

/ ENG ●

The Indian heritage in Sant Pol de Mar



Introduction

From the end of the eighteenth century and all throughout the nineteenth, Catalonia's economy experienced resurgence thanks to trade with America. In 1756, the Crown authorized Barcelona permission to send ships to America; in 1765, trade with the West Indies was opened up to new ports; and in 1778, Spain's King Charles III signed the **free trade decree**.

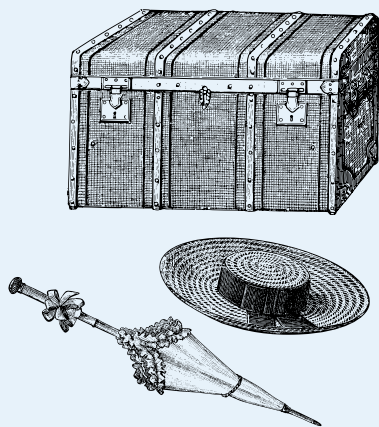
Colonial trade consisted of exporting manufactured goods to America and importing raw materials for its industries. Ships loaded with coffee, sugar, tobacco and cocoa returned from America, and textiles, wine, brandy, dried fruit and paper were exported from Catalonia.

Why did Catalans emigrate?

There were two major classes of emigrants: those fleeing economic hardships who were out of work, and those leaving to earn more money for their businesses. Of the first category, many left when phylloxera arrived in rural areas of Catalonia, an insect that devastated the local vineyards.

This movement spread mainly to the coastal areas, among the marine population.

Most of the emigrants from Sant Pol went to Cuba and then, in order of significance, to Uruguay and Argentina.



They **migrated in chains**, in other words, before embarking on the journey they had already chosen a destination and secured a job. This type of chain migration was based on a network of ties to family and friends: usually, the first to emigrate was the father or a young single person who went to work as an apprentice in a family business or with a friend. Then, once in America, the young person passed on information about opportunities, and then younger brothers went there successively, in order of age, as did cousins and neighbours. Before emigrating, it was important that the young man mastered reading and writing and have knowledge of mathematics and accounting, as this would make it easier for him to find a job there.

Women did not typically emigrate, if they did, it was when they were already married and their husband in America claimed them.

Who were the Indians or “Americanos”?

Indians, or *Americanos*, is the name given to the men who immigrated to the overseas colonies between the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth with the idea of making a fortune and improving their economic and social circumstances.

The typical Catalan emigrant of the mid-nineteenth century was a single teenage boy or young adult, aged between 14 and 18 years old, with drive and ability to work.

To qualify as an *Americano*, the individual had to return home, whether he'd been successful or not. Those who became prosperous returned for flaunt their new-found social status, having climbed the social ladder with their newly acquired wealth. Many spent the remainder of their lives retired in comfortable residences and living on their overseas income, while others also became figures of influence in all areas and promoted all kinds of charitable actions.

However, many of those who left to make a fortune never succeeded. Those who weren't so lucky and had the courage to go back home were told that “they had lost their suitcase in the strait”.

The Indians' wives

Despite having been pushed to the background, women play a very important role in this story. They are omnipresent in the Indians' exploits, as mothers, daughters, wives or widows, rich, poor or slaves. Their names may not have endured but many of their actions, mentioned in documents or cemented in popular memory, form an undeniable part of this Indian legacy.

The widows of the wealthy *Americanos* often worked with advisers and procurators to manage the inherited fortune, which was not insignificant. Many invested in real estate businesses upon returning to Catalonia.

Like their husbands, they also gave part of their fortunes to social and charitable causes. Apart from the many Indian women who led a life of luxury and comfort, others became known for their cultural activities.



Indian houses

The Indians built three types of buildings as private homes. Most built houses, usually near the beach, although some also chose to live in the centre of the towns. Other Indians decided to retire to the countryside and restore colonial-style farmhouses. Finally, in the cities, they built palaces, majestic buildings that only the richest Indians could afford.

