life , Muñoz Rivera began writing poetry . However , he did not publish any of his work until he was 23 years old . In 1882 , Mario Braschi , an editor working for a newspaper named El

Pueblo , accepted to publish a poem titled ; Adelante ! . Braschi advised Muñoz Rivera to continue writing , urging him to concentrate on science and politics , instead of authoring love poems . Muñoz Rivera then began writing about Puerto Rico 's political status , promoting the necessity of an autonomous government .

Even though his father was a member of the Conservative Party , Muñoz Rivera decided to follow his uncle , Vicente Muñoz Barrios ideals and in 1883 joined the Liberal Party . While working within the organization , Muñoz Rivera established a store along Quintín Negrón Sanjurjo , which had limited success . He gained the confidence of the Liberal Party and was named president of Barranquitas ' committee and became a member of the municipal council . In 1885 , Muñoz Rivera ran for a position in the Juana Diaz district 's representation in the Provincial Assembly , but he was not elected . That same year , he began publishing his writings in newspapers and magazines , including El Clamor del Pueblo , La Revista de Puerto Rico and El Pueblo . Other poems published by Muñoz Rivera were : Retamas , Tropicales , Horas de Fiebre , El paso del déspota , Minha terra , Cuba rebelde , A cualquier compatriota , Las campanas , Turba multa , Alea jacta est , Judas , El general , Abismos , Patriota , Himno , Parias and Poemas Liricos .

= = = Establishing an autonomous government = = =

In January 1887 , members of the Liberal Party organized a convention in Coamo where they discussed the reorganization of the party . In this activity he met Román Baldorioty de Castro , who became his mentor , regarding Muñoz Rivera as a " disciple " . A new party called the Autonomist Party was created following this reunion , which also included José Celso Barbosa and José de Diego . The organization 's ideology pursued the creation of a separate government for Puerto Rico , while keeping some relationship with Spain .

The Autonomist Party 's base grew rapidly , in part due to Muñoz Rivera 's writings and speeches directed toward the jíbaro population . The Conservative Party considered this a threat and closed the newspapers where he published his work , sending part of their staff to jail in Fort San Felipe del Morro . After Francisco Cepeda Taborcias , editor of La Revista de Puerto Rico 's was jailed , the position was offered to Muñoz Rivera , who accepted it . After being released from prison , Cepeda criticized Baldorioty de Castro 's policies . Cepeda was elected secretary of the party and Baldorioty de Castro was named honorary president . This action angered Muñoz Rivera , who challenged him to a duel . Cepeda originally accepted the challenge , but later declined the same once the preparations were underway , losing his position within the party 's hierarchy .

As 1887 progressed , the conflicts between liberals and conservatives worsened , with governor Palacio ordering the arrest of more than a hundred liberals . The political tension increased and the year became known as " The Terrible Year " . Palavio also prohibited any person from leaving Puerto Rico with the intention of preventing any actions from Spain . However , the liberals were able to send Juan Arrillaga Roque to Madrid , where he made the situation public . Upon learning of this , Alfonso XII replaced Palacio with Juan Contreras Martinez . In 1889 , Muñoz Rivera was nominated as the Liberal Party 's delegate for the district of Juana Diaz . However , his father was nominated for the same position by the Conservative Party and he moved his nomination to the district of Caguas out of respect . He won the election , which was admitted with the conservatives ' opposition .

On July 1 , 1890 , he founded the party 's newspaper , La Democracia , in Ponce , Puerto Rico . The publication was mostly directed towards politics , but it also included poetry and stories published by Puerto Rican artists . The newspaper brought immediate controversy , which eventually led to Muñoz Rivera 's arrest . Protest were organized throughout Puerto Rico and he was released after his father paid 15 @, @ 000 pesetas as bond . Muñoz Rivera sold his half of the store , in order to raise funds for the publication 's establishment .

