

# Hilda Eduviges Antonia Gândola



**Family History StoryBooks**



## **First Memories**

**In May of 1927 Charles Lindbergh made the first flight across the Atlantic, going from New York to Paris. But something even more special happened just two months later: I was born.**

**My name is Hilda Eduviges Antonia Gándola. I was born in Rosario, Argentina on July 10, 1927. My first home was in a neighborhood known as "Barrio Godoy." At that time, my closest companions were Martín, my faithful dog, a clown doll named Julian, and a vibrant red firetruck that, due to my short legs, I couldn't ride yet. But that didn't stop me from pretending, sitting in it and steering the wheel.**

**Life at home wasn't always easy. My parents, Anita and Ramon Rodriguez, had a strained relationship, so my home was often filled with tension. One reason for that tension was my mother's friendship with Italians in the neighborhood. My father was convinced that they were affiliated with the mafia and tried to keep us away from them.**

**However, there was one Italian neighbor who always wore a smile: Doña Leterina. (Italians use Don and Doña instead of Mr. and Mrs.). After much pleading, my father allowed me to visit Doña Leterina's granddaughters, Josefa and Concepción, affectionately nicknamed Pepita and Chonchona. Our playdates became frequent, and they became my best neighborhood friends, always full of laughter.**

## **Family Breakup**

**One day, when I was four years old, my mother told me that we needed to leave our home. I stayed with Doña Leterina while my mother figured out what to do next. I was sad, but I couldn't help but feel relieved too because our home was filled with arguments, and I feared for my mother's safety.**

**Doña Leterina's home was cozy, but I missed my dog, Martín. Whenever I asked the whereabouts of my parents, Doña Leterina simply stated, "Your mother will return soon." She encouraged me to love my parents. As a devout Catholic, she also assured me that the Virgin Mary would watch over us all. Her words of faith comforted me in this confusing time.**

**When my mother finally came to retrieve me, Doña Leterina kissed me goodbye and told me to remember our talks. As we went to our new home, I asked excitedly, "Is dad coming soon?" "No," my mother replied sadly. "It's just going to be the two of us from now on."**





## **The Boy Never Seen**

**The home where my mother found work was well known in town. She would be the live-in cook for a wealthy family—the Araya's. Their home was large, and we could live there so long as I remained out of sight. So, I was confined strictly to my bedroom and the kitchen.**

**Another child also lived in the house, but I never once saw him. My mother said he was mentally challenged and needed constant care from a nurse. After only a few weeks, I got measles. The doctor told my mother that I was very contagious. He advised talc for the itching and covering the light with blue paper for my sensitive eyes.**

**The Araya's were worried about their son and said we had to leave right away. So, that very night we left and went to stay with Tía (aunt) Rosario.**

## **Corks, Cans, and Beans**

**Tía Rosario was my mother's aunt, married to a businessman, Geronimo. They had eight daughters and one son, all teenagers except for the youngest girl, around eight years old.**

**Tío Geronimo seemed scary at first, but he actually liked me. It may have been because I always had an answer for him or because I wasn't afraid to disagree with him. Either way, he allowed me into his office, a place only he and his son could enter, and also into the mysterious basement, to which only he had the key. What was down there? Well, nothing more than a collection of corks, empty cans, and carob beans. Because the girls in the home were never allowed to see the basement, they were extra curious about what was in there. They never seemed to believe my description.**

**I started to feel like part of the family, safe and loved. But my happiness was cut short, as my mother found a more permanent place for us to live and we had to leave.**

**Years later, when Tío Geronimo passed away, I visited the family to offer my condolences. At last, the family entered the basement for their first time. What did they find? Only bags of corks, empty cans, and carob beans, just as I had described. A smile spread across my face as they remembered my words from years before, but nothing more was said.**







## **The Hat-Making Sisters**

**My mother, who was an excellent cook, found a new job as a cook for two unmarried sisters in their fifties. They owned a hat-making business, and their hats were especially popular among ladies of high society.**

**The sisters' names were Elina and Cecilia, and they were wonderful. I enjoyed visiting with the women who worked there, making the hats. And I loved looking at the shop window with all the fancy hats that fashionable ladies came regularly to buy.**

**At their house, I became the center of attention. They chatted with me often and even gave me toys. When I told them how badly I wanted to learn to read, they agreed to send me to a private preschool, which made me very happy. My mother used to read comics to me over and over. I eventually memorized them, and even fooled some people into believing I could read.**

