

IN THE FIST OF EARLIER REVOLUTIONS:  
POSTEMANCIPATION SOCIAL CONTROL AND STATE FORMATION IN  
GUANTÁNAMO, CUBA, 1868-1902

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History.

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ABSTRACT  
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GUANTÁNAMO, CUBA, 1868-1902  
(Under the direction of Louis A. Pérez, Jr.)

This dissertation charts transformations in social control mechanisms in a rural district of southeastern Cuba during the gradual demise of slavery into the opening decade of state formation in the twentieth century. It examines how changes wrought by slavery's end concurrent with wars of national independence against Spanish colonial rule, and United States intervention into that conflict during 1898, shaped the Guantánamo jurisdiction from a colonial island frontier to a North American enclave. The study contributes to scholarship on shifts in racial constructs, citizenship, labor, and liberalism in New World Diaspora societies marked by legacies of coercive labor.

Dissimilar and distinct military mobilizations of black soldiery were salient factors in the last three nations of the hemisphere to abandon their "peculiar institution" of slavery: the United States (the Civil War 1861-65), Brazil (the Paraguay War, 1864-70 with final abolition by 1888), and Cuba (the Ten Years' War, 1868-78 with final abolition in 1886). This project addresses implications of Cubans of color and former slaves engaged in anticolonial mobilizations during the island's transformation from colony to republican nation-state. I argue that the rebellion against the metropolitan state challenged enduring local structures of domination and power, confronting but not overturning durable social control mechanisms designed to defend property and discipline the colonial order. By 1895,

a cross-racial and cross-class tactical alliance rekindled the independence struggle against Spain and its local sources of power, extracting war taxes from landowners – an incipient politics of the social function of property.

After U.S. occupation, and independence by 1902, that alliance did not last. In the newly constituted republic, political unrest that threatened property destruction and sabotage at sugar estates met with repression. The study ends with the first U.S. occupation, by which time new social forces and elite social control concerns accompanied Cuban independence and post independence politics.

In memory of my grandparents:  
Margaret L. Carlson, 1924-2004  
Roger E. Johnson, 1920-2003  
Helen R. Johnson, 1921-2005

In memory of my brother-in-law:  
José Pablo Domínguez Olivera, 1978-2007

To *guantanameros* everywhere.

*You believe, perhaps, gentlemen, that the production of coffee and sugar is the natural destiny of the West Indies. Two centuries ago, nature, which does not trouble herself about commerce, had planted neither sugar-cane nor coffee trees there.*

-- Karl Marx, "On the Question of Free Trade" 9 January 1848.

*[T]he Cuban question, like the Haytian question of 1796, is that of slave emancipation; and it will only be ultimately solved by determining on what footing free labour may be made to answer both here and throughout the West Indies.*

-- Antonio C. N. Gallenga, *The Pearl of the Antilles*, 1873.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In traveling to libraries and archives in Cuba, Spain, and the United States, and in the course of researching and writing this dissertation project, I have benefited from many people who I want to recognize for their assistance and acknowledge my gratitude and appreciation.

In the beginning was my advisor. Dr. Louis A. Pérez, Jr. encouraged and motivated my interests in Cuban history and first suggested to me that in spite of the exciting variety, depth, and scope of recent research in the field, there remains ample work to be done.

Through his own work, archive guides to facilitate continued scholarly study, and historiographical literature reviews, he greatly aided my orientation to research in U.S. and Cuban materials, and encouraged me to delve deeply into archival records. I thank him too, for his patience.

My dissertation committee members, Dr. Kathryn Burns, Dr. John Chasteen, Dr. Lisa Lindsay, and Dr. Lars Schoultz provided stimulating, often arresting, and constructive engagement with their own ongoing projects, both in seminars and around the department. I learned much from all of them. They gave generously by way of observations, critique, and analysis from their novel approaches, scholarly interests, subjectivities and perspectives.

I also wish to thank the University of North Carolina Department of History administrators and personnel: Peter Coclanis, Lloyd Kramer, Judith Bennett, Fitzhugh Brundage, Pamela Fesmire, Linda Stephenson, Carol Simnad, Alex Morris, and Violet

Anderson, for their dedication and hard work on behalf of the graduate program, its students, and by extension, their commitment to the future of our collective study of the past.

I want to thank friends, mentors, and colleagues at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, and the Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies between the two institutions. Appreciatively, I want to express my regards to Joseph W. Caddell for an invigorating teaching assistantship, his convivial hospitality, and for taking time from a dauntingly busy professional schedule to show me many intriguing things about his native North Carolina. I also want to thank Carolyn Pumphrey and Don Reid for their friendship. John French at Duke University provided lively and appealing opportunities to contemplate Latin American labor history, the African Diaspora, and comparisons between Brazil and the Caribbean. I also thank past and present staff of the Institute of Latin American Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, including Rob Anderson, Arturo Escobar, Beatriz Riefkohl Muñiz, my good friend Sharon Mújica, and a very special thanks to Shelley Clarke for greatly assisting me through a fragmentary and muddled long-distance e-mail and fax exchange with my department while I was getting started in Havana during summer 2003.

Two Tinker Foundation Field Research Grants allowed me to begin initial archival assessments at the Archivo Nacional de Cuba, and become acquainted with regional archives in the provinces. A Waddell Fellowship from the Department of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill underwrote some of my expenses while conducting research in Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo during the summer of 2003. After further research in Spain during the autumn of 2003, a Travel Grant from the UNC Department of History, a Graduate School Travel Award, and a UNC Institute of Latin American Studies

Mellon Travel Award afforded me the opportunity to present some of my work with colleagues at conferences.

I am grateful for the professionalism and kind assistance of many institutions, scholars, archivists, and people in Cuba. In Havana I thank the archivists and staff of the Archivo Nacional de Cuba, the Map Collection personnel who enthusiastically shared the resources that were available at the time of my visit—and who took me to see the restoration underway first hand when they could not meet one of my requests. Also in Havana, I thank the staffs of the Instituto de Historia de la Academia de Ciencias de Cuba, and the librarians at the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí. In Santiago de Cuba I want to express my deep appreciation to the archival staff and historians of the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba, the Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad—VIVAC, and most especially to Dr. Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, historian of the city of Santiago de Cuba, for her perceptive comments, keen interest, and expansive observations about Cuban history and regional particularity. In Santiago I am very grateful to count on the friendship, hospitality, and collegiality of Reynaldo Cruz and Yaritza Leyva. In Havana, I also thank Cuban historians Francisco Pérez Guzmán, who graciously shared with me some of his research notes on regiments of the Ejército Libertador in the 1895-1898 War of Independence, many insights into the period, and personal observations about the essential excitement of discovery in the historian's craft. I thank Oscar Zanetti, and Carlos Venegas for their interest in my project, and for apprising me about their own recent research. In Guantánamo, I am appreciative of the assistance and consideration of José Sánchez Guerra, historian of the city of Guantánamo, and the staff of the Archivo Estatal Provincial Rafael E. Polanco—Guantánamo whose



concern even extended to how this somewhat burnt and wilting *norteamericano* researcher was faring in the punishing summer heat of old Oriente province.

In Spain, I am indebted to the librarians and archivists of many institutions. I thank the staff of the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid, the Archivo General Militar de Madrid, the Spanish Army's Servicio Geográfico del Ejército at the cuártel Alfonso X in Madrid, and the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. *Muchísimas gracias a todos*. I must make special mention for the patient assistance provided to me in searching through the holdings of Sección Ultramar, Cuba, in the Archivo General Militar de Segovia by archivist Subteniente Javier Puente de Mena. Thanks to his dedication and deliberation I was able to make considerable progress and find valuable documentation for this study even while my research season in Spain was drawing to a close. I thank him and the archive staff who carried in the hefty, cold-to-the-touch bundles of documents from somewhere in the repository recesses of the Segovia castle and old artillery school that houses the main archive, and setting up a space heater for me and other researchers in the reading room. Having come from research in Cuba during the summer to Spain in the autumn and onset of winter, the warmth was most welcome.

Not only archivists, but librarians too are utterly indispensable to the vocation of history. Accordingly, I extend thanks to the staff members of the United States National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland and Washington DC, the Boston Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts, the J.Y. Joyner Library Manuscript Collection at Eastern Carolina University, the Davis Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Perkins Library at Duke University, the Nettie Lee Benson Latin

American Collection at the University of Texas—Austin, and the United States Library of Congress in Washington DC.

I am fortunate to have generous and genial colleagues that I have met in the Archivo Nacional de Cuba, and around the conference circuit, who have shared their scholarly concerns in Cuban and Afro-Latin American history: Melina Pappademos, Kathleen López, Larry Gutman, Frank Guridy, Rebecca J. Scott, and Matt Childs. I have profited greatly from friendships with Philip Howard, Kelly Hopkins, Tiffany Anise Thomas-Woodard, and Blair Woodard.

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Maunula, Josh Nadel, Quincy Newell, Rachel O'Toole, David Pizzo, Paul Quigley, David Sartorius, Nathaniel Smith, Devyn Spence, Rose Stremlau, Mark Swartzburg, Kieran Taylor, Alejandro Velasco, Jennifer Walcoff, Darin Waters, Bill Wisser, Kathy Wisser, and Tomoko Yagy.

My colleagues and friends at my first teaching job at the University of Texas—Pan American helped me a lot as I moved between teaching undergraduate students and the pressures of finishing the writing of my dissertation after the disruptions of a move to the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas, most especially Jennifer Mata, Nate Anderson, Ken Grant, Denise Grant, Amy Hay, Chuck Waite, Sonia Hernández, Michael Faubion, Jeremy Taylor, Julian Cole, Carla Calargé, José Hernández, José Martínez, and Renée Rodríguez.

Family and close friends were a welcome diversion during difficult moments, and a source of solace, comradeship, no-cost therapy, and advice. Over the years, and through several moves, I have counted on dear friends within and without academe, including Peter Bertone, Mary Rose Kubal, John Cox, Marty Michaels, my dear sister-in-law and brother-in-law (to whom I dedicate this study) Emily Domínguez and Pablo Domínguez, my *sobrino* Leonardo, Mariola Espinosa, Fred Solt, Gerardo Gurza-Lavalle, Paula Rincón, Matthew King, Michelle Parrish, Rachel and Lyle Lordkenaga, Bill Van Norman, Patty Van Norman, and Jonathan Warren.

Most of all I thank my family: my mother, Elizabeth Bartelmez, and my father, Corlan Carlson, and adoptive grandmother, Ida Eby. All three have been a source of comfort, inspiration, and encouragement to continue pursuing higher education and teaching. I convey my deepest gratitude to my companion and wife Deirdre McDonald who has shared so many of life's joys, trials and tribulations with me, including several adventures and

misadventures related to this dissertation, with aplomb, wit, grace, and continuous support. It is to her I owe the most.

Within this dissertation any omissions, mistakes, misinterpretations, and mistranslations are, of course, my own.

## PREFACE

Guantánamo, or more precisely, the U.S. Navy base situated in the lower part of the bay with its prison for “illegal combatants” from the so-called Global War on Terrorism, was frequently in the news from the start of the Afghan war in 2001. The base chosen to house the detention camp constituted the oldest offshore installation maintained by the U.S. military, a precursor to a pattern of bases that would be established after twentieth-century U.S. wars, in particular the network formed after World War II and during the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. base at Guantánamo figured as an early and anomalous “enduring camp” from control of the Caribbean and isthmian canal in the first half of the century to the Cold War’s end. Such forward positions for the United States eventually formed a militarized global architecture of overseas stations and bases, a worldwide network or archipelago of what historian Chalmers Johnson has termed a veritable “empire of bases” with at least 725 military and intelligence posts in some 153 nations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The official USN website for the Guantanamo Naval Station is available online at <<http://www.nsgtmo.navy.mil>>.

<sup>2</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004), 41-42, 151-85 citing the U.S. Department of Defense *Worldwide Manpower Distribution by Geographical Area*, September 31, 2001, available on line at <<http://web1.whs.osd.mil/DIORCAT.HTM#M05>>. Presumably the numbers of personnel and bases have increased sharply during the ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. For a concise account of the “Gitmo” base’s incarnation as an offshore prison, see Jane Franklin, “Guantánamo Prison,” in the *Historians Against the War Pamphlet #3, Torture American Style* available online at <<http://www.historiansagainstawar.org/resources/torture>>. See also, David Deutschmann, and Roger Ricardo, *Guantánamo: A Critical History of the U.S. Base in Cuba* (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2005); Amy Kaplan, “Where Is Guantánamo,” *American Quarterly* 57.3 (September 2005): 831-858; Alfred W. McCoy, *A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation, from the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); David Rose, *Guantánamo: The War on Human Rights* (New York: The New Press, 2004); and Anders

The “Gitmo” base at Guantánamo Bay was originally founded as a coaling station to supply the U.S. fleet during the War of 1898, serving as the staging area for the invasion of Puerto Rico late in that conflict. Lease agreements governed its continuous use as a naval position in the heart of the Caribbean basin, in close proximity to the Panama Canal, starting with the 1901 Platt Amendment, and by further 1903, 1912, and 1934 treaties between the United States and Cuba.<sup>3</sup> As U.S. naval power expanded, so too did the base: it underwent extension during the 1920s build-up, and grew dramatically during the Second World War and yet again during the large peace-time Cold War defense budgets that followed the Korean War. It was in this mid-twentieth century period shaped by world wars that the surrounding area of Cuba developed a substantial service economy geared toward the base, eventually also drawing numbers of Anglophone West-Indian immigrants as base workers. Social relationships between Cubans, Caribbean peoples, and North Americans grew into a dense web of patterns over time, becoming sundered after the 1959 revolution and concomitant rupture in Cuban-American relations.<sup>4</sup> Concurrent to this twentieth-century service economy’s development, a sex industry infamous throughout Cuba converted much

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Stephanson, “A Most Interesting Empire” in *The New American Empire: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teach-In on U.S. Foreign Policy* edited by Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young (New York: The New Press, 2005), 253-75. Prisoners at the base began hunger strikes from September 2005 on. In December 2005, a North American group of 25 Christian activists hiked to the base’s outermost perimeter in the first protest of the prison, see Regina Linskey, Catholic News Service, “U.S. Nun Among Protesters Against Treatment of Guantanamo Prisoners,” available online at <<http://www.catholicexplorer.com/explore4325/nationworld/us-nun-among-protesters-a.shtml>>. In February 2006 a UN Commission on Human Rights called for the closure of the Gitmo prison, see Suzanne Goldenberg, “UN Report Calls for Closure of Guantánamo,” *The Guardian*, Tuesday 14 February 2006 online at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/frontpage/story/0,,1709328.00.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York, Harper and Row, 1971), 499, 502, 511.

<sup>4</sup> For the relationship between the base and the United States’ Cuban policy, see the dissertation and bibliography in Mary Ellene Chenevey McCoy, “Guantánamo Bay: the United States Naval Base and its Relationship with Cuba,” (PhD dissertation, University of Akron, 1995); and Deutschmann and Ricardo.

of the neighboring port town of Caimanera and whole blocks of Guantánamo proper into a large red-light district catering to U.S. servicemen.<sup>5</sup>

Guantánamo, then, has been a feature of U.S. strategies of non-territorial empire building, “hemispheric defense,” and empire maintenance for much of the twentieth century. From its origins in a U.S. project of turning the Caribbean Sea into an “American Mediterranean” through global conflicts, to more recent interdictions of drugs smuggling, controlling immigrant and refugee flows from Haiti and Cuba, it finally was given a role in the twenty-first century as a sort of offshore American Devil’s Island, or as *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman once put it after perusing the world-wide negative reaction to the United States the “Gitmo” prison had aroused, “Guantánamo is becoming the anti-Statue of Liberty.”<sup>6</sup>

This dissertation, however, is less concerned with that admittedly important story of empire building than with the social, economic, and political changes accompanying the waning years of Spanish colonialism, with its processes of gradual emancipation, increasing foreign investment, and an emergent Cuban national identity. The focus remains on Cuban historical developments instead of U.S. patterns. It is less about the global, and more focused

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<sup>5</sup> Descriptions of the pernicious and degrading features of this aspect of the base’s service economy are many, reference to it even appeared within the 1964 Soviet and Cuban film *I am Cuba* directed by Mikhail Kalatozov in which leering drunken sailors chased a Cuban woman down Havana streets while singing a version of “There’ll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight” that included the lyrics: “The sexy broads in old Guantánamo give us all we want and never say no/So let’s have a drink/Let’s get tight/ Gobs [sailors] on the loose tonight/Here comes the navy, hooray!” See also, Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999), 238-242.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed “read” of the legal case history and development of the prison with a cursory account, or rather, invocation of the base’s imperial history, see Kaplan, “Where Is Guantánamo?”; on the “Gitmoization” of prisons and the history of CIA research into coercion, and psychological torture based on isolation, sensory deprivation, and so-called “no-touch” torture/“self-inflicted pain” in U.S. counterinsurgencies in the Middle East and Central Asia, see McCoy, *A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation, from the Cold War to the War on Terror*. Friedman quotation cited from p. 180.

on the intensely local. Two of the more prominent features of global history include the extension of liberal notions of citizenship in societies marked by historical legacies of coercive labor and the formation of modern states in formerly colonized parts of the world. The former arose in the wake of what Robin Blackburn has termed the overthrow of New World slavery—beginning with the 1791-1804 revolutionary experience of St. Domingue/Haiti. The latter lies at the intersections of nationalism, popular mentalities, and what historian of Central America Robert Holden refers to as the development and formation of modern states, and the “globalization of public violence” in the sense of opponents and supporters of state actors and elites internal struggles and frequent resort to violence, in order to destroy opposition and delimit the terms of such conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

Global patterns remain important, even central, to the narrative, but this study above all concerns the development of the region of Guantánamo during the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. As such, it discusses the thirty-year struggle for national independence that began with the Ten Years’ War (1868-78) and ended with U.S. intervention into the 1895-1898 War of Independence and its repercussions, post-emancipation society, and the rise of Cuban separatist politics. If today the U.S. military base rooted in the intervention of 1898 and resultant 1899-1902 occupation forms a component in strategies of hemispheric and even global hegemony, my dissertation centers on the contestation and challenges to colonial authority *within* a regional and local level during the final years of Spanish control. As a result, the North American base forms part of the story quite late. A reader looking for more information on the background of the base,

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<sup>7</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848* (London: Verso, 1988); Robert H. Holden, *Armies Without Nations: Public Violence and State Formation in Central America, 1821-1960* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), Introduction, ch. 1.



and its long twentieth, and early twenty-first-century history, is referred to the relevant works cited in the bibliography.

My own intersection with Guantánamo came about in the summer of 2000, when I went there thanks to a Tinker Foundation pre-dissertation travel fellowship. I entered graduate school in Latin American History at the University of North Carolina hard on the heels of the centennial of the War of 1898. With an undergraduate background in social and labor history, my scholarly attentions centered on history “from below,” that is to say, on urban and rural workers, the African Diaspora in the New World, resultant racial constructs, the legacies of coercive labor patterns, Caribbean peasantries and rural folk. I was interested in the thirty-year Cuban rebellions against Spain, in the late-nineteenth-century post-emancipation epoch that shares congruent themes of contestations over the terms of freedom, access to land, and autonomy of the emancipated with the U.S. Reconstruction period, and in labor history. I was also fascinated by the earlier history of runaway outlaw slaves, or maroons, and in questions of slave resistance more broadly. A raft of extraordinary books and journal articles on related historical themes and issues was being published during the same period.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> A partial listing of sources of inspiration and expanded historical horizons in books would have to include George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1999) [hereinafter cited as Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*]; Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Fe Iglesias García, *Del ingenio al central* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1999); Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *Essays on Cuban History: Historiography and Research* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1995); and *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Gerald E. Poyo “With All, and for the Good of All”: *The Emergence of Popular Nationalism in the Cuban Communities of the United States, 1848-1898* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989); and Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free labor, 1860-1899* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press 2000) [hereinafter cited as Scott, *Slave Emancipation*].

I resolved to write a regional monograph, or microhistory if records permitting that level of detail could be found, on the Guantánamo district in southeastern Cuba.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, I heeded the explicit call of Rebecca J. Scott and other scholars of the complex processes of emancipation, formation of elements of nationality, and the struggle for independence, to spatially move closer in, using a different optic than the nation state itself as the frame of analysis into distinct, bounded regions and methodologically to utilize “layered different kinds of local evidence” on specific identifiable individuals for a view from within and from below of these profound transformative years.<sup>10</sup> I embraced the proposition of

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<sup>9</sup> Microhistory has been associated with Italian and French studies of Medieval or Early Modern period social-historical contexts using thick description, and anthropological methods in reconstructing popular-class mentalities. There are also Latin American microhistorical studies, including Mexican, Brazilian, and Cuban examples. See Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* translated by John and Anne Tedeschi, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989); Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, eds. *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991). Mexican examples are legion, in many cases an outgrowth of regional *heimatgeschichte* of which Luis A. González González, *San José de Gracia: Mexican Village in Transition* translated by John Upton, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974) was but one early sample, and which introduced the descriptive term microhistory in its original 1968 title: *Pueblo en vilo. Microhistoria de San José de Gracia*. Microhistory’s origins, theoretical underpinnings, and application in Brazil are the subject of Ronaldo Vainfas, *Os Protagonistas Anônimos da História*. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Campus, 2002). See also, Eduardo Silva, *Dom Obá II D’África, o Príncipe de Povo: Vida, Tempo e Pensamento de um Homem Livre de Cor* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997). Rebecca Scott has convincingly described Stanley Stein’s *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958, reprint; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) as a Brazilianist proto-microhistory. Microhistorical studies for Cuba include the comparative study of post-emancipation in Louisiana and Cuba: Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba After Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005) [hereinafter cited as Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*]; Fernando Martínez Heredia, Rebecca J. Scott, and Orlando F. García Martínez, *Espacios, silencios y los sentidos de la libertad: Cuba entre 1878 y 1912* (Havana: Ediciones UNIÓN, 2001); Rebecca J. Scott, “Reclaiming Gregoria’s Mule: The Meanings of Freedom in the Arimao and Caunao Valleys, Cienfuegos, Cuba, 1880-1899” *Past and Present* 170 (February 2001): 181-216, and “Reclamar la ciudadanía imponiendo el imperio” *Del Caribe*, Santiago de Cuba (2002): 22-27 and the accompanying interview: María de los Ángeles Meriño Fuentes, and Isel María Fernández Companioni, “Los sentidos de la historia: conversación con Rebecca J. Scott” pp. 93-98. See also the historiographical essay, Hernán Venegas Delgado, *La región en Cuba* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> See Rebecca J. Scott, “Afterword to the New Paperback Edition” in *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 295-300; Rebecca J. Scott, Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Aims McGuinness, eds., *Societies After Slavery* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2002), 237-242; Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery*; Preface to Louis A. Pérez, Jr. and Rebecca J. Scott, *The Archives of Cuba/ Los archivos de Cuba* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003). Also influential, see “La Guerra Libertadora Cubana de los Treinta Años, 1868-98: Research Prospects” in Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Essays on Cuban History*:

trying to recapture a local and regional character of that history with something of the zeal of the recent convert, insistent that the thickly descriptive and analytical, explanatory function of historical writing can be united at the level of regional interplay of broader social, economic, political, and cultural forces.

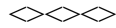
At the same time, my narrative seeks to present the biography of a province about which comparatively little has been written. The historiography of Cuba is weighted heavily toward the western half of the island – Havana, Matanzas, Cárdenas, Cienfuegos, Las Villas. The west has been the locomotive pulling the island into the world system and modernity, where sugar *ingenios* proliferated, slavery expanded, railways were introduced to service tropical exports, and the development of the colonial economy were most pronounced through the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Cuba’s caboose in the eastern province, Oriente, figured as a semi-mythologized point of origins: the site of Cuba’s oldest settlements in the colonial period, the place where the independence struggle began, the *urquelle* of Cuba’s oldest folk traditions and music. Oriente, including Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo, was long poorer, generally thought to be archaic, even “backwards,” and more hybridized Creole Caribbean, less unadulteratedly Spanish and African than the western half of the island from which it was separated by the seigniorial cattle-country of Camagüey. Oriente’s long years of pre-literate oral culture seemed to defy history with its disciplinary conventions and emphases on written documentary sources. This enduring divergence between east and

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*Historiography and Research*, 197-205, with its call for a temporal frame inclusive of the early separatist rebellion through 1898 and investigation of the “secondary stratum” of separatist insurgency and politics within that historical period.

<sup>11</sup> On the historical relationship between railways, sugar, capitalism and technological change in Cuba, see Oscar Zanetti Lecuona and Alejandro García Álvarez, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1837-1959* Translated by Franklin W. Knight and Mary Todd, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Cubans often have likened the shape of their island to a crocodile with its tail in the west, and its head in the east, while *Paulistas* in Brazil have described São Paulo’s industrial park as a locomotive pulling the rest of Brazil along behind it.

west came about from differing geography and trade winds, and in turn, the prevailing political and economic factors. These factors shaped historical legacies of imperial rivalry over the Caribbean in general and the Windward Passage between eastern Cuba and western Hispaniola, with Jamaica to the south, in particular.



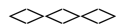
The immediate history of the dissertation project began with my first foray to the United States National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, guided by recently published secondary works, which led me to the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission Records, Record Group 76, Entry 352.<sup>12</sup> This large corpus of records includes legal depositions detailing the claims and counter-claims of 542 cases for restitution from damages during the 1895-1898 Cuban War of Independence made by U.S. citizens. One particularly rich set of depositions and records associated with claim number 120, by Richard K. Sheldon, executor of the will of Paul Brooks of Rutland, Vermont served as my initial documentary evidence for the district. Paul Brooks had been an important member of the Anglo-Cuban Brooks and Company that owned sugar mills and railways in eastern Cuba; most of the documentary record in the archives had been compiled about the destruction of the sugar estate Los Caños at the northern shore of Guantánamo. The depredations against his property had been largely committed, or at least initiated, by separatist insurgents, despite attempts by Spanish authorities to guard it.

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<sup>12</sup> Published sources available at the Library of Congress include Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Claimants' and Government Briefs*, 9 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), *The Final Report of the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1910). Records themselves are in the United States National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG 76, the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission Records, Entry 352 [hereinafter cited as USNA, RG 76, Entry 352].

My initial inclination was to use this rich source of records as the basis for a microhistorical account of the War of 1898. I duly went to Cuba that summer to build on these introductory clues found in the U.S. records. That research was reflected in my Masters Thesis, and I returned the following summer of 2001 to further delve into Cuban archives for a longer and more detailed study.<sup>13</sup> I have tried to piece together some aspects of the puzzle of events within the late nineteenth century in eastern Cuba from a variety of sources. I returned to Cuba during the summer of 2003, and spent the autumn months in Spain visiting the colonial archives in Seville and Madrid, as well as military archives in Madrid and Segovia.

The reader should rest assured however, that while attentive to many political, social, cultural, economic, and military aspects of change, I have merely tried to mesh these where appropriate rather than write a ponderous and unwieldy “total” history. Instead, this dissertation seeks to limn the emergence of post-emancipation society in a Cuban hinterland, one where war and family politics served as ongoing factors within the overarching formation of national identities. I intend for it to shed light on the history of eastern Cuba generally, and suggest solutions to the paradoxes of why a pro-Spanish district turned into a separatist stronghold by the late nineteenth century, and why a nationalist rebellion predicated on a racially inclusive insurgent military gave rise to a bloody repression of black political mobilization in the first decade of national independence.



The twenty-first century reconfiguration of the U.S. base at Guantánamo from a detention facility for Cuban and Haitian refugees to an offshore prison in the wake of the

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<sup>13</sup> David C. Carlson, “The Cuban War of Independence in Guantánamo, 1895-1898: A Regional Study of Insurgency and Intervention” (M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, August 2001).

attacks of September 2001 overtook my ongoing research project on the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. As a result, I have necessarily tried to provide more information on the origin of the U.S. base in the War of 1898 in the relevant chapter and provided this somewhat biographical preface for material that does not properly pertain to the subjects encompassed by the dissertation itself. The origins and intention of this project therefore, were not to exploit the notoriety thus associated with Guantánamo, but instead to proffer an explanation for how the eastern end of Cuba developed during these years of property destruction, conflict, expanding investment, and increasing social change. Patterns of protest underscored by threats against property, and heightened but unrealized expectations regarding citizenship and equality – especially for Cubans of color – collided with a system of social control that ultimately was girded by direct military and naval means available to the colonial power. The colonial state could reinforce its internal security – and indeed, had to – by dispatching troops during crises. A nominally independent Cuban state, however, relied on the United States for external protection, and utilized its own police and recently formed military institutions for internal coercion and public violence. During the Cuban Republic, a long-established rebel pattern of insurgency and claims-making directed at the state, backed by armed protest and sabotage directed at planters, died hard. If such politics of public violence and property destruction were the means utilized by the separatists in achieving the ends of an independent republic, then the continued use of such means into the twentieth century after a republic was constituted—especially by a race-based independent political party outside established patron-client relations and political machines—led to the fury of the so-called Race War of 1912 as the Cuban state-in-formation relied on the recently

established Rural Guard, army, and earlier militia tradition to crush rural—and especially black—dissent.

What follows is the history of these civil, racial, and anticolonial conflicts in a Cuban hinterland based on research carried out in libraries, national and provincial archives in Cuba during summer 2003, and in Spain in the fall of 2003 in addition to the aforementioned research trips.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

6a y 8a	6a y 8a Secciones (Ultramar, Capitanías y Gobiernos Militares) sixth and eighth sections (Overseas, Captaincies and Military Government)—classification of Spanish military records housed in the Archivo General Militar—Segovia, Spain
18-R.	Guerra de Cuba, Guerrillas, Bandolerismo, Claves de Generales classification of Spanish military records within the sixth and eighth sections in the Archivo General Militar—Segovia, Spain
AEPG	Archivo Estatal Provincial “Rafael E. Polanco” – Guantánamo, Cuba
AGI	Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain Sección Diversos, Donativo Camilo García de Polavieja y del Castillo
AGM-M, SU	Archivo General Militar de Madrid (formerly the Servicio Histórico Militar) Sección Ultramar, Cuba
AGM-S, SU	Archivo General Militar de Segovia Sección Ultramar, Cuba
AHN, SU	Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid Sección Ultramar, Cuba
AHPSC, GP	Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba, Gobierno Provincial
ANC, AP	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Asuntos Políticos
ANC, AS	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Audiencia de Santiago
ANC, BE	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Bienes Embargados
ANC, CM	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Comisión Militar
ANC, DR	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Donativos y Remisiones
ANC, GG	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Gobierno General
ANC, ME	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Miscelánea de Expedientes
ANC, ML	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Miscelánea de Libros
ANC, R95	Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Revolución de 1895
BNJM	Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana
BPL	Boston Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Brooks Papers
Brooks & Co.	Brooks and Company
car.	Carpeta: folder in Spanish archival materials

caja	Box
doc.	Documento/document
ECU	Eastern Carolina University, J.Y. Joyner Library, Manuscript Collection, George Leland Dyer Papers
exp.	Expediente: file
GG	Fondo: Gobierno General
GP	Fondo: Gobierno Provincial
GSC	The Guantánamo Sugar Company
leg.	Legajo: bundle of documents
no.	número/ number
NSRC	National Sugar Refining Corporation of New Jersey
NYT	New York Times
PRC	Partido Revolucionario Cubano – The Cuban Revolutionary Party headquartered in New York
RG	Record Group
SGE	Ejército de Tierra, Servicio Geográfico del Ejército—Madrid, Spanish Army Geographic and Cartographic Service
SU	Sección Ultramar
sub-c	Sub-carpeta: sub-folder of documents found within a carpeta in Spanish military records
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
USNA	United States National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, Maryland.



## CHAPTER I:

### Introduction: Guantánamo—From Cuban Colonial Frontier to North American Enclave

*The magnificent States of the Union of America—in [earlier] times impenetrable forests—have been transformed by the axe of the colonist.*

*From such examples one may deduce that the essential in this is the method; the individual in harmony with the collectivity; urging the necessity of seriously pondering [efforts to promote] colonization, as the most effective political means of resolving the political question of Cuba. [...]*

*The eastern part of the island of Cuba, barely populated before 1869, will remain deserted after the sad events that have occurred in the last months of '68 and the first of '69; and the beautiful ports will only serve as refuge to Pirates and malefactors, if the Government ... does not prepare the means to repopulate those fertile lands. [...]*  
*the Count [of Mompox y de Jaruco], who possesses vast lands in these regions, proposes, if the Government approves, to form agro-military colonies of Peninsular and Canary Islander yeomen...*

-- Project of the Count of Mompox y de Jaruco to Colonize the lands of his property, and the State, in the Eastern Department of the Island of Cuba, with Spaniards.  
27 January 1870.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Proyecto del Conde de Mompox y de Jaruco para Colonizar los terrenos de su propiedad y del Estado en el Departamento Oriental de la isla de Cuba, con Espanoles, in Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Sección Ultramar, legajo 92, expediente 48, pp. 1-4 [hereinafter cited as AHN, SU, leg. exp.] This extraordinary abortive colonization scheme to “re-Hispanize” districts of the island of Cuba, and enforce the crown’s social control against internal enemies during the separatist conflict in the 1860s and 1870s came well after similar colonization and fortification schemes for the Bays of Nipe and Guantánamo dating back to at least 1798. The Count’s illustrious aristocrat ancestor, Joaquín de Santa Cruz y Cárdenas, Count of San Juan de Jaruco, future Count of Santa Cruz de Mopox, was an influential member of the Royal Economic Society of Friends of the Country in colonial Havana, and in Madrid, the Royal Consulate of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, and the Royal Commission of Guantánamo. The latter commission proposed planned cities in the valley of Guantánamo, “La Paz,” and “Alcudia,” and elaborate fortifications to wall off eastern Cuba and “avoid the dangers of a black uprising like in Haiti” then undergoing the throes of its protracted slave revolution. See Ángel Guríao de Vierna, “El proyecto cubano del Conde de Mopox: Aspectos generales de su organización y financiación”; Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, “Fomento y organización del territorio: Un proyecto perdurable del Conde de Mopox y Jaruco”; and the catalog of maps and documents from scientific expeditions housed in Madrid’s Archivo General Militar and Museo Naval in Luisa Martín Meras, “Catalogo de la cartografía de la comisión Mopox”, and Ana María Vigón Sánchez, “Catalogo de la documentación administrativa y organización de la Real Comisión de Guantánamo (1796-1802)” all in *Cuba Ilustrada. Real comisión de Guantánamo, 1796-1802*. 2 vols. (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores S.A. n.d.), I: 17-42, 53-76, 141-158, 195-216. Quote from p. 65. Further plans for white settlement in the wake of ongoing Spanish American wars of independence, and the 1819 cession of Florida to the United States, coincided with the foundation of

In the present-day Cuban province of Granma, near the city of Manzanillo, there is a national monument to the origin of the nineteenth-century wars of independence against Spanish colonialism. At the ruins of the Demajagua sugar estate of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, the “Father of the Nation,” stand both a large ceiba tree whose trunk engulfs an edge of the *ingenio*’s large metal gear wheel, and a stone-built edifice that supports Cuba’s liberty bell.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the famously cracked, one-ton U.S. example in Philadelphia, the Cuban bell was not cast originally to summon political meetings and mark important events. Rather, its initial purpose was as a 300-pound sugar plantation bell that tolled once in the early morning to signal the start of work for slaves and free laborers on the estate. Like the U.S. bell, however, it is associated with kindred republican political projects: the declaration of independence from a European colonial power and the belated efforts to abolish slavery. As North American students sometimes learn in national history classes, the U.S. Liberty Bell rang on 8 July 1776 to proclaim the passage of the Declaration of Independence. Less well known, perhaps, is that by the early nineteenth century it became a political icon and potent image of the unmet promises of liberty for the New York Anti-Slavery Society.

In Spain’s Antillean colony of Cuba—the “ever faithful isle”—the morning of 10 October 1868, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, and forty-seven separatist co-conspirators from nearby areas of the island’s eastern province, rang the bell at La Demajagua and proclaimed the independence of Cuba from Spain. They then freed the thirty-eight slaves who labored at the estate, and invited them to form part of an army of a few hundred self-proclaimed Cuban

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Cienfuegos by colonists from Louisiana. See Acuerdo sobre población de la Bahía de Guantánamo, reprinted in the *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, Havana, V. 12, (July-August 1917): 263-264.

<sup>15</sup> Cubans and some numismatists recall the potent image of the rusting gear wheel swallowed by the growing trunk of the enormous tree has been displayed on banknotes at various times in Cuba’s republican and revolutionary periods. See illustration: Mapa histórico de Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. Centenario de su caída, 1874-1974 (Havana: Imprenta Federico Engels, BNJM, ANC, 1974).

citizens being mobilized to march on the small garrison of Spanish troops in the nearby town of Yara. This event, known as the *Grito de Yara*, led to the start of Cuba's decade-long Guerra Grande or Ten Years' War (1868-1878), which in turn, is recognized as the initially unsuccessful progenitor of the protracted movement for Cuban independence.

The structure supporting the bell was built during the centenary of the *Grito de Yara*. On 10 October 1968, Fidel Castro unveiled the monument, proclaiming that the 1959 Cuban Revolution was the capstone of a single, century-long revolutionary movement that began that day a hundred years before. With the revolution's 1 January 1959 triumph, according to a standard official state-sponsored historical narrative, Cuba had achieved a final independence. The first and second wars of independence failed, but hastened the slow demise of slavery, which would finally be abolished in 1886. Then, from 1895-1898 pro-independence fighters—white, black, mixed-race, but united Cubans all—achieved liberation from Spain and overt colonialism and exploitation. And at long last, in the twentieth century, a revolutionary movement, in this version of events, restored and transformed the nation from a semi-sovereign and neo-colonial “pseudo-republic” or mediated republic in many ways dominated by, and beholden to, the United States. The stone monolith bears roughly the shape of the Cuban crocodile – an informal symbol of the island – with a series of buttresses, each symbolizing important events in the formation of nationality: the Ten Years' War, the successive Little War (1879-1880), the War of Independence (1895-1898) that resulted not in Spanish capitulation but in U.S. intervention in 1898, the 1933 revolution that overthrew the Depression-era dictator Gerardo Machado, and finally, the 1953 to 1959 triumph over Fulgencio Batista. It is a historical teleology in stone.