The Indians commissioned these homes before returning to Catalonia. The first thing they did was to contact a family member or trusted friend to hire an architect or master builder, who oversaw the building of the home. The Indians would send instructions and money from America so that once home they only had to take care of the final details.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Indians favoured the neoclassicism style; at the end of the nineteenth century, they opted for modernism; and once in the twentieth century, for noucentisme. In Catalonia, the houses have their own characteristics of each style, but you can also see homes with a combination of features from these styles and others.

NEOCLASSICISM

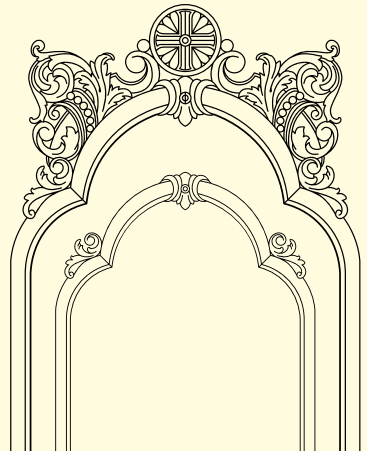
- Buildings mimic ancient Greek temples
- Columns and frontages are placed on the façades
- Round-based temples are built in the gardens

MODERNISM

- Natural elements can be seen on the front of the houses': leaves, trees, flowers, etc.
- Curved lines predominate over straight lines
- The shapes of the buildings seem to have movement
- Very ornate buildings, with no space left undecorated

NOUCENTISME

- Noucentisme architecture features elements of modernism and neoclassicism
- Buildings must not only be beautiful but also fulfil a social function



The houses' courtyards

Popularly known as *els horts* (the orchards), these courtyards were closed off with iron grilles and accessed by a gate decorated with colonial motifs. Through the courtyards and gardens, the Indian wanted to recreate the tropical landscapes of Cuba, which is why they boasted lots of lush vegetation and water installations. There were fountains, small ponds, paths and all kinds of exotic plants.

The plants they chose were the same ones that were planted in Cuban gardens, although not all of them were native to Cuba. For example, there were the Louisiana orange tree, originally from the United States; the bougainvillea, which comes from South America; as well as other plants such as the Indian chestnut tree, hibiscus, magnolia or bamboo.

The palm tree has become a symbol of Indian houses. However, not every house that has palm trees was built by the Indians! Today there are more than two hundred species of palm trees; the Indians' favourite was the royal palm, originally from Cuba.



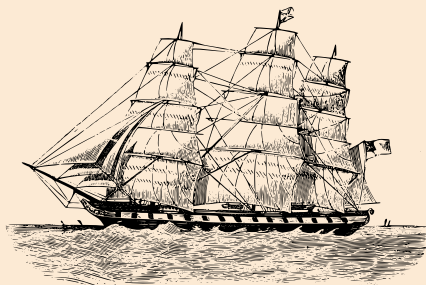
Sailing and nautical schools

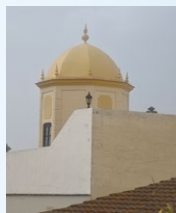
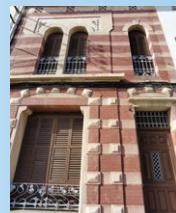
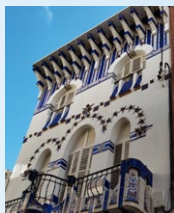
In the 19th century, ships began to be built of iron and steel. Catalonia had a booming industry building wooden boats, which were made or repaired at the shipyards in its ports or on the beaches. The five shipyards in Arenys, then considered the most important in Catalonia, boosted production to meet orders up and down the east coast. The craftspeople in charge of this task were known as “mestres d’aixa” or shipwrights.

The ships carried goods to be sold in America, as well as the crew, passengers and provisions to feed them.