**From them I learned The Lord's Prayer. On Saturday mornings, Miss Cecilia attended mass and took me with her. They even made me a hat to wear to mass.**

**As Christmas approached, the sisters told me the story of Baby Jesus and the Three Wise Men who brought him gifts. In Argentina, January 6th is also a big day of celebration, Dia de Reyes (Kings Day). As it came near, they told me to leave out water and grass the night before. Why? For the camels that would carry the Wise Men bringing presents to all the children. This they did so the children could feel special like Jesus. I will always be grateful to Elina and Cecilia who gave me a new view of life.**

## **Julian & La Luna**

**While staying there, mother and I used to go shopping at a nearby market called "La Luna" (The Moon). There, we met a friendly man named Julian. He was from Spain and had recently come to Argentina. He was very kind and often gave me sweets or peanuts. Sometimes, on Sunday afternoons, he would join us for a walk in the park.**

**When I was five, mother often sent me by myself to La Luna to make purchases, sending with me a note for Julian. He would read the note, give me what we needed, and then send me back with another note. It turned out that these notes had nothing to do with shopping at all. They were secret messages between Julian and my mother. In time, they decided to go on a date, and I got to tag along. We continued with park visits around Rosario and their relationship blossomed.**





One day, Julian wasn't at the store. My mother discovered that he'd had an accident on his way home one night. We found out where he lived and paid him a visit. He was surprised and a little embarrassed to see us when we arrived, as he sat with one leg elevated. He explained that on his way home he had to cross a street that was blocked by a train. Anxious to get home, he climbed between two train cars. Suddenly, the train jolted, trapping his foot. While no bones were broken, he couldn't walk or wear shoes for quite some time.

Julian was living with his brother, Dionisio. Dionisio and his wife, Manuela, had eight children, her mother and a nephew all living there as well—13 in total! Julian introduced us to his relatives as 'the cook and her daughter who work nearby.' But then my mother added, "the cook that he has been dating." They were all a bit shocked, and Julian turned red.

Later, Julian and my mother decided they would get married. That meant it was time to leave Cecilia and Elina. I didn't want to go. They were arranging for me to start school, and at that time, nothing was more important to me. Of course, we did leave their home, but I would always remember how much Cecilia helped me at a time I needed it. I never saw them again, but I did call them from time to time to see how they were doing.

## **Tragedy Strikes**

**We first moved to a rental home for a couple of months, and then to a house close to Tío Dionisio. One of his daughters, Angelita, was my age and often came to play with me. I was happy to have a new playmate, and we were both excited to start school soon.**

**I had missed kindergarten because of all the moving. But now, at six years old, I would finally learn to read. I even practiced by copying words and sentences from any paper I could find, though I couldn't read what I wrote. I had my pencils, copybooks, and uniform, and I was eager to start.**

**Just days before school would begin, Angelita and I were going to see her cousin. I started walking with one foot on and one foot off the curb. The next thing I knew, I woke up in the hospital. A bus had hit me, and the doctor had to operate to remove part of my skull that was broken.**

**I was confused and scared. I saw several people dressed in white, and a lady cleaning me. My back hurt and my head was so heavy with bandages that I couldn't hold it straight. When I awoke the next morning, I was completely blind. The nurse said that my sight would gradually return, and thankfully, it slowly did.**

**When it was time to leave the hospital, my mother explained that Julian had lost his job at "La Luna." We couldn't afford to keep our house anymore. Our only option was to move in with Dionisio, Julian's brother, and his large family. It wasn't the ideal, but at least I would be staying with my dear cousin Angelita.**







## School At Last

Nothing was more important to me at this time than finally starting school. Two months had passed since the school year began and I was anxious to go. But the problem was, the principal didn't want to let me attend school due to my recent accident. After several discussions with my mother, and after promising I wouldn't participate in any physical activities, I was admitted to Francisco Godoy School for Girls.

The one bad thing was that the school was 12 blocks away. I pleaded to attend the closer school, just two blocks away, that my cousins were attending. But my mother said the girls' school would be safer for me after my accident, keeping me away from the more active boys.

Being in school was fun, but also challenging. The other girls had a two-month head start. But I didn't let that stop me. Sure, I still suffered from headaches and forgetting things, but I embraced reading books as if they were my best friends.

