

PEDROSO, PAULINA (1860–1925?)

She was born Paulina Hernández Hernández in 1860 in an Afro-Cuban family committed to Cuban independence. She married Ruperto Pedroso in 1860 but it is not clear whether she participated in the Ten Years, War [1868-1878] in Cuba, or was already living in Florida during that time. Living in Ybor City, the couple made significant contributions to the independence movement. The Pedrosos established a boardinghouse managed by Paulina, which became the hub for liberation activities. She also worked as a cook, seamstress, and in the cigar factories. The Pedroso home was important because Jose Marti often stayed there and it served as the headquarters for his revolutionary activities. Eventually, the Pedrosos gave Martí the home's mortgage to fund the purchase of arms for the movement. Paulina and Ruperto formed the Afro-Cuban club, los Libres Pensadores de Martí y Maceo (the Freethinkers of Martí and Maceo). In 1910 She returned to Cuba in ill health. It is unknown when she died but when Paulina was buried the Cuban flag and an image of Martí dedicated to "my beloved black mother" adorned her remains.