Thus, according to this nationalist and state-centric view, Cuban history has a clear trajectory and a fixed point of destination. There are powerful, even irresistible, elements to this nationalist and quasi-Marxist historicist narrative, and while scholars of the islands' history recognize the way such a teleological view of the past frames history in a locked step, they have all approached tilting against this windmill with some caution. There is much to this understanding of historical developments viewed in light of ongoing presentist concerns, which gives it credence and staying power; there are aspects at once intangible and yet meaningful, symbolic, and enduring. And Cuba and the United States are hardly the only nations with a received historiography given over frequently to exceptionalism. History has long been handmaiden to the promotion and rehearsal of nationalisms. While the monument, and the history it concretely represents, clearly flatter the revolutionary regime as a definitive break with the past, it also suggests important, even essential, continuities with a rebellious history, indeed invokes a veritable tradition of revolt as a vital feature of national character. Those earlier revolutions are likened to the historical foundations upon which the edifice of the thereby legitimated revolutionary state rests. It resonates with the uneven and unmet promises and mixed legacies of liberalism, conceptions of citizenship, and social change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Like all master narratives, it highlights and remembers certain features; others are forgotten or discarded.

This dissertation project, "In the Fist of Earlier Revolutions: Postemancipation Social Control and State Formation in Guantánamo, Cuba, 1868-1902" takes the opening thirty year process of national independence of this imposing century-long edifice amid accompanying gradual emancipation and the development of capitalist export agriculture systems within a nearby eastern province, Guantánamo, as its point of departure. This district was far more

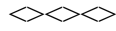
slave-dependent than areas surrounding Manzanillo, and as a result, it was not disposed politically to favor independence at the outset since it relied more on the colonial state. Where a considerably larger proportion of inhabitants in Bayamo and western Oriente initially supported, or eventually rallied to Céspedes' project, the coffee and sugar-producing planters of Guantánamo who dominated local affairs formed a "little Spain" due to their typically pro-colonial loyalties. While the district was far more dependent on slavery than nearby areas of the east, the overall population was small and dispersed over a large area of some of the wildest terrain on the island. This feature elicited periodic worries from the colonial regime that it should be effectively settled lest foreign interlopers establish themselves there. Eventually, the fear of foreign trespass or acquisition became applied to a nativist and Creole nationalist movement advocating independence from the mother colony. As the epigraph to this chapter indicated, the pro-Spanish party feared that Céspedes' internal movement of separatist rebels would lodge themselves there unless the zone was literally re-Hispanized by loyal white peninsular settler-colonists. This settlement-scheme to bolster Spanish social control within the rebellious portions of the colony was apparently never carried out, but the understanding of southeastern Cuba as a frontier overlaid by different discrete waves of settlers—including refugees from the St.-Domingue/Haitian revolution supportive of the continuance of slavery—is crucial to understanding its historical development through the processes of gradual abolition, postemancipation, nationalist rebellion, and U.S. intervention, as will be seen in subsequent chapters.

The region of Guantánamo forms a hinterland to Santiago de Cuba—the island's second largest city—in many regards. Taken together, these southern coastal areas of eastern Cuba have generally been understood as being politically aligned with colonial Spain when

landowners in western and northern Oriente province first revolted against the colonial metropolis in the late nineteenth century. This dissertation's purview is the social control mechanisms over labor and the colony itself during the last decades of colonial rule, and the regional sources of nationality in the early twentieth-century years of halting efforts at nation state formation. It argues that Cuban separatists challenged some durable local structures of social domination and power, transforming them, but not eradicating certain forms, and examines implications of the separatist struggle in a frontier region of the colonial and later republican nation-state.

The period covered by this dissertation project, the latter half of the nineteenth century in Cuba, was an era of complex societal, economic, and cultural transformations. Slavery as the basis for the colonial economy based on agricultural exports came to a gradual end, new processes of free labor appeared, and the consolidation of sugar mills into large *centrales* drawing cane from wide areas continued apace. The period was further marked by long standing desultory conflict over the status of Cuba as a colony. The first modern labor strike in the sugar industry in the district of Guantánamo occurred in 1915, and yet, in waging the wars of independence, separatists paralyzed agricultural production through a concerted campaign of sabotage, economic warfare, arson, and expropriation of property and resources. To tell the story of this nationalist movement "from below" required a temporal frame incorporating the earlier Ten Years' War (1868-1878), which in turn necessitated examining the transformations in coffee cultivation, sugar production, and labor patterns within both sectors, while tracing the nature of rural policing from one of slave patrols to a concerted anti-banditry and counterinsurgent social control role. The fact that a member of this internal militia, the Squadron of Guantánamo, switched sides and became an insurgent

leader, and that the first head of the Rural Guard in the early twentieth century was an ex-insurgent and member of the prominent Brooks family related to regional landowners, recommended a study of continuity and change over this period from the regional level.



The late Antonio Benítez-Rojo described the straits separating Cuba, Hispaniola, and Jamaica as the earliest locus of Hispano-Caribbean Creole culture: “all of the island people found to the west, east, and south of the Windward Passage constituted the first Creole population, culturally speaking.”<sup>16</sup> Havana drew all of the outbound ships from the circum-Caribbean and Gulf Coast into its harbor, from which they would sail on the return voyage to Spain. Settlers in Hispaniola and eastern Cuba, meanwhile, engaged in illicit contraband trade with imperial rivals for meat, hides, tallow, and tobacco against the established crown monopolies. Ultimately, in the early seventeenth century, attempts to restrict this smuggling led to the removal of the population from the north coast of Hispaniola and the razing of disentailed settlements there – known in the history of the Dominican Republic and Haiti as “the devastations.”<sup>17</sup> This drastic response of depopulation and disestablishment to shore up flagging colonial control, perhaps “the harshest collective repression undertaken by Spain against its own colonists” during the early colonial period led fatefully to infiltration of the area by the foreign elements involved in the ongoing smuggling equation: pirates,

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<sup>16</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Translated by James Maraniss (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 51.

<sup>17</sup> Benítez-Rojo, 46-50. On the depopulation of northern Hispaniola in the early seventeenth century, known as the *devastaciones*, see also Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian—Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 34-38; Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998), 42-50. On the divergence between eastern and western Cuba in the literature available in English, see Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 32-33; Robert B. Hoernel, “Sugar and Social Change in Oriente Cuba, 1898-1946,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 8 (November 1976): 217-219; Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba Between Empires, 1878-1902* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), 127.

freebooters, and buccaneers – “transfrontiersmen” all. These interlopers threatened Spain’s New World possessions even during truces in ongoing European wars, since the colonies lay beyond the “Lines of Amity” drawn up after the end of prolonged religious and political conflicts in Europe.<sup>18</sup> As a result, Spain lost control of much of the area first to stateless transfrontiersmen, later to imperial rivals. It marked the beginning of a long age of imperial struggle over the Antilles and North America. That imperial drive for control would last from the seventeenth-century until the end of the Napoleonic Wars in the nineteenth—if not 1898—but reached particular intensity during the many eighteenth-century wars ending with the Seven Years War (1753-1763), the wars of the American and French Revolutions, and the Napoleonic period up to 1815.

The earliest Spanish Caribbean Creole culture survived only in Oriente “after the devastations in Hispaniola and the taking of Jamaica by the English in 1655” and one could here add the loss of western Hispaniola/St.-Domingue to France in the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick, so as a result, “the eastern zone of Cuba remained as the only active seat of culture of the Windward Passage type.”<sup>19</sup> That is, the Spanish colonial emphasis on urban settlements stagnated in the largely ignored Caribbean possessions. There, a sleepy *idiotismus* torpor of rural life predominated, based on largely pre-capitalist subsistence farming combined with cattle ranching, animal husbandry, and tobacco production—and continued smuggling. For students of Caribbean history, this early emphasis on tobacco and cattle gave way in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to sugar’s engrossment of

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<sup>18</sup> The neologism “transfrontiersmen” and description of the Lines of Amity comes from Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Ch. 7, “Anarchy and imperial control,” especially p. 92.

<sup>19</sup> Benítez-Rojo, 53.



arable lands and pasturage, with a servile labor force battening on continuous slave imports from Africa. Cuba's eastern marches and Santo Domingo retained the earlier mode of living and its Creole features the longest. The ruggedly mountainous, rustic, easternmost district would emerge as site of traditions of racial and cultural transculturation and miscegenation/*mestizaje*. Such creolization came to include religious life through veneration of the *Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre*, Cuba's patroness, found—as tradition has it—in Nipe Bay by Juan Indio, Juan Esclavo, and Juan Criollo and moved to her shrine in the mostly black *oriental* copper mining town of El Cobre west of Santiago de Cuba.<sup>20</sup>

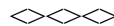
The importance of this “ancient history” to the Guantánamo region cannot be underestimated. The fact that the earliest period of Spanish colonialism emphasized New Spain and Peru, and urban settlement in all of its possessions, left a largely overlooked rural eastern Cuba open to alternative settlement projects by imperial rivals and internal challenges in the form of bandits, smugglers, but most threateningly for planters, autonomous rebel slave communities, or *palenques*, of maroons.<sup>21</sup> This borderlands and frontier quality, in turn, serves as an important leitmotif in the history of Oriente, including the Guantánamo

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<sup>20</sup> Benítez-Rojo, 52-55, See also, María Elena Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), Luis Martínez-Fernández, et al. *Encyclopedia of Cuba: People, History, Culture* 2 vols. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), II: 530-1; Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba: Desde su fundación hasta la Guerra de los Diez Años* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1996).

<sup>21</sup> On the uniqueness of the institution of slave catchers, the *Escuadras de Santa Catalina*, and its early history up to 1850 of suppressing rebel slave communities or *palenques* in the eastern mountains, see Gabino La Rosa Corzo, *Runaway Slave Settlements in Cuba: Resistance and Repression*, translated by Mary Todd, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). The role of this militia as a social control mechanism and part of the colonial state adopts the framework of activities characteristic of states enumerated by Charles Tilly: making war (against external threats), making states (i.e. repressing internal threats, maintaining social control), protection, and extraction (taxation, resource allocation). See Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, Peter B. Evans et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 170-81. On slave patrols as a disciplining body within U.S. slave society, see also Sally E. Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

district, highlighting as it does the primacy of social control based on the need for a militia and rural constabulary as a prop to power relations structured by the plantation model. Even today, faint traces of this enduring preoccupation with military aspects of security may still be visible in the unit of Border Guards, and frequent military exercises, the contemporary Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces maintain guarding their side of the perimeter of the 117 square kilometer U.S. military installation at Guantánamo Bay. Since Cuba is an island, it might seem surprising at first that the Revolutionary Armed Forces have a specialized group of Border Guards apart from a coast guard and navy. During the years following the onset of the Cuban Revolutionary regime and ruptured U.S.-Cuban relations, various border incidents, shootings, and other provocations between U.S. personnel at the base and Cuban guards were a potential source of escalation that led to the creation of a dedicated unit to deal with base security issues from the Cuban side of the perimeter. To this day Guantánamo possesses a much more visible military presence than other parts of the island as a result of the base controlled by the U.S. military on the lower part of the bay. Still a further frontier aspect stemmed historically from the relatively late and peculiar colonization of the largely deserted frontier district, relying on external capital from western Cuba and from foreign investors to develop the area as a plantation agriculture enclave economy.



This dissertation's title, "In the Fist of Earlier Revolutions" is a tribute to the late writer Jose Yglesias' classic 1968 account of life in rural Cuba, written the centennial year of those events at La Demajagua, about continuities and changes occasioned by nearly a decade of social revolution in Mayarí near the northern coast of Oriente.<sup>22</sup> Although a historian

writing of a time period such as the late nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth, from which no direct participants in the interplay of events remain, must necessarily rely on often fragmentary documentary evidence. Yet, in some ways, perhaps similarly to his book based around first-hand participant observations of the late 1960s, one can strive to adopt a view of portentous historical developments from within through using a mosaic of sources—many generated in letters and reports from the conflict itself—from the national and regional archives in Cuba and Spain as well as materials from U.S. libraries and repositories. Where Yglesias’s subject was the townsfolk’s view of longstanding, repeated patterns of social life and clear breaks brought about by the twentieth-century Cuban Revolution that propelled the July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement and Cuban Communist Party to power, a central proposition of this dissertation is to view in microcosm the nineteenth-century “provinces of the revolution” in a maelstrom of social changes wrought by the emancipation of slavery, the development of anti-colonial insurgency, and the transformations of social control during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, into the opening of the twentieth century. These transformations in labor, race, the development of nationality, and conflicts of control and resistance—contestations over the content and concrete meanings of citizenship—constitute the plural earlier *revolutions* of the title. But where Yglesias’s book often sought aspects of the larger Cuban reality, or whole picture, refracted in the everyday lives of Mayarí’s inhabitants, this study also strives to recapture the particularistic, unique regionalisms of the district that have become lost in, or overlooked by, a nation-centered historiography.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jose Yglesias, *In the Fist of the Revolution: Life in a Cuban Country Town* (New York: Pantheon, 1968).

<sup>23</sup> In addition to the micro-historical concerns outlined in the Preface above, the scholarly questions of the dissertation owe much to Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

A premise of the dissertation is that the very geographic insularity of Cuba has largely erased important regional distinctions and idiosyncrasies that were much more prominent in earlier periods, and in fact, while often overlooked retain no less significance today. For while it has been recognized that Cuba's transition from a colony principally of military and strategic importance to Spain in the eighteenth century to an economic colony based on slave-based production of tropical cash-crops for export in the nineteenth century—and Fernando Ortiz's recognition in his classic *Cuban Counterpoint* that the most important historical agents or causative factors for historic change were sugar and tobacco—this plantation-based economic trajectory speaks more to the experiences of western Cuban districts such as Havana, Matanzas, Colón, Cárdenas, and Cienfuegos.<sup>24</sup> In marshalling documentary evidence and making claims about island-wide developments, there is a marked tendency for historians to draw from many regions that had a pronounced divergent individual character in the past. While it is certainly the case that there are strong examples of cultural practices and social features common to all parts of the island, it is no less true that the ways in which change occurred at different rates and in different areas necessitates the disaggregation of regions of the island, especially in the case of Cuba's easternmost provinces. This study therefore puts forth a refined regional-level view for understanding the momentous changes of emancipation and anti-colonial mobilizations in the face of continued pro-colonial opposition and efforts to maintain the control of the metropolis, namely by bringing a different lens closer in to how these key transformative conflicts looked within the periphery rather than from the economic and social heart of the colony. The study strives to

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(Boston: Beacon, 1995), for the conceptualization of uneven archival power that mirrors power relations, and pp. 37-40 "The War within the War", and 53-68 on Sans Souci in the Haitian Revolution.

<sup>24</sup> Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, translated by Harriet de Onís (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947, reprint; Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

see how the broad national-level patterns played out on the ground. And after all, it was in the remote east that Cuba's revolutions first gained traction, a feature that for the cases of the nineteenth-century Ten Years' War, and the "Guerra Chiquita" or Little War, 1879-1880, was somewhat perplexing since in the three decades before the 1860s, the development of export agriculture amid ever proliferating sugar mills, the rise and fall of widespread coffee cultivation, and rising tobacco exports saw a whole series of slave revolts great and small in the western districts.<sup>25</sup>

For elites, such slave revolts and other forms of resistance necessitated a vigilant and functional system of social control. Such concerns were not confined to the period of slavery alone. The system that relied on low cost labor sought to control the dimensions and parameters of freedom against the exertions for greater autonomy and independence by the emancipated. A further proposition of this dissertation is that the theme of social control allows for an analysis of how different social strata—classes, races, genders—interacted in ongoing struggles over freedom and citizenship.<sup>26</sup> Social control in the title refers to the exercise of power and maintenance of hegemony, implicitly and explicitly, to preserve, defend, and extend a highly unequal class and racial caste system that determined access to land, resources, and social status. This proposition harkens back to the understanding that continual resistance and the threat of social violence was always a hallmark of slave systems throughout the African Diaspora in the New World, concisely and memorably phrased by

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<sup>25</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 54-61. Writing of the range and scale of rebellion and restiveness, p. 55: "the recorded list of uprisings in nineteenth-century Cuba is impressive." Some of these revolts, including the 1809 Aponte rebellion, and the 1843 Escalera or "Ladder" conspiracy—about which, more later—prefigured the Creole revolt for independence by decades.

<sup>26</sup> Gad Heuman and David V. Trotman, eds. *Contesting Freedom: Control and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean* (Oxford: Macmillan Caribbean Publishers Ltd., 2005).

nineteenth-century North American abolitionists John Brown and Lysander Spooner as the “state of Slavery is a state of war.”

The emphasis on the exploitation of labor, resistance, and repression inherent within the study of social control by colonial, neo-colonial, and national elites has undergone a shift from the study of comparative slave systems to postemancipation studies. Social control offers historical researchers an important means to analyze the transitions from slavery to postemancipation societies. This scholarly concern, as the late historian of the formation of racial constructs arising out of labor relations in the colonial period, and of the origins of racial oppression of African-descended people in North America stemming from an imperative need for social control, Theodore Allen (1919-2005) put it:

with regard to the class struggle and social control in general in the Americas, attention will need to be given to the resistance and rebellion practiced by the African bond-laborers and their descendants, from the moment of embarkation from the shores of Africa to the years of maroon defiance in the mountains and forests of America; from the quarry’s first start of alarm to the merger of the emancipation struggle with movements for national independence and democracy four hundred years later.<sup>27</sup>

In the case of Cuba and the Caribbean, meeting this challenge necessitates a temporal frame that straddles the transitions from the dismantlement and disintegration of servile labor forms to free wage labor and the processes of gradual abolition and the emergence of postemancipation society. Thus, while a regional history of these societal shifts, this study contributes to the Cuban, North American, and Spanish historiography of the crucially

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<sup>27</sup> Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race. Volume II: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America* (London: Verso, 1997), 9. This two-volume study of race as a social construct that consciously arose through elite social control concerns centered around questions of labor in colonial contexts and the New World, particularly the characteristics of racial oppression within the United States. See *Volume I: Racial Oppression and Social Control. Volume 2: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America*. (London: Verso, 1994-1997). A *précis* of the book is available online: Allen. “Summary of the Argument of *The Invention of the White Race*.” *Cultural Logic: An Electronic Journal of Marxist Theory and Practice*. Volume 1, Number 2, (Spring 1998): <<http://eserver.org/clogic/1-2/allen.html>> and <<http://eserver.org/clogic/1-2/allen2.html>>.

important half-century and also to a burgeoning transnational scholarship on a panoply of issues arising from the African Diaspora in the Atlantic World and what happened after slavery—inclusive of Afro-Latin America and the Reconstruction-era United States.<sup>28</sup>

Of the slave systems in the Americas, those of Brazil and Cuba proved the longest in duration. Brazil's formed early in the northeastern sugar plantation complex, and remained intense into the nineteenth-century with the rise of coffee exports. Racial slavery was introduced early to Cuba, but became strongly associated with the Caribbean sugar revolution, and gained greater impetus after the Haitian Revolution.<sup>29</sup> The slave system of both Brazil and Cuba peaked in intensity during the nineteenth century, and slave owners clung stubbornly to the illegal slave trade until it was halted by interdiction, principally by Great Britain by 1850 in the Brazilian case, and by internal and external factors including the onset of the U.S. Civil War in Cuba.<sup>30</sup> Similarities of both cases extended to mutual

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<sup>28</sup> Examples of this literature and some of its progenitors include Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*; Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998); Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*; Cooper, Holt, Scott, *Beyond Slavery*; Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*; Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*; Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South From Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); Hall; Helg, *Our Rightful Share*; Heuman and Trotman, eds.; Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992); Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Martínez Heredia, Scott, and García Martínez, *Espacios, silencios y los sentidos de la libertad: Cuba entre 1878 y 1912*; Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999); Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba and Degrees of Freedom*; Scott, Cooper, Holt, and McGuinness, eds. *Societies After Slavery*; Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*.

<sup>29</sup> On Brazil, see Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985). For Cuba, see Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970). For sugar plantations in the Caribbean, see Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, and Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 105-36 and chs. 4 and 5.

application of measured emancipation. In Brazil, from 1871 to final abolition in 1888 slavery declined due to the so-called Law of the Free Womb, or Rio Branco regulation that freed children born to slave mothers.<sup>31</sup> In Cuba, a similar gradual freedom edict, the 1870 Moret law, freed children born after 1868 upon reaching legal adulthood, and slaves over the age of sixty. This prevailed in manumitting slaves over an extended period until an “apprenticeship” system (the *patrocinado* law) in 1880 followed by final abolition in 1886 in the case of Cuba. In this approach they conformed to a Caribbean gradual emancipation pattern of 1834-1838 for the British West Indies, 1848 for the French Antilles, and 1863 for Dutch possessions. The lines had first been drawn during slavery’s overthrow in 1791-1794 in St.-Domingue, followed by the defeat of French attempts to restore slavery from 1802 to 1804, along the axes of pressures generated by free people of color for greater rights and equality, the contradictions of liberalism in the nineteenth century, and the ever present possibility, or fear— never entirely remote —of slave rebellion, possibly on the scale of the Haitian revolution. The situation of Cuba was marked by upheaval and warfare within the colony, which hastened the demise of slavery in Oriente and Puerto Príncipe, as will be seen. One feature of a regional study that must be taken into account, is that military mobilization, social disruption, and the effects of the wars against Spain assume a greater role in the story of emancipation within the island’s southeast than other avenues to manumission and

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<sup>30</sup> Arthur Corwin, *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1817-1886* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967) esp. chs. 8 and 9; Heuman and Trotman, xviii; Knight, *Slave Society During the Nineteenth Century*; Schmidt-Nowara, 15, 27, 28. Stanley Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900*, 294, cited a total of 1,542,230 slaves in Brazil in 1873, and 8,419,672 free inhabitants in 1872. Some 500,000 remained slaves by final abolition in 1888. In the case of Cuba, Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, pp. 87, 193-94 revealed a peak slave population in all of Cuba of 368,550 in 1862 declining to 199,094 by 1877 three years before “apprenticeship” or the *patrocinado* system took effect. By final abolition in 1886 there were 25,381 *patrocinados* remaining, primarily concentrated in the island’s western rural districts and urban areas.

<sup>31</sup> For abolition in Brazil, see Robert E. Conrad, *The Destruction of Brazilian Slavery 1850-1888* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1993)



abolition such as *coartación*, or self-manumission through purchase, which was primarily an urban phenomenon, or other features that applied to most other regions, which can create undue emphasis and misimpressions of such factors for Cuba as a whole.<sup>32</sup>

Nonetheless, while military matters assume an exaggerated role in the story of slavery's end in eastern Cuba than in the sugar monoculture and port city core of the west, it is a further premise of this study that warfare played a key explanatory role in the transformation of the district. The conflicts of the late nineteenth century also underlay the acquisition of not just the lower part of the bay by the United States as a coaling station of strategic importance, but an early post-1899-1902 example of U.S. direct investment and acquisition of a sugar enclave by 1905, well before U.S. capital outstripped Britain's as the leading source of foreign investment in the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>33</sup> Political disorders and constant tumult of rebellion were salient leitmotifs of the late nineteenth century, and contributed to the nature of electoral politics, rebellion against incumbent political figures, and oppositional movements by black Cubans in the early twentieth century. War resulted in population movements, provoked chaos, uprooted settlements, destroyed much of the rural economy, and radically altered politics on the ground. It was a potent source of collective mobilizations and struggles, causing a range of demographic shifts as inhabitants from other districts became drawn to one of the contending sides.

A final word on premises in the study concerns racial constructs, descriptive terminology, and place names. First, beginning with changing place names, for much of the

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<sup>32</sup> For fuller treatment of abolition in Cuba, see Corwin; Schmidt-Nowara; and Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas, 466-70, 509-11, 536-37.

time frame under study Cuba's easternmost province was named Santiago de Cuba. In the 1850s and 1860s this was further subdivided into the jurisdictions—moving across the map of eastern Cuba from east to west—of Baracoa, Guantánamo, Santiago de Cuba, Bayamo, and Manzanillo, with Holguín along the north coast west of the Bahía de Nipe, and Las Tunas to the west along the border of Puerto Príncipe. In order to avoid confusion with the city and jurisdiction of Santiago de Cuba that using these archaic but historically accurate terms might incur, the easternmost province is typically rendered as simply “Oriente” in this text, which would more properly be the province name for much of the twentieth century until the 1976 territorial reorganization. Similarly, present-day Camagüey province and city were both known as Puerto Príncipe during much of the nineteenth-century period under study, yet in the dissertation the province is often referred to as Camagüey to distinguish it from the city for readers less familiar with the island's geographic regions. Similarly, Guantánamo today is the name of a province, the capital of the province astride the Guaso River, a broad and deep-water bay, and the name of a U.S. military installation at the lower portion of that body of water. Until 1870 the city (then a town) was usually referred to as Santa Catalina de Guaso, or Santa Catalina del Saltadero after a set of rapids and falls on the river. Here the dissertation tries to employ a precise descriptor and context of what feature identified by Guantánamo is being discussed to avoid confusion. Other variations from terms of the period, and relevant geographic boundaries are defined where appropriate.

Second, as far as descriptive racial terms are concerned, those employed in Cuba have often drawn on a range of features beyond, but inclusive of skin tones and shades including hair texture and other phenotypical characteristics that indicate salient African or European ancestry to present an often bewildering range of categories. Much has been written about

the “one drop rule” prevalent in U.S. race relations, in which racial constructs posit two monolithic races “white” and “black,” and where any visible sign of African genetic inheritance rendered one black as far as “whites” were concerned. Cuban racial classifications, particularly in the east, posited a continuum whereby racially mixed persons inhabited a third category, but one that was open to overlays of class and given social settings and surroundings. For much of the colonial time period under study, at least until the 1880s, social and legal stigma were associated with being a free person of color, and legal “whiteness” was demarcated by the use of honorific terms such as “Don” or “Doña.”<sup>34</sup> In translating Spanish terms to English, “black” refers to the classifications *negro* or *moreno* while “mixed race” and the un-translated “mulato” appears for *mulato* or *pardo* (literally, “brown,” “dark,” or “gray”). The term *mestizo* also denotes someone of mixed heritage, which can cause confusion since the term is usually associated in Latin America to refer to Indian/ European mixed-descent. The ambiguity of the use of term here is deliberate, since an Indian population survived in some measure as “*indios*” in remote mountainous portions of eastern Cuba. The term *de color* is rendered “of color.”

The lexicon of racial terms was generally understood as being rooted in medieval Iberian conceptions of “purity of blood laws” being applied in the New World. With the prevalence of African slave labor, these terms denoted the distance from servile condition, and the social stigma associated with it.<sup>35</sup> Over time, what historian of racial oppression,

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<sup>34</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 41, 55-56.

<sup>35</sup> On race, color and attitudes toward inter-racial relationships between the sexes see Verena Martinez-Alier (Stolcke), *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: A study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989). See also Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, and Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 8-9. See also Theodore Allen, *The Invention of the White Race V.I: Racial Oppression and Social Control* and *V.II: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America* (London: Verso, 1994-1997); Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*; Richard Graham, ed. *The Idea of Race in Latin*

Theodore Allen termed a middle class social control stratum between the enslaved dark-skinned laboring population and the light-skinned European colonist became interposed to maintain order and serve as militia, if need be, given the fear of internal resistance and outright rebellion. In much of the Caribbean, this middle class stratum arose from a mediated and partial inclusion of mixed-race or free-status blacks. In the case of mainland British North American colonies, eventually freed indentured Europeans became a yeomanry to serve as a buffer against physical Indian attack, and to guard against too much cultural syncretism and hybridization that threatened European-derived social norms and identity as British subjects. Importantly, this settler middle social control strata or yeomanry, as a group allied by dint of white skin privilege, and racist solidarity, shared with planter interests vis-à-vis restive African and African American slave workers. Thus, in the colonial period, the condition of slavery became differentiated from indentured servitude as hereditary lifetime bond labor, and children inherited slave status from an enslaved mother.<sup>36</sup> Over time, a peculiar “white race” construct of great longevity developed in the North American colonies, which frequently resulted in white Europeans and their colonist progeny becoming perplexed at the sight of a free-colored middle sector of artisans, urban workers, tenants, small farmers, and militia in the Caribbean context.<sup>37</sup>

The middle social control stratum made up of mulattos and free people of color convinced some—casual observers and earlier comparative scholars alike—that slavery

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*America, 1870-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*; Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967); Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (London: Pluto Press, 1997).

<sup>36</sup> Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, V. II*; See also Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>37</sup> Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, V. II*, ch. 12.

somehow did not have the same rigor in some Caribbean and Latin American contexts as elsewhere. An example of this confusion over variances in racial formation and explanations for it in the nineteenth-century came from a North American visitor, Samuel Hazard, who tried to make sense of the racially mixed population of Santo Domingo on Hispaniola:

It is a conceded and curious fact, that while the early Spaniards of St Domingo had been the severest of taskmasters to their negro slaves, as time wore on they seem, for some reason or other, to have lost this habit, and their slaves were infinitely much better treated than those of the French. This may partly be accounted for from the fact that population became so reduced in the island at one time, that master and slave relied upon each other for company and support, and the chains were in this way gradually lightened.<sup>38</sup>

The notion that “master and slave relied upon each other for company and support” was a misinterpretation of the relative absence of extensive plantations such as existed on the French St. Domingue side of Hispaniola, which necessitated a taxing and brutal labor discipline and regime directed at obtaining profits for a planter embedded in mercantilist capitalist agriculture of absolutist France.

The theory of relative lassitude in Iberian slavery persisted in much of the early literature of comparative New World slave systems. But slavery tied to exacting labor such as plantation agriculture promoted abuse, resistance, and repression quite irrespective of pre-conceptions from Europe about people of color or religious and legal attempts to inveigh into the treatment of those subject to it. As Gwendolyn Midlo Hall wrote in her classic comparative study of colonial social control concerns in eighteenth-century St. Domingue and nineteenth-century Cuba:

evidence would indicate that a preexisting racial attitude of the people of the colonizing nations was not the crucial factor in determining policy toward

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<sup>38</sup> Samuel Hazard, *Santo Domingo, Past and Present; With a Glance at Hayti* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873), 102-3 [hereinafter cited as Hazard, *Santo Domingo*].

emancipation of the slaves and the status of the free colored population, but the crucial factors were the sharp internal and external conflicts and tensions which beset these colonial societies.<sup>39</sup>

As she persuasively argued, the economic structure of the economy and the numbers of slaves within a given context had far greater explanatory power than traditional conceptions regarding race from the Old World.

As for the composition of the social control stratum, the absence of a yeomanry united by racial identification with the master classes resulted periodically during the colonial period in creating armed militias of free people of color. These free people of mixed race could be quite privileged in relation to slaves, but generally held in an inferior status to whites. In a number of Caribbean contexts, black and mixed-race troops were used against imperial rivals and internal rebels including maroons.<sup>40</sup> If attitudes regarding race were not as significant than the structure of a given colony, then pre-existing Iberian institutions dedicated to the suppression of rural banditry underwent some conversion. Some internal policing mechanisms initially transplanted to the Antilles go back to the medieval legal codes, the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X. In this early modern version of men-at-arms patrolling roads the *Santa Hermandad*, a retinue of landowners, was empowered to investigate and punish crimes in sparsely inhabited areas, towns of fewer than a hundred inhabitants, cases of breaking and entering, sexual assaults, and all acts of rebellion against public order and authority.

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<sup>39</sup> Hall, 135.

<sup>40</sup> See Richard Price, ed. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1979); Richard Price and Sally Price, eds. *Stedman's Surinam: Life in an Eighteenth-Century Slave Society*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992); Peter Voelz *Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in the Colonial Americas* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993).

Applied to the suppression of slave revolts and especially organized bands of runaways, however, a more formal reliance on standing bodies of armed men became a general rule over time. The demise of Caribbean slavery was first broached by the example of the 1791-1804 Haitian Revolution. Prior to the outbreak of rebellion in France's most valuable colony by free black *affranchis* or *gens de couleur* along with the plantation slaves themselves, French colonial officials attempted to impose the status of middle social control stratum on free and manumitted people of color by creating the *maréchaussée* in 1717, and reorganizing it by 1733:

By the Colonial Government [free men of color in St. Domingue] were treated, however, as slaves, being compelled, on reaching the age of manhood, to serve for three years in a military establishment, called the *Maré Chaussée* [sic]. This consisted of a certain number of companies of infantry, which were chiefly employed as rangers in clearing the woods of "marons," as runaway slaves were called; and though this organization was eventually broken up, from the fear that arose that it afforded the people of colour a means of knowing their own strength, and of holding general communication with each other throughout the island, it was long enough in existence to have that very effect.

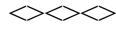
Upon the expiration of their terms of service in the *Maré Chaussée*, the mulattoes were also subject to the work of the *corvées*, a species of labour allotted for the repair of the highways, the hardships of which nearly all authorities agree in describing as terrible. Although they rendered all their military service in the militia of their particular province without pay or allowance, being in fact compelled to provide their own arms and accoutrements, they were nevertheless entirely deprived of any power to hold public office or employment, and were entirely debarred from all manner of liberal professions, and even the taint of blood spread to the latest posterity, so that no white man of any character ever thought of marriage with them. In the courts of justice, also, there was one justice for the white man and another for the coloured.<sup>41</sup>

This passage by a nineteenth-century traveler illustrated the constraints put on free people of color in Caribbean colonies. They were required as a prop for social control, serving as manpower for a constabulary or military institution together with other demarcated and

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<sup>41</sup> Hazard, *Santo Domingo*, 110. See also Hall, 76, 100, 116-17. For Spanish militia of *morenos* and *pardos libres*, see 118-19.

delimited social roles. Yet, they could never be entirely trusted by whites in a system of racial slavery no matter how great a social distance was maintained between the caste groups.



Race constructs would undergo different forms, and the meanings ascribed to them would shift over the time period after slavery. The post-abolition experience for Cubans of color would draw on previous options opened to the participation of free people of color, but also move into new areas and assume new directions. Social control would be drawn on national grounds as Spain attempted to assert control over the colony; for colonial officials, race would recede into a more muted concern, one mediated by class conflicts, but still remain important within elite social control concerns. “In the Fist of Earlier Revolutions” examines the Cuban trajectory of postemancipation social control and state formation from the vantage point of Guantánamo. It is a narrative history of 1868 to 1902, encompassing the watersheds of the Ten Years’ War, gradual emancipation, the War of Independence, and U.S. intervention followed by the early years of the Republic. Nested within the regional focus of the narrative description are several related microhistories.

Chapter I, “Al filo del agua: Guantánamo On the Edge of the Storm,” presents an impressionistic portrait of the district on the eve of the Ten Years’ War, when it was a slave-dependent offshoot of Santiago de Cuba. It follows Samuel Hazard, the author of the observations above about the history of Santo Domingo and policing the St. Domingue slave colony by conscription of free people of color, on his journey to the small-scale but island-renowned coffee plantations in the mountains surrounding the sugar mills of the *llano* or plain surrounding the bay. The district had been practically deserted through long years of earlier colonial history, and had seen an unsuccessful 1741 British invasion during one of the



aforementioned eighteenth-century Anglo-Spanish wars.<sup>42</sup> Officials discussed various proposals to settle the district, but these had lacked urgency until the Haitian Revolution raised the prospect of international conflict in the Caribbean, and the spread of anti-slavery ideology to other plantation colonies. In the wake of this crisis, while the plantation model in much of the rest of Cuba was invigorated and consciously extended to meet the demands for sugar and coffee once satisfied by primarily St. Domingue, Guantánamo and Santiago de Cuba received an infusion of French immigration as refugees fled the conflagration.

Guantánamo remained a frontier district perceived as vulnerable to slave resistance in the form of flight and inviting to potential alternative development including subsistence agriculture by squatters and the formation of rebel slave communities. This feature stimulated attempts to wall off eastern Cuba from the baneful influence of Haitian slave revolution, but also created and reprioritized standing internal social control challenges. The direct presence of Spanish troops as ultimate guarantor of social control was augmented by a voluntary rural *gendarmerie*, or paramilitary body, the Squadron of Santa Catalina de Guaso. This militia remained a force within the area even as the number of maroons apparently subsided. In turn, the development of sugarcane cultivation and processing, worked by slave labor but frequently owned by absentee planters, engrossed some of the most fertile lands in the district. By 1854, a prominent British merchant house, Brooks and Company, introduced railway transportation and technology to facilitate the development of the areas' sugar exports, and so a sugar enclave became implanted atop the earlier French and Creole coffee plantation society. Isolation from nearby areas, the foreign quality of the French and Creole coffee sector, the capital-intensive sugar and railway complex, and the relatively high

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<sup>42</sup> Gott, 39-41.

percentages of slaves—certainly in comparison to other regions of the pre-capitalist east—all militated against the region responding favorably to Carlos Manuel de Céspedes' summons to revolt against Spain.

Chapter III, “Al filo del machete: ‘Black Arm and Cuban Heart’—The Separatist Invasion of Guantánamo” presents the onset of the Ten Years’ War in the Guantánamo region, not as a result of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes’ invocation of independence from a Spain that itself was undergoing civil war and political instability, but through an 1871 separatist insurgent offensive directed principally at the coffee sector in the third year of the war. The confrontation between rebels within and without the zone with the district’s denizens sets the regional particularity of Santiago and Guantánamo in relief against the rest of Oriente province during the rebellion, where there was greater relative support for separatism. Slaves would sometimes take the opportunity afforded by the insurrection against Spanish imperial control, but often also sought to distance themselves from it. And given the weakness of the first insurrection against Spain, slaves encountered rebels often through forcible induction or demands on their labor by the state-in-formation. The chapter argues that slaves asserted their own autonomy and pursued their own objectives wherever possible. Sometimes their motives were in tandem with rebel objectives, at other times they were not.

The rebels began their attack by assailing pro-colonial loyalists in the region as well as Spanish troops, and burning the region’s famous coffee estates scattered in the high-altitude locales conducive to the crops’ cultivation scattered in forested mountains. The rebel incorporation of the district into the wider rebellion in Oriente and parts of central Cuba was, however, not a clear victory for the separatists as is so often described in much of the

nationalist historiography. As historians have noted about the first Cuban war of independence, the attempted separatist revolution in the colony elicited a furious counterrevolution by peninsular-born Volunteers. At times this strident, reactionary movement broke with the authority of Spanish officials deemed too liberal or indecisive in exerting a heavy hand against rebellion. In a sense, Spain found itself faced with two concurrent uprisings against its rule. Typically, the Volunteers had the upper hand in western Cuba, with its huge plantations, black slaves, and Spanish sojourners and migrants, while the unprepossessing eastern provinces of mixed patterns of farming and ranching were site of the bulk of fighting. In Guantánamo this civil conflict included Cuban-born pro-Spanish *integristas* fighting against pro-independence separatists from nearby areas of the east. After invading the district, separatists failed to carry their offensive operations against the sugar sector, which was better protected by the Spanish than the coffee farms in the hill country. The scale the rebellion acquired largely overthrew the pre-existing social control militia, and forced the Spanish military to assume the role of keeping slaves in check, guarding property, and attempting to quash the separatist rebellion. But the militia, the Squadrons of Santa Catalina survived into a new epoch characterized by the social control concern of banditry and the emergence of wage labor.