In 1893 , he married Amalia Marín in a ceremony that took place in Ponce Cathedral . Later that year , he traveled to Spain to learn about its political system . There he realized that Práxedes Mateo Sagasta , president of the Fusion Party , was the better option to help in this task . While in Spain , Muñoz Rivera received notice that his father had died , which heavily affected him . Upon

returning to Puerto Rico , he published an article about his father in La Democracia . He subsequently noticed that his travel had caused controversy within the Autonomist Party , which became divided between followers of Barbosa and Muñoz Rivera , with the two factions becoming known as Muñocistas and Barbosistas .

Barbosa 's group opposed allying with Sagasta , claiming that he was a monarchist while they were supporting the establishment of a republic . Meanwhile , Muñoz Rivera participated in the writing of the Plan de Ponce which proposed administrative autonomy for the island . After several debates , the Autonomist Party agreed to send four men to reunite with Libera Fusion Party in the organization 's behalf , including Muñoz Rivera . Sagasta proposed that if he won the premiership of Spain , Puerto Rico would receive a Chapter of Autonomy which would give it the same degree of sovereignty that the Spanish provinces had . Upon learning of this , most of the Barbosistas resigned , forming a new institution named the Orthodox Autonomist Party . Sagasta became Spain 's prime minister following the power vacuum that occurred after the assassination of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo , and in December 1897 he granted the promised autonomous government . Muñoz Rivera changed the party 's name to Liberal Party of Puerto Rico and served as Secretary of Grace , Justice and Government and Chief of the Cabinet for the independent government of Puerto Rico .

= = = American invasion and military government = = =

On February 18 , 1898 , Muñoz Rivera 's son , Luis Muñoz Marín , was born . By this time the family had moved to Old San Juan , where Luis was born . On February 16 , 1898 , Barbosa rushed to Muñoz Rivera 's home . He had just learned that the American vessel USS Maine had sunk off the coast of Cuba , which would most likely spark a war between Spain and the United States . Barbosa expected the American government to grant Puerto Rico autonomy if they gained control . However , Muñoz Rivera was saddened by the news , knowing that the United States was planning to build a canal in Panama , and that Puerto Rico would be a strategic location to protect the structure . Barbosa insisted that this would not happen , continuing his support towards a military operation .

On May 12 , 1898 , the United States Navy bombarded San Juan , initiating the Puerto Rican Campaign . Initially , the Liberal Party supported the Spanish government , although several members agreed with Barbosa . Muñoz Rivera took possession of Chief of the Cabinet 's position for the Autonomous Government on July 21 . Four days later , on July 25 , the United States Army landed in Guánica led by Nelson A. Miles , beginning the land offensive . On August 13 , the signing of the Treaty of Paris was made public , bringing a halt to all military offensives in Puerto Rico . As part of this amnesty , Spain ceded Cuba and Puerto Rico , converting the archipelago into a possession of the United States under military governorship . The Barbosistas welcomed the American government , but Muñoz Rivera expected them to keep Puerto Rico as a possession . He refused to cooperate with the military government and returned to Barranquitas , where he wrote a poem titled Sísifo , comparing Puerto Rico 's political situation to Sisyphus ' punishment . He subsequently returned to San Juan , accepting a request made by John R. Brooke to continue in his office within the new cabinet . Muñoz Rivera assisted in establishing an insular police . Brooke was replaced by Guy Vernon Henry as military governor . Following this change , both men began having violent discussions , with each one trying to push their positions . Muñoz Rivera would vocally debate several of Brooke 's decisions , with both communicating via an interpreter .

On February 4 , 1899 , he resigned from the position of president of the Council of Secretaries . Puerto Rico was experiencing a serious economic crisis , many problems arising from the population 's inability to communicate with the Americans . Universal election suffrage was canceled , reducing the voting population by more than 85 % . Henry eventually dissolved the Cabinet , removing the final remnants of recognition of the autonomous government established under Spanish rule . Muñoz Rivera opposed the military structure and promoted autonomy . Later that year , he founded the newspaper El Territorio , which voiced the concerns of landowners that were being affected by a blockade imposed by the United States . On April 12 , 1900 , William McKinley signed the Foraker

Act , which proposed the end of the military government and the establishment of a civil government . A Supreme Court was created with five members , all of which were American functionaries appointed by the United States President . The position of Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico was also enacted . The Barbosistas considered this law an advance , eventually creating a new institution named the Republican Party of Puerto Rico . Muñoz Rivera published heavy criticism towards them in El Diario , which angered the members of the new organization . Rumors of an assassination attempt became widespread , and several of his friends visited his house armed . A discussion between both sides concluded with gunfire , leaving no one injured , some of the perpetrators escaped . Muñoz Rivera and those present were arrested and charged with " armed assault " , but the charge was dropped when he established that he acted in self @-@ defense . The Foraker act failed to prevent the monopolization of land , and allowed four American corporations to control of most of Puerto Rico 's agricultural terrains .

