Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Books


Fidel Castro discusses in his autobiography how the Pedro Pan children, as were the parents, were always free to leave the country. He describes the delay in parent’s reuniting with their children was due to logistical issues, primarily caused by interference and antagonism from the United States government.


Polita Grau is the niece of the former president of Cuba, Ramon Grau San Martin (1944-1948). This chapter is a first-hand account of her involvement in Operation Pedro Pan. Polita and her brother established the underground network which disbursed Msgr. Walsh’s visas to the children. She falsified thousands more visa waivers and made arrangements for the plane flights. She was jailed for 20 years for allegedly attempting to overthrow the government. She has been referred to as the “Godmother” of Operation Pedro Pan.

Films


The United States Information Agency created this documentary to document the mission and legacy of Operation Pedro Pan. The 28-minute
film follows the journey of Roberto, a six-year old Pedro Pan child, as he adjusts to his new life at the Florida City Camp. The intent was to show the film at various dioceses throughout the U.S. in hopes of getting more foster families to help relieve the overcrowded conditions at the camps. However, it was never distributed because the steady influx of Pedro Pan children abruptly ended after the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was later shown at Pedro Pan gatherings and exhibits.

Government Documents


This document highlights the cultural and social struggles the Pedro Pans experienced. It also contains information on the costs of the program, particularly the camps and foster care arrangements. It contains several photographs used in the documentary.


This report specifies the goals of the refugee program and overviews the costs of resettlement for adults and children. It specifically details help for the unaccompanied minors. By December 31, 1961 foster care payments had totaled over 2 million. William Mitchell was the Commissioner of Social Security at the time.

This report was published by Katherine Oettinger who was the Chief of the Children's Bureau and John F. Thomas who was the Director of the Cuban Refugee Program. This document contained many unique images of different events throughout the history of the program. The photographs of a toddler in front of the Cuban Refugee Center and the parents crying at the airport were from this document.


This is the first report to President Eisenhower about the Pedro Pan operation. Voorhees had met with Msgr. Walsh and traveled to Miami to assess the situation. In this report, he requests funding for the Catholic Welfare Bureau so they could take care of the Pedro Pan children. They only expected around 100 children at the time.


This is Tracy Voorhees' second and final report to President Eisenhower, two days before John F. Kennedy assumed the office. All diplomatic ties with Cuba had been severed two weeks prior. He recognizes the unexpectedly high number of children attempting to leave Cuba and requests more funding. This report also addresses giving Msgr. Walsh the authority to create visa waivers at his discretion. This was Voorhees' final report in his career with the State Department.

**Interviews**

**Cueto, Emilio. Personal Interview.** 5 March 2018.

Mr. Cueto is a family friend who was a Pedro Pan. In 1961, he left Cuba at the
age of 17, one week after the Bay of Pigs invasion. He is a retired attorney who previously worked for the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington DC. He is a collector of Cuban memorabilia and has exhibited portions of his collection many times. He also has written books on Cuban culture. Mr. Cueto participated as an expert in Cuba in Smithsonian Journeys. His interview was extremely informative and offered a different perspective of the journey than that of my uncle. He went straight from one of the camps to college, since he had already finished high school. His family never left Cuba.


Eduardo Robreno is my uncle and is the person who inspired this entire project. He came alone to the United States at 15 and was placed in foster care in Massachusetts. His parents never left Cuba and he was only able to visit them once before they died. He is a Senior U.S. District Court Judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. He is the first Cuban American to be appointed as a federal judge in the country.

Journals


Norman Graebner was a renowned historian on American history and diplomacy. This article gave an excellent overview of the relationship of the United States with Cuba and the Soviet Union a year after Castro had assumed power.


This article contains statistics about who the Pedro Pans were and how their stay
in the United States was financed. Resettlement to other areas of the United States and its costs are also detailed.


This article details President Kennedy’s involvement in the program. It also specifies additional agencies that helped the children other than Catholic Welfare Bureau, such as Jewish Family and Children’s Service, United HIAS Service, and the Florida State Department of Public Welfare.


This is a firsthand account on Operation Pedro Pan from Monsignor Bryan Walsh. This oral history was invaluable as he is known as the one who began Operation Pedro Pan. In this article, he recounts how the program was started as well as the logistical details of dealing with so many unaccompanied minors. He also discusses in detail how Catholic parishes around the country helped place the children.

Music


Cachao is a famous Cuban composer and bassist. He was born Israel Lopez Valdes in Havana, Cuba. He left Cuba in 1961 for the United States. Cachao gained international fame in the 1990’s for his albums. He wrote “Cuba Linda” for the movie about the Cuban Revolution entitled “The Lost City".
Newspaper Articles


This article offers information on the children that were resettled in Spokane, Washington and their adjustment to life in America.


In this article, the author wrote about how Castro consolidated his power in Cuba. It discussed why many Cubans were trying to leave Cuba after the Castro regime declared that the government would be a socialist one.


Msgr. Bryan Walsh discusses in this article that the Catholic Welfare Bureau had spent over one hundred thousand dollars in late 1960/ early 1961 helping the Cuban refugees. He discusses that the federal government would soon be talking over the financial assistance. These dates coincide with his meetings with State Department official Tracy Voorhees.

This article tells the story of two Cuban siblings placed in foster care. They were reunited with their parents three and a half years after they left Cuba. The brother and sister were 9 and 8 years old, respectively, when they left Cuba without their parents.


This article highlights the relocation of eight children who were sent to Duluth, Minnesota. I used a photograph of the headline in the documentary.


The dilemma of resettlement of the Cuban children is discussed in this article. Msgr. Bryan Walsh states that he believes that the Miami area could successfully absorb all the refugees over time.


This article explains the many changes Castro made to the schools in Cuba during the beginning of the regime. It explains how all private and religious schools were closed and never reopened. It discusses the fact no divergence from the revolutionary doctrine would be tolerated. Any educator that did not comply was dismissed. I used a photograph of the headline in the documentary.

This article contains information on Castro’s indoctrination of the Cuban children. It has specific details on how Castro took over the education system, and forced children into youth camps and literacy brigades that would take them away from their parents. It also discusses how many youths were sent to the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries on scholarships. I used a photograph of the headline in the documentary.


This article discusses at length the creation of the Communist Youth Groups in Cuba and how they were modeled after the Soviet ones. According to the Cuban government magazine the article quotes, to be a member, one must have “hatred of Yankee imperialism and religion.” The AP photographs of Castro with the children from the Rebel Pioneers youth group were taken from this article.


The author of this article, Gene Miller, is credited with naming the children “Peter Pans”. The image of the young girl asleep on the plane, clutching her doll, is from this article. This was the first article mentioning Operation Pedro Pan by its name in a major newspaper.

This is one of the first articles accurately describing the program in the news media. It had been kept silent from the newspapers in order to not draw the attention of the Cuban government. Catholic Charities and the State Department had requested that nothing be published about the influx of children. This is why many children did not realize until later that so many others had left Cuba as well.


This article in Spanish from the *Miami Herald* translates to “numerous persons detained by Fidel Castro’s police.” According to the article, Castro’s secret police arrested 14 persons for falsely distributing copies of the rumored “Patria Potestad” law. These individuals supposedly had 15,000 copies of the rumored decree, which Castro claimed to be propaganda from counterrevolutionaries, supported by the United States government. This further fueled the uncertainty of the children’s future in Cuba.


The changes leading up the 1959 Cuban revolution are discussed. Officials of the United States government were wary of Castro’s intentions. The executions of Batista loyalists soon after Castro are detailed.
This article highlights the impact the Cuban refugee children had in Miami. A juvenile court judge urges a new detention center to be built in Miami. Delinquent youth in Miami could not be placed because the Pedro Pan children were occupying all the available beds as temporary shelter.


This is another article about the relocations of the Pedro Pans and how they adapted to life in the United States.


Msgr. Bryan Walsh discusses how well most of the Cuban youths have adapted to life in the United States.


This article discusses the closure of all Cuban schools and the removal of all clergy from Cuba that taught in the private schools.

This article from the Miami discusses the issue of Patria Potestad. The Miami Herald claimed in this article that it had obtained a copy of the decree from Cuba regarding children becoming wards of the state. The article quotes the supposed decree, stating that after the child reaches the age of 10, “the minor may then be assigned any place, for his cultural or civic instruction that is deemed appropriate, taking into account the highest interests of the nation.” The rumor of the existence of this degree caused panic among Cuban parents, causing many to send them to the United States alone. Patria Potestad was never enacted in Cuba and no formal decree was ever made.


This article documents the first flights out of Cuba since all travel ceased in 1962. The Freedom Flights are twice daily flights to Miami from Varadero, Cuba on Pan American airline. The Pan American flights were chartered by the U.S. government.


This article quotes Msgr. Bryan Walsh about the placement of the Cuban children. He discusses how Catholic Charities and the government agencies worked successfully to take care of the children. This is one of the first article
publicizing Operation Pedro Pan and discussing the financial support given by the U.S. State Department.


In general, there were very few newspaper articles about the program outside of Miami, considering the number of children involved. This is one of the few articles highlighting the exodus. I used a photograph from this article in the documentary.


This report explained how Castro began the militarization of children in Cuba. Children were being taught by the militias how to bear arms. It was one of reasons that some parents sent their children away to the United States. The image of the child with the rifle comes from this article. It was originally published in Granma, the newspaper of the Communist Party of Cuba.


This article discusses the great support Castro initially had after ousting Batista despite his turn to socialism. Although Castro promised a return to the constitution and free elections after the Batista dictatorship, elections never occurred.

The article details the many changes in Cuban life that Castro established for the children. The children were encouraged to join the youth brigades and camps, militias and roles in the Committees for the Defense or face persecution from the government.

**Oral History**


This article details the story of Senator Mel Martinez, a Peter Pan that arrived in the United States in 1962. He discusses his time spent in Camps Matecumbe and Camp St. John’s. He lived with two foster families before his Parents arrived four years later.


Gladys Sanchez Espinosa, a former brigadista in Castro's literacy campaign, recalls the early days of the revolution. Espinosa, a member of the Cuba Communist party, discusses the changes made to the Cuban educational system after Castro took power and its successes.
Walsh, Bryan O. “Monsignor Bryan Walsh oral history interview conducted by Sr. Eileen Rice in Miami, Florida, 12 December 1998” Barry University Oral History Project, Barry University Archives and Special Collections, Miami Shores, Florida.

This transcript of an interview of Monsignor Walsh was an incredible resource. He explains clearly how Operation Pedro Pan started and the obstacles that he faced as well as the parents and the children. He had had experience with child refugees before. He ran a camp in New Jersey in 1956 when Hungarian freedom fighters sent unaccompanied children to United States.

Photographs


This photograph is the headline January 2, 1959 after Batista left the country before Castro and his military arrived in Havana.


This photograph shows the teenage Pedro Pan boys at one of the camps in Miami.


This photograph from June 1957 is believed to be the only existing one of Fidel Castro and the five captains of his guerilla army, It was taken at his secret base in the province of Oriente.
“Castro parades through streets of Havana.” 1959. TelesurTV

After Batisita fled at midnight on the 31st of December in 1958, Castro rode into Havana with his guerilla army on tanks and military vehicles.


George Guarch was a Cuban American who worked for the Catholic Welfare Bureau in Miami and was often the person designated to pick up the children that arrived at the airport. He was affectionately known as “Uncle George”.

“This is an image of the children arriving at the Miami Airport without their parents.”

http://dloc.com/AA00053064/00001/1x?search=operation+%3dpedro

This is an image of the children arriving at the Miami Airport without their parents.


This is a photo of the boys at the Florida City Camp saying prayers before their meal.

This photo shows a Pedro Pan reunited with his family after the Freedom Flights in Puerto Rico.


Reunification of the Pedro Pans took on average over 3 years.


These girls were placed in an orphanage in Dubuque, IA. No Pedro Pan child was ever adopted.


The Pedro Pan girls in this photograph were living at a girl’s boarding school in Buffalo, NY.


This is another often used photo of Pedro Pans from the Guarch Family photo collection.


This map shows that over 14,000 Pedro Pans went to 190 different cities in the United States and Puerto Rico.
http://scholar.library.miami.edu/digital/exhibits/show/freedom/item/224

Opa-Locka camp was a former Navy and Marine barracks that had been converted into sleeping quarters for teenage boys.

“Passport photo of young Cuban girl” 1963. *Barry University Cuba Archives.*

This is a photo of a Cuban girl’s passport.


Teenagers pass through customs with their visa waivers.


The photo of the stewardess carrying an unaccompanied minor across the tarmac in Miami International Airport is found in Yvonne Conde’s book as well.


These boys lived in the Florida City camp.

This photo shows twin girls with their suitcases leading the way for other children at one of the camps.


This photograph from 1961 shows the members of Assault Brigade 2506 after their capture in the Bay of Pigs, Cuba.


These are photographs of the actual visa waivers created by Monsignor Bryan Walsh for the children.


This photo of the girl asleep on the plane was published in the Gene Miller article that coined the phrase “Operation Pedro Pan.”

Secondary Sources

Articles


This article from the newspaper Granma, the official paper of Communist Party of
Cuba, details the successes of the literacy brigade. It discusses how it transformed the lives of the poor in the rural regions of Cuba after the revolution.


This article addresses CIA conspiracy theories regarding Operation Pedro Pan. It also discusses the lack of coverage by the media.


This report contains detailed information about all the camps and temporary shelters in South Florida. All my images of the actual camps were accessed from this document.


This article reviews Yvonne Conde’s book. It also has more firsthand accounts from other Pedro Pans.

Books

This is the first book I read about Operation Peter Pan. Conde herself is a Pedro Pan, leaving Cuba when she was ten years old. This book is not a memoir, but a compendium of testimonies from now-grown Pedro Pans. It is the most informative and thorough book published on the program to date.


This book is an overview of Cuban History from 1762 to the late 1990’s. It is a good general reference book for events leading up to the revolution.

Photographs


This photograph came from an article in Slate magazine about the wave of unaccompanied minors crossing the Mexican border.


The photograph of unaccompanied minors from Central America came from this AP article which discusses their plight regarding placement at the border.
Websites


This in-depth and detailed website devoted to Operation Pedro Pan was invaluable for this project. It was started by Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc., a group created by Pedro Pans in the US in 1991. They are an extremely active community, based in Miami, FL, whose mission is to reunite those involved in the program, as well as educate the public and document the history of the exodus. They sponsor and promote many programs to assist children in need as they feel it is their duty to pay back the kindness they received as children. This website and their Facebook page led to many of my primary sources and photographs.


This is an incredibly detailed website on the history of Cuba. The timelines were especially useful in understanding the chain of events that occurred from 1959 to 1965. It has the complete transcripts of many of Castro’s speeches, including the May Day 1961 speech where he declares Cuba a socialist nation. It has a comprehensive gallery of images and an extensive bibliography.

Videos

This video shows the speeches of several Peter Pans during a meeting commemorating the program after 50 years. They discuss at length the impact that leaving Cuba without their families had on them.