The Guantánamo district, for separatists, may have been a late addition in being incorporated into the first war of independence, but the slaves in the sugar *llano* proved receptive to separatist appeals—particularly those made by free Cuban leaders of color—in the succeeding conflict: the so-called Little War, 1879-1880, which arose to rekindle the failed independence struggle. Those remaining slaves found rebellion plausible when freedom was forthcoming to slaves that had risen in rebellion as part of the terms ending the

first war. A Santiago de Cuba-born mulatto rebel leader, Antonio Maceo, had refused to surrender his command to the Spanish at Baraguá in 1878 without guarantees of either independence for Cuba or immediate abolition of slavery. Although he was shortly driven into exile, slaves took up the opportunity to push for a more immediate amelioration of their status than that promised by the Moret gradual emancipation law in 1870. As mentioned earlier, 1880 marked the transition to “apprenticeship”—token wage payments made to remaining slaves—while the end of the Little War resulted in many separatist leaders’ exile or imprisonment.

Chapter IV: “Resettlement, Recovery, and the War of Independence, 1880-1898” examines the social changes after the war in the decade of the 1880s as slavery definitively came to an end, and the renewal of the anti-colonial armed struggle from 1895 to 1898. This was a transitional period where tenancy arrangements and sharecropping emerged after slavery with some traditional forms inherited by the white and mixed-race peasantry, along with new patterns of settlement and autonomy. Meanwhile, a capital-intensive sugar sector continued to engross arable lands in the *cuenca* or valley that could be accessed by a network of steam trains to central mills. Class relations became more complex, and the separatist cause gained adherents including among some of the former state agents such as Pedro Agustín Pérez, an ex-member of the Squadron of Santa Catalina. By 1895, the separatists, re-organized both on the island and in exile through the efforts of José Martí and other leaders in the *Partido Cubano Revolucionario* reinitiated the revolt for independence.

The chapter offers an account of insurgency and counterinsurgency and the deleterious effects of warfare on the civilian populace. In marked contrast with the earlier conflicts, separatist support was much more pronounced at the outset. The negotiations over

the payment of war taxes—punctuated by periodic destruction of the standing cane by repeated fires, and threats of worse to come by Liberation Army leaders and a tax collector who, apparently, was a veteran of the Ten Years’ War, and the Brooks and Company operating many sugar mills and the district railway under the attempts by the Spanish to defeat the renewed insurrection form a microhistory of social-control concerns and elite negotiations with rebels over the social function of their property, and attitudes toward the formation of a Cuban state that would arise with the Liberation Army’s victory. As it happened, however, the United States intervened in the conflict by 1898.

Chapter V: “1898: U.S. Intervention and the First Occupation” traces the onset of U.S. Navy operations in Guantánamo, the first place where U.S. troops landed, on June 10, 1898, during the war that summer between the United States and Spain over imperial possessions in the Caribbean and the Pacific. In contrast to most portrayals of the events at Guantánamo, which are relegated to a footnote by military historiography of the war because the decisive events took place in Manila, Santiago de Cuba, and the diplomatic arenas of the United States and Spain, the chapter examines the collaboration that initially characterized relations between U.S. Marines and Cuban Liberation Army troops. Despite the brevity of fighting against the Spanish army, the blockade of the island by the U.S. fleet after three years of irregular warfare in an agrarian society provoked an enormous humanitarian crisis of generalized famine and worsened prevailing outbreaks of disease that had stricken the population during wartime Spanish population-removal counterinsurgency tactics (*reconcentración*). The chapter marks the rupture of Spanish control over the island, and the reconfiguration of relations between regional elites, rebel leaders, and the North American occupiers.

The conclusions, Chapter VI: ““On Trial Before the World’: Social Control and Public Violence in the Mediated Republic” foregrounds the changes of the early twentieth century where Brooks and Company was subsumed in 1905 by the National Sugar Refining Company of New Jersey as the Guantánamo Sugar Company. This consolidation of sugar under North American control formed an early example of a pattern begun in the 1880s, but that accelerated greatly during the first decades of the twentieth century. In the twentieth century the United States would, in the course of a hegemonic role throughout the circum-Caribbean, assume the ultimate guarantor role for preserving the system prevailing in the early Cuban republic, mediated by the protectorate status imposed through the 1901 Platt Amendment. One feature of Cuba’s status would be the naval base on Guantánamo Bay made through treaty arrangements in 1903—a forward naval position geared to the U.S. projection of power in the wider circum-Caribbean—and locally, the establishment of a Rural Guard to suppress rural criminal behavior and defuse internal threats to plantations, or even prospects of rural resistance or rebellion to the newly configured republican nation state. Sugar reasserted its central monocrop role that shaped local labor patterns, while a post-war land-rush pushed the sugar economy into new areas at the same moment as the rural population grew and settlers moved into eastern Cuba generally after the end of the war. The era was also marked by local manifestations of an island-wide large-scale influx of migrants and immigrants from Spain. The study ends on the eve of Cuban national independence in 1902, mediated by U.S. protectorate status. It is important to note, however, that on the anniversary of the first decade of the inauguration of the republic, an independent all black political party the *Independientes de Color*, led by *orientales*, embarked on an armed protest against the proscription of their movement, to which the republican state responded with

wholesale repression against the mostly black and mixed-race rural peasantry carried out by the recently constituted national Permanent Army and Rural Guard as well as militia from different parts of the island.

## CHAPTER II:

### Al filo del agua: Guantánamo on the edge of the storm

*The three great staple productions of Cuba are sugar, the sweetener; coffee, the tonic; and tobacco, the narcotic of half the world.*

--Maturin M. Ballou.<sup>43</sup>

*You believe, perhaps, gentlemen, that the production of coffee and sugar is the natural destiny of the West Indies. Two centuries ago, nature, which does not trouble herself about commerce, had planted neither sugar-cane nor coffee trees there.*

--Karl Marx, "On the Question of Free Trade" 9 January 1848.

*For the invalid traveler I can imagine no more perfect country or life than that of the Coffee Mountains of the Yateras [Guantánamo]. ... If, in some happy day for the Cubans, their island shall be blessed with a more liberal government ... which will be followed by a strong tide of emigration, these hills, mountains, and valleys of ... Yateras will be the chosen spots of the island; for here, with comparatively little expense and less trouble, can be made the most beautiful homes in the world for those fond of rural life and the beauties of nature.*

--Samuel Hazard.<sup>44</sup>

In the "fall of the year in which" the U.S. Civil War and slavery ended in the United States' break-away southern territories, a thirty-year old Union army veteran-turned-travel-writer from Germantown, Pennsylvania, Samuel Hazard, Jr., "a man of superior culture ... highly esteemed by all who knew him," visited much of Cuba, including Guantánamo.<sup>45</sup> In 1861,

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<sup>43</sup> Maturin M. Ballou, *Due South, or Cuba Past and Present* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885, reprint; New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 245. Ballou first visited the island in "1845, at a period when the slave traffic was vigorously, though surreptitiously carried on between Africa and the island." He wrote a dramatized account of witnessing the clandestine landing of enslaved Africans from an illegal "Baltimore clipper" slaver under the gaze of an ineffectual French anti-slavery patrol ship near Batabanó south of Havana. See p. 282.

<sup>44</sup> Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1871), 476-477 [hereinafter cited as Hazard]. See also, Hazard, *Santo Domingo, Past and Present; With a Glance at Hayti*, which was written while he was part of a 1869-1870 commission "on the question of the admission of St Domingo into the Union," viii.



when the great conflict over secession began, he had been invalided for service after joining the 6<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry. As historian David Brion Davis has written, the protracted and bloody nature of the war for the (re)Union assured that slavery would not be preserved; accompanying the restoration and reconstruction of the U.S. republic there would be an emancipation proclamation by 1863, when, despite health problems, Hazard re-entered service as a captain in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Artillery.<sup>46</sup> If, in hindsight, the abolition of slavery in the United States was a fortuitous circumstance accomplished during the prosecution of bitter sectional conflict—a conflict of which the very question of human bondage uneasily co-existing within republican institutions was constitutive—then history’s hindsight would also indicate that the removal of Cuba’s similarly “peculiar institution” proved a pre-condition to the attainment of the island’s independence.<sup>47</sup> Hazard’s journey to Cuba—which together with Puerto Rico constituted Spain’s two remaining New World possessions—came on the edge of a storm: just before the beginning of its first sustained war of independence amid

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<sup>45</sup> “Obituary Major Samuel Hazard,” *New York Times*, 12 January 1876, p.4 [hereinafter cited as *NYT*].

<sup>46</sup> David Brion Davis, *Challenging the Boundaries of Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 90; “Obituary Major Samuel Hazard,” *NYT*, 12 January 1876, p.4.

<sup>47</sup> Still a further obstacle arose from a racist pessimism held by many Cuban whites about the presence and role of free blacks in a Cuban polity. How Cuban separatists “disarmed” such social questions about the role of black citizens to posit a racially inclusive nationalism against Spanish race propaganda is among the contributions of Ferrer in *Insurgent Cuba*. Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 94, contrasts the dilemmas of sovereignty and emancipation between American Confederate separatism and Cuban *independentista* and annexationist separatism as a North American “war for southern independence ... waged to preserve slavery; the wars for Cuban independence aimed to end it.” Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 95, signals that the defeat of the Confederacy signaled the deathblow to future illegally traded slave imports. Indeed, Volker Mollin, *Guerra pequeña, guerra olvidada* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2002), 213, wrote, “the Lyons-Seward treaty of 1862, signed between the United States and England, in which the abolition of slavery was demanded in a [more] radical manner, heightened the international isolation of Spain even more.” As to the estimates of the last years of the illegal transatlantic slave trade, Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 290, fn 68, cited David R. Murray, *Odious Commerce: Britain, Spain, and the Abolition of the Cuban Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) as some “30,000 African captives in 1859, 25,000 in 1860, 24,000 in 1861, and 11,000 in 1862.” Hugh Thomas cited the last documented illegal slave ship as October 1, 1865 to September 30, 1866, see *Cuba*, Appendix X, 1543-1545. See also Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, Appendix 1 “Cuban Slave Ships Captured off the Island of Cuba, 1824-1866,” 197-199.

rising interest in renewed and expanding commercial possibilities in the post-war United States.

Hazard's appearance in Cuba was as convalescent and tourist not as abolitionist. For him slavery formed a backdrop, one among a number of social and political anachronisms and curiosities of the isle. Recurrent illness, including tuberculosis, cut his life short at age forty-one in 1876, but not before he had visited sanatoria in North America and Europe. Like a good many nineteenth-century North American consumptives, he made a journey for health reasons to Cuba. Much of his resultant travel account offered descriptions of the Cuban counterpoint of sugar and tobacco, followed by coffee, that third element in the triumvirate of tropical products—the sweetener, tonic, and “narcotic of half the world” mentioned in Ballou's and Marx's epigraphs to this chapter. By 1873, he also published his observations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, made not long after the conclusion of the War of the Restoration (1863-1865) in which a scheme for the annexation and re-colonization of Santo Domingo by Spain was thwarted while the United States was preoccupied with prosecuting the Civil War and the France of Napoleon III attempted to impose the Austrian Hapsburg, Maximilian, as emperor of Mexico. Spanish defeat abroad and internal domestic instability and political crisis emboldened those who had come to see separation of the colony from the flagging fortunes and parasitic taxation of the imperial state as desirable. Spain's failures and reversals compounded political instability throughout the nineteenth century, and also the exploitation of the remaining colonies.<sup>48</sup> It also left a chastened colonial army in the “Pearl

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<sup>48</sup> Gott, 73.

of the Antilles” that would brook no challenges from the forthcoming separatist insurrection.<sup>49</sup>

This chapter follows Hazard on part of his journey, introducing the *dramatis personae* of Guantánamo during the Ten Years’ War, gradual abolition, and on into the end of the nineteenth century. It offers a portrait of the region with its social control mechanisms designed to buttress plantation agriculture, police and discipline bound labor, and maintain colonialism. It also limns the district’s own particular configuration of the trinity of Cuban tropical export crops—sugar, coffee, and tobacco—together with the enslaved African and African-descended workforce that cultivated, harvested, and processed sugar and coffee.

This local slave population combined an amalgam of features—albeit within a Cuban cast and context—of what historian of slavery in North America, Ira Berlin, has termed North American chattel slavery’s different “generations.” These cohorts of African and Afro-descended peoples’ life experiences were shaped by international, national, and regional contexts. The character of New World slavery underwent transformations including the “Revolutionary generations” in the post 1789-1848 period throughout the circum-Caribbean where gradualist abolition took place in British possessions from 1834 to 1838

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<sup>49</sup> Gott, 73; Mollin, 167, 197-213; Piralá, I: 138-146. Spain had been ejected from the Dominican Republic, 1863-1865, thousands of its troops felled by tropical maladies, yellow fever, cholera, and battlefield casualties. Spain suffered further reversals during its naval war with Peru and Chile in 1866. Volunteers in the Spanish military from Cuba and Puerto Rico participated in the conflict in Hispaniola, while the Antillean colonies bore the brunt of the costs of these, and North African, colonial ventures. Mollin suggested that commanders such as Blas Villate, Count of Valmaseda, Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau, and others that waged counterinsurgency campaigns later in Cuba, came away from irregular wars and the defeat sustained in Hispaniola with hardened attitudes toward colonial revolts. On Weyler’s early military career in the war in the Dominican Republic, see John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 154-155. Tone extends the argument about the humiliated Spanish military from failure in the colonies to its deleterious impact in Spanish politics and use against workers in the home country into the twentieth century, see Tone, 286-87. A number of Dominican veterans of the Spanish army later emerged as important separatist military leaders, including Modesto Díaz, Máximo Gómez, and Luis Marcano, see Mollin, 202. There are several biographies of Máximo Gómez. For this cohort of Dominicans, see also, Aldo Daniel Naranjo, and Ángel Lago Vieito. *Hijos de la fraternidad: Los Dominicanos en la insurrección cubana (1868-1878)* (Bayamo: Ediciones Bayamo, 2001).

and remaining French islands by 1848, along with the “Migratory” and “Freedom” generations of the nineteenth-century U.S. south.<sup>50</sup> Caribbean colonies moved from strategically motivated coterie of militarized port towns and a population of small farmers and European settlers and indentured servants to colonies with economic exploitation and slave labor as their *raison d’être*.

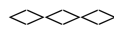
Cuba as a whole underwent such a transformation only with the removal of its strategic location for Spain caused by the loss of Spanish America and the opportunities afforded by trade with an independent North America combined with the overthrow of St.-Domingue by the many wars within the Haitian Revolution. Antillean slavery responded to each of these portentous developments, and slaves themselves drove various wedges into the system.<sup>51</sup> Even so, Cuba’s expanding plantations developed a voracious appetite for constantly imported African slave labor given the high rates of mortality and low population growth.<sup>52</sup> But not every locale in the large island developed at the same pace. The plantation

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<sup>50</sup> Ira Berlin employed the concept of distinct cohorts or “generations” to unpack slave experiences and history in North America’s chattel slavery contexts, first in *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), and later extended his chronology and added new “generations” to explicate the development of southern North American slavery through a final two “Migration” and “Freedom” generations in *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003). While Cuba’s trajectory could profit from the adoption of a similar organizational temporal frame, the intensity of the nineteenth-century slave trade and larger numbers of illegally traded *bozales* brought directly from Africa—all occurring during and after the “Revolutionary Generation” shaped by the U.S., French, and Haitian revolutionary experiences certainly complicates the picture. Thus, in Cuba such generations had considerable overlap and ran concurrently.

<sup>51</sup> There is a large literature on this period and diverse forms of agency among slaves and free people of color. Some representative examples include Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*; the essays in David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Philip A. Howard, *Changing History: Afro-Cuban Cabildos and Societies of Color in the Nineteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998); and Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

revolution that transformed western Cuba lagged in the eastern marches, which retained something of its earlier strategic colony quality but with a white (especially in Camagüey and in western Oriente), free mulatto, and black population (concentrated in eastern Oriente) of small-holding farmers and ranchers. That is to say that Guantánamo was a tardy addition to the already rather late-developing tropical agricultural plantation complex that overtook Cuba in the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth century, at a time of impending decline for “the South Atlantic System” in which African-derived labor produced exports in the New World for burgeoning capitalist markets, from whence the system derived capital investment and technological inputs.<sup>53</sup>



A keen observer, Hazard wrote much of the sights and sounds of Havana and its urban charms, thickly descriptive facets of street-scenes, cafés, the theatre, cigar smoking and manufacture, bullfights, and of various entertainments and amusements of interest to male and female sojourners and travelers to the island capital. He also made a circumnavigation of the island by train, horseback, and ship that carried him into the eastern regions. Thanks to the timing of his visit, a sense of the social, economic, and cultural life in Guantánamo on the eve of the 1868 separatist rebellion suggests key reasons why elites within the district initially remained aloof from separatism and the prospect of independence when the war broke out in nearby areas of eastern Cuba. Certainly he wrote much of life and customs

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<sup>52</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 2, wrote that 523,000 Africans were imported in the fifty-year illegal trade-period between 1816 and 1867. Hall cited Ortiz’s similar figures of 385,000 between 1790-1820, a further 271,659 between 1820-1853, and 200,000 for 1853-1880. As seen in footnote 47 above, Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, cited Murray: 30,000 in 1859, 25,000 in 1860, 24,000 in 1861, and 11,000 in 1862.

<sup>53</sup> Franklin Knight, “Cuba,” in David W. Cohen, and Jack P. Greene, eds. *Neither Slave nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1972), 279. The “South Atlantic System,” subsuming the various “triangle trades” into the Atlantic World comes from Knight’s citation of Philip D. Curtin’s early pre-plantation complex work on Jamaica, see fn 4 in that text.

throughout rural districts on the edge of the forthcoming storm of separatist rebellion – indeed, as his book went to press, he had to update and revise certain parts, including the depth of mutual disdain between native-born Creoles and Peninsular immigrants from Spain. Like so many foreign travel accounts, his encounter with the alien, foreign, even exotic, led him to all manner of detailed, at times rhapsodic, descriptions of flora, fauna, romantic landscapes and natural phenomena, but for the same reason did not overlook the pedestrian, ordinary and everyday aspects of the island.

Not content with a visit to just Havana alone, he also visited other western districts such as Matanzas, where, like many nineteenth-century traveling scribes, his choice of subjects prefigured and anticipated Fernando Ortiz's classic *Cuban Counterpoint* on the transformative agency and power of sugar and tobacco for export to foreign capitalist markets by detailing sugar estates and offering readers a dense description of its cultivation and manufacture.<sup>54</sup> After all, the story of Cuba's western districts for the most part, was contiguous with sugar cane.<sup>55</sup> He then journeyed from the southern port of Cienfuegos to the

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<sup>54</sup> Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint*. A detailed account of sugar and its manufacture is beyond the scope of the present work. On sugar's history see Noel Deerr, *The History of Sugar* 2 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1949-1950); Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (New York: Penguin, 1985). For sugar in Cuba, see Roland T. Ely, *Cuando reinaba su majestad el azúcar*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Havana: Imágen Contemporanea, 2001); Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*; Fé Iglesias García, *Del ingenio al central* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1999); and the *magnum opus* of Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El ingenio: Complejo económico social cubano de azúcar*, 3 vols. (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978). Classic accounts of sugar's historical development's in New World contexts include Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*; Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>55</sup> For a recent qualification of sugar's predominant ramifications for western Cuba's development, arguing that until the 1840s coffee production was far more significant than Cuba's historiography might indicate, see William C. Van Norman, Jr., "Shade Grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western Cuba, 1790-1845" (PhD Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2005). Nevertheless, after the 1840s, sugar swiftly displaced diversified agricultural patterns, see Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas* (Princeton: Princeton

picturesque town of Trinidad before he continued his itinerary by steamer to Santiago de Cuba to visit both the eastern province's capital city, and the nearby shrine at El Cobre to Cuba's patron saint, *Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre*, with other pilgrims. Back in Santiago he contacted members of the locally prominent English merchant and banking house, Brooks and Company, to enquire about visiting the southeastern Cuban district of Guantánamo, primarily its "extensive range of hills, known as those of Quibijan," that is, the distant coffee plantations in the Nipe-Sagua-Baracoa massif forming the rugged easternmost end of Cuba.<sup>56</sup>

It was here, in the cool "Coffee Mountains" that surrounded the valley or plain of Guantánamo with its unprepossessing cane-fields and threat of yellow fever that he was to reserve some of his most breathless descriptions. "Fortunately," he wrote, "since I desired to visit the Coffee Mountains, I had a letter of introduction to a member of the large and well-known firm of Brooks & Co., who treated me in the most cordial manner." His introduction to the influential merchant house went far in "smoothing" his "way as to ship me to the care of their house in Guantanamo or [Santa] Catalina. Had it not been for this, I do not know that I should have had the great pleasure which I so much enjoyed of passing some time among the most beautiful mountains and scenes in Cuba."<sup>57</sup>

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University Press, 1990) and Scott's evocative "Cane covered the land ... like an open secret" in Louisiana's southern sugar parishes and much of Las Villas, Cuba, in *Degrees of Freedom*, 11.

<sup>56</sup> Hazard, 51. On what to call the ranges of mountains and hills, including the Cuchillas de Toar, de Sagua, and de Baracoa, among other regional names, scholars have settled on the rather unwieldy "Nipe-Sagua-Baracoa range" even though locals continue to use various older terms; see "Guantánamo Province" in Luis Martínez-Fernández, et. al., *Encyclopedia of Cuba: People, History, Culture* 2 vols. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), I: 24.

<sup>57</sup> Hazard, 459.

### Brooks and Company

Hazard took the 10:00pm overnight steamer from Santiago, a Brooks and Company innovation, to be awoken early the next morning by the “steamboat waiter” with the query “*Café solo ó con leche, Señor?*” at the “exceedingly large and beautiful sheet of water” formed by Guantánamo Bay.<sup>58</sup> He then rode with a company clerk in the first-class train car, operated, like the steamer service, by Brooks and Company. The train ran three times a week up and down the sixteen miles from the bay when the *zafra*, or sugar harvest, was not in season. Those busy harvest months necessitated daily train service to and from the frenetic activity of the smoke belching mills, and the dingy dock-town of Caimanera with its seawater evaporation pans and salt-raking works to “the little village of Santa Catalina de Guaso, also known as the ‘*Saltadero*,’ from there being a fall in the waters of the neighboring stream.” The train chugged across the valley, or *llano*, of “low, marshy ground” and “thick scrubby forest.”<sup>59</sup> He approvingly related the “excellent railroad, which is constantly busied in carrying the immense quantities of sugar, coffee, rum, and molasses raised and made in this section of the country, and for which Catalina is the depot.”<sup>60</sup> He did not tarry long in Santa Catalina, which, “a rather small place ... about seventy-five miles by land from Santiago” possessed but “one church, some few well-built houses” and had about two thousand inhabitants, but with “a battalion of soldiers stationed there.”<sup>61</sup> The soldiers formed

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<sup>58</sup> Hazard, 460.

<sup>59</sup> Hazard, 460-61.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*



a dual security component of both reinforcing the social control mechanisms designed to ensure planter authority and also to guard the coast from interlopers. By 1870, after his visit and two years after the separatist standard of revolt had been raised in Oriente province, the town of Santa Catalina with its 1,681 inhabitants was renamed “the very illustrious and loyal *ayuntamiento* of Guantánamo.” It would maintain a garrison of 600 men-at-arms.<sup>62</sup> [See illustration, “Arms of Guantánamo.”]

While Hazard made preparations for his visit to the coffee estates in the hills, he chatted with a Brooks and Co. functionary, the Scot “Mr. [James Santiago Forbes] McKinley,” who told him that when “he first went there, eighteen years ago, the place was a very small one indeed” but that with the construction of the railway and dock facilities at Caimanera in the 1850s, “the produce of the back country sought this place as the most convenient outlet ... a permanent depot for the coffee and sugar of the district,” both produced mostly by un-free workers, “until now the business done there is quite enormous for so small a place.”<sup>63</sup> As historian Pedro Pablo Rodríguez pointed out, after several false starts and failed colonization schemes, “interest in Guantánamo appeared in the epoch of the development of slave plantations in Cuba” so that it “grew as an appendage of Santiago, which, without the spectacular leap of a century occurring in [western Cuba’s sugar lands], was nevertheless sustaining growth of agricultural exports of sugar and coffee” unlike much of the rest of traditional, and even pre-capitalist, Oriente province.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> José Sánchez Guerra and Wilfredo de Jesús Campos Cremé, *Los ecos de la Demajagua en el alto oriente cubano* (Guantánamo: Colección La Fama, 1996), 14 [hereinafter cited as Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*].

<sup>63</sup> Hazard, 462. See also, Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: a Cuban History, 1837-1959*, 139-140.

The importance of Hazard's initial regional contact, the family-run capitalist enterprise Brooks and Company, was noted in an 1869 press account, three months into the Ten Years' War. A North American journalist wrote, "The District of Guantanamo has within twelve years been converted from an almost barren waste into a busy and thriving colony."<sup>65</sup> The transformation decisively shaped an earlier plantation model that, re the epigraph by Marx to this chapter, made the cultivation of sugar and coffee in the district appear like its natural destiny. It arose from the British merchant house, Brooks and Company's construction of a railway, shipping piers, and introduction of coastal steamers between Caimanera, the town of Guantánamo, and the sugar mills of the district just as McKinley told Hazard. The firm's transport infrastructure and externally oriented investment overlay the oldest Creole families of the district, which included many descendants of French refugees from nearby St.-Domingue who had fled the Haitian revolution and established coffee plantations in the hills.<sup>66</sup> The Brooks and Co.'s enclave built "roads through the

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<sup>64</sup> Pedro Pablo Rodríguez, *La primera invasión* (Havana: Ediciones Unión, 1987), 12.

<sup>65</sup> "Santa Catalina, Cuba," *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization* V. XIII, No. 627, New York (Saturday, January 2, 1869), 11 [hereinafter cited as *Harper's*]. The Brooks and Company railway and construction at Caimanera includes Ferrocarril y Muelle del Estado de Guantánamo y de la Caimanera, in AHN, SU, leg. 198, exp. 7; Propiedad del ferrocarril de Guantánamo, 1856, in Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba, Inventario de los libros del fondo: Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, 79, [hereinafter cited as AHPSC, GP], while the 31 October 1860 replacement of 32 *emancipados* by 25 Asian contract workers was discussed in the letter of that date, Libro de Actas de la Junta Directiva del Ferrocarril de Guantánamo, Enero 1859-Febrero 1917, Archivo Estatal Provincial Roman E. Polanco, Guantánamo, fondo: Guantánamo Sugar Company (sin procesar)[hereinafter cited as AEPG, fondo: GSC]. For the relationship between sugar and railways in Cuban history, see Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: a Cuban History, 1837-1959*. On the concession and building of the Guantánamo railway within a year first to a wharf at Cerro Guayabo on the bay, later to the more appropriate location of Caimanera, see pp. 66-67.

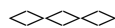
<sup>66</sup> On French immigration from St.-Domingue, see Jorge Berenguer Cala, *La emigración francesa en la jurisdicción de Santiago de Cuba* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1979); Duvon C. Corbitt, "Immigration in Cuba" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 22 (May 1942): 280-308; Hall, 125-127; Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, 12-13, 18, 65-67; Mollin, 309-319; the essay by Juan Padrón Blanco, *Franceses en el suroriente de Cuba* (Havana: Ediciones Unión, 1997); José Antonio Portuondo, "La inmigración francesa – fomento de los cafetales. Las nuevas ideas" *Cuadernos de Historia Habanera* 10 Havana, (1937), 201-215; and Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba, desde su fundación hasta la Guerra de los Diez Años* (Santiago de

valley and over the hills, threw bridges over the river, imported machinery for the sucaries [*sic*, sugar mills]” and “in order to keep the labor supply in pace with the increase in production, imported [Chinese] coolies, established agents in the town, supplied the planters with the means of cultivating the land, receiving a mortgage on the crops.” As a result, resident managers of Brooks and Company became “little princes, and, having large outstanding debts to collect, their interests are wrapped up in the continuance for a time of slavery as the only means of realizing the results of their outlay.”<sup>67</sup>

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Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1996), ch. 4; and Thomas, pp. 129, 131. Estimates for the total number of immigrants in this cohort to Cuba range from 10,000 to 30,000, the latter figure may be a bit high. To this figure up to 12,000 arrived from Spanish Santo Domingo during the same period. Hall, 126, cited 18,213 by 31 January 1804. Padrón claimed 20,000 arrivals within a sixteen-year period, mostly in the environs of Santiago, see p. 14-15. How many of these immigrants were free people of color is also disputed, since colonial edicts prohibited the admittance of free people of color into Cuba. Hall, in particular, seems to indicate extreme Spanish aversion to admitting people of color into Cuba, although the frequency of denunciations might indicate the persistence of the flouting or utter disregard of the law. Nevertheless, it is probable that many Franco-Haitian Creoles obtained admittance through various means circumventing Spanish regulations. Venegas, 138, cited this influx of thirty thousand émigrés in all of Cuba as made up of some 7,000 French, 8-10,000 *mestizos* and the remainder slaves. Anecdotally, it would seem that many French immigrants in the Santiago and Guantánamo zones were identified as *béarnaise* from the region of the French Basque-country in southwestern France. Padrón rehearsed this view: “Many had been born in Saint Domingue, but a third of the whites proceeded from, in first place, from Bearne, Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy; others from Anjou, Poitou and Gascony” see p. 20. Zanetti and García, p. 420, fn. 29 cited Francisco Pérez de la Riva y Pons who found a grant “of a thousand *caballerías* of land [in Guantánamo] to a group of French immigrants from Haiti headed by Luis Bellegarde. Archives de Port de Toulon, 5<sup>th</sup>, III, no.20.” For coffee plantations in Cuba, see Francisco Pérez de la Riva y Pons, *El café: Historia de su cultivo y explotación en Cuba* (Havana: Jesús Montero, 1944); Thomas, ch. X, and Van Norman, “Shade Grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western Cuba, 1790-1845.”

<sup>67</sup> *Harper's*, 11. A road or track building project using rented slave labor from Sta. Catalina to Sagua de Tánamo on the north coast the year after the completion of the railway, appears in Certificaciones, cartas, y actas manuscritas referentes a la construcción del camino entre Guantánamo y Sagua de Tánamo, en que se utiliza mano de obra esclava aportada por los hacendados de la región. Fechado: Stgo. de Cuba, Gtmo., AHPSC, Fondo: GP, leg. 204, exp. 4, fecha: 15 de septbre. 1857- 13 febrero 1858, Materia: Caminos; Esclavitud.



By the time of Hazard's visit just previous to the outbreak of the Ten Years' War, Guantánamo had a population of 5,268 whites, 5,515 free people of color, and 8,638 slaves.<sup>68</sup> This demographic picture, of approximately 27 percent white, almost 30 percent free persons of color, and 44 percent enslaved made the district the single most slave dependent in eastern Cuba.<sup>69</sup> There were almost two slaves for every white inhabitant. And on many plantations, especially the larger coffee and sugar estates, slaves greatly outnumbered white or mixed-race owners and overseers. The three jurisdictions making up Guantánamo: Sagua de Tánamo on the northern coast, enclosing the watershed of the Sagua river flowing north to the Atlantic, and Tiguabos and Yateras, to the west and east respectively of the Guaso river flowing south to the large bay on the Windward Passage included some of the most wild and inaccessible terrain on the island. Still farther east, the lush jungle and banana, coconut, and cacao-growing district of Baracoa with 11,277 inhabitants—43 percent white, 43 percent free people of color, and 14 percent slave—existed around a remote port on the Bay of Honey, so isolated from the rest of Cuba by heavily forested rugged terrain that it figuratively formed something of a separate island—indeed at times Creoles suspected of sedition by colonial officials were temporarily internally exiled to the town. The Table 2.1 below, drawn from Hazard's "Gazetteer" of Cuba indicated Guantánamo's population by each of its three

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<sup>68</sup> Hazard, 569; Jacobo de la Pezuela y Lobo, *Diccionario geográfico, estadístico, histórico de la isla de Cuba*, 4 vols. (Madrid: Imprenta del Establecimiento de Mellado, 1863-1866), II: 498, cited in Rodríguez, *La primera invasión*, 14, described approximately 20,000 inhabitants: 5,331 whites, 5,463 free *mulatos* and blacks, and 8,561 slaves—44 percent of the population—while Enrique Buznego Rodríguez, Gustavo Pedroso Xiqués, and Rolando Zulueta Zulueta, *Mayor General Máximo Gómez Báez: Sus campañas militares. Tomo I (1868-1878)* (Havana: Editora Política, 1986), 47, listed, without attribution, 4,331 whites, 5,645 *mulatos* and free blacks, and 8,645 slaves.

<sup>69</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 54-55.

jurisdictions, while Table 2.2 presents an age pyramid of the population by sex, race, and servile condition:

Table 2.1  
Population of Rural Guantánamo jurisdictions:  
Tiguabos, Yateras, and Sagua de Tánamo, 1867

Jurisdiction	White population	Free population of color	Slaves	TOTAL
Tiguabos	1,639	1,866	4,847	8,352
Yateras	574	1,195	2,761	4,530
Sagua de Tánamo	2,526	1,664	594	4,784
Total Guantánamo	5,268 [5,313]	5,515 [5,727]	8,638 [8,561]	19,414* [19,619]

*Source:* Data from Hazard, 563-579. Numbers in brackets indicate data from Pezuela, II: 500. \*The missing 1,748 people from the total for all Guantánamo presumably represents the 1,134 to 1,681 inhabitants from the population of Santa Catalina del Guaso, reflected in Pezuela's census, which became the city of Guantánamo in 1870.

Table 2.2  
Sex, Age, and Race, Guantánamo, 1859-1860  
A. Men

Race	Age 1 to 15	Age 16 to 25	Age 26 To 40	Age 41 To 60	Age 61 to 80	Age 81 to 90	Age 91 to 100	Age 100 +
White [Includes Asians]	1,253	573	878	396	100	5	0	0
Free People of Color	1,404	498	646	334	129	18	1	4
Slaves and Emancipados	1,722	873	1,131	695	220	20	2	0
TOTAL	4,379	1,944	2,655	1,425	449	43	3	4

B. Women

Race	Age 1 to 15	Age 16 to 25	Age 26 to 40	Age 41 to 60	Age 61 to 80	Age 81 to 100	Age 100 +
White [Includes Asians]	1,098	420	396	181	31	0	0
Free People of Color	1,267	517	472	264	76	12	1
Slaves and Emancipadas	1,518	707	1,014	552	184	6	1
TOTAL	3,883	1,644	1,882	997	291	18	2

Source: Data from Pezuela, II: 498-499.

As may be seen, Tiguabos and Yateras were much more oriented to the plantation model with substantial slave populations but also a large mixed population, while the northern interior of Sagua de Tánamo was majority white *guajiros* and mixed-race peasants who farmed food crops, tended pigs, reared domesticated animals, and grew tobacco for market on small plots.<sup>70</sup>

Hazard wrote that Cuban planters did not want a continuance of slavery, “but, hitherto, they have wanted a compensation for their slaves, and a system of free labor that would enable them to work their valuable estates.”<sup>71</sup> That is, a long declining system of rising-cost servile labor, which producers of tropical exports had nevertheless come to see as a competitive advantage after final abolition in the British West Indies between 1833 and 1838, would have to be replaced by one that approximated the returns, economic and psychological, they had hitherto commanded.<sup>72</sup> Many powerful purveyors of exports such as

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<sup>70</sup> For tobacco in Cuba, see Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*; and Jean Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery: A Case Study in Cuban Labour History, 1860-1958* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>71</sup> Hazard, 554.

<sup>72</sup> On Cuban and Brazilian planters’ likely benefit from final abolition in the United Kingdom’s Caribbean colonies, see Davis, 85-86. On the expansion and competitiveness of Cuban plantation-produced sugar concurrent with decreasing production in the British West Indies, see Hall, 28.

sugar, and those with aligned interests, had long recognized that slavery was faced with irreversible and inevitable decline, even if, as Davis has pointed out “planters in Cuba and Brazil” retained assurance as late as “the 1860s and 1870s that slavery would last several more decades.”<sup>73</sup> The issues for them were how precipitously it would come to an end and whether compensation could be obtained. Coercive labor had pervaded social relations, economic arrangements, and the very culture of the island throughout Cuba’s development but most especially the precipitous rise of the plantation complex in the nineteenth century. Throughout the period slave populations continuously declined through excessive mortality rates—particularly those on sugar mills—exacerbated by a grim regimen of constant overwork, ghastly health conditions, disease, highly uneven gender ratios between mostly male and female slave populations that prevented natural increase, and even factors such as high rates of suicide.<sup>74</sup> As a rule, only on coffee plantations, some other types of farms, and a few sugar estates did the slave population undergo natural increase. Without continual re-supply of captives, the labor force on the majority of Cuban plantations waned rapidly.<sup>75</sup> Since at least 1817, repeated treaties had been signed by Spain to abolish the slave trade, and by the 1850s and 1860s even the lucrative, long-lasting illegal trade had drawn to a close. Prices for slaves climbed precipitously, and “the supply of labor in that respect [was] not up to the demand.” Hazard indicated “Coolies have been introduced, and the plan has worked well for the planters, though it is death almost to the” Chinese, almost entirely from

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<sup>73</sup> David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 325.

<sup>74</sup> Hall, 18-20. For more on slave and indentured worker suicide see Pérez, *To Die in Cuba*, ch. 1.

<sup>75</sup> Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 117.

Guangdong province, thus transported to the island as indentured workers.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, agricultural labor remained in short supply without access to African slavery.