Words and sentences were no problem. But numbers? Oh boy, they were my biggest enemy. The teacher told this to my mother, who then wouldn't let me rest. I had to memorize those times tables until they were fixed in my head. It was tough, but it taught me the magic of memorization, which I cherished from then on. I also memorized as many poems as I could get my hands on. And all that brain exercise was even helpful for my recovery.

## **Peanuts and Coffins**

**When I was seven years old, four foreign young men rented the apartment next to ours. When we asked Abuela (grandmother) María about our new neighbors, she said they were most likely medical students because the Medical University of Rosario was nearby.**

**They didn't speak much except to greet us with a "Buen Día" and a smile. We often heard them chatting with each other in another language, and we determine they were Germans, as many Germans had come to Argentina.**

**Soon, we began hearing loud pounding noises coming from their home, as if they were building something. Now we were really curious. We tried peeking through the windows to see what they were building. Again, we turned to Abuela María who said, "It's most likely the students are making coffins to store the dead bodies they study. It would be better for you to stop looking through the windows and disturbing them." We kept our distance from then on.**

**My mother asked the owner of our small neighborhood market what he knew about them. "They come a few times a day just to buy peanuts, nothing else," he said. That only added to the mystery. Now we had more questions: "Why don't they eat like regular people?" "Why do two of them always go together to buy a kilo (2 pounds) of peanuts?" "Why do they always wear those odd cowboy pants (blue jeans)?"**





**One day, the pounding stopped, and our questions were answered. The four young men emerged wearing suits, white shirts, ties, and hats. They knocked at our door and introduced themselves as Mormon missionaries, here to teach us about a new gospel. We had never heard of this religion before.**

**My mother noticed that they didn't look very healthy. They had been building benches for their church (which explained the loud noises), and in their rush to finish, they hadn't been taking time to eat proper meals.**

**Recalling what the owner of the market had told her, my mother said, "Come in and have a bowl of soup." They gladly accepted the invitation, relieved to eat something other than peanuts. They confessed they didn't know how to cook, what to buy, or even where to buy it. Their Spanish was also limited. I kept my distance from them until my mother called me over and told me they weren't medical students building coffins.**

**They enjoyed the delicious soup my mother had prepared, along with bread and butter. Grateful, they explained that they were from the United States and planned to stay for two and a half years teaching their message. They even invited us to Sunday School, which would start the following Sunday at 10 AM.**

**And so, our peanut-loving neighbors turned out to be unexpected visitors that would soon change our lives.**

## **Windows of Heaven**

**The next Sunday, Angelita, her brothers Dionisio and Joaquin, and I went to Sunday School. The grown-ups didn't come because they thought "school" meant just for children. But they did join us for the evening Sacrament Meeting at 6 PM.**

**Honestly, I didn't understand much of what was talked about. The missionaries didn't speak much Spanish. Still, over time, I learned a lot. It was the first time I heard about our Heavenly Father. At seven years old, that meant a lot to me. My real father was absent, and my stepfather was focused on looking for work. So, knowing I could talk to a Father in Heaven through prayer was a blessing.**

**The missionaries taught Angelita and me how to sing the hymns. Then when it was time to teach the rest, they had us sing them over and over until everyone else learned. We didn't have any instruments to accompany us at that time; that came later.**

**I'll always remember the four missionaries who visited our home for the first time: Brothers Maurer, Cummins, Cheney, and Murphy. Years later, we learned to address them as Elders instead of Brothers.**

**With my father out of work and my mother expecting a baby, these were challenging times. So, you can imagine what a blessing it was when the missionaries asked my mother if she could cook and do their laundry, for which they would pay. Thanks to this, the missionaries not only brought the Gospel into our home, but also much needed bread.**







## Dual Babies

Shortly after my brother Cecilio was born, I had the thought of visiting where we used to live before my parents broke up. I mentioned this to my mother, and she agreed that it was a good idea.

One afternoon we walked to our old neighborhood, Barrio Godoy. Our first stop was to visit Doña Monica, our next-door neighbor, so she could meet my new baby brother.

She was thrilled to see us, and as she held my brother Cecilio, she turned to me and asked, "Negrita (that was my nickname), have you seen your father's baby daughter?" I hadn't. This was a complete surprise to me.

