

“Nine-teen hours” I said to myself. That was how much time was left until we start the rebellion. Throughout that very night of September 22 1868, I Francisco de Mota was organizing and instructing my “jornaleros” on the shortcuts they could take if they needed to take refuge for a while and where the extra weapons were hidden. This I had to do as I was fifty years of age and could not physically take part in this rebellion due to my liver problems and respiratory issues mainly caused for excessive smoking. My sugar mill and house are both located in Mayagüez, where most sugar mill owners as well as other locals, such as doctors, lawyers and housewives are preparing for the big day, for “El Grito de Lares”. Hell, even the town dulcero, or candy seller, is actively participating in the meetings. Politics wise, I am on the liberal’s side, primarily because I find it preposterous that after paying taxes all these years I cannot recall seeing a decent road in all of Mayagüez, not to mention that we do not own steamboats or have the much needed trains. Furthermore, I have to send my child to study abroad and keep myself from sharing with him in his early years, which I will never be able to recuperate because of the lack of academic institutions. And the Spanish, have they no shame in practicing capital absenteeism? I believe it to be truly outstanding that to this day we, sugar mill owners, are obliged to practice “el regimen de la libreta” and not pay our “jornaleros”, when it is thoroughly known that paid “labradores” work better and this system is just a façade for slavery. As to my possessions, I own approximately fifty acres of land, with sixty “jornaleros” working them. Among my plans are obtaining an administrative position in government, invest in the building of steamboats and trains, however I am concerned by the salary that is paid to the “labradores” and what will be done with so many paid workers as the payroll will significantly increase when these “jornaleros” are given the status of “labradores”. With all of these things happening right now, I feel as healthy as a horse, I’m directing the meetings with the “jornaleros” my self throughout my whole sugar mill, and I strongly feel that we can cause change with this rebellion and that just rejuvenates me and drives me to be so active in the planning of this event in history. Today, the “jornaleros” and I dined and toasted in their becoming into the status labradores and for the betterment of Puerto Rico, a freer Puerto Rico. Regrettably, I do face the danger of betrayal, specifically by the neighboring sugar mill, which is in favor of the conservatists and has thorough knowledge of my liberal feelings, but I do not let that come in my way. To sympathize and connect more to their struggle, I’ve been eating quotidian “jornalero” cuisine with them and sharing thoughts with them, however I wear my usual attire because there is indeed a social difference, notwithstanding their status change, I will still be the sugar mill owner.