In so linking slavery to the labor required for rural estates in Cuba, Hazard was certainly on the mark for the Guantánamo region. An undated rural census probably composed sometime in the decade before his visit, in all likelihood just before the Brookses organized the building of the railway between Caimanera and Santa Catalina in 1856, showed two-thirds of Tiguabos and Yateras slaves laboring on coffee farms (*cafetales*), while twenty nine percent worked on sugar mills on the plain. The remainder of slaves, five percent of the total, mostly worked on livestock farms of one type or another (115 individuals), other types of agricultural enterprises (118), or toiled alongside free peasant cultivators on tobacco vegas (48). This regional demographic pattern was distinct from averages for Cuba as a whole, where in 1862 some 47 percent of slaves labored on sugar mills, while 7 percent were involved in coffee cultivation (see Table 2.4 below.) The distribution of slaves in the 1850s in Guantánamo’s slave-dependent Tiguabos and Yateras districts appears in Table 2.3 below, while the estimated 1862 place of residence and type of labor for all Cuban slaves—making up approximately 27 percent of Cuba’s population at the time—appears in Table 2.4:

Table 2.3  
Distribution of Slave Population by Place of Residence, Guantánamo, ca. 1854

TOTAL number of slaves [Jurisdictions of Tiguabos and Yateras]	5,337 [100 %]
1. Sugar	1,559 [29 %]
a.) Numbers of sugar slaves in steam Or water-powered mills	1,377 [88 percent of total for sugar]
b.) Numbers of sugar slaves in Ox-powered <i>trapiches</i>	165 [11 percent of total for sugar]

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<sup>76</sup> Hazard, 554.



TOTAL number of slaves [Jurisdictions of Tiguabos and Yateras]	5,337 [100 %]
2. Coffee	3,497 [66 %]
3. Cattle and livestock raising	115 [2 %]
4. <i>Sitios</i> , other farms, and tobacco <i>vegas</i>	166 [3 %]

*Source:* Data from Padrón de fincas rústicas del partido de Tiguabos, propietarios, dotación, producción y rentas and the similarly titled associated padrón for the partido de Yateras, ANC, fondo: Gobierno General, leg. 388, nos. 18510 and 18511, s.f.<sup>77</sup>

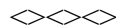
Table 2.4  
Distribution of Slave Population by Place of Residence, Cuba, 1862

Residence	Males	Females	Total	Percentage total of slaves in island	Slaves as Percentage of Residents	Male slaves per 100 Female slaves
Sugar plantations	109,709	62,962	172,671	47%	79%	174:100
Towns	37,014	38,963	75,977	21%	15%	95:100
Stock farms	20,414	11,100	31,514	9%	35%	184:100
Coffee plantations	14,344	11,598	25,942	7%	77%	124:100
Small farms ( <i>sitios</i> )	14,253	10,597	24,850	7%	11%	135:100
Tobacco plots	11,622	6,053	17,675	5%	15%	192:100
Small farms ( <i>estancias</i> )	4,220	2,698	6,918	2%	8%	156:100
Ranches	4,311	1,909	6,220	2%	18%	226:100
Other	2,675	1,500	4,175	1%	19%	178:100
Other farms	1,655	769	2,424	1%	20%	215:100
TOTAL	220,217	148,149	386,366			149:100

*Source:* Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 12.

<sup>77</sup> These two *padrones* appear in the Archivo Nacional de Cuba without dates. By relating the information on these documents to other censuses, tax records, and an 1867 list of Chinese indentured workers in Guantánamo that includes the years of their contracts they had fulfilled appearing in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Spain (AHN, SU, leg. 76, exp. 5, Guantánamo, 1867. Relación de Asiaticos contratados ecistentes en esta Jurisdicción [*sic*]), I surmise that the *padrones* date from sometime in the first half of the 1850s, before the construction of the railway. Until a more precise date can be adduced for the documents, I have therefore indicated that they are “ca. 1854.”

Thus, overarching aggregate labor patterns for the slave workforce in Guantánamo were quite different from elsewhere on the island even if the nature of labor on rural estates was similar. The region was more dependent on slavery than any other area of Cuba's east. Island-wide, by mid-century slaves were generally concentrated on sugar mills, at least for close to half of them. In Guantánamo, such indeed was the lot of about a third of bound laborers. But while island-wide the number of slaves resident on coffee plantations had diminished to seven percent, in Guantánamo almost two-thirds of the region's enslaved workers were to be found on such fincas. Very few worked on other types of farms or ranches, let alone in towns. The majority of slaves in Guantánamo produced coffee and sugar at their legal owners' behest; those two crops were explicitly reliant on the labor of bondsmen and bondswomen.



The development of exports emanating from Cuba's nineteenth-century plantation boom came at a time of marked economic stagnation for most of independent Latin America. Much of the continent came under the sway of Great Britain's expanding trade and informal empire. Hazard's initial contacts, the Anglo-Cuban Brooks and Company—founded in 1845 by Thomas Brooks, Richard Stephen, James Wright, and Luis Augusto Verbrugge from an earlier merchant house, Wright, Brooks, and Company—came to include the male descendants of Thomas Brooks. He was a wealthy early nineteenth-century English merchant with interests in Havana and Santiago de Cuba married to a Cuban woman of French/St.-Domingue ancestry: Rosa Despaigne Duconge.<sup>78</sup> In 1853, chief stockholders

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<sup>78</sup> On the 20 September 1845 founding of Brooks and Company, see José Sánchez Guerra, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros (1532-1899)* (Guantánamo: Editorial El Mar y la Montaña, 2003), 33. [hereinafter cited as Sánchez, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros*]. See also Zanetti and

Thomas Brooks, Richard H. Beattie, William Adams, Thomas Alexander Brooks y Despaigne, and José Nariño obtained the crown authorities' permission in Havana to build a railway from Santa Catalina to Caimanera.<sup>79</sup> Joined by several estate owners, they assembled a bound labor force to build the regions first railway from among *emancipados*—Africans taken from illegal slave ships and nominally freed after years of labor on public works projects, but frequently re-enslaved through various forms of legalistic chicanery—and slaves rented out from among those that appeared in the *padrón* in Table 2.3 above.<sup>80</sup> Further extension of the railway was placed on hold throughout the Ten Years' War (1868-1878) and the Little War (1879-1880) but in the depression years of 1883 and 1884 the railway branched to the west to the sugar mill town Soledad, and to the eastern hill-country and coffee towns of Jamaica and Felicidad in Yateras.<sup>81</sup>

To facilitate agricultural exports and technological inputs, the Brookses managed infrastructural and transport services connecting Guantánamo, Caimanera, and Santiago de Cuba including the railway and various related enterprises. Eventually members of Brooks & Co. also obtained influential consulships for eastern Cuba: Frederick Ramsden, an amateur naturalist, was Consul of Great Britain at Santiago from 1850 to 1898 and also a member of the firm. By the late nineteenth century, Paul Brooks would be Vice-Consul of the United

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García, 66, 232. I am grateful to José Sánchez Guerra, the historian of Guantánamo for graciously sharing with me an unpublished manuscript, “La Brooks y Compañía,” *El Managüt* (Guantánamo), Sección de Historia Comité Provincial del PCC de Guantánamo.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> For *emancipados* and indentured workers on the railway, see the aforementioned 31 October 1860 letter in Libro de Actas de la Junta Directiva del Ferro-carril de Guantánamo, Enero 1859-Febrero 1917, AEPG, GSC. Mention is made of forty Guantánamo *emancipados* being “consigned to public works” in De la consignación de 40 bozales de los aprehendidos en Guantánamo a las obras públicas del depto. Oriente. Fecha [Santiago de] Cuba, diciembre 15, 1857 al 6 febrero 1858, AHPSC, GP, leg. 554, exp. 13, Materia: Esclavitud.

<sup>81</sup> Zanetti and García, 139-140.

States in Guantánamo; Theodore Brooks would hold the same position for the United Kingdom. Still another, Robert Mason, would serve as Consul of China, likely the result of previous railway experience there, but possibly also involving the supply of indentured workers to the Caribbean from Guangdong province before the Chinese imperial government halted the supply of low-cost laborers in 1874 because of the rampant exploitation and abuses the labor system entailed.<sup>82</sup> Brooks and Co. officers thus held important consulships for nations involved in trade relations with Spain's Cuban colony, which not only allowed them better to oversee export and import trade, but also gave the firm potential backing from powerful interests in addition to the declining metropolitan state's authority.

### The llano: Sugar

This sparsely populated frontier district grew into a classic enclave economy developed along the lines of the Caribbean plantation complex. In an earlier colonial period, it had elicited little development or attention apart from periodic security concerns stemming from the failed British military expedition in 1741, the early-nineteenth-century era of Latin American Wars of Independence, and the 1819 U.S.-Spanish Adams-Onís Florida and Gulf Coast boundary treaty, all of which spurred abortive Spanish schemes to promote white soldier-colonist settlement. By the early nineteenth century the suitable terrain surrounding the bay was home to small-scale, slave-based cotton, indigo, coffee, and sugar enterprises, but by the mid-nineteenth century the plain, or *llano*, was well on its way to being remade by sugar monoculture. After the railway was built, the zone practically functioned as a

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<sup>82</sup> Information comes from the later War of Independence (1895-1898), see "Martínez Campos's Plans – Probability that He Will Place the Army in Pando's Charge. A Receipt Given for Prisoners. Gomez Visits Santa Clara as a Fruit Vendor – British Citizens in Trouble Appeal in Vain to Their Consul," *NYT*, 12 December 1895. p. 14.

landlocked sugar and coffee island connected by rail and steamer traffic to maritime trade through Santiago de Cuba, and the wider world system. Most trade was conducted with the United States, followed by France and then Great Britain.<sup>83</sup>

Steam-powered machinery and train transport made sugar, like elsewhere in Cuba, a factory in the fields with its curious hybrid of high-technology inputs, seasonal wage labor, and slave workers. Expanding production, increased economic rationality, and the use of technology apparently did little to ease the lot of slaves who faced a workday of up to twenty hours during the grueling fieldwork required throughout the six-month *zafra* harvest season.<sup>84</sup> Investors built or upgraded larger mills, which included private narrow-gauge railways hauling sugar cane from distant collection points in sprawling, extensive fields to the increasingly complex grinding, filtration, clarification, and other sugar-making operations of the sugarhouse. Trains then carried barrels and large boxes and crates of finished sugar products to private shipping piers on the bay or the main line and its port connection at Caimanera. The Brooks & Co.'s fortunes grew apace the expansion of export production, weathering the lean years of economic crises of periodic stagnation, depression, and labor crisis brought on by the scarcity of slave labor and low population growth.<sup>85</sup> By the start of the 1868 rebellion, "Thomas Alexander, Paul, Luis, Theodore and Ernest August Brooks" co-

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<sup>83</sup> Pezuela, II: 510.

<sup>84</sup> Hall, 17-19, discussed how mechanization did not alleviate the grueling nature of many tasks. See also Moreno Fraginals, *El ingenio* for technological sophistication, and labor regimes on sugar estates in Cuba.

<sup>85</sup> Sánchez, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros*, 34.

owned the “*ingenios* Santa Cecilia, Romelié, Los Caños, San José, San Sebastián [in Santiago], and Flor de Bano.”<sup>86</sup>

By the 1860s, these and other sugar mills in the *llano* of Guantánamo accounted for twenty percent of Oriente’s sugar, while those in greater number in Santiago produced another sixty-six percent.<sup>87</sup> As a whole, however, Cuba’s easternmost province only contributed fifteen percent of the island’s total sugar output.<sup>88</sup> Taken together, then, the Santiago region and its Guantánamo satellite produced the great bulk of the primitive east’s sugar and were site of the region’s physical plant and investments in land and labor of the frequently absentee “slave power” bourgeoisie. Sugar may not have become the forest-felling, land-engrossing latifundia colossus of Cuba’s west, but it increasingly absorbed flat and rolling arable land in these country districts, while the heavily forested broken uplands remained the province of mixed small-holding patterns and medium-sized agricultural enterprises dedicated to subsistence horticulture, pastoralism, tobacco cultivation, and a rural middle-class engaged in coffee farming with slave labor on their manor-like estates.

Slaves’ lot on the sugar plantations could vary widely, but the nature of the crop itself required an intensive and exhausting repetitive schedule of fieldwork tasks. Land had to be constantly cleared, new sugar plantings tended, hoed, and weeded. Slaves dug ditches, built cane-breaks and fences, erected buildings, and cut cane. During the half-year grinding season cane had to be cut and trimmed, stacked, then hauled to the sugar house as quickly as possible to preserve its sugar content and avoid rot or spoilage. The character of such labor

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 8; Sánchez, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros*.

<sup>88</sup> Zanetti and García, 101.

has been alluded to in many descriptive accounts, and reports of twenty-hour workdays were common.<sup>89</sup> Sugar's labor system drew heavily on primarily male bond workers. Planters were often loath to "waste" money and resources rearing slave children to young adulthood, preferring to extract work from any laborer they owned.<sup>90</sup> Gender imbalances on Cuban plantations, which typically had a preponderance of males with fewer women particularly in the early decades of the nineteenth century before the decline in the illegal trade, were notorious. Similarly, an attitude that slaves were an expensive drain on planter incomes unless constantly placed under observation and set to work fostered a propensity to fill every conceivable period of the day with endless busy tasks to be performed. Late at night, or even early in the morning, exhausted slaves would be locked in barracks or barracoons to sleep. There was often not much autonomy left to slaves in such systems, but what little they possessed was jealously preserved. Sundays offered little by way of rest, but slaves worked on their own account and projects, tended their private cultivations, and met for opportunities to socialize, barter, and perform religious rites or observances.

The same rural census that provided the numbers of slaves in the 1850s in the tables above, also detailed nine steam or water powered *ingenios* and eleven antiquated ox-powered *trapiches* in which teams of tethered animals moving in a circle provided the motive power to turn rollers to crush the sugar cane. The sugar mills, owners, estimated acreage under cultivation, power-source, and number of slaves resident at these Guantánamo mills appears in the Table 2.5 below, while the consolidating and expansive effects of the railway on the sugar sector, with eleven steam powered and two water powered mills by 1860—

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<sup>89</sup> Hall, 13-20.

<sup>90</sup> Hall, 24-28.

unfortunately without data on the numbers of slaves on *dotaciones* of the mills—are aggregated in Table 2.6:

Table 2.5  
Sugar Mill, Owner, Acres Cultivated and Uncultivated, Power plant, Number of Slaves in Tiguabos and Yateras, Guantánamo, ca. 1854.

Sugar Mill	Owner	Estimated Acreage- Cultivated Uncultivated	Mill Power source	Slave Dotación
San Idelfonso	D. Pedro Ma. Cardona	400 1,199.88	Steam	120 slaves 3 Chinese
Perseverancia	D. Salvador Alverny	366.63 1,416.53	Steam	123
Monte Sano	D. Ruperto Ledesma	400 1,416.5	Steam	99
Santa Rosa	D. Lorenzo Jay	666.6 3,333	Steam	220
Santa Fé	D. Eugenio Larré	266.64 1,066.56	Water	140
Isabel	D. Teodoro Brooks	199.98 2,466.42	Steam	200
Santa María	D. Félix Durruty	333.3 2,466.42	Steam	140
San Miguel	D. Vinent y Compañía	166.65 2,166.45	Steam	130
Esperanza	Sres. Moré y [José] Baró	399.96 1,033.23	Steam	191
Santa Ana	Santiago Poumier	50 unknown	Oxen	38
Margarita	D. Victor Lachaise	66.66 166.65	Oxen	13
Santa Inés	D. Guadalupe Malletá	33.33 266.64	Oxen	5
San José	D. Ramon Pérez	16.67 999.9	Oxen	5
Sinforosa	D. Manuel Malletá	16.67 283.305	Oxen	3
San Fermín	D. Fermín Choreans [?]	16.67 149.985	Oxen	5
Manantial	D. Fermín Toreaux	166.65 1,166.55	Oxen	43
N. Fortuna	Da. Luisa Girar [Giroux?]	8.3325 unknown	Oxen	35



Sugar Mill	Owner	Estimated Acreage- Cultivated Uncultivated	Mill Power source	Slave Dotación
Purial	Luis Thaireau	66.66 266.64	Oxen	18
San José	D. José Fournier	166.65 466.62	Oxen	14 1 Chinese
Confluente	D. General Espalter	166.65 unknown	Water	N/a
TOTAL Slaves in Sugar				1,559 4 Chinese

*Source:* Data from Padrón de fincas rústicas del partido de Tiguabos, propietarios, dotación, producción y rentas and for the partido de Yateras, ANC, fondo: Gobierno General, leg. 388, nos. 18510 and 18511, s.f. (Acreage estimates from caballerías, with 1 caballería = 33.2 acres.)

Table 2.6

25 Guantánamo Sugar Mills, 1859-1860, after introduction of railway.

Sugar Mill	Owners	Estimated Acreage, Cultivated Uncultivated	Mill Power source
San Idelfonso	Sres. Cardona & Jovellar	633.27 833.25	Steam
Perseverancia	D. Salvador Alberni	333.3 1,333.2	Steam
Monte Sano	Sres. Ledesma & Baidaji	399.96 733.26	Steam
Santa Rosa	D. Lorenzo Jay	399.96 2,499.75	Steam
Santa Fé	D. José Faure	199.98 1,866.48	Water
Isabel [Yateras]	Widow of Couronneau & Assoc.	266.64 3,799.62	Steam
Santa María [Yateras]	D. Félix Duruthy	499.95 1,999.8	Steam
San Miguel [Yateras]	Sres. Vinent & Co.	433.29 999.9	Steam
San Juan [Yateras]	D. Juan Moulié	0 399.96	Steam
Esperanza	Sres. Baró & Moré	733.26 1,766.49	Steam
Hermitaño	Da. Margarita Fournier	8.33 333.3	Oxen
Naranjo [Margarita]	D. Victor Lachaise	33.33 199.98	Oxen

Sugar Mill	Owners	Estimated Acreage, Cultivated Uncultivated	Mill Power source
Naranjo	D. Ramon Pérez	83.325 1,166.55	Oxen
Sinforosa	D. Felipe Malletá	16.655 333.3	Oxen
Manantial	Heirs of D. Thureau	99.99 1,066.56	Oxen
San Juan	D. Fermín Thureau	16.655 1,133.22	Oxen
Purial	Widow Fournier	66.66 299.97	Oxen
Banito	D. Miguel Pérez	33.33 233.31	Oxen
San Pedro	D. Félix Ferrier	50 333.3	Oxen
Filipinas	D. Esteban Sierra	83.325 6,599.34	Oxen
San Francisco	D. B. Rey	0 1,166.55	Steam
Soledad [formerly a coffee and cotton estate, <i>see</i> <i>Table 2.10</i> below.]	D. Gregorio Malletá	0 1,333.2	Steam
Confluente	Widow of Fabr�	208.3 366.63	Water
Coco [Sagua de T�namo]	Sres. Biens & Reed	99.99 233.31	Oxen
Uni�n [Sagua de T�namo]	Sres. Ramos & Rigal	99.99 233.31	Oxen
TOTALS	Steam-powered <i>Ingenios</i>	Ox-powered <i>Trapiches</i>	Water-powered <i>Ingenios</i>
<u>25 Guant�namo total</u>	11	12	2
2 Sagua de T�namo	n/a	2	n/a
19 Tiguabos	7	10	2
4 Yateras	4	n/a	n/a

*Source:* Data from Pezuela, II: 502; Carlos Rebello, *Estados relativos a la producci n azucarera de la Isla de Cuba, formados competentemente y con autorizaci n de la Intendencia de Ej rcito y Hacienda. Cuba.* (Havana: n.p., 1860), 94-95. (Acreage estimates from caballer as, with 1 caballer a = 33.2 acres. Total cultivated cane lands: 4,795.2 acres, uncultivated: 31,263.54 acres.)

The tables indicate the transformation of earlier sugar establishments utilizing St.-Domingue type oxen or water-powered machinery to crush and grind cane by the introduction of rail technology into the district along with steam engines as the motive force for sugar factories rising out of the *cañaverales* of the *llano*.

### The monte: Coffee

“After the [sugar] *ingenios*,” Hazard imparted, “the *cafetales* are the most extensive agricultural establishments carried on in Cuba.” Their “size varies from one hundred to one thousand acres, or even more in the mountains” while the *dotación* of resident slave workers “employed in the low country is as high as one hundred, but generally averages to every one thousand acres about fifty or sixty negroes.”<sup>91</sup> Some two-thirds of slaves in the Guantánamo district lived and worked on such coffee farms. Despite the local prominence of coffee cultivation, its production lagged behind even those regions where sugar had subsumed and overtaken coffee in western Cuba earlier in the century,” at one time ... as largely cultivated ... as is at present sugar cane.”<sup>92</sup> Coffee had boomed in western and parts of central Cuba from an 1827 peak in production of 20,000 tons, to some 12,000 tons yearly until the 1840s.<sup>93</sup> In the 1860s production in Cuba had dropped to 8,000 per year, but, as historian

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<sup>91</sup> Hazard, 480. See also Van Norman, “Shade Grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western Cuba, 1790-1845,” 9, and the concluding chapter. Present-day Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo provinces grow most of Cuba’s coffee for both internal consumption and export.

<sup>92</sup> Quote from Hazard, 479. For a recent detailed social and cultural history of coffee plantations in western Cuba’s *Vueltabajo*, from whence both the slave-based *cafetal* production of the bean and *cafecito/tazita* consumption of the beverage in Cuban life originated, see Van Norman, “Shade Grown Slavery: Life and Labor on Coffee Plantations in Western Cuba, 1790-1845.” See also Thomas, *Cuba*, ch. X.

<sup>93</sup> Thomas, 129.

Hugh Thomas wrote, the plummet in production was in western Cuba, while in the east, production continued to rise from 1846 into the 1860s.<sup>94</sup>

Like much agricultural production in Cuba's eastern province, coffee cultivation by slave labor remained archaic and the quality and quantities of it were inferior to those grown elsewhere on the isle. Even within Oriente province itself the amounts produced by slave cultivators in Guantánamo were less than nearby areas, including the numerous coffee farms surrounding El Cobre and Santiago in the rugged Sierra Maestra range.<sup>95</sup> In 1861, San Antonio de los Baños in the Vuelta Abajo, an area in decline west of Havana that had been in the forefront of coffee production during the booming 1820s and 1830s, produced two-and-a-half times more coffee from its 84 *cafetales*—one estate more than in the Guantánamo region.<sup>96</sup> In spite of the small-scale of coffee production in the zone, Hazard wrote “the mountains of Guantanamo are now considered the coffee regions of Cuba, and there the cultivation is on the increase, while in other places it has decreased.” For both struggling coffee growers, and upwardly mobile would-be *cafetaleros*, the availability of suitable land in the frontier district promised a continuance of coffee cultivation's particular culture in Cuba within an overarching late-nineteenth-century age of slave and serf emancipation, the extension of sugar monoculture, and of dispossession, migration, and the proletarianization of labor. Slavery remained central to this cash crop, but Hazard thought that modernization and technical sophistication were making inroads: “In the past few years, owing to the

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<sup>94</sup> Thomas, 132.

<sup>95</sup> In 1867 there were 112 *cafetales* in El Cobre in the Sierra Maestra to the west of Santiago, see list of *Fincas rústicas*, 30 Noviembre 1867 Angel María Chacón, in AHN, SU, leg. 4957, Censos Generales, 1874-1879-1887, Provincia de Santiago de Cuba.

<sup>96</sup> Pérez de la Riva, *El café*, 78-82; Rodríguez, 17, 18.

gradually increasing scarcity of negroes, many improvements have been made in the use of labor-saving machines, some of which are worked by steam-power in lieu of the old-fashioned way of working by water-power.”<sup>97</sup>

The coffee grown in Tiguabos and Yateras was mostly for consumption within Cuba itself, while some surplus was exported to France. Hazard repeated the then-current notion that the decline of Cuban coffee exports stemmed from 1848 with “the United States placing an almost prohibitory tariff on Cuban coffee in favor of Brazil, which empire receives our flour and grain at a nominal tariff” but that in any case, it was “certain that many of those who formerly planted coffee now make sugar” due both to the great instability and constant fluctuation of coffee prices, and because the cultivation of sugar used the planters’ “large number of hands to greater advantage.”<sup>98</sup>

Historians such as Thomas have argued that sugar displaced coffee because it was much more profitable, that coffee estate owners could not as readily afford the expense of slaves, and rising Brazilian competition in the 1840s combined with high tariffs on Spanish-produced goods entering the United States from 1834 on.<sup>99</sup> Labor was central to why Brazilian production won out in U.S. markets over Cuban competition for other longer-term reasons. Lower transport costs for tropic commodities shipped from port cities would seemingly make Cuba’s proximity to the Gulf Coast commercial center of New Orleans at the terminus of the Mississippi riverine system, and thus U.S. internal and urban markets, an incomparable natural advantage. But the 1817-1820 Anglo-Spanish bans on the Trans-

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<sup>97</sup> Hazard, 481.

<sup>98</sup> Hazard, 479.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas, 131.

Atlantic slave trade north of the equator, reinforced by similar treaties in 1835, drove up the cost of illegally traded slaves in the Caribbean despite often lax enforcement.<sup>100</sup> While slave prices declined relative to those in the United States in the 1830s, suggesting “labor market saturation” during sugar’s rise, scholars of slave prices found that threats to the illegal trade created “sharp upward fluctuations in prime-age female relative to male slave prices” as owners tried to adopt a system conducive to natural increase instead of the earlier pattern of continual imports.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, in Brazil—both closer to sources of slave labor supply in West, Central-West, and even Southeast Africa, and facing comparatively fewer restrictions of the Portuguese and Brazilian-controlled illegal-trade— prices remained generally stable from “1835 and 1850” in both markets, but the cost of women slaves in Brazil did not rise as steeply during the decades before the trade’s final suppression in the 1850s.<sup>102</sup> Fragmentary data from Vassouras in Rio de Janeiro’s coffee zone suggested that slave prices were higher than in Rio de Janeiro, so future research may indicate regional variations in the cost of slaves before they rose in the 1850s.<sup>103</sup> Then too, Brazil saw a substantial internal slave trade that reallocated large numbers of agricultural laborers from the sugar sector in the declining northeast to the coffee zones of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Something the opposite occurred in western Cuba: coffee production was particularly hard-hit by a series of destructive hurricanes in the 1840s, leading coffee planters there to sell off their slaves to the

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<sup>100</sup> Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 325-26, further emphasizes the role of British finance capital and investment in promoting Brazil’s coffee boom.

<sup>101</sup> Laird W. Bergad, Fé Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 154, ch. 7.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 149-51, ch. 7.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, 150.

sugar barons, or even switch to sugar cane cultivation themselves, in place of restarting coffee production, which unlike sugar required several years before the trees would bear harvestable quantities of coffee-cherries.<sup>104</sup> Henceforth, coffee in Cuba would no longer be as it was—“as largely cultivated in the valleys and plains as” by the 1860s, “sugar-cane, yet now the portion of the island where most of the coffee-raising is done is in the district and neighborhood of [Santiago de] Cuba, and in the jurisdiction of Guantanamo” where “the land [was] to be had for a song.”<sup>105</sup> The cheapness of land in sparsely populated marginal frontier districts of the east thereby gave coffee cultivation in Cuba a new lease on life. In fact, coffee planters in the district had far more of their capital invested in their slave labor force, by-and-large, than in land much like antebellum U.S. slaveholders in the cotton fields, rice lowlands, tobacco farms, and sugar estates of the rural south.

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<sup>104</sup> On this cycle of storms, see the environmental history, Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Winds of Change: Hurricanes and the Transformation of Nineteenth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Van Norman, Introduction, 117-118, 182, 232. Hall, 30, discussed the transfer of 38,000 Cuban slaves from the western coffee sector to sugar cultivation by the late 1840s—concurrent with the introduction of Chinese indentured workers, especially in the 1850s, as a transitional form of labor. On coffee plantations in Vassouras and the Paraíba valley in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil that exhibited a particularly rapacious and exploitative attitude toward the natural environment and the slave-laborers who worked them during Brazil’s coffee export boom, see the classic study by Stanley J. Stein, *Vassouras: a Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. See also Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Coastal Forest*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). In the first half of the nineteenth century, the British colony Ceylon was for a time the leading producer of coffee, where, according to Gregory Dicum and Nina Luttinger, *The Coffee Book: Anatomy of an Industry from Crop to the Last Drop*, (New York: The New Press, 1999), 30-31: “By 1869 approximately 176,000 acres of rainforest had been destroyed solely for the cultivation of coffee” until the fungal disease, coffee leaf rust, *hemileia vastatrix* struck that year. For a time the ravages to the crop were offset by brining additional lands into coffee production before switching to tea cultivation. By the 1870s, Brazil moved into first place, followed by growing production in Central America and Latin America. See Dicum and Luttinger; and see also the global coffee history, Mark Pendergrast, *Uncommon Grounds: The History of Coffee and How It Transformed Our World*, (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 17-44, for coffee rust, 43-47.

<sup>105</sup> Hazard, 479.



As Hazard left the *llano*'s "flat country behind" during his journey to Yateras' *cafetales*, he encountered muleteers, "from some of the invisible labyrinths of road, followed by the head of some coffee-laden mule emerging around the curve, and, perhaps, succeeded by twenty or thirty others, all with their loads of coffee following their leader, to whom they are attached head and tail." He remarked the "transporting of the coffee to market is a business of itself, and is generally carried on by some native Indian, the owner of large numbers of mules, though on some of the estates where horses are plenty the proprietors send down their own trains."<sup>106</sup> At the time of his visit, at least one of these Indian mule-drivers, Policarpo Pineda Rustán, had turned to banditry, operating with a group of *bandoleros* as highwaymen in the mountainous fastness.<sup>107</sup> There was no indication from his travel book that Hazard heard of such matters, but this criminal's trajectory will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

The presence of Indians performing such transport tasks, and working as herdsmen and pastoralists providing beasts of burden to the district's agricultural enterprises, while slaves performed gang and task labor on plantations, offered a clue to how labor, class, caste,

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<sup>106</sup> Hazard, 465, 489-90.

<sup>107</sup> On Rustán (about whom more will be described in Chapter II), particularly some of his activities during the Ten Years' War see Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 55-57, 121. Banditry in Latin American contexts has generated substantial scholarly interest. For some influential suggestive analyses, see Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (1969, reprint; New York: The New Press, 2000); Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Lords of the Mountain: Social Banditry and Peasant Protest in Cuba, 1878-1918* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1989); Manuel de Paz Sánchez, José Fernández Fernández, and Nelson López Novegil, *El bandolerismo en Cuba, (1800-1933): Presencia canaria y protesta rural*, 2 vols. (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Litografía Romero, S.A., 1993); and Richard W. Slatta, *Bandidos: The Varieties of Latin American Banditry* (New York: Greenwood Publishing, 1987).



and race were intertwined within the local social hierarchy. Table 2.7 below indicates that not just race per se, but also color was correlated to servile status.

Table 2.7

7,841 Guantánamo Slaves Classified by Sex and Race, ca. 1860

325 Urban slaves:

Race	Male	Female	Total
Pardo [mixed]	23	29	52
Moreno [black]	129	144	273

7,516 Rural slaves:

Race	Male	Female	Total
Pardo [mixed]	96	91	187
Moreno [black]	3,874	3,455	7,329

TOTAL: 3% Pardo, 97% Moreno -- 53% Male, 47% Female -- 96% Rural, 4% Urban.

*Source:* Data from Félix Erénchun, *Anales de la Isla de Cuba: Diccionario administrativo, económico, estadístico y legislativo*, 3 vols. (Havana: Imprenta Antillana, 1857-1861), 1643.

The data did not indicate what portions of the ninety-seven percent of black (*moreno*) slaves were Creoles or African-born *bozales*, but fully ninety-six percent lived and worked in the countryside. Just 325, or four percent of the total, worked as domestics or artisans in towns. Only three percent of 7,841 slaves in the region in 1860 were listed as being of mixed race. It is impossible to know at this remove whether blackness was so indelibly associated with servile condition that slaves were simply understood to be “black” while free people of color were “socially whitened” in the census data. Informally people probably made further distinctions between traditionally free people and those more recently freed—that is manumitted slaves and their descendents would sometimes be held as socially lower in status than older free mixed-race families. Whites in privacy, as the most racially privileged group of whatever class, likely tended to lump most people of color together, but those same people did not always recognize any unity of shared oppression or necessarily express social solidarity. The mindsets produced by internalized colonialism’s “social constructs”—racial oppression and its supporting racialized logics and ideologies as a means of hierarchization

and social control—would prove difficult to socially de-construct or eradicate, and there was a tendency for families of color to stigmatize darker skin tone even among their own progeny.<sup>108</sup>

Put more simply, the social construction of race was somewhat different from the prevailing monolithic black/white pattern, the North American “one drop rule” whereby any visible trace of African ancestry made one “black.” In the United States racial miscegenation socially produced “black” children, subject to enslavement in perpetuity—lifetime hereditary bound labor—if born to a slave mother. In much of Latin America racial miscegenation produced “lighter” or “less black” children. In short, whites had the greatest relative racial privileges and advantages, and were encouraged by the racist logics of unequal power relations to view any and all persons of visible African ancestry as lower in social status. But among people of color, a split often was maintained between black and *mulato* or *pardo*, which has resulted in confusion as to whether race in Cuba was conceived as a bi-partite “white/black” system like that of the United States, historically, or a tri-partite “white/mixed/black” system.<sup>109</sup> In eastern Cuba distinctions were maintained often between skin tone and shade, between brown and black, between free and freed, between nominally Christian and animist, between Cuban-born and African-born—and even within families and

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<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the freedom struggles of the nineteenth and twentieth-century United States and beyond had unifying terms such as “negro,” and “colored,” and later “black” thrust on them by the dominant society, while, to quote Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 283, fn 18, in Cuba “Equal rights activists ... often adopted instead the phrase *de color* (of color), by which they intended to refer respectfully and inclusively to all people of African descent.”

<sup>109</sup> Much indeed has been written about different racial constructions and their change across time. An accessible synthesis is Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*. As for the frequent invocation of racial oppression and racist discourses in Cuba’s 1895-1898 war of independence examined in the historical literature, Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 309, fn 37 characterized as “Considerable energy has been devoted by historians to trying to figure out ‘the’ role of racism and distinctions of color in the war for independence” and proffered “Ada Ferrer’s dynamic and dialectical interpretation in *Insurgent Cuba*” as “one way out of the impasse.” I tend to agree and subscribe to the same nuanced approach, while acknowledging previous scholars’ attempts at greater precision.

households.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, historically free families of color often were tied through kinship, social, and economic relationships to manumitted and enslaved persons and networks. As a result, such free people of color in the east were cognizant of how the association of blackness with slave condition could affect their social status.

Guantánamo was a region starkly stratified by race, class, color, gender, and even comportment and carriage. The social scale's extremes of wealth and poverty were correlated with race. The social hierarchy was especially apparent on the coffee fincas with a mass of bonds-people resident in huts or a barracks beside the timbered and tiled homes of the owners. Among the "very gentlemanly French planters" Hazard described their morning rituals and customs: "the little ones go off with their governess, and we leave Madame in charge of the establishment."<sup>111</sup> On the coffee farm itself, "there are sometimes administrators... in general they are managed by the proprietor with the assistance of the *mayoral*, who may be white, but who is generally the most intelligent negro on the place."<sup>112</sup> The slaves themselves formed mostly a backdrop to his account, but he indicated that the sorting of coffee was "done by the negro women ... twenty or thirty of these women in their oddities of dress, or even the scarcity of it, picking away from the great piles of beans before

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<sup>110</sup> For nineteenth-century race relations, social inequality, sexual values, norms of honor and virtue, see Verena Martínez-Alier (Stolcke), *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1989). For a twentieth-century memoir by a *santiaguera* black Cuban woman that may be read in conjunction with other studies of race, and social "whitening" in Cuba and other Afro-Latin American contexts, see María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century*, translated by Anne McLean (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000). For a present-day ethnography of a town in the old coffee districts of the state of Rio de Janeiro that may similarly offer some comparative insights, see France Winddance Twine, *Racism in a Racial Democracy: The Maintenance of White Supremacy in Brazil* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

<sup>111</sup> Hazard, 465, 467.

<sup>112</sup> Hazard, 481.

them ... keeping up all the time a monotonous chanting” or collective work song.<sup>113</sup> Coffee picking and various other agricultural tasks were performed “by the hands on the place, — men, women, and children all going through the rows, each one with two bags and a basket.”<sup>114</sup>

Food and subsistence needs provided another venue for expressing the social distance and class gulf between the masters, slaves, and peasants. More elaborated, European-derived table customs, cutlery, and styles of cuisine prevailed among planters with a few Creole adaptations such as the absence of bread and utilization of native foods and fruits at the table. For slaves, the diet was spartan and rudimentary, although more varied than that consumed on sugar estates. The plantain, “constitut[ed] the principal food of the negroes on the sugar and coffee estates” while the coconut palm, “important not only as shade for the coffee, but for the thousand and one uses it is put to besides ... bears a large and important share in sustaining the life of the lower-classes, negroes, etc.” From it they even made “a species of wine, which they make into ardent spirits; from the fruit [coconut] they get their cups, lamps, and oils.”<sup>115</sup> Others described relatively ample food grown by slaves themselves that supplemented the dried salted *tasajo* beef or *bacalao* salt cod, plantains, yucca, or other

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<sup>113</sup> Hazard, 488.

<sup>114</sup> Hazard, 484. Van Norman contended that as a general rule coffee farms in western Cuba had more balanced gender ratios and larger numbers of children than would be found commonly on sugar *ingenios*. Harvesting, sorting, and other tasks required greater manual dexterity so that—like cotton in the southeastern United States—coffee was a crop conducive to child labor. See Van Norman, 123, 135, 139-143, 206. Padrón, 46, makes similar claims about coffee in Cuba’s east, although mostly without evidentiary supports, and straying into questionable claims of coffee slavery being mediated by the proximity of owners residing on their own estates. On cotton and child labor, see Hall, 153.

<sup>115</sup> Hazard, 495, 496.

starchy food crops frequently provided on the coffee farms. The production of food, along with most of the household tasks were feminized types of labor typically done by women.