When my father visited next, I asked why he hadn't mentioned her to me. He responded, "I didn't want to upset you." His answer puzzled me. "I love babies," I said. "When will you bring her so I can see her?" He promised it would be soon, but it wasn't until my half-sister Soledad was over 5 years old that I finally met her. It was also the first time I met Martina, her mother. By then, I was 12 years old.

## **Embracing a New Religion**

**Meeting the missionaries brought big change to my family. My mother was excited to learn more about the new religion. I was thrilled that I could go to Sunday School. We were learning things we had never heard or experienced before, and we were very happy. But some of my mother's relatives were not pleased with what we were doing.**

**My mother had six brothers named Raul (Trompa), Elias (Negro), Jose, Oscar (Paya), Emilio (Flaco), and Carlos (Carlitos), and four sisters, Josefa (Pepa), Nelly (Negra Ori), María Elena (Bibi), and Delia (Negrita). Everyone in Argentina seems to have a nickname. My mother's sisters began visiting to convince her not to change religions. They believed that because she was already Catholic, we should stick with the old ways.**

**One day, as the conversation became heated and my mother was about to send them home, I blurted out a saying I had heard from another woman: "No por haber nacido en un horno, habrías de ser bizcocho" (Just because you were born in an oven doesn't mean you have to be a biscuit). They looked at me and then burst into laughter, and from then on, they stopped discussing our religious change.**





## **Baptism in the Arroyo Saladillo**

**Our journey into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began with a long period of learning the teachings of the new gospel. Rosario was only the second city in all of South America to welcome missionaries, the first being Buenos Aires some years earlier. So, this was a very new thing for us and of course everyone around us. But after a year of study and attending, my mother and I, together with four other relatives, became the first to be baptized in the city of Rosario.**

**Baptized with us were three of Dionisio's children, Angelita, Julia, Dionisio, as well as my aunt, María Cristina Sainz. I was nine years old when we were baptized on December 31, 1936.**

**When the day of our baptisms arrived, the missionaries, who were new to the area, picked a creek called Arroyo Saladillo (Saladillo Creek) for our baptism. The creek wasn't large, but they felt it would do. Little did they know that their choice would lead to an unexpected encounter with the police.**

**The police mistook our gathering for a swimming party and warned that this was a very dangerous place to swim. After we explained that we were only there for a baptism, they allowed us to continue, with a serious warning, "Stay out of the water except for the baptism." So, once the baptisms were done, we ended our special day with a summertime picnic, of course staying clear of the water.**