The crew was the group of people who ran the ships and worked on them. Each crew member had a different name, depending on their position. On old sailing ships, there was the captain, the highest authority on board; the first officer, who was in charge of navigation; the helmsman, who steered the ship; the boatswain, who was responsible for the cargo; and the sailors, who took orders from their superior officers.

First officers had to study at **royal nautical schools** before they could sail the seas and oceans. They had to master mathematics and navigational instruments. In Catalonia, the first school for navigator pilots was founded and led by Josep Baralt Torres in Arenys de Mar in 1780. It was one of the most important of its time and educated many Sant Pol residents, mostly young men aged 14 to 19, including Bonaventura Adroher, who became a first officer, and Ramon Roura (Bepba), who became a navigator. In Sant Pol, there were many other navigators and sailors in addition to the ones who studied at the school in Arenys. These included Francesc Xavier Roca Pujol (Avi Xicu), who was a ship’s captain, and Joan Mas Vilarnau (Pau Xuca), who was a master shipwright and built ships like the schooner “Nuevo Magallanes”. Later, schools also opened in Mataró, Vilassar and Masnou.





Route Sant Pol dels indians

Can Planiol

Abat Deàs, 30

This building from 1910 is by architect Ignasi Mas Morell and was commissioned by Ramon Planiol for his brother Josep. This was the manor home of the Planiol family, where Ramon lived as a child with his parents, before becoming a carpentry shop. They rebuilt what was already there.

The house is a sample of **modernist architecture** in the style of Mas Morell's first period, with a very ornate façade in which colour is the most striking feature. Blue, red and white, dotted with maroon blooms, cover the entire frontage. Interestingly, on the first floor you can see the shield of Sant Pol and the flag of Cuba, which represent the relationship between the architect and Ramon Planiol (the Americano), who were friends and took a trip together to Havana, where the architect resided for a while. There, he renewed his architecture title and built the Notary Association premises as well as a house for the Planiol family.



Ramon Planiol Claramunt, immigrated to Cuba in 1873 to work at the Sauleda house in San Francisco de Paula. He arrived in Cuba at the age of 13 and set about selling fabric, which he bought in the capital and distributed in a cart to the inland villages. He became independent and settled in Havana, where he started new businesses and began amassing wealth, acquiring all sorts of building materials companies: wood, marble, iron, ceramics, hydraulic tiles, etc. He also took over Victoriano Sauleda's business when he returned to Sant Pol: a ceramics factory for construction and various uses.

He was a figure of considerable influence in Cuba, and later, in Sant Pol. Planiol married a Mexican woman from a very good family, Clara Padilla.

In 1924, he returned to Sant Pol and sent his nephews Jaume and Ramón Planiol Arcelós to run his Cuban companies. Ramón stayed in Cuba to continue his uncle's business, following in his footsteps as a businessman and an important and influential community figure, while Jaume returned to Sant Pol to oversee the Can Reig property, which his uncle had bought from the Roca family.

Ca l'Adroher

Abat Deàs, 23-25

Built in 1875, this three-story building has a flat roof and features solemn, severe **neoclassical architecture**. The main element is its large balcony with three doors, clearly inspired by Neoclassicism in the layout, proportions and restrained decoration. The corners where the façades meet have blocks of granite taken from Palace of the Marquis of Alfarràs, as do the frames on the windows and balcony doors. Behind the building, there is a circular watchtower with a dome and a weathervane on top.



This house is owned by the Adroher family, which has been living in Sant Pol since the 15th century. According to the stone on the façade, it dates back to 1517. After the Marquis of Alfarràs, it became the Can Roquer farmhouse and occupied the four houses on “Pla de les Palmeres”. You can still see the coat of arms and some defensive turrets in the inner courtyard.

Bonaventura Adroher Fontrodona (1796-1873) was a great navigator pilot and he discovered a sandbank off Cadiz that bears his name. When he retired in Sant Pol in 1852, he married Paula Vivas and they had five children. Then he bought the old Roquer house and his son **Francesc Adroher Vivas** (1834-1917) restored it in **1875**, which is the date above its main entrance. He left it to Bonaventura Adroher Moreig, and it has continued to be passed down through the generations to this day.