Rural white and mixed-race countrywomen—*la guajira*—were probably little different in many regards from those Hazard described in western Cuba closer to Havana: “not so talkative as the husband” performing much of the productive and all the reproductive labor and household tasks, able “to mount a horse, though she usually rides with her husband, sitting.... upon the neck of the horse.”<sup>116</sup> Women in the countryside faced few employment options given the absence of industry and few institutions that allowed for social mobility. Attachment to the extended family or to men in the capacity of fulfilling endlessly repeated domestic labor tasks such as child rearing, and supplementary labor inside and outside the household was typical. Given the relative weakness of the church, formal marriage was often disregarded by peasants and small-scale ranchers in favor of informal unions—a pattern that would persist well into the twentieth century. Various forms of independent self-employment, operating as market women, sewing, peddling, or preparing food represented some of the options or alternatives open to women in this agrarian patriarchal society. Men almost always controlled property, but cases of widowhood sometimes conferred economic power, property ownership, and concomitant social status on women.

Whites were disproportionately over-represented as the privileged owners of major properties, while poor whites, long-free, and more recently freed people of color owned food crop farms, stock farms and small ranches, apiaries, and tobacco plots (*vegas*). Free people of color owned rural and urban properties, but wealthier whites controlled the more valuable estates commensurate with greater privilege. A census from about the time of Hazard’s visit

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<sup>116</sup> Hazard, 536.

enumerated eleven steam powered sugar mills, two of them water-powered *a la St.-Domingue* (and both owned by French Creoles), and twelve ox-powered *trapiches* on the plain. Eighty-three *cafetales*, some eight percent of the 996 total in the country, but supplying only four percent of the total coffee production, dotted the hillsides. Forty-three *haciendas* and thirty-one stock raising farms supplied beasts of burden and transport: horses, donkeys, mules, and castrated oxen to haul cartage and sugar cane. Table 2.8 below presents something of a social pyramid with the 298 tobacco plots worked by many rural people of color represented together with un-free workers performing labor on estates, as well as on their own *rozas* or *conuco* vegetable gardens and animal pens, in the category of “farming” below. The relative lack of laborers is perhaps indicative, or at least suggestive, of the scale and prevalence of forced labor patterns within the district:

Table 2.8  
Occupation and Race:  
Whites and People of Color (Both Free and Enslaved), Guantánamo, 1861

Occupation	Whites	People of Color [Enslaved and Free, <i>Mulato</i> and Black]	TOTAL
Owners/proprietors	175	116	291
Farming [includes many slaves]	1,271	6,848	8,119
Shop-keepers/commerce	135	4	139
Manufacturers	1	5	6
Mechanics/Artisans	418	476	894
Occupation	Whites	People of Color [Enslaved and Free, <i>Mulato</i> and Black]	TOTAL
Professions	17	5	22
Laborers	71	253	324
TOTAL	2,088	7,707	9,795

*Source:* Rodríguez, 21, data assembled from Pezuela, II: 498. In addition, Pezuela included “3 ecclesiastics of all classes,” 52 active and retired civil servants, and 105 active and retired military—all whites, and 28 “pobres de solemnidad,” half white and half “of color” for a total of 188 in addition to those listed in the table for 9,983 total of Pezuela’s

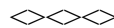
population figure of 19,619. It would seem that the majority or even all of the people listed in the economically active population table were male.

A set of tax records from 1861 listed sixteen sugar mills in Tiguabos, three in Yateras. In addition there were seventy-four cafetales, forty-one “*haciendas de crianza*” for rearing livestock, sixteen pastureland *potreros*, 144 other farms: “*sitios de labor y estancias*,” 243 tobacco vegas, and four apiaries (aside from clusters of bee-hives that were often tended on cafetales for pollinating various flowering plants and providing marketable quantities of coffee flower honey and beeswax, and still others similarly maintained on small farms). Sagua de Tánamo on the north coast, and drawing white peasant colonizers and free black settlers from the Holguín district, had but two primitive sugar mills, both quite small, forty-one *haciendas de crianza*, two *potreros*, five *sitios de labor*, but 334 tobacco vegas.<sup>117</sup> Semi-peasant subsistence cultivators and settlers in Sagua and other marginal areas thus turned to tobacco as a source of revenue. Given the use of honorifics such as “Don” and “Doña” that were restricted to legally white residents at this time period, out of a total of 802 taxed rural landowners, 430 had “Don” while 46 were “Doña” for 476 total presumed white proprietors. In addition, thirteen estates were operated by groups of descendents as an inheritance or as caretakers, leaving 265 men without the title and 48 women proprietors without and thus, some 313 total free black or mixed-race taxed property owners. All the taxed owners of sugar mills and coffee estates were identified with the honorific, as were the majority of more valuable estates. Out of the sixteen ranchers and *potrero* pasture owners in Tiguabos and Yateras, only four were not so identified as legally white.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Libro talonario para la recaudación del impuesto municipal sobre fincas rurales en Guantánamo, in ANC, Archivo: Miscelánea de libros, año: 1861, sin legajo, no. de orden: 2.588, Fincas rurales. Impto. de. On tobacco cultivation, see Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint* and Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery*.

This mixed population stratified by race and class lived dispersed over a wide area. The availability of land and low population density led to a pattern of endogamous, more self-reliant groups of families, “closed to the extreme of forming true clans ... with the correspondent forms of patriarchy” and patron-client networks whereby clients deferred to, or followed, the male heads of these extended family groups.<sup>119</sup> The weight of tradition, custom, and familial authority in this patrician and patriarchal setting must be emphasized in analysis of conceptions of honor and gender roles in nineteenth-century Guantánamo society. At the same time, the very independent nature of rural life placed women in a setting far removed from the lot of urban white upper-class women—held as a societal ideal—confined and secluded within the household. Such urban white women could not go out unsupervised, “not even attend church” which, in Hazard’s Anglo-Protestant view, they attended “for pastime, it being their only hour of freedom from the shackles that custom throws around them.”<sup>120</sup>



Given patterns of comparative isolation of the population, dispersal in the often rugged terrain, self-sufficiency, and the relative lack of manufactured goods in the countryside led to a keen popular knowledge and lore about various uses for natural resources from the local environment. The rural poor contrived musical instruments for their *changüü* social gatherings from salt-cod packing crates (turned into drums and African-derived lamellaphone instruments), vegetable scrapers, agricultural implements, skillets,

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<sup>118</sup> Data from *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Rodríguez, 22.

<sup>120</sup> Hazard, 553-54.



spoons, old jugs—even the dried jawbone and teeth of a pack animal (*el quijano*)—in short, from any piece of scrap. Rural *guantanameros* practiced a few distinctive regional idiosyncrasies, including using the brightly luminescent flying beetle associated with coffee producing uplands, the “cucullo” (*cucuyo*) as artificial illumination, “it is said, by anxious lovers, at their stolen nocturnal rendezvous; and it may be for this reason they are such great favorites with the ladies, who wear them in their belts, their hair, and under their thin, gauzy dresses, which they wear of an evening; the effect, as may be imagined, is as novel as it is beautiful.”<sup>121</sup>

A further source of regional distinctiveness was the vernacular linguistic diversity. The Brookses and French Creole coffee planter Enrique Lescaille hosted Hazard, who was astonished to be addressed by “out-of-the-world” slaves in the “Coffee Mountains of Yateras” with “*bon jour, maitre*” and asked by slave women sorting coffee in a mixture of Spanish and French ““*Dame medio, maitre*’ give me five cents master.”<sup>122</sup> The French language, or its kin, *patois cubain*, continued to be spoken alongside Spanish, while numbers of Catalan merchants in the town of Guantánamo added to the region’s polyglot linguistic hierarchy. Within the town of Santa Catalina del Guaso itself, the Table 2.9 below of

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<sup>121</sup> Hazard, 474.

<sup>122</sup> Hazard, 438-39, 459-95, especially 488-91 for French patois/ kreyòl spoken by some Yateras slaves. In the Padrón essay, *Franceses en el suroriente de Cuba*, 63, Haitian influence in Cuba arising from 20<sup>th</sup> century immigration is differentiated from “French Creole” or *patois cubain*, which Padrón asserted may still be spoken in regions of the Cauto river and around Gran Piedra east of Santiago de Cuba. This claim renders comprehensible the statements of a tourist guidebook from the 1920s: “The dialectic *lingua franca* employed by dull wits of African descent [*sic*], and certain of the Cantonese, is almost too crippled to speak of in connection with pure Castilian. The student has to be well grounded in the language to understand much of it, particularly when mixed with the creole French brought over from Haiti in the last century, and frequently heard in Oriente prov[ince]. Many Haitian words are current in the vernacular here” and “Formerly there were so many *cafetales* in the region [Yateras] that it was known as Coffee Mts. district. A bizarre French patois is spoken in some places, and French names are prominent. It is said that some of the half-castes in the Yateras country have the blood of the Cuban aboriginals in their veins,” T. Philip Terry, *Terry’s Guide to Cuba, Including the Isle of Pines; With a chapter on the Ocean Routes to the Island—A Handbook for Travelers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926), 31, 415.

nationality and sex, taken from a Spanish census, suggests the Atlantic World's wider cosmopolitan links and connections with Guantánamo:

Table 2.9  
Nationality and Sex, Urban whites, People of Color (Slave and Free, *Mulato* and black [*Pardos y Morenos*]), and Emancipados, Sta. Catalina de Guantánamo, Cuba 1859-1860

Origin	Men	Women	TOTAL
“Of this church” [locals]	217	314	533
Spain	125	67	192
France	85	95	180
“This Island” [Cuba]	104	61	165
England [including Jamaica]	9	4	13
The United States	6	N/a	6
Mexico	6	N/a	6
Yucatán	1	1	2
Emancipados [Africa]	18	12	30
Other locales of the island [ <i>sic</i> ]	5	2	7
Total	576	556	1,134

Source: Pezuela, II: 503.

The origin of separate languages within the rural district arose from its disparate discrete waves of migration and comparative recent settlement, but the survival of these ethnic and linguistic divisions indicated some degree of ethnic chauvinism, exclusion, isolation, and social control inherent in the plantation system despite the presence of a large free population of color. There is some evidence that hundreds of African *bozal* captives continued to arrive in Guantánamo as late as 1860 according to a British consular dispatch concerning the activities of the illegal slave-ship, the *Javernies*, seized off the African coast with 819 slaves aboard and records indicating previous human smuggling runs to

southeastern Cuba.<sup>123</sup> Slave speech was often dismissed as “jargon,” but it suggested a language akin to Haitian Kreyòl.<sup>124</sup> Writing of his coffee planter host, Hazard wrote:

[Because Lescaille was] French, therefore by birth, educated in the United States from a boy, and living constantly amongst Spaniards, he had the happy faculty of being able to speak either French, English, or Spanish, as a mother-tongue, in addition to which he spoke the Creole dialect, – a compound of vile French and some little Spanish, which is the usual language of the negroes and the plantation.<sup>125</sup>

A Spanish census recorded, “almost all of the oldest families in Santa Catalina originated in the immigration from Santo Domingo and have French last names [.] [T]hat language is as usual in this area as it was in the former French part of [Hispaniola].”<sup>126</sup>

This marked French influence, it must be emphasized, was equally prominent in Santiago de Cuba and its environs. Furthermore, Santiago boasted a much larger population. Another travel account indicated “the revolution in San Domingo ... gave the first great stimulus to the culture of the coffee plant in Cuba” when “refugees from the opposite shore sought shelter wherever they could find it ... large numbers made their new homes in the eastern department of Cuba” transforming the “lands which had been idle for three and four centuries into smiling gardens.”<sup>127</sup> Much like Cienfuegos, founded on Cuba’s southern coast in 1819, another French infusion arose after the transfer of Louisiana to U.S. control after 1803. In addition to Cuba’s east, the initial wave of immigration, arising from the great slave

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<sup>123</sup> Bosch and Sánchez, 64, 82. See also, Guerra, I: 26.

<sup>124</sup> Robert B. Hoernel, “A Comparison of Sugar and Social Change in Puerto Rico and Oriente, Cuba: 1898-1959” (Ph.D. dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1977), 123; Emilio Bacardí y Moreau, *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba* 10 vols. (Madrid: Gráficas Breogán, 1973), III: 218.

<sup>125</sup> Hazard, 464.

<sup>126</sup> Pezuela, II: 507.

<sup>127</sup> Ballou, 243.

revolution in St.-Domingue, and then leavened by post-Napoleonic war arrivals migrated and re-migrated to New Orleans, Charleston, Havana, and other regions in the wider Gulf Coast and circum-Caribbean basin.<sup>128</sup>

French cultural influence in the arts, popular culture, the opera and theater, dance, and styles of dress marked the age throughout much of Latin America, but in eastern Cuba such forms and practices could not be extricated from the actual presence of French and Franco-Haitian migrant families and their descendents. Just a few years before Hazard's visit, a Santiago newspaper article series, *Lo que fuimos*, celebrated the courtly manners and refined styles of dress brought by francophone immigrants, decrying in Cuba "the acceptance of *americanism* of the United States" that displaced French "urbanity and culture" with an "*aristocracy of money* [*emphasis in original*]."<sup>129</sup> Proximity to the United States offered a cultural, social, and economic pole for much of Cuba, but the east was both more Caribbean hybrid and French; Hazard did notice quite a few "articles direct from France" and, "made only for this market [Santiago]... at extraordinarily low prices."<sup>130</sup> The rural census predating both Hazard's trip, and the newspaper's series on culture and *noblesse oblige* indicated a profusion of French surnames among coffee planters in Guantánamo, divided into the separate jurisdictions of Tiguabos and Yateras in the Tables 2.10 and 2.11 below:

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<sup>128</sup> Suggestive of a broader francophone Caribbean pattern, see for example the children of Eulalie Mandeville and Eugène Macarty who moved to Santiago de Cuba to start coffee farms before returning to New Orleans in Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 21.

<sup>129</sup> Portuondo, 206, quoting "M.M.N." in *El Marino* "Lo que fuimos," 6, 7, 8, 11, 15, 16 January 1862.

<sup>130</sup> Hazard, 440.

Table 2.10

32 Tiguabos Cafetales, Owner, Acreage Cultivated and Uncultivated, Number of Slaves, Guantánamo, Cuba, ca. 1854

Coffee farm	Owner	Estimated Acreage- Cultivated Uncultivated	Slave dotación
El Dorado	D. Gregorio Planche	91.66 510.95	58
La Luisa	D. Félix Arnaud	199.98 1,066.56	114
Olimpo	D. Antonio Carbonell	99.9 399.96	78
Indiana		83.325 249.98	70
Oasis		99.9 1,399.86	48
Alegría		133.32 499.95	50
Chaumier	D. Agustín Ybonet [Ivonet]	133.32 566.61	64
Carlota	D. José Cagnet	133.32 366.63	37
María Luisa	D. Juan Loustanan	266.64 299.97	87
Soledad [later converted to a sugar estate]	D. Gregorio Malletá	116.655 199.98	190
San Juan	Hodelin Brothers	66.66 333.3	31
Belona	Fernando Toreau	66.66 1,266.54	24
Cuneira	Hodelin Brothers	133.32 433.29	60
Reunion	Luis E. Oscar	133.32 933.24	72
San Emilio	Luis Ernesto	133.32 433.29	112
Celina	Luis Bombout	133.32 533.28	55
Emilia	D. Luis Tarosay	133.32 199.98	140
Alma	D. Hipólito Daudinot	116.655 183.315	46

Coffee farm	Owner	Estimated Acreage- Cultivated Uncultivated	Slave dotación
Recompensa	Hodelin Brothers	133.32 133.32	46
S. Luis	D. Luis Tarosay	133.32 499.95	90
Romaná	D. Miguel Morasin [Moracen]	133.32 499.95	42
San Esteban	D. Teodoro Brooks	33.33 66.66	80
Santa María	D. Carlos Coste	[blank]	[blank]
San Pedro		199.98 266.64	160
N. Soledad	Da. Margarita Brum	116.655 216.65	46
San Juan de Bellavista	Da. Lucía Daudinot	116.655 566.61	46
Sitio	D. Juan Bec	11.1 25	6
Hermanos	D. Hipólito Daudinot	116.655 549.95	46
Yemen	D. Adriano Daudinot	116.655 666.6	47
Isabelita	D. Martín Vizcay	133.32 866.58	80
Unión	D. Ana Aguirre	50 116.655	25
Rosita	D. Carlos Lauverin	16.665 50	14
TOTALS	54,347 <i>arrobas*</i> coffee	3,532.98 cult. 12,965.37 uncl.	2,064 1 Chinese
Average dotación:			64.5 Slaves

*Source:* Data from Padrón de fincas rústicas del partido de Tiguabos, propietarios, dotación, producción y rentas, ANC, fondo: Gobierno General, leg. 388, no. 18511, s.f. (Acreage estimates from caballerías, with 1 caballería = 33.2 acres. \*An arroba was approximately 107 lbs.)

Table 2.11

36 Yateras Cafetales, Owner, Acreage Cultivated and Uncultivated, Number of Slaves, Guantánamo, Cuba, ca. 1854

Coffee Farm	Owner	Estimated Acreage- Cultivated Uncultivated	Slave dotación
Cubana	D. Cayetano Ysalgué	99.99 233.31	24
Dios Ayuda	Da. Lucía Felipe [Phillips]	50 166.65	37
Perla	D. Juan Duvergé	166.65 333.3	82
Santa Teresa	D. General Espalter	116.655 166.5	70
Perú	D. Juan Carrera	16.665 633.27	12
Confianza	D. José Lassalle	16.665 133.32	4
Ninfa	D. Eugenio Dinesure	199.98 399.96	98
Valparaíso	D. Juan Eugas	99.99 899.91	72
Monte Alto	Da. María del Caridad Soler	16.665 99.99	8
San Fernando	D. Fernando Pons	66.66 266.64	38
Unión	[Illegible]	133.32 [Illegible]	20
Ermitaño	D. Enrique Lescaille	133.32 199.98	36
Chaumier	D. Luis A. Constantin	16.665 99.99	17
Monte Verde	D. Federico Lescaille	133.32 333.3	118
Victoria	D. Edmundo Reygondeau	99.99 266.64	36
Bella Vista	D. Juan Begué	99.99 333.3	40
Bella Vista	D. Pedro Daisson	33.33 66.66	10
Naranjos	D. Eduardo Chivas	99.99 199.98	54
Las Gracias	D. Victor Savon	133.32 133.32	26

Coffee farm	Owner	Estimated Acreage- Cultivated Uncultivated	Slave dotación
Palmarito	D. Artur Limon	66.66 133.32	15
Joben María [ <i>sic</i> , Joven María]	D. Juan Dumé	33.33 99.99	14
Amistad	D. Lencio Turcas	133.32 366.63	89
Felicidad	D. Isidoro Bayú [Bayeux]	199.98 599.94	55
Campo Hermoso	D. José A. Morales	50 166.65	20
Méjico	D. Pedro Oscar Durevé	66.66 166.65	40
Noely	D. Raimundo Baquet	50 199.98	14
Monte S. Juan	Da. Juana Mena	16.665 66.66	30
Carolina	D. Federico Preval	25 33.33	6
Valdor	D. Jorge Preval	25 66.66	22
Clarita	D. Jorge Preval	50 199.98	28
Santa Isabel	D. Emilio Reygondeau	66.66 66.66	62
Cedro Gordo	D. Emilio Reygondeau	99.99 199.98	64
Chalet	D. Emilio Reygondeau	133.32 333.3	39
Polía [Folie?]	D. Pedro Boulí	41.66 99.99	12
Esperanza	D. Numá Reygondeau	133.32 199.98	71
Mont Friendship [Amistad]	D. Fernando Pons [Félix Durruthy]	133.32 199.98	50
TOTALS			1,433
Average dotación:			40 slaves

*Source:* Data from Padrón de fincas rústicas del partido de Yateras, propietarios, dotación, producción y rentas, ANC, fondo: Gobierno General, leg. 388, nos. 18510, s.f. (Acreage estimates from caballerías, with 1 caballería = 33.2 acres.)

The data suggest the French, Creole, and Spanish *cafetaleros* possessed an average *dotación*, or slave work force, resident at each cafetal of 64.5 for estates in Tiguabos, and 40 in



Yateras. By the time of Hazard's visit, he thought that "fifty or sixty" bonded agricultural workers were required to cultivate every thousand acres. Elsewhere he estimated that on 264 acres, "two hundred thousand [coffee] trees can be planted" producing about "sixty-two thousand five hundred pounds of coffee" that would command a "nice little return of fifteen thousand dollars" if coffee prices were at twenty-five dollars for 100 pounds. "From that, of course, have to be deducted the expenses" of running the estate, transport, and so forth.<sup>131</sup>

Slave laborers grew coffee seedlings, which were then "carefully and regularly weeded" every month "for two years; at the end of which time those plants that have attained to the height of thirty inches are cropped" and stunted. By the end of three years the coffee tree began "bearing in small quantities; at the end of the fourth year" the trees had matured and gave a yearly harvest "for twenty-five or thirty years' at the end of the sixth or seventh year, they require[d] pruning; and after ten years, they" only produced a harvestable crop "every alternate year."<sup>132</sup>

Slaves performed a variety of tasks with each season, including introducing new plantings, extending cultivation, diverting watercourses for irrigation and as a power source for machinery, clearing land, and performing gang and task labor as required on the estate.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Hazard, 481.

<sup>132</sup> Hazard, 482. For a detailed account of coffee cultivation and everyday life on a range of western Cuban *cafetales*, including the isle's single largest at Angerona west of Havana, see Van Norman, especially chs. 2 and 3. For coffee production in other Latin American contexts, see William Roseberry, Lowell Gudmundson, and Mario Samper Kutschbach, eds, *Coffee, Society, and Power in Latin America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995). For the Caribbean, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Coffee Planters and Coffee Slaves in the Antilles: The Impact of a Secondary Crop," in Ira Berlin, and Philip Morgan, eds., *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1993).

<sup>133</sup> A full description of coffee cultivation, the erection of farm buildings, patterns of gang and task labor, and other aspects of the life of bond workers is beyond the scope of the present work. For a more extensive treatment see Van Norman for colonial western Cuba, and Stein for Vassouras in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

As with sugar, the crop shaped the nature of work and its rhythms and pace. Farm work was difficult, and workdays could—and often did—last fifteen hours, but they compared favorably to what often prevailed on the sugar mills, especially in the long harvesting and grinding season.<sup>134</sup> In late February until April or “even up to June” the trees were in flower. By September through November, throughout the rainy and hurricane seasons, the harvest season occurred. Overseers set the amounts each harvest hand had to pick, stipulating rewards for quotas met and meting out sanctions or punishments for failure. On many *cafetales* an ox or mule-powered pulping mill, while wealthier coffee estates used steam or water-powered pulping mills in a circular track overrode the dried coffee cherries to remove the pulp, or in the latter case, so it could be washed off and removed from the beans after fermentation for half a day. Other slaves raked the cleaned beans out onto “*secaderos*, or drying floors ... large stone basins, quadrangular in shape, about fifty or sixty feet long ... arranged in a sort of terrace, ... about three feet from the ground, built of stone, with plastered floors” and built in such a way “to drain off the water in case of rain.”<sup>135</sup> In such squalls or storms, the beans would be raked up and covered with a small thatched roof to protect them until the rain ceased. Various other operations, some involving the pulping-mill again, processed the dry fruit and their seeds—the beans—for the operations of sorting, sifting, packing, shipping, and transport to market.

The labor the slave workforce performed included not just cultivating and harvesting the coffee, but also frequently upland “rice, plantains, potatoes [*sic*, *viandas*—as a variety of starchy root vegetables such as yucca, malanga, boniato, potatoes, etc. eaten in Cuba in lieu

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<sup>134</sup> Hall, 18; Van Norman.

<sup>135</sup> Hazard, 483-86.

of bread are known], cacao or chocolate, and all kinds of fruit ... planted in the same fields with the coffee in order that the trees may eventually afford the shade which the coffee plant requires.”<sup>136</sup> These crops allowed for greater food self-sufficiency, often shaded the coffee trees, and provided a lucrative source of revenue for internally marketed produce—especially important while the planters awaited full harvests given the nature of the crop. These cultigens suitable for internal markets or subsistence also served as a crucial hedge or social safety valve during periods of economic downturn, low coffee prices, crop failures, disease outbreaks, and other mishaps.

Like sugar mills, the coffee estate also had “its *batey*, or square ... not generally so extensive as on the sugar-estates, consisting of the *casa de vivienda*, or dwelling-house, the *tendales*, or store-houses, ... stone terraces for drying the coffee, the stables,” the slave barracoon or cluster of thatched *bohío* huts, “and the coffee-house where the fruit is prepared, this being generally the largest of the structures.”<sup>137</sup> At times, cacao beans for the manufacture of chocolate would be grown in exportable quantities. Still other *cafetales* gained renown for their plantains, mangos, oranges, limes, or other fruits and vegetables.

Hazard’s hosts took him to see their friends’ and relatives’ estates. He found the “Monte de Verde, the finest estate in this section of the country ... situated in a lovely valley, ‘midst surrounding hills’ with a “large and handsome” dwelling house, replete with both flower and “fruit and vegetable gardens” that were “large and very fine” having cultivated

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<sup>136</sup> Hazard, 480.

<sup>137</sup> Hazard, 480-481. It appears that slaves on coffee farms lived in either a group of independent huts, or a barracoon of one to four large thatched buildings, sometimes with multiple rooms. See the brief study by Zoe Cremé Ramos and Rafael Duharte Jiménez, *Barracones en los cafetales?* (Havana: Publicigraf, 1994). For a fuller discussion of slave housing on colonial coffee farms over time see Van Norman, especially chs. 3 and 4.

even “the strawberry.”<sup>138</sup> The *padrón* from the decade before his visit, did indeed list Federico Lescaille’s Monte Verde as having the largest dotación in Yateras: 118 slaves. He also noted “one or two fine estates belonging to the Rousseau family, who at one time resided in the United States, and their places” bore the state “names of Virginia and Alabama.”<sup>139</sup> “The loveliest place, however” in his estimation, “was the one known as the ‘Orangeries’ [*sic*, Los Naranjos], which, high up among the mountains, was itself built upon a plateau” with “a fine stone house, built something in the style of some of the Swiss chalets, and finished in its interior with the beautiful polished wood of the country” with, furthermore, “a splendid view of the adjacent mountains and the valley beneath.”<sup>140</sup>

The Franco-Cuban Creoles, Béarnaise, Spanish, and Catalan proprietors were haughtily proud of their intensively worked splendid estates and seigniorial life-style. For those descended from *petit blancs*, ruined *grand blancs*, and some refugee *gens de couleur*, or “*affranchis*” from Haiti, their fortunes had been rebuilt from the losses that their French and Franco-Haitian forbears had incurred. Over time they had built up privileged positions and a manorial lifestyle either in residence in urban centers, or at their country estates at the old professions of managing sugar-making and coffee culture in the vicinity of Santiago, moving

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<sup>138</sup> Hazard, 479.

<sup>139</sup> The author can attest that Virginia still exists as a town in present-day Guantánamo Province, as do many of the old *cafetales*, including Carolina, Dios Ayuda, and others. I am grateful to José Sánchez Guerra, the historian of Guantánamo, for alerting me to the existence of extant ruins from the epoch as well. See the ruin of Los Naranjos in Diego Bosch Ferrer, and José Sánchez Guerra, *Rebeldía y apalencamiento: Jurisdicciones de Guantánamo y Baracoa* (Guantánamo: Centro Provincial de Patrimonio Cultural, 2003), 22-23. In addition to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Cafetal Isabelica at Gran Piedra near Santiago de Cuba with its museum, Padrón, 64, mentioned ruins of “Fraternidad ... near Ramón de las Yaguas; ‘Kentucky,’ apparently founded by migrants from New Orleans; ‘La Indiana,’” whose destruction will be discussed in the chapter on the Ten Years’ War, as well as El Olimpo, Tres Arroyos, Gran Sofía, Amitié, Villanueva, La Linne, Providence, and other traces of the old coffee estates. [See photo “Cafetal La Isabelica.”]

<sup>140</sup> Hazard, 472-73.

east in some cases to the comparatively empty frontier and forests primeval of Guantánamo. Cuban historian José Antonio Portuondo cited Emilio Bacardí's description of one Catalan-owned *cafetal* near Santiago as "one of the most splendid ... one of the gardens of the so-called French colony ... the house, almost a palace [replete with] a library, billiards room, its own school, chapel, etc."<sup>141</sup> They also brought with them notions of slave discipline, social control, and policing from the old colony of their forebears, just across the Windward Passage from the territory of their new plantations.

As Hazard unfailingly indicated, "This is the same district where, before the present troubles, runaway negroes, deserters, and convicts had collected, and uniting together for protection, were fortified in such a way in those wild mountain passes" so that it was difficult, if not impossible "to dislodge them."<sup>142</sup> Again, such was the border-like quality of southeastern Cuba, demonstrating the cultural and spatial metaphors of frontier and their social control implications for this end of the island, distant from Havana's—let alone Madrid's—authority.

#### *Cimarronaje: The Social Control Problem Posed by Maroons*

By the time of Hazard's description, he had somewhat overstated the actual prevalence and continuing viability of this form of fugitive slave activity as a plausible form of resistance.<sup>143</sup> Certainly all forms of passive and active slave struggle, from the sudden and

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<sup>141</sup> Portuondo, 205 citing Emilio Bacardí Moreau, *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba* vols. I, II, and III.

<sup>142</sup> Hazard, 475-476. On geographic and demographic features of eastern Cuba conducive to the establishment of fugitive settlements, see La Rosa, 75, 140.

extemporaneous to the carefully planned and executed, remained constant preoccupations for slave owners throughout the island. Outright rebellions and sudden uprisings appeared to be far more common in western Cuba, while flight into the interior, with fugitives thereupon banding together in the wild, became somewhat more frequent in Cuba's east than elsewhere due to geographic and demographic conditions.<sup>144</sup> Nevertheless, *any* resistance from slaves—either real or perceived, violent or evasive—imposed social control demands on the slave system and its social hierarchy and norms. The mere existence of fugitive bands of runaways implied internal subversion: slave owners could be thwarted successfully and there was the intolerable-to-masters possibility that ex-slaves could attain a rough sort of independence without the consent of authority figures.<sup>145</sup> The exaggeration of slave flight reflected the perceived dangers posed to the system by both *petit marronage* – temporarily absconding from the plantation – and *grand marronage* – attempted permanent flight into the interior:

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<sup>143</sup> La Rosa, *Runaway Slave Settlements in Cuba*, 178-217, maintained that anti-maroon patrols and expeditions declined because there were ever fewer numbers of maroons. He wrote that the last mention of such a counter-maroon operation was mounted in 1864, near El Cobre, p. 217.

<sup>144</sup> La Rosa, 9-11, 95-98, 129-139. Southeastern Cuba, especially the regions around Guantánamo and Baracoa, had traditionally been viewed as sites conducive to slave flight, including *grand marronage*, with the formation of *palenques* relatively more widespread than elsewhere. See Bosch and Sánchez; Zoila Danger Roll, *Los cimarrones de El Frijol* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1977); José L. Franco, "Maroons and Slave Rebellions in the Spanish Territories" in Price, ed. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 35-48; La Rosa, *Runaway Slave Settlements in Cuba*; Francisco Pérez de la Riva, "Cuban Palenques" in Price, ed. *Maroon Societies*, pp. 49-59; John Glanville Taylor, *The United States and Cuba* (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 226-331, partially quoted in Louis A. Pérez, Jr. ed., *Slaves, Sugar, and Colonial Society: Travel Accounts of Cuba, 1801-1899* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 1992), 114-116. On slave-hunters or *rancheadores* in western Cuba, see Cirilo Villaverde, *Diario del rancheador* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1982), and Demoticus Philalethes [a pseudonym], "Hunting the Maroons with Dogs in Cuba" from *Yankee Travels Through the Island of Cuba* (New York: Appleton and Co., 1856), 38-42 reprinted in Price, ed., *Maroon Societies*, 60-3.

<sup>145</sup> Hadden, 141-43; La Rosa, 198. For maroons in other circum-Caribbean contexts, see Richard Price, ed. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*; see also Captain John Gabriel Stedman's narrative of anti-maroon expeditions by African-born "Coromantee rangers" and Dutch marine infantry in Surinam in the late 1700s: Richard Price and Sally Price, *Stedman's Surinam: Life in an Eighteenth-Century Slave Society* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992). On maroons in Haiti see Jean Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons: Liberty or Death*, trans. by A. Faulkner Watts (New York: Edward W. Blyden Press, 1981).

There are two kinds of runaways; those who merely leave on account of some temporary pique, or fright, and others who really start thinking to get back to their country. The former seldom stay away long, and generally lurk about the house itself, and are mostly soon caught or come back of themselves. But the others, who try to get away entirely, have a different idea, for as they came by sea, so do they expect to get back to Africa by land, and always make for the east.<sup>146</sup>

Well before Hazards' visit, the foreign visitor cited above, John Taylor, had written of the phenomenon of slave resistance assuming the form of *cimarronaje*, or maroonage, from the Spanish term for turning feral. Easternmost Cuba, this earlier visitor reported, had “[c]ollections of wild Indians, or negroes,” who formed hidden inaccessible communities, and which, “so established, are called *Palenques*, and the people, ‘Apalencados.’ [sic, *apalencados*].”<sup>147</sup> “For the capture of what is called a ‘cimarrón simple,’” a mere runaway, that is, “any slave found wandering more than twelve miles from his master’s house without a passport, a reward of four dollars is recoverable from the owner,” he wrote, “and many poor Spaniards turn a penny by looking out for such chances.” “The Palenques” however, necessitated “a different regulation. Sometimes they form themselves in more accessible districts, and a settlement of runaways is termed a palenque when there are more than seven congregated.”<sup>148</sup> In order to deal with hidden pockets of such fugitive runaways or maroons, the old Spanish militia tradition practiced by the oldest Creole families underwent a transformation from armed retinues raised among the planters themselves into a volunteer militarized police force dedicated to undertaking regular slave patrols.

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<sup>146</sup> Taylor, 226-31.

<sup>147</sup> Taylor, 226-31. “Palenque” literally means palisade or wood-fence. “Apalencado” was thus a person resident in a palenque.

<sup>148</sup> Taylor, 226-31.

This farthest southeastern end of the island, as stated earlier, lay in close proximity to Haiti, site of slave revolution feared as a contagion. Every now and then officials viewed the imposition of crown control and authority over this largely deserted and long ignored area as an imperative. Such occasional imperial defensive directives in turn fomented various schemes, which typically could not be carried out, to promote white settlement in general, and military colonization in particular. Persistent smuggling and the existence of a lawless milieu of illegal slave trading, piracy and privateering that accompanied the end of the Napoleonic wars and the South American wars of independence fed imperial fears. Illicit commerce was rumored to provide a link between maroons and Haiti or Jamaica.<sup>149</sup> The early nineteenth century with its political instability and slave-based economic surge saw many slave uprisings in western Cuba, and considerable maroon activity in the east. Large palenques such as El Frijol between Guantánamo and Baracoa and Muluala near Santiago were sources of planter concern and preoccupation.<sup>150</sup> In a recent synthesis surveying the contours of the Afro-Latin American experience one historian has likened the effort at maroon suppression “a continuing battle” in the years 1815-1838 by professional slave hunters “many of them free blacks and mulattoes.”<sup>151</sup> As fears of uprisings and rebellions assumed the form of a more indiscriminate repression of blacks and mixed-race people generally in the wake of the *Escalera* conspiracy of the 1840s, so named after the practice of tying suspects to ladders to be tortured, social control came to rely much more on policing

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<sup>149</sup> Franco, “Maroons and Slave Rebellions in the Spanish Territories” in Price, ed. *Maroon Societies*, 43, rehearsed this view, citing ANC, Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, leg. 139, no. 1.

<sup>150</sup> On Muluala see Andrews, 74-75; for Bumba, Muluala, and Moa (El Frijol) see Franco, “Maroons and Slave Rebellions in the Spanish Territories” in Price, ed. *Maroon Societies*, 44-48 and Pérez de la Riva, “Cuban Palenques” in Price, ed. *Maroon Societies*. For El Frijol, see Danger Roll.

<sup>151</sup> Andrews, 74-75.



racial boundaries drawn between whiteness and blackness instead of servile condition.<sup>152</sup>

Whatever fears Haiti and full-scale race war may have exerted in the Cuban imaginary, it was often the aggregate of myriad localized dreads of localized slave rebellion, and vengeful responses by oppressed slaves at the level of each plantation and district that informed social control responses.

In much of the island poor white farmers could form a yeomanry, serving as a bulwark to the plantation system in the same way poor whites in the U.S. south formed a social control stratum aligned with planters and slaveholders defined by racial oppression of people of color. Indeed, throughout colonial Spanish America the *espada ancha*, or gentry's short sword, was a gendered emblem of social rank for rural, legally white, male proprietors, becoming adapted over time into more of a tool and less of a weapon in the form of the ubiquitously carried machete. As a traveler wrote, "when [the *Monteros* or yeomanry] stir abroad, in nearly all parts of the island, they are armed with a sword, and in the eastern sections about Santiago, or even Cienfuegos, they also carry pistols ... the arming of the *Monteros* has always been encouraged by the authorities, as they form a sort of militia at all times available against negro insurrection, a calamity in fear of which such communities must always live." Even though the *guajiro* countryman—as white self-employed peasants and some rural free people of color were called—was "rarely a slaveholder" he was "frequently engaged on the sugar plantations during the busy season as an overseer, and, to

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<sup>152</sup> On the Escalera or Ladder conspiracy, see Gott, 64-7, 78; Hall, 57-62; Philip Howard, *Changing History: Afro-Cuban Cabildos and Societies of Color in the Nineteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998); Hall, 57-62, 126, 129, 130; Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988); Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 99-103.

his discredit be it said, he generally prove[d] to be a hard taskmaster, entertaining an intuitive dislike to the negroes [*sic*].”<sup>153</sup>

Nevertheless, in the trackless east a more organized patrol system had to be created instead of simply relying on informal methods such as rural *guajiros*—“poor [white] Spaniards”—ever on the lookout for reward opportunities by returning runaways “sought by hue and cry.” A regular slave patrol was created from one of the disciplined militia Squadrons of Fernando VII established in Cuba during the wars of independence in Latin America. Adopting a *longue durée* view of parapolicing from Mediterranean origins one could view the antecedents of militia service in the Spanish empire deriving from the *Santa Hermandad* road patrols of Iberia’s medieval epoch.<sup>154</sup> In the case of Guantánamo, it seems that hereditary control of this Squadron was passed down to males in the extended Pérez family—one of a number of old settler families with features of rural clans—of the old Indian village, San Anselmo de Tiguabos. The Escuadras de Santa Catalina formed a southeastern Cuban analog of the *maréchausée* slave hunters of St.-Domingue and used their intimate knowledge of the local terrain in behalf of their planter patrons.