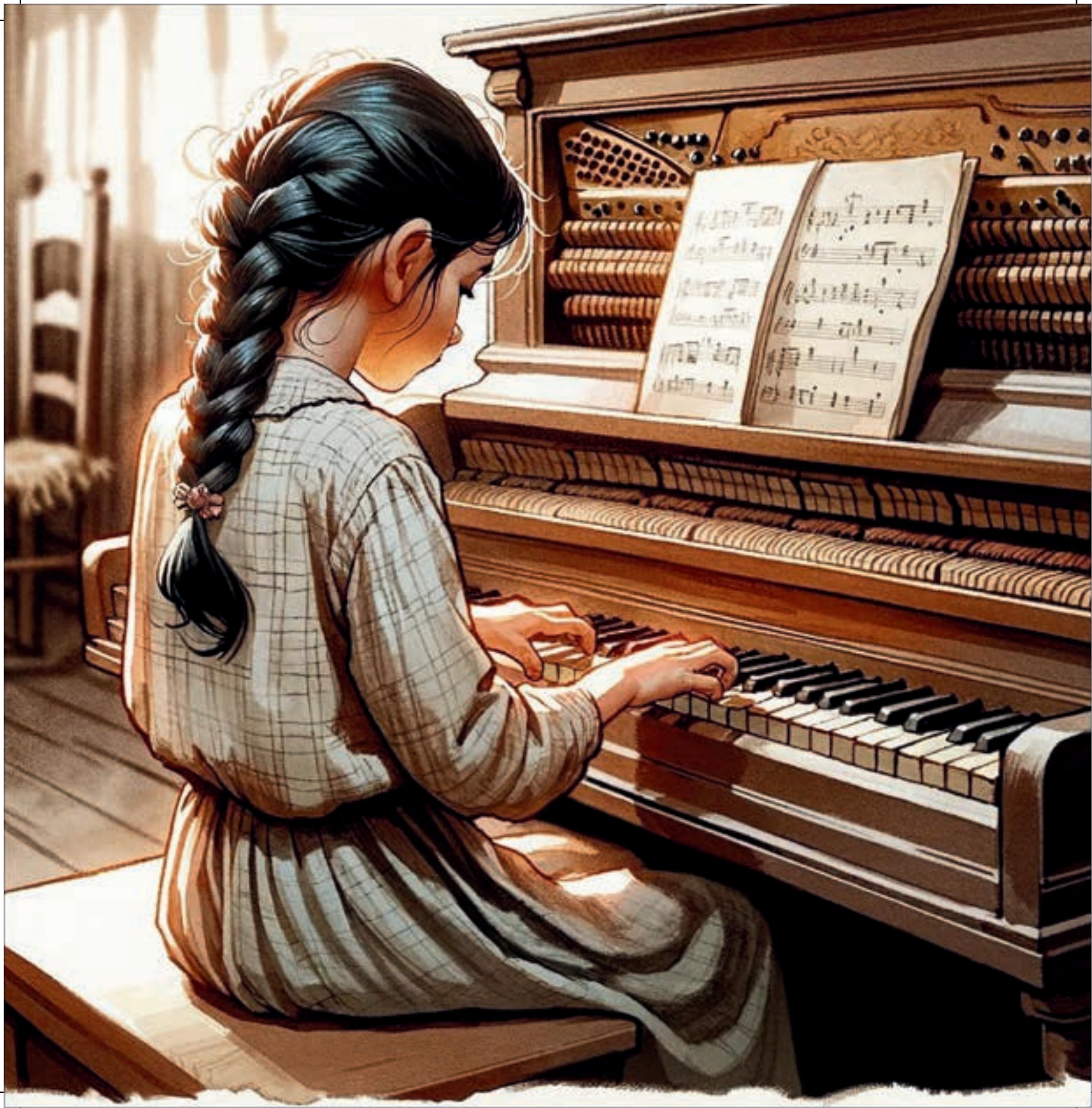
## **Chores and Chords**

**When I finished the sixth grade at age 12, I wanted to continue my education by studying to become a secretary. So, I tried to sign up for a three-year program at an all-girls school. When I went to take the entry exams, we learned that they didn't have space to admit all who were applying. They would determine who could attend by lottery, like drawing names from a hat. Even though I got good grades, my name wasn't drawn, and my dream of secretarial school was fading away.**

**Around that time, our church needed someone to play the harmonium (a pump organ). But there was no one who knew how to play it. That's when Doña María Pensa, a new church member, came to me with a deal: "You help me out, and I'll help you. Come live with me and Don Luigi (her husband), do some chores, and I'll pay you. You can use that money for piano lessons and private secretarial training."**

**I said yes and began living with this sweet elderly Italian couple. Don Luigi and Doña María became like family to me, and they even called me "Nena" (young girl), a term mostly used for daughters. I learned so much while living with them. Doña María especially loved teaching me the hymns.**







**She also suggested I learn the piano from Mina, who taught her daughter Irene years ago. After just two piano lessons, I showed up with a hymnbook in hand and asked her to teach me the hymns. But Mina gently told me, "Hold on! You're not quite ready for those hymns. There are some basics you need to learn first." I understood, but we needed music for church. So, we made a deal: I'd start by playing the simple hymn melodies with just one finger. Soon I was playing at church.**

**My days were now bustling with activity. After breakfast with Don Luigi, I jumped into my daily chores. I swept the beautiful patio, scrubbed the floors, did laundry every other day, and ironed clothes once every three days. Then, it was off to Mina's to practice piano. After that, I headed to secretarial school until 6 or 7 PM, depending on the day.**

**When I got back home, Doña María had dinner ready. After cleaning up, I tackled my homework. Later, we'd sit down together and practice hymns—a special routine for Doña María. She'd sing those hymns joyfully all day long. When she switched to reading scriptures, I'd dive back into my studies.**

**I spent four wonderful years with these dear friends. But once my schooling was done, it was time for me to find a full-time job. So, at sixteen years old, I returned to my parents' house.**

