

CASA CAUTINO  
1 Calle Santiago Palmer  
Guayama  
Guayama Municipio  
Puerto Rico

HABS PR-81  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### CASA CAUTIÑO (Cautiño House Museum)

HABS No. PR-81

Location: *Casa Cautiño* is located in Guayama a city South of the island of Puerto Rico. The city encompasses approximately 62.25 square miles. To the East of Guayama is the town of Arroyo; Northwest is the town of Salinas and directly to the North is Patillas. The exact coordinates of the home are latitude 17-59-16 North, longitude 66-06-49 West. Guayama is one of few cities in the island with a “checkboard” gridded plan. The house is bound to the North by Fernando Genaro Bruno Street; to the East of Palmer Street and to the West by a Methodist Church. The house is located directly in front the town’s main plaza.

Present Owner: Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

Present Use: Museum

Significance: The Cautiño House is striking due to the ornamental and detailed nature of its Spanish colonial architecture. This home represents the cultural and historical values which many old structures still maintain. It was built for Don Genaro Cautiño Vázquez between 1885 and 1887. The house features neoclassical cornices, pilasters, roman arches, relief motifs, and mouldings. These were blended with some details of vernacular architecture in the southern area of Puerto Rico. Its Neo-classical style evolved from a mixture of European influences. Some of the typical details of ornamentation in this XIX century traditions include: elaborate balconies, grille-work, delicate forged iron and woodwork detail.

Description: *Casa Cautiño* is a U-Shaped structure, one story building with an interior patio at center. Its located at the corner of Vicente Pales Matos street and Santiago Palmer street. The main entrance elevation, on Vicente Street, presents an exquisite covered, marble-tiled portico supported by six thin forged iron and wood columns, bordered by forged iron lacework at its top. This portico is raised three feet above street level and is reached by marble-tiled steps. An iron grille-work railing between the columns blends perfectly with the open portico contributing a sense of lightness to the structure with a flavor of the New Orleans creole style. A continuous masonry cornice roofed with galvanized zinc sheets crowns the portico. The ceiling of the portico incorporates is 12” x15” white mahogany boards, with a continuous molding at its borders. The main façade is recessed behind the portico and consists of five archway openings with

wooden operable louvers; each of them flanked by fluted pilasters and topped by a continuous small masonry cornice that runs throughout the entire wall façade flowing into the rest of the building. Delicate woodwork lacework fans at each arch opening crown each door opening. The entire façade is trimmed by a large continuous masonry cornice with a masonry parapet at its top. Said parapet is articulated which is divided into five panels; each one separated by pilasters with “candelabra” or pineapple placed on the top of each one. The center parapet panel stands one foot higher than the rest of the panels and includes a garland motif at its center. The façade at Palmer street repeats the details similar to the main façade (Vicente Street); the use of roman arch openings (three openings per area); decorative lacework fan on the top of the operable louvered doors continuous small cornice on the top of each doors and arches. The patio is enclosed with a solid steel double door with ornamental detailed steelwork. This one was probably the original entrance to the coach entrance area. The interior patio facades include in a roofed gallery on three sides of the building, thus connecting all the spaces of the house. The original structure was “L”- shape, they articulated the main house and the service area. Originally, a wooden structure that was used as a garage by the servant’s quarters. A library is now housed there. At present this space is used where today is the library. At the present, this space is used as offices for the Museum.

History: Manuel Texidor in 1885 designed the house. Occupied for three consecutive generations, it was inherited from father to son, and son to grandson. In 1968, the third generation built, on the site of the old servant’s quarters a library in concrete block articulating its facade in the same style as the original structure, maintaining its architectural language. Shortly after 1987, the home was acquired by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and it is currently used as a museum. Years later the old library area of the property was rehabilitated to be used as temporary offices for governmental purposes. Once the construction of the "Antigua cochera de la casa" it became known as the museum home and later was used as an exhibition hall. Currently the house is in the process of another rehabilitation. Throughout time, the most important details of the house have been maintained.

Sources: National Register of Historic Places “Casa Cautiño” 1984.  
Interview with the museum historian Sra. Nilda López-Tirado.

Historian: Miraida Rodríguez Muñiz (student)

Project

Information: The drawings and research for this project were completed by students of the School of Architecture at Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico throughout an *Architectural Documentation Workshop* that took place between Spring and Summer 2014. Lymarie Torres, Lynette Pagán, Gabriel Medina, Charleene Crespo, Carolina de la Cruz, Alexander Esparolini, Yasser Moreno, Alberto Martínez, Jordi Rodríguez, Miraida Muñiz, Rubén Meléndez, Cristian Galloza, Viviana Méndez. The workshop was led by Professor Claudia Rosa-López, assisted by Professor José Lorenzo-Torres.