Fruitful comparisons could be made between patterns of behavior of fugitive slaves forming maroon communities in the wider circum-Caribbean, and Afro-Latin America, which demonstrate broad similarities. A surfeit of unoccupied land seems to be a pre-condition or objective factor for this form of slave resistance, as suggested by the Jamaican

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<sup>153</sup> Ballou, 230.

<sup>154</sup> Hall, 75-77, noted that in sixteenth-century Cuba “a *hermandad* of masters” pursued runaways, but was shortly replaced by *rancheadores* using trained dogs. She cited Würdeman and Ortiz that monetary rewards for the capture of runaways elicited denunciations and captures by other slaves. She also referred to abuses by slave-hunters against free black peasants, who could often be threatened with capture and enslavement unless protection money or other extorted payments were provided.

cockpit country in the early 1700s, the borderland between St.-Domingue and Santo Domingo on Hispaniola, and most especially the survival of maroons in mainland colonies such as Surinam and Brazil. After all, fugitives had to be able to get away to someplace free of scrutiny for maroonage to be a plausible form of resistance. Imperatives of survival, evasion, and escape led many fugitives to swamps or densely forested mountains, preferably in a sparsely settled region, yet sometimes not so far removed so that contraband or illicit trade could be conducted with free communities. Most instances of *palenque/ quilombo* (as *palenques* were known in the Lusophone South Atlantic system) formation were accompanied by factors that arose from profound political and economic instability as well. The Luso-Dutch wars in seventeenth century Brazil, the 1655 English seizure of Jamaica from Spain, and the various Anglo-French and Anglo-Spanish inter-imperial struggles in the Caribbean fomented fissures and ruptures in plantation and mine discipline that slaves exploited, and often led to the military mobilization of free people of color and slaves.

While broad similarities in maroon communities' formation across colonial contexts can be shown, the repressive response of planter societies exhibits more variation to the security and social control problem such rebels posed. Eastern Cuban maroon activity and the paramilitary *cuadrilleros* who pursued them bore resemblances to the *quilombos* and the so-called "bush captains" or *capitães do mato* who hunted fugitive slaves in Brazil, although in the latter case many such bush captains were free blacks or people of color. Brazil's sheer size and variegated terrain offered fugitive runaways the ability to form *quilombos* in areas ranging from mountains to jungles to coastal mangrove swamps. Eastern Cuba's mountain ranges and forests formed potentially ideal terrain for such refuges. In Brazil's urban locales there were even gang-like temporary autonomous zones composed of denizens of the city's

*demimonde*, slaves plying the streets or operating workshops in their masters' behalf who absconded from their job sites, and more permanent runaways. In a documentary collection, historian of Brazilian slavery Robert Conrad conveyed a range of slave resistance from individual flight to the formation of *quilombos* to various revolts.<sup>155</sup> An 1824 report from Rio de Janeiro's Chief of Police suggests the conundrum faced by slave societies throughout the Diaspora in suppressing maroonage. He complained that ordinary soldiers and police could not approach rebel encampments without giving the game away: "when the assault begins the blacks (and the deserters who live among them) have already been informed and have abandoned the place where they were thought to be hiding out."<sup>156</sup> Meanwhile, he decried in irritation that the "so-called bush captains, which the town council appoints, are worthless" claiming that they moonlighted as slave-stealers, kidnapping non-fugitives and selling them as contraband.<sup>157</sup> He recommended procuring the services of specialists, in this scenario, "foot soldiers and bush captains" who pursued both diamond smugglers and runaways in Minas Gerais. In the case of Guantánamo, something like a specialized body of men at arms would be maintained for such suppressive duties. Similarly, an 1853 Brazilian report on the destruction of *quilombos* in Maranhão that had been formed initially during the 1835-1840 Balaiada liberal revolt indicated that a special troop of soldiers was utilized, undertaking a

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<sup>155</sup> Robert Edgar Conrad, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, reprint; University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), Part Nine, "A State of Domestic War": How Slaves Responded," pp. 362-411. See especially, 381-389.

<sup>156</sup> Estevão Ribeiro de Rezende to Clemente Ferreira França, 18 December 1824 quoted in Conrad, 383.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* On the military mobilization of blacks and maroon activity during the Balaiada revolt, see Andrews, 76, 95.

long counter-maroon campaign.<sup>158</sup> Quite like colonization schemes proposed for Guantánamo the report recommended “a military colony” be established to prevent the maroons regrouping.<sup>159</sup>

Present-day Brazil has villages of maroon descendents, often recognized by the Federal Government. A definitive answer as to whether some Cuban towns in the countryside may have a similar heritage, alluded to by Francisco Pérez de la Riva, must await further research, but certainly the place names Palenque and Palenquito are quite common in the southeastern districts.<sup>160</sup> It would seem that if such communities eluded the colonial state that they ultimately melded with the free rural population of color—especially during the long Ten Years’ War. Returning to maroonage and its suppression in Cuba’s east, John Taylor published an account of maroon activity there in 1851, just two years before the northern Brazilian case just mentioned.

A somewhat hyperbolically sensationalized, even at times jocular account from Taylor nevertheless illustrated aspects of maroonage, as well as continued sabotage and truculently defiant behavior on the part of at least one unknown black woman rebel resisting re-enslavement by a white bounty hunter:

one of a party for catching Apalencados [that is, a *cuadrillero* or *rancheador*],

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<sup>158</sup> Relatorio do Presidente da Provincia do Maranhão o Doutor Eduardo Olimpio Machado na abertura da Assembleia Legislativa Provincial, no dia 1 de Novembro de 1853, pp. 7-8, quoted in Conrad, 386-89.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, 388.

<sup>160</sup> La Rosa, 221, rehearsed the view that after the Ten Years’ War the “runaway slave settlements were abandoned.” “None” he examined “became towns inhabited by the freed runaways or their descendants. ... After they were freed [by separatist proclamations and Spanish treaty provisions in the 1868-1878 Ten Years’ War] they could offer their services to an economy that was based” on wage labor. An earlier view that many rural communities and neighborhoods or *barrios* owe their origins to palenques after postemancipation peasant society subsumed them may be found in Pérez de la Riva, “Cuban Palenques” in Price, ed., *Maroon Societies*, 58-59.

had managed to separate himself from the rest; being doubly confident, inasmuch as he carried, besides the usual rapier, a double-barreled percussion gun. As he was going along quietly through the wood, he heard the voices of a man and woman in conversation. He immediately burst through the bushes, and stood in front of them demanding surrender, and presenting his gun. The man, instead of complying, was making off, when the white man, knowing he could not catch him while encumbered with his gun, pulled the trigger, but the cap only exploded! On this the woman, turning round in another direction, called out, "Francisco come out! White man gun no powder got!" [*sic*] Now behold *three* adversaries; the men armed with swords, the woman with a long knife! However, not this time did his gun prove faithless; he quietly put on a fresh cap, and, as there was no help for it, took a deliberate aim at each of the men, whom he shot in turn, and afterwards capturing the woman, not without some trouble and a few wounds, made his way back to his party.<sup>161</sup>

Under no circumstance could the slave system tolerate maroons defying involuntary servitude. Motivations of slave patrols included an authoritarian, racial and ideological component, and the profit motive.<sup>162</sup> The return of runaway slaves to bondage, or their descendents who had been independent subsistence cultivators, was fraught with difficulties, of course. Adult rebels proved difficult to assimilate within a plantation's dotación. The foreign author above added to his account that "A good many children are captured in these [anti-maroon] expeditions" and reported "The rest of the negroes look with supreme contempt on these Palenque people, and really think it a disgrace to have been there. I have often heard them twit" a former maroon "woman on her origin." "As for her," he added,

she was one of the greatest furies and most completely intractable creatures one could conceive. She had really no end of paramours; and she carried her familiarities with them to such a scandalous degree, that [she was] placed ... under some restraint or other; in revenge for which she actually set fire to [the] house, which was burned to the ground, with much valuable property! It was her anxiety to include [her owner] in the conflagration, which saved him,

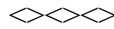
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<sup>161</sup> Taylor, 114-16.

<sup>162</sup> La Rosa, 198, emphasized the ideological and political needs of the systems, arguing that such anti-maroon patrols were very expensive to undertake, the numbers of captives taken small, and the profit to be made from the sale or return of the captives controlled to only eight pesos per runaway. It would seem, however, that those participant in such expeditions received pay and forms of remuneration and privileges for their services. Future research may reveal other calculi in greater detail.

for she set fire to the thatch just above where he slept, and the crackling of the flames awoke him, but if she had chosen another part, he might easily have been suffocated. In consideration of this proof of her warm feelings, he disposed of her to a sugar estate, where she would hardly have a chance to play such pranks, her propensities being known.<sup>163</sup>

Again the threat of sale to a sugar plantation, in this case carried out against an intransigent, rebellious woman appeared as a threat held over slaves in other settings as a form of punishment beyond floggings, the stocks, and other cruel corporal punishments used in slave discipline.



In July 1830, Antonio de León of Mayarí commanded a military operation of specialized slave hunting militia to locate and destroy four palenques including Muluala and a satellite village, Bumba near the Río Frío:

I hid long enough for the lieutenant [with two scouts and thirty of fifty armed men] to emplace himself, and in a half hour I began the attack. A few steps forward and I found myself in a ditch full of pointed sticks. However, we overcame this first obstacle without being heard. The second obstacle seemed insuperable: this was the climbing of a steep, rugged hill ... which had two very narrow, winding paths that we followed, endlessly. ... at a turn of the path we encountered a Negro who, armed with a machete, attacked the first man in line. The latter, having already loaded his gun, fired a shot, whose report was heard throughout the rocky area. The Negro tried to run away but was too badly wounded and bleeding to go far. The sound of the shot caused the other Negroes on the hill to disperse. These then fled to the opposite side of the hill overcoming cliffs that have to be seen to be believed. We redoubled our pace, but when, out of breath and tired we reached the top, the only traces of them we could find were the pieces of cloth caught on the thorns in the bushes.<sup>164</sup>

The fugitive slave hunters discovered seventeen huts with thirty beds, “spread out that it is only possible to surprise 2 or 3 at one time” and “built so low that they cannot be seen over

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<sup>163</sup> Taylor, 116.

<sup>164</sup> Franco, “Maroons and Slave Rebellions in the Spanish Territories” in Price, ed. *Maroon Societies*, 45, citing ANC, Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, leg. 230, no.2.

the bushes” to render them very difficult to detect.<sup>165</sup> The pursuers of runaways were informed by a captive that the maroons traded beeswax and forest products for clothing, tobacco, and tools, and de León expressed fear that should they “get the firearms (which they now lack)” that their position would be impregnable. Such campaigns, and the Caribbean history of similar persistent problems such as the eighteenth-century Maroon War in Jamaica, suggested the geographical and environmental factors that created the need for a rural constabulary to prevent an internal challenge to slave holders’ authority and developmental ambitions for the zone.

The social and political origins of the Squadron of Santa Catalina, thus arose in this “absolutely undeveloped” state of Guantánamo’s rugged mountains and “woods ... frequented by runaway slaves and the few aboriginal Indians [in Cuba]” as well as its proximity to Haiti.<sup>166</sup> Its intended social control function included defense of the region from transfrontiersmen such as squatters, indigent “vagrants,” and maroons who posed a potential internal subversive challenges of alternative independent settlement. The Squadron also guarded against encroachment by imperial rivals. The effective colonization of southeastern Cuba languished for decades; a few Creole families raised cattle and food crops for local consumption. The settlement of the region in the early nineteenth century came in the form of French and Franco-Haitian immigrants, intent on reestablishing Caribbean plantations. They brought with them social attitudes and institutional prerogatives molded by other colonial contexts and the *Code Noir* for resuscitating plantation agriculture for export and the internal market even as slavery entered into decline and diminished supply.

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<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>166</sup> *Harper’s*, 11.



Founded as an anti-maroon paramilitary to suppress runaway settlements, the Squadron of Santa Catalina formed a locally recruited slave patrol unlike the haphazard patrol and police systems elsewhere on the island. It was neither made up exclusively of whites, like most slave-hunters (called *rancheadores*) in western Cuba, nor composed of Peninsular Spaniards and their immediate descendants, as were most volunteer militia units. White settlers formed a preponderance of such volunteers after 1850 in much of Cuba after the bloody and far-reaching suppression of conspiracy among free people of color and generalized fears of slave revolt amid rumors of abolitionist plots in western Cuba's Escalera conspiracy in 1843 and 1844. Thereafter whites, typically Spanish-born *peninsulares*, predominated in most militia in the colony, with certain exceptions such as a few separate mixed-race *pardo* and free black *moreno* battalions, typically based in cities.<sup>167</sup>

In Guantánamo, scions of the oldest families of the district inherited the command of the paramilitary force. The Pérez family of the Tiguabos region, which apparently arrived sometime in the seventeenth century, and may well have formed part of the militia that resisted the British and North American incursion during the War of Jenkins' Ear in the early 1700s, exerted something of the social roles of a regionally prominent caudillo leadership. Miguel Pérez Céspedes, born the first year of the nineteenth century, recruited his retainers for militia service from among whites and free *mestizos*, frequently impoverished Indians

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<sup>167</sup> On black military mobilization and militia service, see Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, *Los batallones de pardos y morenos libres* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976); Herbert S. Klein, "The Coloured Militia of Cuba, 1588-1868" *Caribbean Studies* 4 (July 1966): 17-27; Peter Voelz, *Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in the Colonial Americas* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1993). On the question of black loyalism and pro-metropolitan attitudes in an age of separatist and autonomist politics more generally, see the study of the Cienfuegos district by David Sartorius, "Limits of Loyalty: Race and the Public Sphere in Cienfuegos, Cuba, 1845-1898" (PhD. Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2003). On increased surveillance and scrutiny of African-descended people in nineteenth-century Cuba, see Hall and C. Stanley Urban, "The Africanization of Cuba Scare, 1853-1855," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 37 (1957): 29-45.

from San Anselmo de Tiguabos or Yateras.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, rumors circulated that Pérez's own *trigueño* ("wheat colored") complexion was the product of European-Indian racial miscegenation.<sup>169</sup>

Pérez and the Squadron of Santa Catalina ranged far and wide through the most remote mountains and inaccessible forests of southeastern Cuba hunting for maroons, with an ex-slave tracker, Simón, from the Felicidad *cafetal* frequently by his side.<sup>170</sup> Armed with a brace of pistols or a blunderbuss, a machete, a cudgel, and a rope lasso – the *cuadrilleros* crept stealthily through the dense foliage from different directions, hoping to surround the maroons before the alarm sounded – avoiding the spiked pits used for defense. When

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<sup>168</sup> La Rosa, 97. Pérez appeared in the previously cited *padrones* de fincas rústicas del partido de Tiguabos, propietarios, dotación, producción y rentas, ANC, Fondo: Gobierno General, leg. 388, exp. 18511, s.f. as owner of a potrero, Barrito, that was unusual in having 29 slaves. This estate appears as an "estancia" in the 1861 tax records, subject to a yearly tax of twenty pesos. In addition, there is an "hacienda," Palenquito, taxed at \$ 2.68 per annum. See Libro talonario para la recaudación del impuesto municipal sobre fincas rurales en Guantánamo, ANC, ML, año: 1861, s.leg., no. 2.588, Fincas rurales. Impto. de. A 2004 genealogy of the regionally prominent Pérez family, "Los Pérez de Guantánamo: Apuntes históricos de una familia cubana" appears at <<http://www.bvs.sld.cu/revistas/his/his%2095/hist2295.htm>>.

<sup>169</sup> So thoroughly did Spaniards exterminate the Taínos – as reported first in the sixteenth century by Bartolomé de las Casas and ever after – that the existence of Indians in Yateras, Guantánamo, and Baracoa is often greeted with incredulity or dismissal. Anthropologist José Barreiro has written about Taíno-Arawak people in the 1980s and 1990s in the Ramírez and Rojas clans, but not confined to those two extended families. See, José Barreiro, "Survival Stories" in Aviva Chomsky, Barry Carr and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff, eds. *The Cuba Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 28-36. See also Gott, 21-23, and photo 13, p. 216 from ethnographer Stewart Culin, 1901. A 1926 tourist guidebook's discussion of race and Cuba's population noted "The word *Indio* (Indian) is used only in Oriente province to apply to the peoples of *El Caney*, *Tiguabos*, and *Jiguaní* (where the aboriginal strain lingered longest)," see Terry, 33. Briefly, other scholars question the existence of Indians—or at any rate autochthonous Taíno-Arawak descendents—asserting that so-called Cuban Indians are *pardos*, or *mestizos*, that is racially mixed people, speak Spanish, no longer practice "Indian" customs, etc., and furthermore any Native American and/or Antillean ancestry itself arose from various indigenous slaves taken to Cuba in colonial times. Fruitful comparative study could perhaps be made with the phenomenon of post-traditional Indians in Brazil, where *pardos* or *caboclos* are frequently reclaiming an Indian identity, see Jonathan W. Warren, *Racial Revolutions: Antiracism and Indian Resurgence in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001). For alerting me to local oral traditions on the possible Indian or mixed descent of the Pérez family in Tiguabos I am grateful to Olga Portuondo Zúñiga. Similarly, Cuban Liberation Army General Jesús Sablon Moreno, better known by his *nom-de-guerre* Jesús Rabí, who headed the Second Corps in the Bayamo/Manzanillo area during the 1895-1898 war, and was originally from Jiguaní, has also been referred to as both a man of color and as an Indian.

<sup>170</sup> Bosch and Sánchez, 63, citing Exequiel Planes y González, an early historian of Guantánamo in the 1840s.

pursuing individual fugitives in the bush they used specially bred tracker dogs. In such a campaign in 1848, they surprised a well-organized *palenque*, Todos Tenemos, with fifty-nine houses and thirty-five hut-like storerooms. Two maroons were killed resisting the slave hunters, one of whom they had wounded with a spear. Pérez's group took "200 sacks of rice and 625 pounds of jerked meat ... 'a church with a sham altar on which there was a piece of wood with which [the maroons] had tried to portray Christ'" was seized as well.<sup>171</sup> In subsequent yearly maroon-suppression campaigns in 1849 and 1850, Pérez's troop used the settlements they had previously discovered as base camps. They captured twenty-six and killed seven maroons in two years.

#### Conclusions: 1868, A Cuban Republic-in-Arms vs. A Cuban Vendée

Thus, at the time of Hazard's visit easternmost Cuba presented a vista of anachronistic contrasts. Like the beehive emblazoned on its coat of arms, the town of Santa Catalina/Guantánamo was abuzz with commercial activity attendant to the sheaves of plants framing the worker-bees swarming around the centerpiece: "sugar, the sweetener; coffee, the tonic; and tobacco, the narcotic." The Brooks and Company's infrastructural innovations in transport and sugar production augmented a modern capitalist sugar and railway complex. This industry formed an enclave in the valley with merchants in towns and its outlet to the wider world system through the bay.<sup>172</sup> In the interstices, a mixed and often primitive

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<sup>171</sup> La Rosa, 178-179. He has located three invaluable anti-maroon campaign diaries from Miguel Pérez in the Cuban National Archives: ANC, fondo: Gobierno Superior Civil, leg. 628, no. 19,877, and leg. 621, no. 1,820.

<sup>172</sup> Zanetti and García, 79, pointed out that the "narrow shape of the island, as well as the abundance of natural ports" led to "successively small regional lines linked to a number of independent ports. ...[T]he triple combination of plantation-railroad-port ... enabled each region to perform the same economic activity autonomously." Hence the origin of various sugar enclaves such as that of Guantánamo.

agricultural economy coexisted, while in the hill country coffee cultivation by slave labor and pre-capitalist traditional patterns of land tenure, usufruct rights, and social customs predominated. Some subsistence farmers and small-scale ranchers supplemented their income by participation in seasonal modes of employment for wages. Still others engaged in forms of tenant farming arrangements.

The Guantánamo region had long been marginal to colonial development in Cuba. As a result of this lengthy neglect, and the earlier period of Spanish colonialism's emphasis on urban settlements, a racially mixed population developed over time in this rural hinterland engaged in the Hispanic Caribbean's traditional pursuits of farming, cattle ranching, and tobacco cultivation. Slavery was practiced, but over an extended period Creole society became racially mixed with a large free population of color resulting from manumissions and natural increase among the population. Of the 14,153 people of color in the district by 1862, 39 percent were free; 61 percent were held as slaves. Like in nearby Santo Domingo, the earlier systems of racial hierarchy and racial oppression of African-descended people that had arisen from application of Spain's ancient religious-conflict-derived purity of blood and caste laws in the context of the New World, and the social relations of slave and master were muted somewhat by the crown's military necessity of maintaining control over the largely deserted frontier. That is to say, the relative status of free people of color rose when they were vital to the political and military functioning of the colony against external and internal challenges.<sup>173</sup> Various schemes of developing military colonization, or encouraging white settlement, never came to fruition. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the resolution of the protracted contest over Haiti in a rebel slave victory over European colonial powers,

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<sup>173</sup> A similar crown motivation led to alliances between royalists and free people of color during the Wars of Independence in Venezuela and Nueva Granada. There were even royalist units composed of maroons directed against the pro-independence Creole elites. See Andrews, 46-48.

but also resulting in internecine black and *mulato* civil wars, the relative lassitude that once characterized racial constructs and race relations within the district changed as it too followed a plantation-driven development model more characteristic of Cuba's west than other regions of the east.

Eventually this region with its pre-capitalist, multi-racial, rural colonial society, along with a surviving indigenous Antillean population in some inaccessible areas, had become overlaid in the early nineteenth-century by a wave of French and Franco-Haitian settlement. This movement of francophone migrants—propelled by the pull factors of Cuban development and availability of land, expelled by the push factors of the Haitian revolution—had a significant social, cultural and economic impact on Cuba as a whole, but in the case of Santiago de Cuba and the district around Guantánamo it was a particularly transformative and decisive infusion. The pre-existing Creole “society with slaves” became a would-be “slave society” at their behest with changed racial privileges and exclusions, even as the continued viability of slavery itself seemed ever increasingly in doubt. Many in this cohort dedicated themselves to *ancien régime* type pursuits in the recently overthrown St.-Domingue-style: a plantation complex of sugar and coffee cultivation performed mainly by enslaved African and black Creole agricultural hands. By and large they viewed their slave workers like other slaveholders in the circum-Caribbean, with a Janus-headed mixture of dread and fear with concomitant brutality and attempts to modify, discipline, and exert control over their behaviors, and a paternalistic, patronizing view of them as their loyal peons or serfs contentedly residing on their estates. Race making assumed new forms as racist attitudes and distinctions hardened, manumissions grew less frequent, and rights of people of color became curtailed.

The political instability occasioned by the revolutionary and migration generations of slavery gave rise to resistance to the implantation of the changed regime and its exacting labor relations and stifling constraints, principally in the form of fugitive slave flight and maroonage. In turn, the instability led to the social control transformation of the Squadron of Santa Catalina militia as a slave patrol bolster and prop to slaveholder authority. A reactionary colonial labor and race relations tempered the vaunted civilization brought to eastern Cuba by the French influx even while republican and liberal currents of sovereignty, citizenship and duty to the state, and the Rights of Man swept the Americas. Hippolyte Piron, a Santiago de Cuba Frenchman, wrote in 1876 during the Ten Years' War to a French metropolitan audience, perhaps with a degree of exaggeration or emotive rhetorical flourish, that over many years for their compatriots in southeastern Cuba:

[Being an overseer of a slave dotación] is the vile employment agreeable to their hard hearts, and we fulfill [such tasks] with feeling, exercising them with an unchecked cruelty; they display more wickedness than the Spaniards, the Cubans and the Creoles. The greater part of these men so determined are *béarneses* ... The French nation, apart from honorable exceptions, is sadly represented in Cuba; an opinion has been formed there as false as it is unfavorable. Those distinguished Frenchmen [in Cuba] one finds generally in the city; they are doctors or businessmen.<sup>174</sup>

The resultant complexity and tensions of the local social composition and constellation of Creole identities—*mestizo*, black, and white, Spanish/Catalan, African, French—and the relative isolation from areas outside of nearby Santiago gave rise to a distinctive regionalism in southeastern Cuba. Contradictory and conflicting trends in this ruggedly mountainous satellite of Santiago de Cuba largely prevented, or at least complicated, emergent national consciousnesses and identities like those occurring and

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<sup>174</sup> Portuondo, citing Hippolyte Piron, *L'île de Cuba; Santiago—Puerto Príncipe—Matanzas et la Havane* (Paris: n.p., 1876).

percolating through elite and popular sectors in western Oriente. Overland communications were difficult, tending to make endogamous rural communities' outlooks insular. Low population density implied that land for subsistence agriculture could be had, which lessened agrarian conflicts and pressures outside the *llano* while generally leading to small-holder mentalities hostile to assaults on property-rights, as well as a conservatism that looked askance at rapid political, social, or cultural changes.

In sum, when Carlos Manuel de Céspedes raised the standard of separatist revolt in late 1868, unleashing a train of events that would begin the processes further eroding slavery and adding to pressures for gradual emancipation on the island amid military conflict and Jacobin republican claims, much of *guantanamero* society remained stolid defenders of slavery, initially chary or outright hostile to his summons. As historian Volker Mollin described, “the Ten Years War was a war of regions, a war on a regional scale” while the regionalism exhibited by Oriente and Puerto Príncipe provinces itself “constituted a political response to a cultural, social, and economic reality characterized by the weak relations existing between different regions isolated one from the other.”<sup>175</sup> As many people in western Oriente rallied to the separatist state-in-formation, and while sectors of Puerto Príncipe’s inhabitants followed suit, albeit under their own regional leadership, Guantánamo remained a backward-looking district for the most part. In the enfolding revolution it was a counterrevolutionary eastern Cuban Vendée.<sup>176</sup> The revolution would be carried from without into the district by means of invasion. In this reactionary district generally opposed to separatism, slave owners stubbornly clung to their way of life based on the exploitation of

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<sup>175</sup> Mollin, 93-94.

<sup>176</sup> Francisco Ibarra, *Cronología de la guerra de los Diez Años* (Santiago de Cuba: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1976), 81; Hortensia Pichardo, *Facetas de nuestra historia* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1989), 124-27.

un-free labor, adapting the social control mechanism of the fugitive slave patrolling militia, Pérez’s Squadron of Santa Catalina, to a pro-Spanish integralist paramilitary. As over 8500 slaves worked primarily on the region’s 25 sugar mills, 11 of them larger “centrales,” and 87 cafetales, Guantánamo became the most slave-dependent district of eastern Cuba. The historical experience of the region set it apart from the western jurisdictions of Oriente province where separatist support would prove initially strongest.<sup>177</sup> Table 2.12 below portrays the race and servile condition of the population of western and eastern Oriente province before the outbreak of rebellion, showing that those sub-regional jurisdictions in the east where opposition to separatism was greatest were generally those most dependent on slave labor:

Table 2.12  
Estimated Population and Race, western five jurisdictions of Oriente – greater initial popular support for separatist insurrection, ca. 1868.

Jurisdiction	Total Population	Percentage “White”	Percentage “Free Coloured”	Percentage Creole and African-born Slave
Bayamo	33,555	51	40	9
Jiguaní	17,814	70	26	4
Holguín	51,828	78	13.5	8.5
Las Tunas	6,820	60	33	7
Manzanillo	26,431	52	42	6
<b>TOTAL western Oriente</b>	<b>~137,000</b>	<b>87,385 64 %</b>	<b>38,911 28 %</b>	<b>9,200 7 %</b>

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<sup>177</sup> Mollin, 304.



Table 2.13

Estimated Population and Race, eastern three jurisdictions of Oriente – weaker initial popular support for separatist insurrection, ca. 1868.

Jurisdiction	Total Population	Percentage “White”	Percentage “Free Coloured”	Percentage Creole and African-born Slave
Santiago de Cuba	96,028	29	37	34
<b>Guantánamo</b>	<b>19,619</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>44</b>
Baracoa [most isolated zone]	11,277	43	43	14
<b>TOTAL eastern Oriente</b>	<b>~127,000</b>	<b>37,979 30 %</b>	<b>46,276 36 %</b>	<b>49,699 39 %</b>

SUMMARY:

W. Oriente: ~137,000 64 percent “White,” 28 percent “Free Coloured,” 7 percent Slave

E. Oriente: ~127,000 30 percent “White,” 36 percent “Free Coloured,” 39 percent Slave

*Source:* Data from Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, *Guerra de los Diez Años, 1868-1878*, 2 vols. (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1972), I: 26-27, 32. See also Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 55.

The social control regime had been geared to impede manifestations of slave resistance, and to prevention of alternative settlement by fugitives in the countryside. When the colonial authorities were confronted with political rebellions and divided loyalties in Spain shortly followed by separatist uprisings in Oriente, and Camagüey and with supporters in Matanzas and western Cuba as well, the counterinsurgent and stridently *pro-peninsular* Volunteers swept up the pre-existing counter-subversive role of the Squadron of Santa Catalina against rural bandits and maroons. Nevertheless, there was some marginal support even in Guantánamo when war ushered in strains on bondage and attachment to the colonial state.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 3.



Samuel Hazard left Guantánamo by night. He did not egress as he arrived: aboard the first-class train carriage accompanied by a Brooks & Co. clerk; instead he clambered onto a railway handcar cranked “by two sturdy” black workingmen for the trip back to Caimanera and the return steamer to Santiago. From there he sailed along the north coast back to Havana, stopping briefly at the isolated slumbering port of Baracoa, and at Nuevitas and Puerto Príncipe in Camagüey. Upon his return to the United States, he wrote the paean to the “perfect country ... of the Coffee Mountains of the Yateras [Guantánamo]” quoted in the epigraph to this chapter: “If, in some happy day for the Cubans, their island shall be blessed with a more liberal government” then an enterprising colonist or entrepreneur could make “the most beautiful homes in the world for those fond of rural life and the beauties of nature.”<sup>179</sup> Just a few years later, in 1868, the long brewing storm of separatist rebellion that emerged from the incapacity to bring “a more liberal government” to the isle broke over the social and physical landscape of eastern Cuba, including the southeastern zone around the *cuenca* of Guantánamo with its tobacco plots, sugar mills and coffee farms—its racially and ethnically-mixed agrarian population, its masters and slaves, and its colonial paramilitary constabulary. The following chapter’s narrative returns to Guantánamo during the 1871 separatist insurgent “invasion” of the district, and examines the fortunes and misfortunes of the Tiguabos-based Pérez family, particularly Miguel Pérez of the Escuadras and his nephew Pedro, confronting a group of free black separatist rebel leaders from nearby Santiago de Cuba.

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<sup>179</sup> Hazard, 476-77.

### CHAPTER III:

#### Al filo del machete: “Black Arm and Cuban Heart”—The Separatist Invasion of Guantánamo

The violent death of the septuagenarian runaway slave-hunter and militia officer, Miguel Pérez Céspedes, and seven soldiers May 25, 1871 in a skirmish at Ojo de Agua in distant Guantánamo was an event important enough to be included in Blas de Villate y de las Heras, the Count of Valmaseda’s bi-monthly field report from the captain-general’s headquarters in Havana to the Ministry of War in Madrid. It even made the “Telegraphic Brevities” section on the front page of the *New York Times*.<sup>180</sup> Spanish military sources related that “the brave commander of the Squadron [of Santa Catalina] Don Miguel Pérez, one of the bravest officers in this army, and who, in spite of his seventy years had displayed during all of the campaign ... an incredible activity for his age” had encountered rebels while reconnoitering near the smoldering ruins of the San Luis coffee plantation, hunting for the band that had attacked him and burned his own *cafetal*, Canaan, and taken his slaves three

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<sup>180</sup> Parte de Novedades, 15 Junio 1871. Conde de Valmaseda. Comandancia General de Cuba, Archivo General Militar de Madrid (formerly the Servicio Histórico Militar), caja 2547, carpeta 21.8.1, p. 28-30 [hereinafter cited as AGM-M, caja, car.]; “Telegraphic Brevities,” *New York Times*, 7 June 1871, p.1 [hereinafter cited as *NYT*]. Detailed accounts of insurgent attacks on Pérez’s coffee farm, Canaan, and the Galilea estate, 22 May, as well as his death in battle, appear in *Sobre la creación de una Columna al mando del Comandte. Don Miguel Pérez, Jefe de la línea de Guantánamo, Mayo 1871*, and *Partes y diario de operaciones de la columna al mando del Comdte. Don Miguel Pérez, Jefe de la línea de Guantánamo*, in *Archivo General Militar de Segovia, 6a y 8a Secciones (Ultramar, Capitanías y Gobiernos Militares)*, 18-R. (Guerra de Cuba, Guerrillas, Bandolerismo, Claves de Generales), legajo 53, 55 folios [hereinafter cited as AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R. leg.]. For Pérez’s death, see especially letters from Tiguabos by Felipe Plaza bound in Sección 3a. *Acción ocurrida el día 25 de Mayo en Ojo de Agua y acontecimientos del Comte. D. Miguel Pérez. The attack on Canaan and removal of the slaves there appears in Ataque del Cafetal Canaan por los insurrectos, 22 Mayo 1871.*

days earlier. A Havana periodical reported the death of the “Chief of the Squadron of Guantánamo Don Miguel Pérez y Céspedes who at seventy-one years of age, gave fifty-four in service to Spain.”<sup>181</sup> A Cuban exile wrote to a friend from Kingston, Jamaica: “The death of Miguel Pérez has been a great triumph for the patriots because this man was the most important *jefe* ... in this demarcation.”<sup>182</sup>

Insurgents had ambushed Pérez in the third year of anticolonial rebellion immediately prior to invading the pro-Spanish district of coffee and sugar plantations in southeastern Oriente province.<sup>183</sup> That 1871 invasion of Guantánamo would have important ramifications on the future strategy of Cuban separatists waging an unequal struggle against the colonial metropole, seeking to impose nationalist propositions of a future independent state or a progressive republic. Against the intransigence of the colonial state apparatus, and with the

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<sup>181</sup> Abelardo Padrón Valdés, *Guillermón Moncada: Vida y hazañas de un general* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1980), 152, cites *Juan Palomo* Havana, 16 April 1871, 256. See also Regino Boti Barreiro, *Guillermón: Notas bibliográficas del General Guillermo Moncada* (Guantánamo: La Imparcial, 1911), 22; José González Puente, *Mayor General Pedro A. Pérez* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1967); and Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 76.

<sup>182</sup> Rodríguez, 49, citing letter of José Joaquín Palma to Hilario Cisneros, in Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Colección Cubana, Colección de Manuscritos Ponce, no. 115.

<sup>183</sup> Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*, 56; Philip S. Foner, *Antonio Maceo: The “Bronze Titan” of Cuba’s Struggle for Independence* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), 38; Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, *Guerra de los Diez Años, 1868-1878*, 2 vols. (Havana: Cultural, 1950; reprint ed., Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1972), I: 27; Rodríguez, especially ch. 4. For the Cuban Ten Years’ War, see Raúl Cepero Bonilla, *Azúcar y abolición* (Havana: Editorial Cenit, 1948, reprinted in *Escritos históricos*, Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1989); Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*; Richard Gott, *Cuba: a New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), ch. 3; Guerra y Sánchez; Jorge Ibarra, *Ideología Mambisa* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1972); Volker Mollin, *Guerra pequeña, guerra olvidada* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2002); Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), ch. 5; and Antonio Pirala y Criado, *Anales de la guerra de Cuba*, 3 vols. (Madrid: F. González Rojas, 1895-1898). On Cuban-born and Spanish-born insular inhabitants’ participation as *integrista* volunteers, see María Dolores Domingo Acebrón, *Voluntarios y su papel contrarrevolucionario en la Guerra de los Diez Años* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996); Pirala; and José Joaquín Ribó, *Historia de los voluntarios cubanos* 2 vols. (Madrid: Imprenta de T. Fortanet, 1872-1876). On the Ten Years’ War and its effects on abolition, see Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century*, ch. 8; Karen Robert, “Slavery and Freedom in the Ten Years’ War, Cuba, 1868-1878” in *Slavery and Abolition* 13, No. 3 (December 1992): 181-200; and Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, ch. 2.

military campaign flagging under sustained Spanish repression, a group of insurgents committed to a more immediate emancipation of slaves than the movement's civilian leaders, including several free black *santiaguero* officers such as the twenty-six year old *mulato* Lieutenant-Colonel, Antonio Maceo, and his younger brother, José, and led by the Dominican-born general Máximo Gómez, emulated the great Liberator of South America, Simón Bolívar's 1813 "War to the Death Proclamation."<sup>184</sup> Henceforth, areas of Cuba's eastern province that had not rallied to the Republic in Arms would be compelled to enter the revolution by force. Neutrality was no longer an option. Tactics of property destruction – using the arsonist's torch against properties supplying the Spanish with material support, exportable cash crops, and taxable revenues – would be carried out systematically.

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<sup>184</sup> Bolívar issued the decree calling for death to Spaniards and Canary Islanders who were not actively supporting Venezuelan patriots against royalists, in part to signal that Spain's *bellum romanum* extirpation of the rebellion would be met with similarly "uncivilized" means. See John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808-1826*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), 203-4, and Robert L. Scheina, *Latin America's Wars: Volume I: The Age of the Caudillo, 1791-1899*, 2 vols. (Dulles, VA: Brassey's Inc., 2003), I: 27. After Bayamo fell to Spanish troops and integralist *voluntarios* in early 1869, Count Valmaseda exceeded his authority under the relatively liberal captain-general Domingo Dulce, and issued a proclamation that read, in part, "You well know that I have pardoned those who have fought us with arms ... you know as well that many of the pardoned have gone against me. ...[Before] such ingratitude, such villainy, it is no longer possible that I be the man of yesterday ... whomever is not with me is against me, and so that my soldiers know how to distinguish you [from rebels], hear the orders I have given: Every man, over the age of 15 ... found outside his residence, without a justified reason for doing so, will be *pasado por las armas* [shot]. Every house that is not inhabited will be burned ... Women not residing in their respective *fincas* or houses, or those of their parents, will be concentrated in the towns of Jiguaní and Bayamo, where their maintenance will be provided for: those that refuse to go will be removed by force..." Thomas, *Cuba*, 252 citing Pirala, I: 552. Count Valmaseda's subsequent rule as captain-general from December 1870, vowing to "pacify" the island made extension of the rebellion imperative for Gómez and other military leaders. A copy of the proclamation appears reproduced in Máximo Gómez, *El viejo Eduá, o mi último asistente* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1972), 109.