## **Pirulo & Cacho: Unexpected Brothers**

**Around this time, our family got a surprise visit. It was my uncle's sister-in-law, holding a cute baby named Orlando Jose (but everyone called him Pirulo). She was a single mother, trying to find a job. So, she asked if we could watch her baby for a few days. My mother agreed.**

**It was many months later before she came back, this time holding another baby boy, Juan Carlos (nicknamed Cacho). She hadn't realized that she was pregnant when she initially brought Pirulo. Mother was understandably upset but agreed to take care of both boys for a while.**

**I became a sister to Pirulo and Cacho, and they stayed with us from then on. Although they knew their real mother, they affectionately called my mother "mamá."**





## **Juan The Shirtless**

**During this time, Juan D. Perón rose up as a powerful general who gained fame for helping the military take over the government. He eventually became president. His wife, Evita, was also very popular for giving exciting speeches, praising the General's goodness. Juan was no ordinary speaker. When he spoke, large crowds gathered and cheered. In one speech he did something completely unexpected. To show that he was no different than the poor people, he called himself "el primer descamisado," which means the #1 shirtless one. And as he said this, he took off his shirt. This brought cheers from the crowd, and many did the same. From then on, his followers were known as "Descamisados" (shirtless ones), to show unity with the poor of Argentina. Whenever he'd speak, he would start with "Mis queridos descamisados," meaning "My dear shirtless ones", and the crowd would cheer wildly.**

**But not everyone liked Perón. Those who opposed him faced serious consequences. They could lose their jobs, their homes, or even disappear without a trace. Some of my schoolmates, who were outspoken about their beliefs, vanished mysteriously during that time.**

**Soldiers set up barricades where they questioned people passing by. One day, on my way home from work, my mother, worried about my straightforward nature, came and intercepted me at one of these checkpoints. She stood behind me in line. When it was my turn to be questioned, she signaled to the guard, circling her ear with her finger. It was her way of saying, "Don't listen to her; she's mentally unstable." I didn't find out until later why the guard let me pass without further questioning.**

## Night School

I went to work for a beverage company called Schlieper. But I really wanted a high school diploma. The problem was, I needed to keep my job and make money. So, I decided to go to night school. Imagine going to school after a long day of work—from 8 PM until midnight! It was hard to stay awake during those late classes. During the day, I worked, and at night, I studied. Sometimes, I even stayed overnight at my office. And I used Saturdays to catch up.

At school, I met a boy named Angelo Giberty. He was an Italian immigrant and thought he was better than everyone else. He bragged about how great Italian schools were and even challenged the teachers. I was struggling with algebra, so one day I confronted him and asked why he didn't help people instead of putting them down. His answer surprised me: "Nobody has asked me." So, right then and there, I asked him for help. He agreed without hesitation and became my tutor.

Angelo had been through a lot. Under the dictator Benito Mussolini's rule, he became a prisoner. He had to do hard labor in a stone quarry. At one point, he thought about smashing his arm on purpose as a way to get out of the work camp. But he realized that would damage his arm forever, so he didn't do it. After three years, Mussolini's time in power ended, and Angelo was set free.

As Angelo helped me with algebra, my classmates got jealous. I encouraged them to ask him for help too. Soon, he was tutoring more and more girls. By the end of the year, everyone liked him so much that he was voted the "Most Liked Boy." It was the first time Angelo felt like he truly belonged in our community.







## **Picnic with the Mormons**

**During my vacation months, I visited my friend Lucía in Buenos Aires. One of the highlights of my visit was attending a Stake picnic at a park next to a river. On the day of the picnic, Lucía didn't feel well and decided to stay at home. She arranged for me to go with her friend, Sara.**

**As we arrived at the picnic, a group of boys on bicycles caught our attention. Each one had a letter written on the front of his white T-shirt so that when they rode in a line through the streets, they spelled out "MORMONES" (The Mormons). I wasn't much of a fan because to me it seemed like advertising a product.**

**Two boys at the picnic came over and invited us to join their group, but Sara declined, saying, "We'd rather stay here." They started to walk away, but then, suddenly, they grabbed the two of us and tossed us into the river. They laughed, but we did not find it funny. We were freezing and had no towels nor extra clothes. Since we wore swimsuits underneath, we decided to remove our blouses and pants to let them dry.**

**Thankfully, as we sat shivering, another boy, a friend of Sara, came to our rescue. He offered Sara his towel, but she proudly said "No, I'm fine." Then he turned to me, and I took his towel eagerly.**

It turned out he was one of the bike-riding boys—he had the letter O written on his T-shirt. He hung around with us for a while. With a camera he'd borrowed, he asked Sara if he could take her picture. She, again coldly, said no. Then he turned to me. I wasn't excited to have my picture taken, cold and wet-haired, but with Sara being rude to someone who'd come across the park to offer his towel, I felt he deserved some gratitude. So, I said ok. His name was Roberto Gándola.

Six months later, a group of those park boys were visiting Rosario, including one of the boys who dunked us in the river. He came to me and said, "Your picture looks great." I was confused. Then he told me that Roberto had enlarged the picture of me, and it was now hanging prominently as a poster in the window of a photo studio.

I was furious. The thought of myself displayed in a large picture was terrible. I imagined being a laughingstock among the youth group. I asked him for Roberto's address. He sent it to me later, but by then, Roberto was on a two-year mission for the church. I wrote him a fiery letter telling him he had no right.

He wrote back, insisting he knew nothing about an enlarged photo. It was then I realized that a boy who would throw me in a river would also fib about a picture. I felt foolish and wrote to Roberto, asking for his forgiveness. We kept writing letters throughout his mission and became very close. I even recorded a song on a vinyl record of me playing the piano and singing "La Vie En Rose," and sent it to Roberto.





## **From Mission to Marriage**

**Roberto finished his mission around the same time Evita Perón died in July 1952. We met in Buenos Aires, but we couldn't go many places. The subway was only taking people downtown near the Casa Rosada (Pink House or capital building), where Evita's body was on display. It was quite an experience to see long lines of people stretching out for miles. Throughout the rest of the country, there were also free trains and buses for those who wanted to pay their respects to the late First Lady. After three days, we returned home.**

**Although we lived hours apart, we dated over the next months, until we decided to marry. Roberto worked two jobs to save for the furniture we would need. I continued working at Schlieper and attending school at night to finish my high school diploma.**

**We picked July 8th for our wedding date, roughly a year after Roberto's return from his mission. We first had a civil ceremony, according to national law, in the morning at the Registro Civil de Rosario in the morning. Then, in the evening, we had a second ceremony at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, where our District President, Raul Rovira, married us in the Rosario Centro branch building.**

**For our honeymoon, we went to Córdoba. The hostel where we stayed was open just for us because the owner, Don Miguel, an immigrant from Spain, was doing some repairs and didn't want any other guests. We had an amazing time there—exploring during the day and listening to Don Miguel's hilarious stories in the evenings. We didn't need any other entertainment.**

## **Getting Started**

**When we got back from our honeymoon, something surprising happened. Roberto was called to serve as President of our church branch. Although young, he truly was outstanding at his duties.**

**Thankfully, Roberto found work just two blocks away from our home. This was a blessing that saved on both time and bus fare. The only inconvenience was that we had to live with my family. Luckily, the house was large enough, and we were able to move into my old room.**

**A few months after our marriage, I was pregnant with our first child. He was born in December 1954, and we named him Roberto Alejandro, after his father and grandfather.**







## **Welcome to America**

**You may remember my cousin Julia, Dionicio's daughter who I lived with and who was baptized with me. Julia married one of the former American missionaries who had served in Rosario. His name was Von Elsworth, and they lived in Mesa, Arizona, in the United States.**

**When our baby was two years old, Julia and Von convinced us to join them in the United States. There we could stay for a few years, earn good money, and experience the American dream before going back to Argentina.**

**At this time, we were still living with my parents and were not content with our situation. But being non supporters of Perón left us little hope of being able to get a house for ourselves. Plus, we dreamed of being sealed in the temple for eternity. Although Roberto was convinced sooner than I was, in the end we made the difficult decision to leave family behind and make the move. We sold our furniture to pay for plane tickets, and with very little to our name, we started our journey to the United States.**

**We first flew to Florida and from there had to travel by bus across the country to reach Mesa, Arizona. We brought only a small amount of luggage. I recall that I didn't have space to pack my large fur coat, so I simply wore it. That cross-country journey was unbearably hot.**

Even though we didn't speak English, we managed to learn enough to ask for milk for the baby. In fact, that was exactly how Roberto said it at stops along the way, "Milk for the baby?" It turns out he asked that way because he wasn't sure if, being America, they might use different milk for babies.

Finally, we arrived in Mesa. We settled into a trailer in Von and Julia's backyard. Roberto found work, and we were able to be sealed together for eternity in the Mesa Temple. This was a dream come true, and we were deeply grateful.

This marked the beginning of our wonderful family life. We had four more children: Kent (a name we first heard from the Kent cigarettes sold in the store where Julian worked), Leslie, Steve, and Daniel. We eventually moved to California, where we raised our family.

While we love our memories of growing up in Argentina, it had its challenges. Our life in America has been filled with blessings. We recognized that our small family would have its best opportunities here, so we never returned to Argentina. Still, a special love for my homeland will always rest deep within my heart.



# Hilda Eduviges Antonia Gándola

JULY 10, 1927 - MARCH 12, 2020

My Relationship:



FamilySearch.org ID: LXTF-CL9

Book Created for Hilda's Son, Steve Gándola

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# Spanish Pronunciation Guide

	Name	Pronunciation
	<b>Hilda</b>	Éel • daw
Dog	<b>Martín</b>	Mar • teén
Clown doll	<b>Julian</b>	Who'll • yawn
Mother	<b>Anita</b>	Aw • kneé • taw
Father	<b>Ramon</b>	Raw • moan
Italian neighbor	<b>Doña Leterina</b>	Leh • teh • deé • naw
Italian playmate	<b>Josefa (Pepita)</b>	Ho • séh • faw (Pep • éat • aw)
Italian playmate	<b>Concepción (Chonchona)</b>	Cone • sep • syóan (Chone • chóné • aw)
Wealthy family	<b>Araya</b>	Aw • díe • yaw
Aunt	<b>Tía Rosario</b>	Roh • sáw • di • oh
Uncle	<b>Tío Gerónimo</b>	Head • ówn • ee • moe
Hat maker	<b>Elina</b>	Eh • leé • naw
Hat maker	<b>Cecilia</b>	Seh • séal • yaw
Stepfather	<b>Julian</b>	Who'll • yáwn
Uncle	<b>Dionisio</b>	Dee • yo • kneé • syoh
Uncle's wife	<b>Manuela</b>	Mawn • wéll • aw
Favorite cousin	<b>Angelita</b>	Awn • hell • eé • taw
Cousin's grandma	<b>Abuela María</b>	Maw • deé • yaw
Next door neighbor	<b>Doña Mónica</b>	Món • ee • kaw
Stepsister	<b>Soledad</b>	Soul • eh • dáwd
Soledad's mother	<b>Martina</b>	Mar • teén • aw
Church member	<b>Doña María Pensa</b>	Maw • deé • yaw Pén • saw
Piano teacher	<b>Mina</b>	Méan • aw
María Pensa's daughter	<b>Irene</b>	Ee • déh • neh
Adopted brother	<b>Orlando José (Pirulo)</b>	Or • láwn • doh Ho • séh (Pee • dú • lo)
Adopted brother	<b>Juan Carlos (Cacho)</b>	Huan Cáwd • los (Cáw • choh)
Schoolmate	<b>Angelo Giberty</b>	Áwn • hello
Teenage friend	<b>Lucía</b>	Loose • eé • aw
Lucía's friend	<b>Sara</b>	Sáw • daw
Husband	<b>Roberto Gándola</b>	Row • béd • toh
District president	<b>Raul Rovira</b>	Raw • úle Row • beé • dah

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**Illustrations by Jake Harmer**

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**1st edition 2024**



Young Hilda



Hilda with her mother, Ana



Hilda (L) with a friend



Hilda (R) with friends



Hilda (L) with friends



Hilda with her parents  
Ana and Julian



December 31, 1936.  
Baptisms of X, Maria Cristina Sainz,  
Julia Perez, Hilda Rodriguez in Rosario,  
Argentina

School Girls-  
Hilda is in the brown coat, Middle row,  
3rd from Right.



Cecilio, Ana, and Hilda



Hilda and her family:  
Hilda, Julian, Ana, Cecilio  
Pirulo, Cacho



In front of Hilda's house  
Roberto and Hilda, and Ana and Julian  
with others

July 8, 1953 Hilda and Roberto got married in Rosario, Argentina



Hilda with her 5 children:  
Kent, Robert, Steve, Daniel, Leslie