El Pla

Abat Deàs, 17

This house was built between 1870 and 1880 by emigrants from the Sauleda family on their return from Cuba. The name comes from its front garden, which is full of palm trees.

Featuring a **pared-down neoclassical style** that contrasts with the decorative excess of the pre-dating Baroque style, and with an imposing appearance, its frontage is typically neoclassical: stuccoed with polychrome friezes, balconies framed by a pediment and a balustrade made of artificial stone on the roof.

Facing the sea, it has a large colonial-style garden with a fountain covered in glazed tiles and a pottery sculpture depicting a young fisherman with a turtle.



The home is linked to **Josep Sauleda Villaronga** and his son **Victoriano Sauleda**, who moved back from Havana to San Francisco de Paula (14 km away), where Josep bought a shop and worked with his son, Victoriano, who would take over and grow the business, creating a ceramics factory for construction and various uses. After 28 years in Cuba, Victoriano returned to Sant Pol (in 1888) and three years later sent his sons Pepe and Arturo as well as his nephew Magi Pasols Paulis to work in the Paula shop (in Cuba).

Can Roca Ravell

Manzanillo, 1

Dating back to 1916, this property features medieval and Arabesque motifs in an example of **architecture from the transition from neoclassicism to modernism**. This two-storey building is known for its reddish façade with horizontal bands of red brick and imitation stone, and its Juliet balconies with semicircular arches on the first floor, one of which is double and decorated with a ceramic frieze. On the façade there is a tile bearing the name of the building contractor: J. Palet (Joan Palet Bayà).



They called it “Ca la Felícia” after the first owner’s mother.

It was commissioned by **Joan Pujol Llobet**, an emigrant to Cuba who ran a very successful funeral home in Cienfuegos.

He married a Cuban girl whose surname was Herrera, who came to Sant Pol several times to visit family, and they had a daughter called **Maria Pujol Herrera**.

Maria came to Sant Pol because she had had health problems in Cuba. She moved to Barcelona and met the printer **Alfons Roca Ravell**. In 1910, she donated 15 wall maps and geographical charts to the new schools, as well as notebooks and 200 satchels for the students. Maria and Alfons were the parents of Antonia Roca Pujol, who married Xavier Roca, a pastry chef from Barcelona. Every year, they spent the summer in this house with their children.

Can Cristòfol

Abat Deàs, 3

Built in 1870, this property is the richest example of **neoclassical architecture** in Sant Pol. It exhibits great artistic quality and a wide array of styles, with a blend of everything that its owners had seen and desired. The three-storey building has a domed lookout tower that can only be seen from the street behind it (Manzanillo St).

Its façade follows the style imperatives of the time, with the classical orders on the columns -Ionic on the upper floor and Doric on the main floor- and coloured walls that are ornately decorated with stuccoes and quilting. There are also decorative ceramic elements and wrought-iron railings on the balconies. On the upper floor, there is a separate balcony on each opening, all with natural stone cantilevers. The main balcony features a coat of arms with the owner Cristòfol Panadero's initials and the year the building was constructed: "C.P. 1870".



Cristòfol Panadero Tarré (1835–1910) lived in Sagua de Tánamo (on the eastern end of the island, like Santiago de Cuba), where he ran a thriving business.

He was married to Rosa Casellas Ferrer, who returned to Sant Pol to settle there with their children. Cristòfol, who went back and forth between Catalonia and Cuba, returned for good in 1894.

He served as mayor from 1895 to 1897, and the project to replace gas street lights with an electric system was approved during his term. His life was deeply woven into the fabric of the town.