Carlos Manuel de Céspedes proclaimed "War to the Death" 18 February 1869: "the conduct of the enemy has not changed, but rather has been aggravated by further acts of cruelty and barbarism ... obliging me to *accept* war without quarter ... Blood for blood, execution for execution, extermination for extermination." The actual decree called for summary execution of integralist Creole volunteers, seizure of property of the Republic in Arms' enemies, offered a bounty to Spaniards turning over weapons and materiel, but urged that wounded or captured enemy soldiers in uniform be spared and well treated. Article five resembled Bolívar's most explicitly: "the present war of independence does not recognize neutrals ... who is not with us shall be considered an enemy." See Manifiesto sobre el decreto de guerra a muerte, La Larga, February 18, 1869, and Decreto de guerra a muerte, 18 February 1869 in Fernando Portuondo del Prado and Hortensia Pichardo Viñals, eds. *Carlos Manuel de Céspedes: Escritos* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1974), 152-55.

Furthermore, this cohort of Jacobin rebel officers tried to outflank the liberal metropolitan government's 1870 gradual emancipation edict that had yet to be enacted against opposition by the staunchly reactionary Peninsular settlers' *integrismo* movement dominating Cuba's internal politics. That decree was the Moret Law, which ostensibly freed slave children born after September 1868, and elderly over the age of sixty. Some Cuban separatists thereby moved to decree complete abolition in December 1870.<sup>185</sup> The exigencies of war implied justifications to the rebels for an attempted, or at least proclaimed, rural *levée en masse*: all citizens of Cuba Libre, whites and blacks –including ex-slaves or *libertos*, owed the nascent Republic in Arms either military or agricultural labor.<sup>186</sup>

#### Separatism and Indemnified Abolition

The offensive to extend separatist military operations into pro-Spanish integralist zones thus represented a radicalization of eastern insurgents in the faltering revolution begun on 10 October 1868 by planters, cattle-ranchers, and landowners in Bayamo, Manzanillo, and Puerto Príncipe in the center and east of the island. These elite rebel leaders of differing political persuasions mobilized their kinsmen, retainers, clientele, and enlisted both poor urban and rural folk – including whites, free *mestizos*, and blacks – to achieve political objectives of gaining independence or some form of union with the United States.<sup>187</sup> The

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<sup>185</sup> 25 December 1870, Portuondo and Pichardo, *Carlos Manuel de Céspedes*, 221-24.

<sup>186</sup> On the Moret Law or so-called “free-womb law”, see Knight, 123, 172-74, 176-77; Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, 63-83; and Thomas, 257-58. On the impressment of *libertos* into menial labor for the insurgents, see Ferrer, 25-37; Mollin, 92; Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 123; and Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, ch. 2. On obligatory military service see Decreto Estableciendo el Servicio Militar Obligatorio, Bayamo, Saturday 24 October 1868 in Portuondo and Pichardo, 120.

September 1868 overthrow of the monarchy in Spain and resultant political instability in the colonies seemed a propitious moment to reformists and separatists, coming hard on the heels of the failure of a portion of the island's Creole planters and aligned clientele to secure from the metropolitan government either substantive reforms, or parliamentary representation in the Spanish *Cortés*, and thus to directly alter Cuba's colonial status.<sup>188</sup> Their conflict began as a "limited war for limited goals."<sup>189</sup> While many separatist leaders opposed slavery, and

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<sup>187</sup> On the contradictions of annexationism—once an early-nineteenth-century refuge of Cuban slave owners against the threat of Spanish collusion or compliance with British abolitionism's demands—and independence-minded nationalism within Cuban communities resident in the United States, see Gerald E. Poyo, *"With All, and for the Good of All": The Emergence of Popular Nationalism in the United States, 1848-1898* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), chs. 2 and 3. See also Ada Ferrer, "Armed Slaves and Anticolonial Insurgency in Late Nineteenth-Century Cuba" in Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, eds. *Arming Slaves* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 317-18 where annexationism among separatists arose as an alternative to surrender and a salvation against class and race war that might have followed in the wake of mass mobilizations carried out to further the insurrection: Ferrer quoted Céspedes: "[I]n the minds of a majority of Cubans ... is always the idea of annexation as a last resort, in order to avoid the abyss of evils which they say would lead to a war of the races." In 1873, the Ten Years' War mid-point, Irish *New York Herald* journalist, James J. O'Kelly, interviewed Calixto García, who described insurgent political ambitions as subject to the ebb and flow of internal and external events: "We desire to be independent, but, if this is impossible, we wish to attach ourselves to some strong government that will be able to guarantee to us liberty and order, so that we may develop in peace the resources of our country." There was talk of "a large party in favor of annexation to the United States" in the "Central Department ... but in the Eastern Department the main idea has been independence" while English influence suggested "the formation of a confederation of the Antilles" in opposition to annexation so that "hopes were held out that England would abandon Jamaica, as she abandoned the Ionian Islands, in order to facilitate the formation of the confederation of the Antilles." Doubtless with a view to influencing Anglo-phobic U.S. popular opinion, he wrote that this project was gaining ground out of disgust with "the manner in which the United States has acted toward" Cuban separatism, i.e. non-recognition of Cuban belligerency, which Spain's recent enemies such as Peru had granted, and strict enforcement of the Neutrality Act and support of treaty obligations with Spain. See James J. O'Kelly, *The Mambi-Land, or Adventures of a Herald Correspondent in Cuba* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1874), 217-18.

<sup>188</sup> Thomas, 237-40.

<sup>189</sup> Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 125. See also Thomas, 246-50, and Guerra, 30-32. For Carlos Manuel de Céspedes's ambivalent 27 December 1868 pronouncements on slavery after freeing his thirty slaves at *La Demajagua*, see "Freedom and Slavery" trans. by Aviva Chomsky, in Chomsky, Barry Carr, and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff, eds. *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 115-17. Briefly, masters could free their slaves and obtain receipts for future indemnification, slaves of neutral owners were to be treated as sacrosanct private property, slaves of counter-revolutionaries were liable to be confiscated, slaves could be loaned to the patriots, maroons in *palenques* were declared free, but more recent runaways were to be returned to their owners. See also, Ferrer, "Armed Slaves and Anticolonial Insurgency in Late Nineteenth-Century Cuba," 309, who noted that while there would be no compensation paid pro-Spanish owners, the decree effectively "encouraged only manumission" rather than abolition per se. See also Portuondo and Pichardo, *Carlos Manuel de Céspedes*, 144-45.

some had freed their own slaves, they generally favored ending the institution gradually and with indemnification paid to owners after independence had been achieved.

Their dilemma was similar to President Abraham Lincoln's in the recently concluded U.S. Civil War: he had postponed emancipation until 1863 in part to keep Delaware, Maryland, and Kentucky—frontline slave states all—in the Union. Lincoln had also contemplated gradual abolition based on some form of compensation to owners for their loss of private property.<sup>190</sup> In both cases slavery was a crucial underlying issue, just not the primary concern for elite white political leaders. Cuba's eastern separatist leaders hoped to placate or win over the far wealthier and much more influential planters in the western “king sugar” districts of Havana, Matanzas, Cárdenas, and Las Villas by deferring abolition. For Lincoln, the overriding concern had been mobilizing an amply racist white citizenry for restoration of the Union; for Cuban separatists it was finding a basis for white and black Creole unity against forms of racial and national oppression exercised by Spain's local constituencies and the metropolitan state, which was itself undergoing profound political instability.

But while many, indeed most western planters, remained integralists loyal to the Spanish colonial system, separatist hesitancy around the “social question” – slavery and how precipitously it should be ended – eroded support among many free blacks, and even those slaves familiar with insurgent decrees. Enduring divisions and factions arose among the

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<sup>190</sup> Cyril Lionel Robert James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1995), 60; Victor Gordon Kiernan, *America: The New Imperialism: From White Settlement to World Hegemony* (London: Zed Press, 1978, reprint; London, Verso, 2003), 71-72. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 28, 31, takes this analysis of temporizing and hesitation around slave emancipation down to the level of state elites, demonstrating that the pro-Whig sugar barons of southern Louisiana as a general rule strongly favored slavery, opposed secession, and sought the protection of tariffs on imported sugar. Thus occupying Union forces after 1862 initially hoped to secure their support by exempting the sugar parishes from the proclamation.



rebels. Some were regional and personalist in nature, others more political. Slavery and abolition proved a crucial originating factor in many of them. A November 1868 insurgent decree threatened the firing squad for robbery, wanton destruction, and attempts to “stir up and remove” the tied labor force from plantations of pro-separatist owners.<sup>191</sup> Cattle ranchers in seigniorial Camagüey, lacking rural partisans and foot soldiers, and desirous of material and political support from a United States that looked askance at slavery’s continuance in the Americas after the U.S. Civil War, separately proposed abolition in February 1869 with indemnification to be paid at a future, unspecified date.<sup>192</sup> Rebel politicians, mostly from the center of the island, meeting to write the republican constitution at Guáimaro in April 1869, attempted compromise by abolishing slavery immediately, without indemnification, but ruled that ex-slaves owed wage labor to their former masters, and with the proviso that Cuba would seek annexation to the United States. Later, representatives failed to ratify the constitution. The *de jure* treatment of freed slaves (*libertos*) required them to continue to perform menial *corvée* labor, either for their masters or for the state-in-formation under the *Reglamento de*

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<sup>191</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 25-42; Foner, *Antonio Maceo*, 30; Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 122. The proclamation appears in Portuondo and Pichardo, 129-30; see also, the “Order of the day” prohibiting unauthorized slaves from joining the Liberation Army, 123.

<sup>192</sup> A copy of the 26 February 1869 Puerto Príncipe (Camagüey) proclamation, *La institución de la esclavitud, traída a Cuba por la dominación española, debe extinguirse con ella*, appears in AHN, SU, leg. 4933, 2a parte, tomo 3, doc. 52. It reads, in part:

- “1. Slavery is abolished.
2. The masters of those who until today have been slaves will receive indemnity when it is opportune to do so.
3. All individuals that by virtue of this decree owe their liberty will contribute their efforts to the Independence of Cuba.
4. To accomplish this end, those considered necessary and fit for military service will fill our ranks, enjoying the same rights and considerations as the rest of the Liberation Army.
5. Those who are not [fit for service], for the duration of the war, will continue a dedication to the same work that they presently perform in order to keep properties in production, and contribute in that way to sustaining those who offer their blood for the common liberty, an obligation that corresponds in the same manner to all those CC [Cuban Citizens] now free, exempt from military service, whatever their race.
6. A special regulation will prescribe the details for the fulfillment of this decree.”

*libertos* in force from 6 July 1869 until 25 December 1870.<sup>193</sup> *De facto*, their treatment depended on the whim of insurgent officials and highly variable local circumstances.<sup>194</sup>

### Escalation of the War

In several counter-offensives to suppress rebellion, Spanish troops and integralist volunteers swept through eastern Cuba and seized and confiscated the properties of rebel suspects. During military operations, collaborators and sympathizers of the insurrection faced arrest, deportation, exile, and even summary execution, while their houses and farms were often burned.<sup>195</sup> A correspondent describing counterinsurgent practices in central Cuba during the high-water mark of the conflict wrote that not only were “Insurgents ... with arms in their hands” summarily shot, but also “unarmed fugitives whom terror ... had driven into the woods” and even “others who had remained quietly at home, but who were suspected of sympathy with the rebel cause.”<sup>196</sup> In 1873, the Irish adventurer and *New York Herald*

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<sup>193</sup> Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, 47. Hortensia Pichardo, ed., *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*, 2 vols. (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1977): I: 380-82.

<sup>194</sup> Cepero Bonilla, “Azúcar y abolición” in *Escritos históricos*, ch. 12, “En Guáimaro no se emancipó al esclavo” argued that the Cuban insurrection was not explicitly abolitionist until 1871. See also Foner, *Antonio Maceo*, 33; Robert, 195; Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, 48. For a strong qualification of this view, arguing that many slaves themselves immediately began forcing the issue when the conflict began, see Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, ch. 1.

<sup>195</sup> For an analysis of this counter-revolutionary repression arguing that it went well beyond actual Creole separatist supporters, and constituted a radical socio-economic program designed to “re-Hispanize” Cuba, see Alfonso W. Quiroz, “Loyalist Overkill: The Socioeconomic Costs of ‘Repressing’ the Separatist Insurrection in Cuba, 1868-1878” in *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, No. 2 (May 1998): 261-305. On pro-colonial volunteers, see Domingo Acebrón. See also the pro-separatist journalist impressions of O’Kelly, especially 44-53, 107.

<sup>196</sup> Gott, 80, quoting Antonio C.N. Gallenga, *The Pearl of the Antilles* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873; reprint ed., New York: Negro University Press, 1970), 164-65. Gallenga’s description of Sancti-Spiritus and Las Villas, both to the west of the Spanish army’s Jucaro-Morón *trocha* erected to contain the insurrection to Camagüey and Oriente, suggests the origins of the later 1896-1897 counterinsurgency population removal strategy known as *reconcentración* imposed by Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau. Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 195-196, scrupulously separated the “long-term precedents and immediate precursors” of

correspondent, James O'Kelly, an anti-British Fenian and therefore of pro-separatist, anti-colonial politics, described how "Spanish columns marched and countermarched through the desolate regions, burning whatever miserable leaf-covered shanties they encountered, wreaking vengeance on the wounded, the sick, and the weakly ... hunting like bloodhounds the ill-armed and wretchedly supplied soldiers of the Cuban republic" in much the same fashion as earlier the maroons had been pursued.<sup>197</sup> As the conflict escalated, marked by a growing pattern of reprisals and a shift to irregular warfare, which pitted colonial settler militias and regular troops against separatists operating among urban and rural populations motivated primarily by self-preservation, the warring parties' use of coercion and compulsion by force became explicit.

In spite of elite separatists' hazy and limited reformist political goals, the age of Clausewitzian total war had arrived in Cuba. With the sugar mill owners around Santiago pledging an extra "10,000 pesos to the Spanish authorities for the purpose of 'exterminating the revolution'" Gómez, an emergent rebel tactician due to his Spanish military background, picked promising officers that had distinguished themselves in the earlier fighting such as the free *mulato* Antonio Maceo and devoted his combatants to habitually eluding Spanish columns in favor of meticulously prepared ambushes, and most importantly it was thought, sabotaging agricultural production by subjecting plantations to the torch.<sup>198</sup> In early 1869 the lawyer-cum-president Carlos Manuel Céspedes authorized José Morales Lemus—who

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reconcentration, seeing its origins in Cuba in early 1870 as a result of the internally displaced refugees within Puerto Príncipe and Santiago that arose from the insurgent strategy targeting rural property, and further, Weyler's term as captain-general of the Philippines, 1888-1891, where the population removal strategy was undertaken on Mindanao against a "low-level guerrilla insurgency." See pp.157-58.

<sup>197</sup> O'Kelly, 107.

<sup>198</sup> Foner, *Antonio Maceo*, 30.

originally commanded separatist conspirators in Havana who had been disrupted and devastated by Volunteer repression financed by Spanish merchants, shopkeepers and migrants—to issue letters of marque in order to encourage would-be privateers to raid Spanish commerce—even though such practices, once emblematic of warfare within the Caribbean basin, had been rendered illegal by prior international agreements.<sup>199</sup> In effect, the Liberation Army dispersed into smaller, swiftly marching groups that preyed privateer-like on Spanish commerce and sources of revenue at the source: the plantations themselves. One 1869 insurgent offensive, north of Santiago, burned fifteen *cafetales* and twenty-three sugar mills.<sup>200</sup> The question of what to do with the slave workforce naturally arose and suggested to the rebels a means of harnessing able-bodied recruits. If irregular warfare directed at economic targets, the many immobile estates scattered in eastern Cuba, resembled a *guerre de course* waged on land, then another feature involved acquisition of recruits and labor. Whereas past maritime conflicts had relied on the press gang to forcibly recruit sailors, impressments of slave dotaciones would provide the separatist army with manpower. Slaves not evacuated by their masters, or not fleeing on their own initiative, were incorporated into the insurrection. In many cases slaves required little encouragement, as some accounts

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<sup>199</sup> Autorización a Morales Lemus para expedir patentes de corso, 1 April 1869, in Portuondo and Pichardo, 171. An actual letter of marque in very deteriorated condition appears in Patente de Corso cogida a los insurrectos con muerte de su propietario, AHN, SU, leg. 4933, tomo 5, no. 96, which reads in part, “Carlos M. de Céspedes, president of the republic of Cuba, in use of the faculties which have been invested in him by the power of the revolution, issues this *Carta Patente de Corso* in favor of Arturo M. Casimajou, who in virtue of this letter is authorized to arm one or more ships ... C[itizen] Arturo M. Casimajou will proceed to crew and arm them ... with at least a third part Cubans and two-thirds foreigners ... [He will] proceed in privateering operations under the Cuban flag, against any ship flying the Spanish flag, strictly subject to the international laws established and recognized by the civilized nations. ...” 8 July 1869 “The President, C.M. de Céspedes – The Secretary of War, F[rancisco] V[icente] Aguilera.”

<sup>200</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 56; Gott, 79. See also “Cuba. Eighteen Plantations Burned by the Insurgents—Flight of Cuban Bandits,” *NYT*, 7 February 1869, p.1: “The insurgents have burned eighteen large plantations in the Eastern Department, Cholera of a very violent type is prevalent in the insurrectionary district ... Cuban prisoners, PARRA and ANNOYA, were killed by troops, or volunteers, while attempting to escape from Guantanamo.”

indicate that numbers left for the conflict or struck out on their own.<sup>201</sup> Certainly all evidence suggests that many among the sizeable population of free people of color in Oriente formed a significant core of separatist support.

The ethnic composition of the rebellion drew on whites and free people of color, as well as many slaves, in a multi-racial military. But this mixed force also coexisted with long entrenched expectations of racial hierarchy and social order from a slave society. With that social system becoming upended by the rebellion, and the features of class war in mobilizing poor people into rebellion becoming manifest in insurgent ranks, even if under elite direction, concerns about race and class participation became pronounced. In an unexpected micro-historical coincidence, both a Spanish prisoner of war, Antonio del Rosal y Vázquez, and the Irish *New York Herald* journalist James O’Kelly—who had served in the French Foreign Legion in Mexico in the 1860s, interviewed and accompanied the emperor of Brazil Pedro II on his state visit to the United States, and had organized an Irish ambulance corps in France during the Franco-Prussian War—found themselves in Calixto García’s encampment in western Oriente province in 1873, the fifth year of the conflict that was transforming Cuba.<sup>202</sup> This allows a cross-examination of separatist combatants from the perspective of an enemy, and from a separatist partisan of anti-colonial sympathies, albeit well after the 1871 invasion of Guantánamo had taken place, and in a different district of Oriente province. The Spanish infantry captain—a source hostile to the separatists to be sure—who was spared and held

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<sup>201</sup> See Ferrer, “Armed Slaves and Anticolonial Insurgency in Late Nineteenth-Century Cuba,” 307-10 on both “forced and voluntary induction” and “indescribable enthusiasm” by libertos within separatist military ranks.

<sup>202</sup> Biographical information on O’Kelly from Fernando Ortiz’ 1930 introduction to James J. O’Kelly, *La tierra del Mambí* (reprint; Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2001), 7-59.

captive for two months by the *mambises*, and ultimately released in a prisoner exchange, wrote:

The immense majority of the *insurrectos* that I have seen are blacks and *mulatos*, yet despite this there are a growing number of whites, of which almost all are chiefs or officers. Despite the apparent harmony and fraternity that prevails among them, a terrible race hatred shows through among some ...

For a white to be a simple soldier, it would have to be because he was branded a coward, while it would be necessary for a man of color to be very accredited to merit promotions ... Aside from whites and indigenes of color, there are in the ranks a small number of Chinese and a few deserters from our [Spain's] army. ...

There are few quarrels among themselves, but on the other hand, the instinct for rapine is very developed among them: nothing is as pleasing to them as the *golpes* or attacks on towns, because in them they may satisfy their thirst for plunder: they destroy anything in their path, even without any necessity to do so, only for the pleasure to destroy. ...

[A]ttacks [on towns] can be considered as payment for the troops because pillage is permitted: each has a right to what he steals, while officials get half of what their assistants seize.<sup>203</sup>

O'Kelly's observations echoed the description, although with a more optimistic and egalitarian portrayal of race relations among the rebels:

About one-third of the fighting men are white, and the majority of the other

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<sup>203</sup> Antonio del Rosal y Vázquez de Mondragón, *Los mambises. Memorias de un prisionero* (Madrid: Imprenta de Pedro Abienzo, 1874), 7-8, 13, 40. A spy generated an almost obsessively detailed 26 October 1869 list of the general whereabouts of 4,710 insurgents—4,000 of them armed—from Puerto Príncipe (Camagüey) to Nuevitas appearing in Memoria reservada de los campamentos de la insurrección en la Jurisdicción de Puerto Príncipe, formada hoy día de la fecha por un testigo presencial que viene observando los planes, movimientos y conducta de la insurrección desde el día 19 del corriente año, AHN, SU, leg.4933, tomo 5, no. 91. The variability of conditions prevailing in armed separatist camps in Camagüey's cattle country and cane fields was quite apparent, ranging from "El Monitor" with "twenty blacks," commanded by a black captain to "El Peralejo" composed of a hundred whites, blacks, and Asians "armed with carbines and long smooth-bore muskets" under command of a one-armed "very despotic and cowardly Colonel Pedro Recio," who, it claimed, his own men had tried to kill. The locations of newspaper presses as a source of rebel propaganda were carefully recorded, including the papers *El Cubano Libre*, *República Cubana*, *El Mambí*, and *Libertad*. It claimed Manuel de Jesús Valdés "published a sheet defending the fusion of the white and black races. ... and calling the blacks *blood brothers* [*hermanos carnales*]" [*emphasis in original*]. It also discussed workshops, armories, rural ranches, and caves with weapons and munitions stored within, "Monte Oscuro" with a hundred blacks whom one "Captain Ramón Parto Recio (Canary Islander) treats with a ram-rod," *puertoprincipeño* chief Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz, later killed in action 11 May 1873 at Jimaguayú, who was characterized "one of the most despotic and bloody" leaders, together with many separatists from Havana and western Cuba who had made their way to rebel zones. On Chinese participation in the Liberation Army, see Juan Jiménez Pastrana, *Los chinos en las luchas por la liberación cubana, 1847-1930* (Havana: Instituto de Historia, 1963).

two-thirds are of color other than black, all shades of brown predominating. There were some half-dozen Chinamen, one of whom acted as aid surgeon. The most perfect equality exists between the white and colored races ... and although a majority of the officers are white, a very large portion are colored.<sup>204</sup>

Elsewhere, O’Kelly observed that the separatist Liberation Army burned property, destroyed farms, lived off the land, expropriating what they could, and systematically denied food to civilians and garrisons in Spanish-controlled towns.<sup>205</sup> The contending parties battled each other in a protracted rural guerrilla war. The Spanish and their supporters relocated to towns and hunkered down for a lengthy, if intermittent siege, for the most part, while separatists and their support base dispersed in the remote countryside.

Military attacks and the destruction of estates in Oriente, however, made little impact on the island’s economy as a whole. By the end of the year the most prosperous and significant sugar mills in western Cuba brought in a bumper crop. The 1868 *zafra* was 749,000 tons, a considerable jump from the 597,000 tons of sugar ground the year before, and Cuban sugar production remained high at 726,000 tons for both 1869 and 1870.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> O’Kelly, 221.

<sup>205</sup> O’Kelly, especially chs. 8, 15, 17, and 18.

<sup>206</sup> Thomas, Appendix XIII, 1562 gives world production figures for cane sugar derived from Noel Deerr’s two-volume *The History of Sugar* of 1868: 1,759,000 tons (749,000 for Cuba), 1869: 1,728,000 tons (726,000 for Cuba), 1870: 1,662,000 tons (726,000 for Cuba). Only by 1871 did sugar production diminish, with 1,697,000 tons of cane sugar worldwide and a drop in Cuban production to 547,000 tons. Cuban economic historian, Julio Le Riverend, traced the wholesale destruction of Central and Eastern Cuba’s agrarian economy but noted that for Western Cuba, “on the contrary” there was a slight increase in production, and the establishment of newer sugar mills, many more modern *centrales*, such as “some twenty-five more than existed in 1862” in Colón in 1874. To Le Riverend, the data from the war years suggest “the ingenios eliminated in Central and Eastern zones were of scant importance” and that production capacity could largely be made up by the far more intensive sugar cultivation found in Havana, Matanzas, Colón, and to a lesser extent the central districts of infrequent insurgent depredation in Las Villas and Cienfuegos. See Julio Le Riverend, *Historia económica de Cuba* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1985), 455-56. This excess productive capacity was central to Spanish military strategy of confining the insurgency to the traditional and primitive eastern end of the island for the duration of the Ten Years’ War. Something similar occurred on a smaller scale in

Some insurgents responded by prohibiting the harvesting of sugar cane, backed by a decree to fire fields under cultivation.<sup>207</sup> And yet other elements of the separatist leadership mostly shrank from attempting to impede sugar harvesting in its western heartland and sought to dissuade and prevent armed followers from that drastic course of action. Such a policy would alienate potential supporters, outrage influential business and planter elites, and turn public opinion—both within Cuba and abroad—against the separatist rebellion as Spanish propaganda demonstrated the sheer waste and wanton destruction it caused and played on long-standing anxieties of slave revolt to paint the cause as a race war.

Nevertheless, these forms of irregular warfare suggested to Gómez the trajectory of bringing the revolution by “fire and blood” to Guantánamo and thereby extending the poorly

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Guantánamo where the insurgents would largely be forced to operate in the mountains—where they devastated the coffee sector—but were excluded or expelled from the sugar sector on the better-protected plains.

<sup>207</sup> Foner, *Antonio Maceo*, 34. Property destruction tactics assailing plantations directly, as well as appeals to blacks, appeared in the handbill Proclama de la Junta Libertadora de Color, Imp. del Negro Laborante, Habana, 1 Octubre 1869, in AHN, SU, leg. 4933, 2a parte, libro 4, doc. 96 (also quoted in Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 39). The identical handbill also appears in the Real Academia de Historia, Madrid, Colección Fernández Duro, leg. 6, doc. 79, cited in Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, 56. The version in AHN reads, in part, “The blacks are the same as whites/ ... The Cubans want the blacks to be free/ The Spaniards want the blacks to continue being slaves/ ... The blacks are not fools, they have a big heart and fight together with the Cubans/ When the Cubans that are fighting pass by where the blacks are; then the blacks can go with them to be free/ When the Cubans who are fighting are far from the blacks; then the blacks will run away and go with the Cubans; but first they burn the sugar mills/ ... In the sugar mills the blacks do not have anything more than *leather* [*cuero*, the lash], and all the money is taken by the master in order to let it go to the Spaniards/ If the sugar mills are not burned, and the harvest is completed, all the money from the harvest will be taken by the Spaniards and then the Spaniards will send very many soldiers, with many rifles and cannons to kill the Cubans and the blacks will remain slaves forever/ The time to fight has come. It is better to be in the hills fighting together with the Cubans so that all men, blacks as well as whites, shall be free, than to be working as slaves/ Viva la libertad! / Fire to the sugar mills and everyone to the hills, to fight against the Spaniards!”

A similar, less simplified, more formal announcement of the decree, El Comité Republicano, Habana, 10 Diciembre 1869, in AHN, SU, leg. 4933, 4a. parte, libro 6, doc. 1 [pasted in the back of *Revista Política*] reads, in part, “Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, President of the Republic, has ordered that all Cubans, loyal to the cause of the homeland and obedient to its Government, should set fire to the cane fields and the tobacco harvests, to dispel the enemy, and deprive them of resources taken from here to make war on us. Every Cuban must respect and carry out the order of the first Magistrate, and it is necessary to execute it rapidly and punctually so that the entire world can see we are united and resolute in sacrifice. ... Each Cuban (white, or black; for all are equal) need not announce to anyone his projects ... No more fear! War to Spain, and long live Cuba! Fire and blood into all parts [of the island]. We will burn today, and tomorrow we will be free and Cubans.” The actual 10 October 1869 circular, “Notificando la resolución de destruir las fuentes de riqueza del enemigo” appears in Portuondo and Pichardo, 196-97, citing Justo Zaragoza, *Las insurrecciones en Cuba* 2 vols. (Madrid: 1873), II: 808.



armed and equipped insurrection, which was increasingly threatened by impending defeat, particularly as large numbers of rebels in the province of Camagüey surrendered.<sup>208</sup> But first, local pro-colonial constituencies and state agents in nearby regions of the east would have to be confronted.

### Cuba Española: Miguel Pérez and the Squadron of Santa Catalina

In attacking Miguel Pérez, the rebels eliminated a local leader who embodied Spain's control over the colony, and the maintenance of slavery and social hierarchies within it. Pérez had ample experience and detailed knowledge of the region's topography as an accomplished runaway hunter within the Guantánamo district – precisely his “fifty-four [years] in service to Spain,” and by dint of being the local militia leader.<sup>209</sup>

Over time, the story of Pérez's death received romantic nationalist embellishments. According to one variant, in an exchange of letters Miguel Pérez had taunted the free black Cuban officer, Guillermo Moncada, writing:

To Guillermo Moncada, where he may be encountered:  
Mambí: The day is not far off when, over the battlefield drenched in your blood, the flag of Spain will be raised over the shreds of the Cuban banner.

Moncada's rejoinder written on the reverse said:

To Miguel Pérez y Céspedes, where he may be found:  
Enemy: I say the hour [as opposed to the day] draws near when we will cross swords. I do not boast, rather I promise, that my black arm and Cuban heart have faith in victory. I am sorry that a lost brother imposes upon me the sad opportunity to take the edge off my machete. But, until Cuba shall be free, this same evil is just.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 43-54.

<sup>209</sup> Padrón, *Guillermón Moncada*, 30, 149-52 implicitly argues that the elimination of the leader of the Squadron of Santa Catalina was the intent of Gómez's orders to Moncada.

Irrespective of whether this exchange occurred, or was merely apocryphal, the very real duel between the seasoned old slave hunter and free black carpenter turned insurgent officer certainly resonated with each telling and retelling of it postwar. Those born on the island had long been conscious of certain shared commonalities.<sup>211</sup> In many cases, particularly in eastern Cuba, the “big war” (*Guerra Grande*) concretely politicized such nascent identities formed from a complex pastiche of local sources and affirmations. The story of Moncada—“Big Bill” or Guiller món—dueling with the royalist *cimarronero*, Pérez, symbolized the demise of an internal social control mechanism at the hand of a free black Jacobin in the colonial history of the Guantánamo district.

Moncada’s 1871 ambush of Pérez had been a death prefigured by the 1869 killing of a subordinate (and relative) in the Squadron of Santa Catalina, Francisco Pérez, at the hands of the Yateras Indian bandit, José Policarpo Pineda Rustán, known simply as “Rustán.”<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Padrón, *Guiller món Moncada*, 149, citing Boti, *Guiller món*, 69-70. See also Miguel Varona Guerrero, *La Guerra de Independencia de Cuba, 1895-1898*, 3 vols. (Havana: Editorial Lex, 1946), I: 554, citing Boti. In this rendition of Moncada’s (popularly nick-named “Big Bill/ Guiller món” or the “ebony giant/ gigante de ébano”) reply is simply “my arm and my Cuban heart (*No me jacto de nada, pero te prometo que mi brazo y mi corazón de cubano tienen fé en la victoria*).” The reader may therefore judge whether both “arm” and “heart” were modified by the adjective *cubano* or if “black arm and Cuban heart” was implicit in Moncada’s letter to Pérez, who understood his opponent to be a free black with an African-born mother and/or grandparents, or whether Moncada’s blackness was a more recent addition to the story. The fallen Miguel Pérez was succeeded by his son, Santos, who commanded the Squadrons of Guantánamo until his death 16 February 1890.

<sup>211</sup> Mollin, 278-308, 321-52; Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Criollidad y patria local en la nacionalidad cubana*, (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1994), 6-13.

<sup>212</sup> Diego Bosch Ferrer and José Sánchez Guerra, *Rebeldía y apalencamiento: Jurisdicciones de Guantánamo y Baracoa* (Guantánamo: Centro Provincial de Patrimonio Cultural, 2003), 42; and Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 55. On Rustán, see Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 55-7, 121; Gonzalo de Quesada y Aróstegui, “Policarpo Pineda Rustán,” in *Páginas escogidas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1968), 267-73; and José Sánchez Guerra, *Rustán: Coronel Policarpo Pineda Rustán y su participación en la Guerra de Diez Años* (Guantánamo: Sección de Investigaciones Históricas Comité Provincial del PCC, 1990). An 1869 insurgent list of 420 rebels, *Relación nominal de los individuos vecinos de la Jurisdicción de Guantánamo que han tomado parte en la insurrección voluntariamente o forzados, así como los instigadores y auxiliares de la misma, fecha en dicho lugar a 15 mayo 1869*, in ANC, fondo: Asuntos Políticos, leg. 59, exp. 61, lists Rustán, 36-years of age, along with ninety-two rebels in the district of Yateras — presumably his *bandoleros*, but claims he was from the jurisdiction of Baracoa.

This mule-driver turned bandit had been pursued throughout the old maroon country of the district since 1863 by the rural *gendarmérie* and the Civil Guard after he had beaten the lieutenant governor in retaliation for having been flogged in punishment for striking his abusive Catalan merchant employer.<sup>213</sup> With the outbreak of hostilities, Rustán had allied his band of brigands with the insurrection, taking his fugitive skills of evasion to their side in much the same, if opposite, way as the Pérez family's counterinsurgent role had been adapted and incorporated by the metropole to confronting the separatist insurrection. Indeed, Moncada had been made a subordinate of the "primitive rebel" or quasi-maroon Rustán after Pérez's Squadron pursued, harried, and drove them out of the district in 1869.

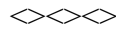
During the last Cuban war of independence – the 1895-1898 war – José Martí conflated the stories of the two Pérez's deaths during the Ten Years' War in his campaign diary on 23 April 1895 as he passed through Guantánamo, just twenty-six days before his death in action at Dos Ríos near Bayamo. That earlier duel in a past war had remained in the local oral culture or folklore traditions of the district, but had not affirmed the triumph of emergent *cubanía* ("Cuban-ness") within a nationalist discourse over identification with the colonial metropole—no "black arm and Cuban heart," no inclusive professions as fellow Cubans of "lost brother," no statement of regret over lamentable means ("the sad opportunity to take the edge off my machete") and necessary ends ("Cuba shall be free") as had Moncada's purported letter exchange with the old slave hunter, even if the result was similar. Instead it was a squalid local vendetta: "Policarpo put the other Pérez's [Francisco's] balls on his face like a pair of glasses."<sup>214</sup> An apparently disconcerted Martí, who in the years after

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<sup>213</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 68-69.

the Ten Years' War and Little War had labored mightily to forge a fragile unity among separatists in exile, had asked rhetorically at the time, "but why do these Cubans fight against Cubans?"

As has been seen, the regional distinctiveness of prevailing economic and social relations and concomitantly unformed elements of nationality in a sparsely settled frontier were key reasons for divergence in the case of Guantánamo. And the separatists constituted a minority, even in many parts of Oriente. Separatism was politically and militarily weak, and divisions existed within the provinces of the revolution as well as between regions.



In a 1914 novel about nineteenth-century coffee plantations in Oriente province, Emilio Bacardí made frequent reference to both the French or at least "frenchified" (*afrancesado*) culture of the masters and the *patois cubain* "mumbo-jumbo" [*sic*] of the slaves.<sup>215</sup> In the fictional account of the tragic saga of the Delamour family and coffee estates near Gran Piedra between Santiago and Guantánamo, the slave work force held a meeting with a rebel emissary urging them to desert their master and join the revolution. After hearing about "Cuba Libre" the eldest among them responded with "*Cub lib; sá sá yé sá?* [Cuba Libre, what thing is that?]." Upon being informed that Cuba in arms would break the shackles of slavery and burn and destroy the institution in its lair, the plantations themselves, the elder responded: "*Pá bulé isí. Met nu sé bon met. Pesón pa pi alé* [There'll be no burning

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<sup>214</sup> José Martí Pérez, *José Martí: Selected Writings*, edited and translated by Esther Allen (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 389.

<sup>215</sup> Emilio Bacardí Moreau, *Vía Crucis* (Barcelona: Imprenta Luisa Torres, 1914) 1a parte "Páginas de ayer," 30, 32-5. See also French patois spoken in urban Santiago de Cuba in 2a parte "Magdalena," especially the character Teodulo Pinaud, a tailor, aka. *Musiú Popot*.

here. Our master is a good master. No one will go away].”<sup>216</sup> Bacardí’s intent in writing such a passage was open to differing interpretations, of course, and may well have been similar to the mythology of the loyal, docile, self-effacing, humble, irresponsible but genial slave stereotype found frequently in slave societies throughout the Diaspora, and prevalent in much U.S. Southern “lost cause” literature. He seemingly emphasized a serf-like dependency of slaves as feudal vassals in this patriarchal, patrician, and pre-modern bound labor system whereby slaves lived in thatched villages near the manor-like dwelling-house, store-rooms, and coffee pulping mill: “the *cafetales* were palaces; the [brick or stone and plaster] drying yards and aqueducts recalled the works of the ancient Romans.”<sup>217</sup>

Whatever Bacardí’s authorial intentions, informed speculation of competing motives suggests that slaves responded warily to entreaties or overtures from any quarter. The master class, descended from those who fled the largest slave revolt in history, the Haitian revolution with its resultant race war, saw themselves locked in permanent conflict – even approaching a state of ongoing domestic war – with their chattels.<sup>218</sup> Bound laborers understood first hand the arbitrary authority, wanton treatment, and severe abuse masters were capable of. They would closely analyze, watch, and wait before jeopardizing their

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<sup>216</sup> Bacardí, *Vía Crucis*, 133-5. See also Mollin, 351-52. The induction of slaves as soldiers or laborers for the insurrection often included some type of explanation of separatist goals and abolition, see, for example, Ferrer, “Armed Slaves and Anticolonial Insurgency in Late Nineteenth-Century Cuba,” 312.

