

## **Semilla de la Revolution**

Fidel and Raul, older brother Ramon and grew up on a large farm in Holguin province. Angel Castro, their father was a young Spanish soldier when he first arrived in Cuba. Once discharged from the army back in Spain he returned to Cuba. He first started cutting trees as a logger. Eventually he started his own logging business. He became very close friends with another man named Fidel Pino, one day Angel Castro's first son would be named after him.

When Angel Castro had saved some money, his friend Fidel loaned him some money so that he could buy land at an auction. Angel began to log his land and grow sugar cane. As long as he was making money he continued to buy and clear more land. Over the years he managed to buy 1,000 hectares. As well as sugar, he was crop farming the land with assorted vegetables, raising cattle, pigs and chickens while still exporting wood.

The mother of the Castro children was Lena Ruez Gonzales, who was born in Finale de Rios Province, the Western most part of Cuba. Her family was very poor. They arrived at Biran farm looking for work. Angel hired them. Angel and the daughter Lena fell in love here, were married.

Over the years, the Castro parents built a small town here. Twenty seven facilities were built- a spacious one room school and house for the teacher, a family doctor's house and small hospital, a pharmacy, a large general store, a butcher shop, a restaurant, a movie theatre, a farm management office, a machine shop and small saw mill, a cock fighting arena, a post and telegraph office, a bar and pool hall, a hotel and eventually a home and an office for the community lawyer who would be Fidel. Eleven of the buildings remain standing to this day. Angel Castro built a self-sufficient community where all types of services were provided so that people would not have to go outside for anything. The community built a dozen small homes as the land was cleared and the farm was expanded. Many workers came to live in the community and they said Mr. And Mrs. Angel Castro were a very compassionate and humane couple.

They had seven children, starting with Ramon,

Fidel and Raul, who all grew up thinking their life with school and medical care was quite normal.

In this community there was no "dead time" - dead time is outside the three months sugar cane harvesting when there was no work for many people elsewhere on the island. Here there was crop farming and many other chores to do year round. All employees were paid fair wages. When he died the people said it was as if they had lost their own father.

Fidel and Raul grew up amongst all of this not as a result of communism or socialism but because of their family's "compassionism". When Fidel was 10 years old his teacher said she could teach him no more. The family decided to send him to Santiago de Cuba, where Jesuit monks schooled him. He also excelled at sports. While traveling to and from school he saw others living in abject poverty and discussed this with his parents. In time Raul and Fidel planned to build more farms based on the Biran concept.

A few years later he traveled back and forth to Law school in Habana, he expressed his concerns with the poverty, disease, starvation and unemployment to his mother as well as a desire to extend the concept of his family's farm to other locations. She said, "why not all of Cuba?"

While attending law school he studied to see if there was some legal way to change the despicable dictatorship government in Cuba. Nada! During that time, Fidel the national public speaking and debate champion, lead student protests against Batista. His brother Raul joined him as an organizer. He received many stitches on two occasions as well as being jailed several times. Eventually he was jailed on what is now "The Island of the Students". After the failed attempt to procure weapons at the Moncada Barracks in Santiago he was jailed then exiled to Mexico. Raul followed him there. They met Che and the rest is history.

It all started with Biran farm... the Semilla or Seed of the Revolution.

[Biran Tourist Attraction](#)