

This is Google's cache of http://homes.aol.com/_121b_frxFvAzlPpPBfx4VtiFVUnVtNzn+3y+8n. It is a snapshot of the page as it appeared on 24 Oct 2008 14:57:18 GMT. The [current page](#) could have changed in the meantime. [Learn more](#)

These search terms are highlighted: **favilla guitars**

[Text-only version](#)

[AOL Main](#) | [Mail](#) | [AIM](#) | [Join AOL](#)

Search the Web

Search

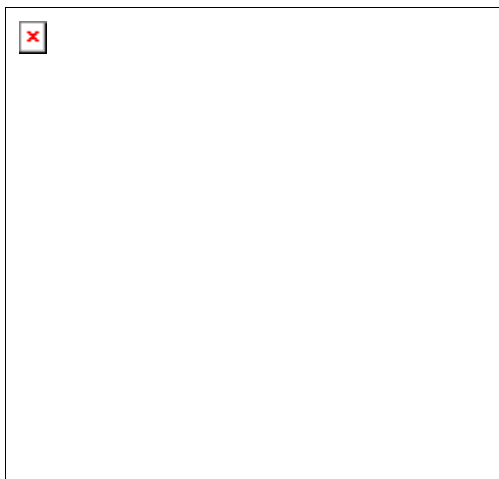
[AOL & AIM Sign In](#)

[Main](#) >> [Hobbies & Interests](#) >> [Ham Radio & Electronics](#)

[Search](#) | [Help](#)



Favilla Guitars 1890 - 1986



Hello

I, am Thomas H. **Favilla**, (BigTom5@aol.com), fourth generation guitar builder (now retired).

Over the years I have received many inquiries about The **Favilla** company and its instruments, from individuals, collectors and stores. As there is very little in print about **Favilla** instruments I will try to rectify that on this web page, by direct answer to e-mailed questions.

Now that I am semi-retired I enjoy taking the time to answer questions regarding **Favilla** string instruments. Some have gone up ten fold in price. One ukulele which sold for \$ 35 to \$ 50.00 in recent years just went for \$ 335.00. This was an exceptionally fine instrument, most bring about one third that price. Many people confuse the points of collectability and playability. I have always felt more comfortable with the playability of **Favilla** instruments than regarding them as collectables. That is my opinion but I don't make the market, the public does. Common models are not rare, rather, it is superior condition which is rare, desirable and therefore expensive.

One point of confusion I would like to clear up is that some early model (1890-1910 approx) instruments bore the label Marca Aquila were built in America.

In the late 1960's the name Aquila was used briefly on **Guitars** imported from Japan by **Favilla Guitars** Inc. This took place from the late 1960's to 1973.

All instruments bearing the "**Favilla**" crest on the headplate were built by the **Favilla** family here in the United States. The only exception being a group of about 75 instruments (all were rosewood models) built with the **Favilla** name in script built in the late 1970's.

Except for the 1920's, ukulele production was never more than 10% of our overall production of **Favilla** instruments and alot less after 1960. No soprano ukuleles were produced after 1968. Baritone ukuleles were produced until 1985. **Guitars** until 1986. In later years (after

1945) our instruments followed a rather basic model number pattern. Classic **guitars** started with the letter "C" and steel string with "F". Then came the model number, generally 5,6, or 8. Custom models were numbers 9 and 10 (never more than 12 built in any given year). A special model was the 12 string guitar, model F12H, about 60 per year were built from 1962 to 1973. The "H" designation after the model number was for the dreadnaught body size, actually a little fuller than that represented by the Martin D series. Its six string companion was the popular model F-8H which rated equal to the Martin D-18.

The Company

The earliest record of the Favilla's dates to the 1800's when three brothers Francesco, Antonio and Jacamo, fled France to what is now Italy. Jacamo a priest and violin maker who trained in Cremona Italy, taught Francesco violin making. It is from that Francesco, who had a son named Francesco, who was the father of Giovanni (John) and Joseph that the instrument making arm of the family in the United States is descended.

Joseph and John (my grandfather) started building in the United States in 1890. Four years later formed a company in 1894 which was the forerunner of **Favilla Guitars**.

There has been some confusion among collectors, some of who think there was as many as three **Favilla** companies. Actually the main company is descended from John (Giovanni) and his brother Joseph. Along with them worked a number of brothers, sisters and cousins. One cousin Anthony formed a company about 1926 that was in business for about 3 years and produced some banjo's and ukulele's. Some further confusion results from my grandfather John sometimes using his middle name Nicholas and his brother Joseph using his middle name, Edward. Some people think they were separate builders, this was not the case. My father Hercules (Herk) **Favilla** was actively building on and off from 1935 to 1980.

In July 1963 Frank **Favilla**, (one of John's two sons) who had split with his brother (Herk) formed a company "Villar" which was in business for nine months until Frank's death in 1964.

John and Joseph started building in the United States in 1890, By 1894 they had a music store at 200 Grand street and across the street an instrument shop at 201 Grand street in New York City. In the early 1920's, the shop moved to 161 Bowery where they employed 55 people, building thousands of ukuleles, as well as mandolins, banjos, **guitars** and some violins (built by Joseph). If it had strings on it the **Favilla** brothers built it. About 1930 they moved the shop briefly to 552 Myrtle avenue in Brooklyn, NY, then to 4W.16th Street in New York City where the shop remained until 1959 when it was taken over by my father Hercules (known as Herk) after a tumultuous ten year internal struggle with his brother Frank (a brilliant builder but not a businessman). In 1959, Herk received full control from the family and changed the name to **Favilla Guitars** Inc, He quickly moved the shop to larger quarters at 57 Front Street Brooklyn, where he remained until 1963. I joined the firm full time in 1962 (I had been working after school and in the summers for my grandfather since 1957). In late 1963 Herk made a major move to 60 Smith street in E. Farmingdale, Long Island, quadrupling the size of the shop. Production hit a peak of about 3,500 **guitars** a year. Then by 1967 the rapid rise in popularity of the electric guitar financially strapped the company and it had to retrench. Not having the financial backing to produce an electric guitar line in volume, the company began to downsize. By 1973 commercial production ceased. In 1975, I opened a guitar retail store, in Huntington, NY, my father and I built a few custom **guitars** a year until 1980 when Herk retired. I continued building a few **guitars** a year until 1985 when other business matters took up more of my time. In January 1986 I sold the retail operation and ceased all building.

It is a fact that the Favilla's were the original developer of the Baritone Ukulele in the 1940's it was a regular part of their line by 1948 and Herk **Favilla** Published the first Baritone Ukulele Method in 1949.








For an excellent photo array visit Carls Ukulele Community on the Link below
(Updated August 11, 2008)

My Favorite Links

[Ukulele Diner](#)

[Uke-Yak](#)

[Carls Ukulele Community Photo Album](#)

	 AIM Remote	 Send me an Instant Message	 Add me to Your Buddy List	 Join my Chat Room	 Send me an Email	 Add Rer...
---	--	--	---	---	--	--

[Download AOL Instant Messenger](#)

page created with [Easy Designer](#)