<sup>217</sup> Bacardí, *Vía Crucis*, 1a parte, 30. Elsewhere the author describes slaves bringing serf-like tribute to their master in the form of crops, piglets, produce, and so forth from their *conuco* cultivation plots during a social gathering on the plantation, 50-55.

<sup>218</sup> On the impact of events in Haiti in Cuba, see Navarro González-Ripoll et. al., *El rumor de Haiti en Cuba: Temor, raza y rebeldía, 1789-1844* (Madrid: CSIC, 2005). See also, Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*; David P. Geggus, ed., *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

given social circumstances arrived at through precarious negotiation of the long-prevailing plantation system.<sup>219</sup>

Then too, the relative scarcity of *bozales* from the 1840s on due to the increasing interdiction of the illegal trade had driven up the prices for slave laborers, and encouraged some masters to promote natural increase among slaves. The children of slaves, held perpetually in bondage, promised planters a self-reproducing caste of servile laborers such as worked the antebellum U.S. South's cotton fields. The encouragement of families among slaves could serve masters a social control mechanism: unruly, recalcitrant, or rebellious behavior placed not only the individual but also the enslaved person's dependents in jeopardy. But at the same time the economic situation of the cash-strapped master class often enabled slaves to negotiate material improvements and ameliorate some aspects of their situation and living standards, allowing some small measure of hard won autonomy over their lives and labor—a circumscribed shift toward share-cropping and tenancy arrangements prior to emancipation. Our modern views of slavery and its grotesquely unequal power relations have fixated on its salient coercive and often appallingly violent, cruel aspects. As a result there has been emphasis on exploitation and resistance. Modern mentalities shaped by antislavery ideologies but tempered by Gramscian notions of the functioning of hegemony nevertheless are discomfited and rebel at the notion that people accede—at least outwardly—to the system. Forms of accommodation arose when people were trapped within a world of hardscrabble existence and limited available options, inhabitants of an environment where a

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<sup>219</sup> By “negotiate” I mean a wide range of behaviors—compromises within highly unequal social systems—structured by an often narrow and constrained set of social circumstances. My definition corresponds to that of João José Reis and Eduardo Silva’s provocative exploration of the space between the tropes of heroic resistance, passive victim, and complicit collaborationist “Uncle Tom” in *Entre Zumbi e Pai João, o escravo que negocia* in *Negociação e Conflito: A Resistência Negra no Brasil Escravista* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989), 13-32. See also Andrews, 22-40.

person could see others at first hand, or certainly imagine all too readily, in more dire circumstances. In such a setting, one could come to cling to any tenuous relationship as a source of security—even seeing the site of one’s constrained and limited existence as home and hearth.<sup>220</sup>

This wary and cautious slave and peasant conservatism does not negate or refute ongoing resistance, which many scholars of slavery have rightly emphasized, but merely adds consideration of individual and collective cost-benefit analyses and motives into discussion of slave participation in the separatist armed struggle. Certainly many slaves harbored long simmering grievances and even pent-up rage at the systemic violence and daily humiliations and exploitations they were often subject to. Such people could be quite receptive to the opportunity the insurrection afforded for powerful motives of revenge, settling accounts, resistance, or running away. But the risks of joining a ragged persecuted band of rebels often seemed far too great for any reasonable expectation of returns. The point is that slaves pursued their own motives when they could. Sometimes these could be in concert with the rebels, at other times in conflict.<sup>221</sup> An 1869 North American magazine article acknowledged, “A sort of general encouragement may have been given to the insurgents for the purpose of intimidating the Spanish Government into gradual rather than an immediate emancipation. But,” it went on to state, “it is not surprising, considering that

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<sup>220</sup> On patterns of and possibilities for family life and creolization on coffee farms in an earlier colonial period, extraordinary forms of *petit maronage*, and patterns of resistance including full-scale slave rebellions in western Cuba, see Van Norman, chs. 4 and 5. Provocatively, on p. 139 the issues are raised of a slave “moral economy” in which *bozales* could see the labor regime on some cafetales as approximating forms of labor approximating or more akin to certain types of agricultural labor and slavery practiced in Africa than the regimes prevailing at other plantations, especially sugar *ingenios*.

<sup>221</sup> As but one example among many, see Robert, “Slavery and Freedom in the Ten Years’ War, 1868-1878,” 181-82, where Cienfuegos sugar slaves denounced an unpopular overseer to the Spaniards as a seditious insurgent supporter. The authorities in turn, had him arrested in spite of the absence of evidence.

the negroes have had all pluck knocked out of them, and dread firearms, and therefore could not join in a simultaneous rising – it is not surprising, we say, that a handful of regular soldiers sufficed to quell the outbreak of insurrection in Guantanamo.’<sup>222</sup>

If such were the carrots and sticks hindering and conditioning underlying slave responses to insurrection, what this rather glib analysis missed was that the “handful of regular soldiers” was, in fact, primarily the local militia, the Squadron of Santa Catalina with an intimate knowledge of the terrain and a long counterinsurgent pedigree. It was also premature, written as it was before the 1871 invasion. A journalist who visited these same coffee districts later wrote:

[French Creoles] must have been far from thinking that their new country also was to fall a prey to the same evils, and in a great measure from the same causes as those from which they escaped. For the Cuban question, like the Haytian question of 1796, is that of slave emancipation; and it will only be ultimately solved by determining on what footing free labour may be made to answer both here and throughout the West Indies.<sup>223</sup>

As runaway slave activity declined by the mid-nineteenth century, and external capitalist investment from Brooks and Company allowed for the consolidation of steam-powered sugar mills, by 1858 the Squadron had become a rural *gendarmerie*. Members served two months out of the year.<sup>224</sup> Despite their typically humble social backgrounds, it is likely that those incorporated into the Squadron were subject to the separate court *fueros* and enjoyed privileges attendant with service in the disciplined militia. Service implied distinction and rank, or impunity, within the community. Maroon activity may have diminished, but as late as 1863 municipalities in the district expended \$150 gold pesos to

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<sup>222</sup> Harper’s, 11.

<sup>223</sup> Gallenga, 149.

<sup>224</sup> Pezuela, II: 266. See also Rodríguez, 57.



continued patrols.<sup>225</sup> Clearly both the ongoing threat of successful maroon flight, and the actual existence of small palenques remained a social control concern.

Anthropologist Gabino La Roza has indicated that in eastern Cuba “vagabond runaway slaves” and “runaway slaves living in settlements,” as he termed slave resistance leading to actual outlaw ex-slave encampments or more permanent hidden rebel villages—which may be simplified by using the French term *grand marronage* to incorporate both tactics—largely disappeared by the mid-nineteenth century with changing social conditions.<sup>226</sup> Much the same shift earlier occurred in western Cuba, where maroon presence had been eliminated by the green tide of cane cultivation in Matanzas earlier in the nineteenth century.<sup>227</sup> For that matter it also became less prevalent in the antebellum United States where runaways from border-states frequently sought refuge in free labor states or in Canada with the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act.<sup>228</sup> Nevertheless, in Cuba, the increasingly high price of slaves amid declining supply meant that individual runaways commanded a much higher bounty from owners.<sup>229</sup> But while the masters’ social control solution to maroon activity in the coffee sector lay in effective repression combined with modifying servile labor to a form of semi-feudal serfdom – essentially allowing their laborers

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<sup>225</sup> Bosch and Sánchez, 64, Pezuela, II: 506. La Rosa, 215, briefly described late anti-maroon patrols led by Pérez in 1852, which captured fifteen maroons but at the cost of seven slave “hunters wounded on stakes,” and a further call for operations to be undertaken by the lieutenant-governor of Guantánamo in 1857.

<sup>226</sup> La Rosa, 7-8, 207.

<sup>227</sup> Bergad, 83; Mollin, 71.

<sup>228</sup> On U.S. slave patrols, with some comparative treatment of the Anglophone Caribbean, see Hadden. For slave resistance and flight in U.S. Southern contexts, and on slave patrols, see also John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially chs. 5, 6, and 7.

<sup>229</sup> Bergad, García, Barcia, ch. 7.

to live in a closely supervised village tied to the finca – the rigid conditions of the sugar plantation and its exploitative labor demands at harvest time imposed different constraints. The expansion of sugar on the plain ineluctably led to other social control challenges.

The aforementioned 1869 article underscored the geographical distinction between the “lofty range of mountains” and the “pestilential” hot *llano* “studded with ‘sucaríes’ [sugar mills], the mountains with ‘cafetals’ [coffee plantations].” It listed “Potosí ... the largest and most scientifically managed” coffee farm, “with 200 slaves” and the “largest sugar estate ... ‘Esperanza,’” absentee-owned by the wealthy Havana-based planter “Mr. Bardow [*sic*, José Baró Blauxard]” with “400 male *employés*, many of which are coolies and the remainder slaves.”<sup>230</sup> An 1867 list of 120 single male “Asiatics” or Chinese indentured workers in Guantánamo indicated that twelve worked on the railway, two as domestics, and 106 in the countryside, ninety-seven of them at Esperanza – their eight-year indenture contracts stipulating a twelve-hour workday for food and lodging, at a pay scale of four pesos per month purchased in Havana by Baró who had made his fortune from the illegal slave trade.<sup>231</sup>

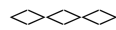
On 28 January 1868—months before Céspedes’ *Grito de Yara* initiated the Ten Years’ War—during the sugar harvest, eighty of these Chinese “mutinied” over mistreatment

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<sup>230</sup> *Harper’s*, 11. The badly decomposed pre-1860 agricultural census [ca. 1854?] lists 191 slaves at Esperanza, owned by don Moré and don Baró, Padrón de fincas rústicas del partido de Yateras, propietarios, dotación, producción y rentas, ANC, GG, leg. 388, no. 18510, sin fecha.

<sup>231</sup> Relación de Asiaticos contratados residentes en esta Jurisdicción, Guantánamo, 1867, AHN, SU, leg. 76, exp. 5, doc. 1 For Chinese contract labor in Cuba as a transitional form of labor see *The Cuba Commission Report: A Hidden History of the Chinese in Cuba* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993); Gott, 69-70; Knight, 57; 116-19; Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, 29-35, 89-100. On forms of resistance, but especially suicide among relatively recently imported workers, first African *bozales*, later Chinese in Cuba see Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *To Die in Cuba: Suicide and Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), ch. 1. On Baró’s participation in the illegal trade, see Roland T. Ely, *Cuando reinaba su majestad el azúcar* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Havana: Ediciones Imagen Contemporánea, 2001), 293, fn 255. For observations of “a Portuguese steamer which had just arrived from Macao, with a cargo of Celestials, some eight hundred and eighty-nine souls” in Havana the last year of the trade, 1873-1874, see O’Kelly, 67-72.

by their foreman. Arming themselves with “hoes, mattocks, knives, and machetes,” they fell back to their living quarters at the sounding of the alarm by “the pairs of rural guards” placed in the fields to prevent cane fires and patrol the roads.<sup>232</sup> The lieutenant governor and a detachment of troops arrived to find slaves and indentured workers at odds, each group fearing what the other might do, and what would befall them because of the work stoppage. The Chinese indentured workers turned over their weapons, and some black slaves and free wageworkers made accusations about especially guilty parties. The lieutenant governor’s report indicated that these laborers worked at the best finca in the district, with better food and conditions than many. Those identified as culpable “were punished with ten or twenty *varazos*.” Three ringleaders were put in irons. The Squadron of Santa Catalina could effectively buttress planter authority on the invigilated sugar mills of the plain and pursue fugitives in the remote mountains. The outbreak of war would initially demonstrate their counterinsurgent utility in further reinforcing the social control of the colonial state.



The onset of the Ten Years’ War led to the Squadron’s full mobilization, with separate units commanded by different members of the Pérez clan. Miguel’s son, Santos, led one column. A nephew, Pedro Agustín Pérez y Pérez, was in charge of another.<sup>233</sup> The

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<sup>232</sup> Expediente manuscrito que trata del amotinamiento de ochenta asiaticos contratados en el ingenio “Esperanza” de José Baró; los hechos que ocasionaron el motín fué el maltrato de obras, por parte del capataz, a dichos asiaticos. Guantánamo, Stgo. de Cuba, Enero 28 al 31 de 1868, AHPSC, GP, leg. 327, no. 32, año: 1868, materia: Chinos. Sánchez, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros*, 49-50, claimed that Baró brought 262 Chinese to La Esperanza, where they revolted in 1864, cutting off the ears of two *mayorales* and taking whites hostage. Negotiations between the civil and military authorities and the church resulted in a separate Chinese quarter, apart from the slave barracks. The description of the 1864 revolt appeared without citation, so it remains unclear if there were two rebellions, or the one described in 1868 in AHPSC.

<sup>233</sup> González Puente, 7, described Monday 29 April 1844, the birth of Pedro Agustín Pérez at the home of his parents, Eligio Pérez y Pérez and Lucía Antonia Pérez y Céspedes, and his baptism in a church

Squadron's repressive tasks and patrol functions resembled counter-maroon sweeps much as before, ranging out into the most inaccessible hills to ferret out likely insurgent encampments – called prefectures by the rebels themselves, but labeled simply “camps” or even *palenques* by Spanish forces. Initial slave flight, incorporation into rebellion, or opportunity for flight created by political unrest that was originally not explicitly abolitionist meant the conflation of insurrection, slave flight, and the rekindling of maroon activity may not have been too wide off the mark.

The start of the rebellion drew battle lines between the sugar enclave and export coffee sectors and the semi-peasant small holders, squatters, and tenant farmers in the mountainous periphery of the region.<sup>234</sup> Marginal rural supporters of the separatists along the north coast communicated with insurgents in Holguín. These pro-separatist elements achieved some small military victories, briefly seizing Tiguabos and other towns, until late November 1868 when they launched a haphazardly organized frontal attack on the city of Guantánamo itself. The Squadron and other colonialist militia repulsed the poorly armed rebels with considerable losses. This defeat of the *insurrectos* was followed by a counterattack on their encampment, which killed and captured more of the rebels and ejected the dispersed remnants from the district.<sup>235</sup> At the beginning of the war, it seems that the affair was mostly confined to white Cubans, with some involvement of free people of color on both sides. As the conflict developed, however, there was a tendency for the loyalties of *orientales* of color to be questioned, where racial identification became correlated with either

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“constructed by the Pérez family, on lands of the Pérez, with a Pérez officiating, ... son of two Pérez” and with Miguel Pérez y Céspedes as both his uncle and godfather.

<sup>234</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 3.

<sup>235</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 21-27.

a more white integralism versus a more mixed-race separatist profile. Separatist insurgents made some incursions from time to time, foreshadowing the major depredations that would follow in 1871, such as a December 1868 raid on the cafetal San Fernando between the cantons of Monte Líbano and Yateras close to Guantánamo where thirty slaves—presumably mostly men—were seized by 153 rebels.<sup>236</sup> Nevertheless, the district remained for the most part a bulwark of Spanish colonialism within Oriente province. Reinforced by regular troops, the colonialist paramilitary concentrated on the outlaw Rustán's band. In mid-1869 they surprised and apparently annihilated a filibuster expedition from the schooner *Grapeshot*, which was attempting to land weapons, munitions, and republican banknotes supplied by Cuban exiles in the United States.<sup>237</sup>

Little about the ill-fated *Grapeshot* filibuster expedition to Guantánamo can be known with certitude, but it is suggestive of the efficiency of the *Escuadra* paramilitary social control mechanism in reinforcing the local authority of the colonial state, and underscores the reputation of the district as a “little Spain” during the Ten Years' War. The old runaway slave patrol militia became adapted to emerging counterinsurgent roles against threats posed by local insurgents, those operating from nearby areas of Oriente province, and external separatist backers. The paramilitary mobilized against the appearance of the foreign filibusters; it would appear that all, or at least most of the crew and smugglers aboard

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<sup>236</sup> Ferrer, “Armed Slaves and Anticolonial Rebellion in Late Nineteenth-Century Cuba,” 307.

<sup>237</sup> On the *Grapeshot* filibuster landing to assist the separatists, see Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 37-42, citing José Joaquín Ribó, *Historia de los voluntarios cubanos*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Imprenta de T. Fortanet, 1872-1876) I: 86. Brief mention of the *Grapeshot* carrying arms from New York, putting into port at Wilmington, North Carolina, appears in Se remite extracto de una correspondencia sorprendida a los insurrectos, part of Revista quincenal 15 Julio 1869, AHN, SU, leg. 4933, 4a. parte, libro 5, doc. 30. See also, “Cuba. Cholera Rampant—More Filibustering Expeditions—Latest News from the Front—War Gossip—That Bruised Soldier—A Spanish Loyal League,” Quasimodo [a pseudonym], *NYT*, 21 June 1869, p.4. Padrón, 27, asserted that some survivors of the *Grapeshot* expedition were rescued by Rustán and Moncada's force.

attempting to reach the insurrection were captured and executed. The ship was likely the “schooner” mentioned in a *New York Times* article “which brought” 100 men from New York and Jamaica to a remote landing spot at Baitiquirí just to the east of Guantánamo Bay: “The men appeared to be composed of Americans, Dominicans and Cubans.” Betrayed by a “negro guide” who

informed the commander at Guantanamo, while a mounted *ordenance* [*sic, ordenanza*] informed the garrison at Baracoa. Before mid-day 700 men, composed of troops, volunteers and country people who were forced to accompany the troops were at hand. The filibusters were surrounded, and although outnumbered, fought desperately. ... a large number were killed, among them the reputed leader of the expedition. Several were captured and taken to Santiago de Cuba to be executed there. The others ... escaped. At latest dates they were still at large, although letters from Santiago de Cuba, written by Spaniards, announced that they were captured.<sup>238</sup>

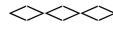
The article further listed the seizure of 400 Remington rifles, two small artillery pieces, “three cart-loads of baggage,” munitions, and “over two millions of unsigned patriot currency of the denominations of one, two, five, twenty, and fifty dollars ... Private letters received later state that every man belonging to the expedition was either killed or captured.” The paper also reported a “second expedition, composed of 150 men” that “landed in the jurisdiction of Guantanamo and joined the [insurgent] forces in the interior unmolested” but gave no further details. The article’s author, one “Quasimodo,” impugned several Spanish newspaper stories about the progress of the war as distorted, exaggerated, and inaccurate. He described a battle at the Nuevitas railroad between insurgents and “colored Havana volunteers” where “About sixty of these volunteers had deserted and joined the Cubans.”<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> “Cuba. Cholera Rampant—More Filibustering Expeditions—Latest News from the Front—War Gossip—That Bruised Soldier—A Spanish Loyal League,” Quasimodo [a pseudonym], *NYT*, 21 June 1869, p.4.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

Some survivors of the *Grapeshot* expedition may have been rescued by Rustán and Moncada's force.<sup>240</sup>



Many local integralist volunteers were from the laboring classes, lending an intra-class character to district political loyalties. Yet other indications suggest that participation in the separatist armed struggle bore the hallmarks of peasant rebellion and class war. Most in Guantánamo either remained indifferent or passive to pro-independence appeals, or arrayed against the separatists. Many inhabitants identified the regional particularistic interests of their *patria chica* with the integralist colonial nationalism of Cuba Española. But some poor whites, *mestizos*, and free blacks in the semi-peasant periphery drew battle lines against the land-engrossing sugar enclave in the valley and the slave-based coffee sector in the mountains.

A May 1869 report on the insurrection from the lieutenant governor listed 419 men and one woman as “having taken part in the [separatist] insurrection, voluntarily or forcibly.”<sup>241</sup> The twenty-three year old single woman from Tiguabos was “dressed as a man in the way of the *insurrectos*” and in official custody, as were a considerable number of the others.<sup>242</sup> She and about 170 of those listed had the honorific “Don” indicating that they were considered legally white, while about 250 without the title were presumably black or of

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<sup>240</sup> Padrón, 27, asserted that Rustán and Moncada rescued some survivors of the *Grapeshot* expedition.

<sup>241</sup> Relación nominal de los individuos vecinos de la Jurisdicción de Guantánamo que han tomado parte en la insurrección voluntariamente o forzados, así como los instigadores y auxiliares de la misma, fecha en dicha lugar a 15 mayo 1869 in ANC, AP, leg. 59, exp. 61. The total number indicated 319 in Sagua de Tánamo, 92 – including Rustán – in Yateras, and 9 in the city of Guantánamo. 226 “volunteered,” including two African-born rebels and two Creole slaves, 173 were “forced,” while 21 remain unknown.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*; see also, Sánchez and Campos, *Los ecos de la Demajagua*, 20.

mixed race. Eighty-nine percent had “from the countryside” listed as profession, while six percent were artisans of some sort – cobblers, tobacco workers, tailors, building masons.<sup>243</sup> Fewer than one percent were substantial property holders, although it is likely that many *campesinos* listed from Sagua de Tánamo had a tobacco *vega* or subsistence farm. Only forty-eight were originally from the immediate environs of Guantánamo/ Tiguabos, while fully eighty-eight were from Sagua de Tánamo on the trackless, wild north coast. A further eighty hailed from nearby Mayarí, and around forty originally came from Holguín in mostly white western Oriente province. Sixty-five were from the rainy, lush jungle-country surrounding isolated plantain, banana, and coconut-producing Baracoa on the easternmost tip of the island, and roughly a similar number came from Santiago. Fifteen were Catalans, Canary Islanders, Galicians, or from other regions of Spain. Two were listed as African born, but may have been manumitted before the war, while two Creole blacks, a thirty-three and a thirty-eight year old, were described as slaves.

While the solitary list is anecdotal, it is nevertheless suggestive that many of the insurgents in the district came from peripheral areas marked by small-holding farms and peasant subsistence cultivation, underscoring Eric Wolf’s thesis on twentieth-century peasant revolts being caused by a restive peasant sector being overridden by agrarian capitalist forces and the engrossment of land by investors or gentry tied to a larger economic system.<sup>244</sup> It certainly seems a logical and reasonable extrapolation that the list of persons killed, surrendered, pardoned, imprisoned, or awaiting further disposition suggests that the

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<sup>243</sup> Ferrer also uses this document; juxtaposing it with a similar insurgent list from Camagüey to contrast the disparate social origins and class composition of rebel forces by region early in the conflict, see *Insurgent Cuba*, 55-56.

<sup>244</sup> Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).



Squadron had largely checked the insurgency locally.<sup>245</sup> The insurrection gained ground in western Oriente province and Camagüey, but remained stymied in Oriente's slave-dependent east. In the rest of Cuba, Peninsular Spaniards and *integrists* volunteers quashed with a heavy hand manifestations of separatism—real and imagined.

As Spain's colonial army prepared to erect a barrier across the narrows of Puerto Príncipe to physically separate western Cuba's civilization from Camagüey and Oriente's "barbarous" primitive frontier, latent schemes for the settlement of the region with a yeomanry of white Spaniard soldier-colonists arose again as mentioned in the epigraph to Chapter I:

The eastern part of the island of Cuba, barely populated before 1869, will remain deserted after the sad events that have occurred in the last months of '68 and the first of '69; and the beautiful ports will only serve as refuge to Pirates and malefactors, if the Government ... does not prepare the means to repopulate those fertile lands. ... the Count [of Mompox y de Jaruco], who possesses vast lands in these regions, proposes, if the Government approves, to form agro-military colonies [of] Peninsular and Canary Islander yeomen.<sup>246</sup>

The Count of Mompox y de Jaruco's 1869 colonization plan showed no indication of detailed knowledge of the situation on the ground in Guantánamo. Indeed, at the time it was submitted, the local supporters of the "integrity of *Cuba Española*," that is, the maintenance of the Antillean colony with metropolitan authority in Spain, appeared to have the upper hand. If military colonists were not forthcoming, then the agricultural colonists already present became further militarized. Aggressive patrols combed the hills, while the

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<sup>245</sup> The list suggested that ten were dead, twenty-eight in prison, 263 had been "reprieved/pardoned" (*indultado*) in Guantánamo, Santiago de Cuba, Baracoa, or Mayarí, 74 were presumed to be in the insurrection, while the status of 45 remained unclear or unknown. Fully 266 were "present," e.g. accounted for, surrendered, captured, or whereabouts known, while almost 140 remained "absent."

<sup>246</sup> Proyecto del Conde de Mompox y de Jaruco para Colonizar los terrenos de su propiedad y del Estado en el Departamento Oriental de la isla de Cuba, con Espanoles, 27 January 1870, AHN, SU, leg. 92, exp. 48, pp. 1-4.

restrictions on movement inherent in the slave plantation regime with its pass system, curfews, and barracks—typically with an armed guard posted in front—hindered contacts between bond laborers and the rebels. Since plantations were the chosen battlegrounds of the insurgents, concomitantly planter oversight increased. In the meantime, planters fortified their estates with large kerosene-powered spotlights for illumination at night, loopholes and embrasures for firearms, watchtowers, and a ring of blockhouses against the *mambí* insurgents.<sup>247</sup> Militia and eventually growing numbers of regular troops manned the defenses of property, and it was not entirely unknown for “the most trusted of the slaves” to be armed, “though with inferior weapons.”<sup>248</sup> To observers, the rural landscape assumed a positively medieval aspect as forts, army posts replete with stockades and battlements, watchtowers,

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<sup>247</sup> On estate fortifications during the Ten Years’ War, see O’Kelly, *The Mambi-Land*, 120-121. The term *mambí* is thought to have originated during the 1864-1865 War of the Restoration in the Dominican Republic, where it was first applied to black *insurrectos* by Spanish troops as an epithet. It may derive from a Congo or Angolan word *mbi* meaning “bad man,” or it may be a reference to a specific Dominican rebel. The name was used in Cuba during the Ten Years’ War, and taken up by the rebels themselves. See Gott, 73; Philip Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of U.S. Imperialism*, 2 vols. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), I: 31; and Fernando Ortiz’s 1930 introduction to James J. O’Kelly, *La tierra del mambí* (Havana, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2001), 8. On blockhouses, see Mollin, 201, fn 209, which claimed that the system of blockhouses originated with France’s Imperial Grand Army in Haiti, and from there were again built by the same army to contain and control Spanish guerrillas during the 1808 Peninsular War in Iberia. Post-1830 French colonial practice in Algeria further stimulated the diffusion of the tactic and physical architecture of social control in other colonial contexts. The Spanish army had envisioned a fortified line, or “trocha” including many such blockhouses during the War of the Restoration in the Dominican Republic, but did not build such an elaborate defensive system until the Ten Years’ War in Cuba. John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 157, described trochas first being built in colonial campaigns in the Philippines, 1888-1891. See also Tone, 118-19, 167-68, 184-85, 188-89. In Cuba the Spanish army envisioned that the Trocha across the narrows of Júcaró-Ciego de Ávila-Morón would isolate the insurgents in the less-developed and economically less-significant east, keeping them out of the western districts of the isle. See also, Tamara Blanes, *Fortificaciones del Caribe* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2001), 162-178, 195-210; José Manuel Guerrero Acosta, *El Ejército Español en Ultramar y África (1850-1925): Los soldados olvidados del otro lado del mar* (Madrid: Acción Press, S.A., 2003), 29, citing projected trocha plans for Santo Domingo in AGM-M, Colección General de documentos, leg. 5-4-12-4. Further research may find that barbed wire—invented separately in France in 1867 and in the United States in 1874—and later installed as part of the trocha in Cuba was used to fence off western Cuba from separatist rebellion in Oriente before it found widespread use in the late 1870s on the North American western frontier. For barbed wire’s political history and the social control “management of space,” see Olivier Razac, *Barbed Wire: A Political History* trans. by Jonathan Kneight (New York: The New Press, 2002).

<sup>248</sup> O’Kelly, 119-22.

and blockhouses dotted the countryside with a militarized defensive architecture of social control. The coffee planters would shortly learn, however, that the Spanish were ill-disposed to defend four percent of Cuba's coffee production—physically scattered in difficult, barely accessible mountainous terrain—especially when twenty percent of eastern Cuba's sugar in the more readily defended Guantánamo valley was at stake. Nevertheless, despite such ambiguities and unforeseen effects of war and mobilization, it would seem that instability generated by the conflict began to have undermining effects on slavery.<sup>249</sup>

A 17 April 1871 letter from the lieutenant governor of Guantánamo – eighteen days before Pérez's death – bore something of the *imprimatur* of the runaway catcher's *modus operandi* if not direct evidence of his participation in the capture of slaves it described.<sup>250</sup> Responses to a government request to list the name, master, and current location of captured slaves presumed to have tried to join the insurrection or emanating from overrun insurgent prefectures recorded 270 such slaves, 166 of them from the Tiguabos region, and 104 from Yateras. This anecdotal list like the aforementioned intelligence on local insurgents in 1869 offers little at first glance apart from noting that these bound laborers, irrespective of their motives or circumstances of flight from their often French owners, apparently did not have “all pluck knocked out of them” after all. But as it is set against other records it is evidence of the erosion of slavery in the district. It is striking that most of the almost three hundred

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<sup>249</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, ch. 1; Robert; Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, ch. 4, especially pgs.94-108.

<sup>250</sup> Esclavos presentados en el Departamento procedtes. de la insurrección, 17 April 1871, AHPSC, GP, leg. 563, exp. 29, docs. 1-7, año 1871, materia: Esclavitud. Operation reports bearing Miguel Pérez's signature appear in Columna de operaciones de Guantánamo, Diario de las operaciones practicadas en la primera quincena del mes de la fecha, AGM-M, caja: 5803, exp. 5803.68, p. 1-5, and the aforementioned record in AGM-S, 6a y 8a, leg. 53, 55 folios.

slaves were from coffee plantations isolated in the mountains.<sup>251</sup> Only thirty came from the steam-powered sugar mills Perseverancia and Santa Fé, and seven from the ox-powered *trapiche* San José on the plain.

Apart from where they had lived and worked, and the fact that they had run away or been taken from their plantations there was no indication of motives or if they had returned through happenstance, random capture, or even as some kind of cadre intent on carrying the rebel message of Cuba Libre or news and details of the government's Moret Law provisions on emancipation to their isolated or cautious fellow slaves. As was the practice in Cuba, the slave "*presentados*" appeared only with first names: slaves did not have family surnames to be recorded, although they sometimes appeared with the owner's surname, or rarer still, their profession. All on the list had male names, except possibly one or two difficult to discern, which would be in keeping with an insurgent tendency to induct or compel male slaves into the insurrection.<sup>252</sup> Their ethnicity was not recorded either, and the names were Spanish or French, although provocatively one who was simply "Africa" might have been an African-born *bozal*. Frustratingly, there was no indication of whether they were impressed into the insurrection, or if they heeded insurgent propaganda appeals and fled their owners, or if they simply took advantage of dislocation and unsettled conditions to pursue their own motives, perhaps attempting to reunite with family members elsewhere—or even if some among these

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<sup>251</sup> That the slaves were returned to their actual owners rather than placed in some sort of deposit was strongly suggested by the correspondence between the property named and the owners in the tax records from a decade earlier, Libro talonario para la recaudación del impuesto municipal sobre fincas rurales en Guantánamo, ANC, ML, año 1861, sin legajo, no. 2,588, Fincas rurales. Impto de. Moving farther back chronologically, there was further correspondence between properties and owners from a circa mid-nineteenth century agricultural census, Padrón de fincas rústicas del partido de Tiguabos, propietarios, dotación, producción y rentas, and del partido Yateras, ANC, GG, leg. 388, exp. 18511 and exp. 18510, sin fecha [ca.1854?].

<sup>252</sup> See Ferrer, "Armed Slaves and Anticolonial Insurgency in Late Nineteenth-Century Cuba," 325, fn 12.

fugitives represented a rekindling of maroon activity amid the instability and social strains provoked by the conflict. Nevertheless it is indicative of a hemorrhage from the dotaciones coincident with the separatist war and the effects of the Moret law freeing children and the elderly.

Table 3.1 below shows age, sex, occupation and civil status of slaves in 1871. From approximately 8,500 slaves postwar, by the third year of the conflict, and the first year of manumissions under the Moret law, the number appeared to have fallen to 6,800.

Table 3.1  
Age, sex, occupation and civil status of slaves from an 1871 *padrón*.  
Age and sex:

Jurisdiction	From 1 to 15 years of age Male / Female	From 16 to 20 years of age Male / Female	From 21 to 40 years of age Male / Female	From 41 to 50 years of age Male / Female	From 51 to 60 years of age Male / Female	Total by sex Male / Female	Total
Guantánamo	1,048 707	497 445	1,625 1,428	119 416	215 300	3504 3296	6,800
Oriente and Camagüey	6,333 6,092	2,769 2,465	9,243 7,957	2,313 3,022	2,223 1,467	22,881 21,003	43,884
All Cuba	38,647 33,340	16,534 14,034	69,694 51,170	11,672 15,591	15,710 8,700	164,791 122,835	287,626

Occupation and civil status:

Jurisdiction	Countryside	Domestic service	Married	Widowed	Single	TOTAL
Guantánamo	6,096	704	0	1	6,799	6,800
Oriente and Camagüey	33,867	10,017	455	220	42,809	43,884
All Cuba	231,790	55,820	10,000	2,330	274,890	287,220*

Source: Data from Spain, Ministerio de Ultramar, *Cuba desde 1850 á 1873. Colección de informes, memorias, proyectos, y antecedentes sobre el gobierno de la isla de Cuba, relativos el citado período, que ha reunido por comisión del gobierno D. Carlos de Sedano y Cruzat* (Madrid: Imprenta Nacional, 1873). \*In some cases the totals do not match, indicating, perhaps, cases where status was unknown or incomplete.

There are other sources that give insights into the chart of apparent runaways. Five months before the 17 April 1871 list, two slaves named Felipe and Santiago from the San José cafetal between the cantons of El Toro and Monte Líbano, had claimed to Spanish interrogators that they had naïvely followed the orders of their overseer, Eduardo Pochet, into insurgent ranks. In their case, they were not returned to their owner, José Fournier, but set free because they alleged they had been bamboozled by a seditious superior to whom they owed deference, and because they had subsequently served Spanish authorities faithfully.<sup>253</sup> In April however, Gerónimo, Raimundo, Irene, Marcelino, José Caridad, and Agapito from the same coffee plantation were returned to the owner Fournier.<sup>254</sup> Had they been motivated to run away because Felipe and Santiago had gained freedom collaborating with pro-Spanish elements? Had they similarly claimed they had been duped or coerced into rebellion by an insurgent sympathizer? There was simply no evidence from which to reconstruct their motives in absconding from their plantation. Neither was there evidence of what role they may have performed in insurgent ranks. Perhaps they had been set to work at menial tasks and come to view the insurrection with disfavor.<sup>255</sup> Maybe they had tried to elude labor demands from any and all overseers, separatist, integralist, or neutral.

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<sup>253</sup> David Sartorius, "Limits of Loyalty: Race and the Public Sphere in Cienfuegos, Cuba, 1845-1898" (PhD. Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2003), 63.

<sup>254</sup> Esclavos presentados en el Departamento procedtes. de la insurrección [*sic*], AHPSC, GP, leg. 563, exp. 29, año: 1871, materia: Esclavitud.

<sup>255</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 32-37.

### The General and the Assistant

Some insights into the mobility of slaves during the war, and an example of a *liberto* from a Guantánamo *cafetal* joining the insurgency, may be gained from one of the personal servants, known as “*asistentes*,” maintained by insurgent officers. One such ex-slave, Eduardo, who served in such a role with Máximo Gómez himself instead of as a combatant in separatist ranks for much of the Ten Years War had his story written down by Gómez many years after the war. Eduardo, or simply “old Eduá,” was originally “from the *cafetal* ‘San Juan,’ Guantánamo.” He left for the war at the “beginning” when, according to Gómez writing in a facsimile of his subaltern’s voice, “one Rendón took us out of [the coffee farm], and I left very sad because I left my woman and two little children.”<sup>256</sup> Gómez, a veteran of the Spanish army in the Dominican War of the Restoration, had ably employed his knowledge and experience of his ex-comrades-in-arms to ambush and defeat a Spanish column early in the war at Venta del Pino close to the impromptu rebel capital of Bayamo.<sup>257</sup> As historian of Spain John Tone has described, Cuban rebels gunned down the Spaniards from ambush at near contact distance, before overrunning the survivors, machetes in hand. The rebel victory bought the capital of Cuba Libre four months of time, and earned Gómez promotion to general.<sup>258</sup>

The experiences of ex-slave Eduá and the town of Bayamo after that brief, and for the separatists, heady four months took a rather different turn. Gómez described conversations with his servant that suggest he was in western Oriente’s Cauto river valley, possibly one of

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<sup>256</sup> Gómez, *El viejo Eduá, o mi último asistente*, 27.

<sup>257</sup> Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 61-62.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.* Similarly, O’Kelly lauded the military actions of Modesto Díaz, another Dominican veteran of the Spanish Army, for his role in halting another column during the same period, see p. 283.

the few *libertos* who survived the staggering, bloody separatist defeat at El Saladillo 7-8 January 1869 at the hands of the Count of Valmaseda.<sup>259</sup> There an attempt at a set-piece regular battle by insurgent general, Donato Mármol, part of a desperate bid to halt the Spanish troops and integralist *voluntarios* of the “Crescent of Valmaseda” moving against rebel-held Bayamo, pitted 4,000 blacks—including many recently freed slaves armed only with machetes or pikes (*chuzos*)—and some 500 other *orientales*: whites and people of color poorly armed with an ad hoc assortment of antique blunderbusses, fowling pieces, and muskets—against the rifles and artillery of Valmaseda’s column composed of Spanish line infantry and integralist volunteers from western Cuba. Over 2,000 separatist combatants were slain on the field.<sup>260</sup>

The defeat imposed on separatists waging armed struggle the necessity of irregular warfare. Fire—*candela*—brought by the incendiary torch, shortly became a preferred, even iconic, insurgent weapon for waging a scorched earth campaign—especially after many inhabitants of Bayamo razed their town before the metropolitan colonial army seized it. The hapless *liberto* Eduá remained with Mármol’s forces until the insurgent leader’s death from a tropical fever, when many of the troops under his command either followed the *holguinero* chief, Calixto García, or dispersed, deserted, and melted away. Eduá was numbered among the latter, and became, in effect, a maroon dwelling in a cave until he joined Gómez as one of his *asistentes*. As O’Kelly candidly, if coarsely, noticed a few years later, “assistants were

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<sup>259</sup> Gott, 77.

<sup>260</sup> