

Documentary: “With a Stroke of the Chaveta”

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Pam Sporn’s documentary film *With a Stroke of Chaveta* tells the unique story of cigars and literature in Cuba and Cuban emigre communities in the United States. From the mid-1800s to the early 1900s lectores, or readers, were an integral part of the world of cigarmakers- a blend of educator, newscaster, entertainer, and labor organizer. José Martí called the readers’ platforms “advanced pulpits of liberty” because of the role readers played in disseminating information about the struggle for Cuban and Puerto Rican independence.



With a Stroke of the Chaveta

With a Stroke of Chaveta takes viewers into today’s legendary cigar factories of Cuba to witness the unique practice of la lectura de tabaquería, the collective reading of literature, while tabaqueros roll habanos. From lectores Odalys, Aguila, and Gricel we learn about the challenges of meeting the expectations of a knowledgeable and demanding workforce and the satisfaction of receiving the applause of hundreds of chavetas struck in unison. This poetic film leaves us wondering where to draw the line between “worker” and “intellectual.”

Robert Ingalls, Professor Emeritus of University of South Florida, and Co-author, Tampa Cigar Workers: A Pictorial History calls WITH A STROKE OF THE CHAVETA: “An engaging documentary that provides a revealing contemporary view of a thriving cultural institution, created by and for workers long before the Cuban revolution.”

The film is 28 minutes long and has English subtitles throughout.

For information on ordering WITH A STROKE OF THE CHAVETA, and other films from Grito Productions, visit their website:

<http://www.gritoproductions.com/with-a-stroke-of-the-chaveta>

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