El Centre

Consolat de Mar, 49

It started off as a modest establishment, erected in a working class Sant Pol, for the fishermen and farmers, who spent their weekend downtime at two recreation venues: the *Círculo Recreativo* and a spot on Nou St. that the Serra family opened. The new establishment was founded by **Ramon Roura**, who had just arrived from California, in 1865



In 1888, a group of well-to-do Sant Pol residents breathed new life into the space, making it their social headquarters. A Catalan patriotic organisation was founded, the **Catalan Centre of Sant Pol**, with members of and ties to a similar centre in the capital: Catalan Centre of Barcelona. The building hosted more and more activities, mostly social (gatherings), cultural (choir, theatre), charitable (helping the ill, giving out food and goods) and political.

In Sant Pol, residents either frequented **Puda** (middle class, working class and particularly fishermen) or the **Centre** (high class, right-wing with social and political influence).

In 1892, they purchased the property across the street (now the Centre Cultural i d'Esbarjo or the Cultural and Recreation Centre) to expand the facilities to include a theatre for the performing arts group and hold events open to the public.

Centre Cultural i d'Esbarjo is still in use today (generally for plays and films), but the Cafè del Centre closed on 9 January 2017.

Ramon Roura lived in Montevideo with his brother Agustí and worked for a shipbuilding company with other colleagues. During the Uruguayan Civil War, a group of them decided to go to California on a schooner they had built (the *Nuevo Magallanes*), commanded by Ramon himself. Once there, some stayed, some scattered across North America, and others returned home.

When Ramon returned to Sant Pol, he married **Maria Paulis Roura** (known as *Teta del Centre*) and established the hospitality business to make a living. In 1880, Ramon died and Maria was forced to take over the establishment. She was the one who first officially registered a “café” in the building on Carrer de Mar St.

The new Schools

Santa Clara, 2

These were financed, mostly, by four *Americano* benefactors: **Ramon Planiol Claramunt** and **Jaume Roca Vivas**, who had returned from Cuba with fortunes, properties and businesses, and brothers **Francesc and Salvador Roca Pagès**, wealthy bankers living in Buenos Aires who kept up a solid relationship with their relatives in Sant Pol from Argentina.

In the nineteenth century, the situation of the schools in many villages was not very good. In 1857 the Spanish government established free education for all, but there was not enough money to build all the schools needed. The Indians' support was very important as it allowed new schools to be built and others to be reformed.

The schoolhouse was constructed in 1907-1910. The building is by Mas Morell and is considered the most interesting work of his first period, but today the building is badly damaged as a result of the destruction that occurred during the Spanish Civil War, when the figures of the Virgin and the angel that decorated the front of the building were destroyed. These figures had been a donation from Ramon Planiol's wife, Lady **Clara Padilla**, which is why the street was given the name of Santa Clara.

The building has an uneven ground floor with an interior courtyard, with an elevated section at one of the corners (the former schoolmaster's house) that gives it a monumental appearance and is crowned by a stylised conical pinnacle covered with polychrome glazed ceramic and finished with a lightning rod.

The decorative features include a base of pebbles inlaid with stones and shells, as well as the bands of brownish glazed Valencia brick that appear on the vases, which crown the pilasters and the roof, and the crumbled tiles.

The schools were divided by a wall separating the girls' school from the boys' school, in two symmetrical buildings, with two entrance doors and two independent courtyards. It was the school of Sant Pol from 1910 until 25 January 1975.

The architect asked for no payment for the project (which is why he was named an honorary municipal architect) and even retouched it, as initially the schools did not have a dovecote (the part between the schoolmaster's house and the pinnacle).



Can Norbert

Manzanillo, 67

This is the home Pau Simón Vives had built for his son Agustí Simón. Norbert Simón Olivé is the great-grandson of Pau Simón. This semi-detached house faces the sea, surrounded by a garden. The ground floor is raised a bit off the street level, with a small garage, and there is a first floor and flat tile roof. The main façade, in the **neoclassical style**, features a small pediment on the top of the entablature, moulding on the cornice, and balconies and parapets on the windows with terracotta balusters.