= = Last years and death = =

The United States eventually designed a program to " Americanize " Puerto Rico . One day while working for an article in El Diario , a friend of Muñoz Rivera brought a newspaper informing that all education in Puerto Rican public schools would be taught in English . He was surprised by the announcement , expressing that the plan would fail due to lack of teachers with knowledge in the language . Muñoz Rivera began publishing articles directed towards the jíbaro population , in which he promoted self @-@ government for Puerto Rico .

In 1901 , a group of statehood supporters broke into the El Diario 's building , vandalizing most of the equipment . Following this incident , the family moved to Caguas where he reopened La Democracia . After receiving further threats from the statehood movements , Muñoz Rivera decided to move to New York City , not before leaving the paper 's editing in charge of one of his followers . There he founded the bilingual newspaper Puerto Rico Herald , in which he heavily criticized the United States ' stance on Puerto Rico . During the following years , the family constantly traveled between both locations . Muñoz Rivera , together with Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón , Antonio R. Barceló and José de Diego , founded the Union of Puerto Rico party , which won the election in 1904 . Following the party 's victory , he was selected as a member the House of Delegates .

In 1910 , Muñoz Rivera ran for Resident Commissioner in the United States House of Representatives representing the Union of Puerto Rico party , and served from 1911 to 1916 . After spending nearly a year perfecting his English , Muñoz Rivera began forming friendships with some congressmen . Among these were Henry L. Stimpson and Felix Frankfurter . In 1915 Muñoz Rivera proposed granting Puerto Rico greater autonomy without requesting independence from the United States , and equal rights without becoming a state . His proposal was greeted by opposition from many members of his party including José de Diego . Still in the end , his party agreed on his proposal .

On March 2 , 1917 , the Jones @-@ Shafroth Act was signed , granting United States citizenship to Puerto Ricans and creating a bicameral Legislative Assembly . Still , he was not pleased with the Jones Act since the judicial and executive branches were still controlled by the United States . On March 16 , 1916 , he gave a speech in the house floor that seemed to argue in favor and against American citizenship . He declared that if the earth were to swallow the island , Puerto Ricans would prefer American citizenship to any citizenship in the world . But as long as the island existed , the residents preferred Puerto Rican citizenship .

Shortly afterwards , he became ill and returned to Puerto Rico to recuperate . In late 1916 , Eduardo Georgetti , a friend of the family , summoned his wife and son to Puerto Rico and informed them that he was suffering from an infection that had begun in the galbladder , before expanding throughout his body . Luis Muñoz Rivera died on November 15 , 1916 in the town of San Juan , before the Jones Act was enacted into law . When he died , the town 's bells were tolled and La Borinqueña was sung by those present . The funeral procession began five days after his death It traveled throughout Puerto Rico and was attended by thousands of people along the way . Some Jíbaros traveled between municipalities to attend more than one part of the activity . At his request ,

Muñoz ' remains were buried at San Antonio De Paduas Cemetery in Barranquitas , Puerto Rico .

= = Legacy and honors = =

Muñoz Rivera 's son , Luis Muñoz Marín , also became an important figure in politics , taking part in the foundation of the Popular Democratic Party of Puerto Rico . He was elected in 1948 as the first democratically elected Governor of Puerto Rico in 1948 .

In 1923 , the municipality of Ponce erected a statue in honor of Munoz Rivera and renamed the northern plaza of the city 's main square Plaza Muñoz Rivera for him . * Sixteen Puerto Rican schools were named for Muñoz .