{rokbox title=|The train station in Aracataca. Photo: Miguel Camacho.|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/gabo/garciamarquez13.jpg{/rokbox}

The train station in *Aracataca*. Photo: Miguel Camacho.

The *Márquez Iguarán* family arrived in *Aracataca* at the end of August 1910. It had made a great exodus of 22 months from *Barrancas (La Guajira)* and a pilgrimage through *Riohacha*, *Santa Marta*, and *Ciénaga*. They bought a large house near the town's main square. Although it was a remote village, *Aracataca* had already welcomed numerous immigrants from Spain, Italy, Syria, Palestine, and Lebanon. Beginning in the second decade of the century, a banana boom consolidated, which brought electric power, the first orchestra, the Camellón 20 de julio [20th of July promenade], the construction of the church, and the lottery - weekly gambling that prospered in the shade of its economic and social activities.

In explaining the origin of *Macondo*, Gabriel García Márquez, gave the most plausible version of the hypotheses that were considered immediately following the publication of *Cien años de soledad* [One Hundred Years of Solitude]. He reiterates them in *Vivir para contarla* [Living to Tell the Tale]: "The train passed by the *Macondo* farm at eleven and stopped at *Aracataca* ten minutes later".

Aracataca, that small hamlet located 80 km from the Caribbean Sea and an old settlement of the indomitable *Chimila* Indians, bathed by the freezing waters that descend from the *Sierra Nevada* and disgorge into the

Ciénaga Grande
, had become a municipality in 1915. Together with
Ciénaga, Fundación, Puebloviejo, Pivijay
, and
Sitionuevo
, it was part of the Banana Zone, where, by 1908, the boom of the fruit production that exited through the port of
Santa Marta
under the might of the United Fruit Company could be observed.
Alberto Avello Vives,
El Caribe bananero de Gabriel García Márquez
, 2007 [The banana Caribbean of García Márquez].

{rokbox title=|“The Colonel Was Here”. Photo: Carolina Gil.|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/gabo/garciamarquez11.jpg{/rokbox}

“The Colonel Was Here”. Photo: Carolina Gil.

“When Gabriel was born, there were still remnants of the banana fever that had shaken the zone in years past. *Aracataca* resembled a town of the Far West, not only for its train, old wooden houses, and smoldering dust streets, but also for its myths and legends. Towards 1910, by the time the United Fruit Company had erected its camps at the heart of the shady banana plantations, the village had known an era of splendor and waste (…)”.
Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza,
El olor de la guayaba
, Editorial Bruguera, Barcelona, 1982 [The Fragrance of Guava].

Consult the complete texts on *Aracataca* in *Las rutas de García Márquez* guide, available at the following bookshops:
Librería Nacional
in
Cartagena
and
Barranquilla
and
Librería Ábaco
in
Cartagena
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