Pau Simón Vives was born in No. 8 La Riera St. At the age of 27, he enlisted in the army and was sent to Cuba the following year. In addition to being a soldier, he also became a businessman. Shortly after arriving in Santiago de Cuba, he set up a ceramics factory that produced all sorts of products: tiles, bricks, pots and more. He would later buy a large tract of land to produce tobacco.

In 1879, he returned from Cuba, aged 51, and bought a house in Barcelona, although he was registered as a resident of Sant Pol de Mar. He put the money he had made in Cuba to work through investments, the most significant being the land he purchased on La Punta. Meanwhile, on Manzanillo Street, he began building a home for his son Agustí Simón: Can Norbert.

Agustí Simón was born in Cuba and returned to Catalonia with his father when he was 6 years old, living in Barcelona and Sant Pol. When Pau Simón died, he left his whole estate to his son, as well as his responsibilities. At the age of 23, Agustí took over the project on La Punta. He was cultured, a pioneer and a forward-thinker. He had a large library and played the piano. He was the first person in Sant Pol to have a car, which ran on gasoline, and he also had two motorcycles, one with a sidecar. He enjoyed cycling and photography; he brought the first gramophone to Sant Pol, bought a film projector, and used a typewriter... all around the turn of the century.

La Punta

Avinguda Dr. Furest

In 1880, there were only a few houses on La Punta, starting from the train tracks. After that, there was a rocky outcropping that stretched to the sea. Near the beach, there were some huts that the fishermen used for storage and would later become Nofre Oriol's anchovy salting house.

At that time, La Punta was a dirt and stone track along the coastline used to take oxen to the Morer beach, where they hauled out the boats.



La Punta of Pau and Agustí Simón. Pau Simón Vives returned from Cuba and bought the land on La Punta, from the salting facilities to Morer beach. In 1880, the Provincial Commission granted him permission to level the terrain.

There were two problems facing the project on La Punta: firstly, water had to be brought in and, secondly, they were concerned the sea would cover the flattened land, so they built a wall separating the beach from the promenade. They also considered enclosing the land to build and create private gardens there, but the city council wanted a public space along the beach so the fishermen could come ashore quickly if a boat capsized or they had another problem.

Pau Simón died in 1898 and his son Agustí Simón inherited the project. In 1897, La Punta had water, was partially levelled, and was subdivided into plots to be sold to different families. The area nearly all the way from the corner to almost the Morer beach was sold to Modest Furest Roca.

La Punta of Dr. Furest. In 1918, after having left to study medicine, Modest Furest Roca returned to Sant Pol for good. He married and developed strong connections in Girona, where he founded Vichy Catalan in Caldes de Malavella (a bottling plant for medicinal mineral water). In 1922, he commissioned architect Ignasi Mas Morell to work on the La Punta project. He designed bathing areas, a theatre, cinema, hotels and other leisure centres, even a gym. This project inspired the charitable and cultural organisation *Amor Social* and the hotel *Parador de La Maresma*. He also took advantage of the area by the promenade to build summer houses.

The sugar industry

Sugar was made from sugar cane in sugar factories (known as *ingenios*).

It was a long process that began with harvesting the sugar cane. Once harvested, it was taken to the *ingenios* to be peeled and crushed in the *trapiches* (sugar-cane mills). The *trapiches* were made up of a series of animal-powered mills that crushed the cane to get the juice or *guarapo*. There were also hydraulic mills that were driven by water from rivers. Once the cane was pressed, the juice was boiled and taken to the *resfriaderas* (chillers), where the sweet liquid was clarified, filtered and crystallised.

On the other hand, we have **rum**, an alcoholic beverage often obtained from sugar cane. Rum was made from molasses, the dark liquid left after boiling sugar-cane juice. It was a by-product of the process that couldn't be used to make sugar.

Sugar cane is not originally from America. It has been well known in China since antiquity and was introduced to the Caribbean by Christopher Columbus in 1493, where the tropical climate provided the perfect conditions for it to grow.

The Roca family had a plantation and sugar factory in Cuba called *Ingenio y tranquilidad*, which was so important that there was even a train connecting the sugar cane fields and the factory, one of the oldest on the island.

Francesc Xavier Roca Pujol (Avi Xuca), a ship's captain, was the son of a modest fisherman, Pau Roca Fontrodona, and Teresa Pujol Torrus. He married Rita Vivas, and their children were Francesc Xavier Roca Vivas, Francisca Xaviera Roca Vivas and **Jaume Roca Vivas**, who was born in Sant Pol but lived in Manzanillo and was in charge of the sugar factory on the outskirts of the city.



Tobacco

Tobacco was used by indigenous peoples to perform religious rituals. It was discovered by Europeans in 1492 when two Spanish sailors were exploring inland Cuba. The two sailors noticed that the natives smoked some dried leaves that gave off a strange smell.

Soon the habit of smoking became fashionable in Catalonia and many Catalans dedicated themselves to the tobacco business.

Tobacco production involved two phases: the cultivation of the plant in the plantations, known in Cuba as *vegas*, and the production of the tobacco in the factories.

Men smoked tobacco in several ways. The poorest rolled the dried leaves into **cigars** in Catalan, and the rich folk smoked it in pipes made of wood or clay.

The **pipes** were made in Catalonia and exported to Cuba.

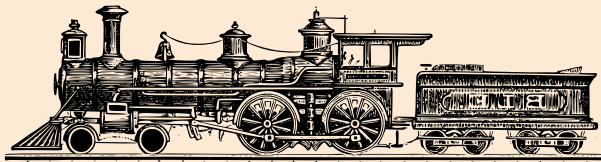


The Railway

The construction of the railway in Catalonia was possible thanks to several companies promoted by Indians. The first railroad to open in the Spanish state was in the colony of Cuba in 1837, and linked the capital of the island, Havana, with the region of Güines. It was the second railroad in America and the fourth in the world.

The first train in Spain began running in 1848 and linked the cities of Barcelona and Mataró. This railway was promoted by Mataró-born Indian **Miquel Biada Bunyol**, who also played a part in building the first train in Cuba.

The railway reached Sant Pol in 1859.





Habaneras

Although habaneras have Cuban origins, they were more popular in Catalonia than in Cuba, where it was a little-known musical genre.

In Cuba, the habaneras were not sung; instead, musicians performed them for the audience to dance along to. The habanera was a ballroom dance called **Cuban contra dance**, which emerged in England, spread to France and then Spain, where merchants from the cities took it to Cuba. On the island, the Cuban musicians adapted it, and throughout the nineteenth century, fused it with the music of the black slaves and changed the style's rhythm. This phenomenon, called *creolization*, gave rise to the Catalan habaneras as we know them today.

When the habaneras arrived in Catalonia they were known as **Americanes** and spread through zarzuela (a very popular theatrical show in the nineteenth century, in which the actors sang and performed at the same time) and through folds made of cane and string (prints that told of fantastic stories, explained events and recorded popular songs. First they created a fold, a folded sheet that was hung from a string in the squares or public places in villages).

Between 1940 and 1950 the custom of singing habaneras was dwindling, until two books were published to prevent this type of song from being lost and, from then on, the habanera went from the tavern to the stage.

Since 2003, Sant Pol has been celebrating the **FIRAMAR** festival, which takes place in the second half of August. It includes a range of maritime activities, which can be categorised into different parts: the recreational and festive part is the **Festival d'Havaneres de Sant Pol**, a massive event popular among locals and visitors alike. Each edition sees acclaimed performing groups take part. Since 2009, FIRAMAR has held the **Habaneras Composition Competition of Catalonia**, the only one of this kind in our country.

Firamar is organised by *Penya Xindries* with the collaboration of the *A Tot Drap* association and the city hall.



Ajuntament de
Sant Pol de Mar



Costa
Barcelona



Diputació
Barcelona



Barris i Viles
Marineres



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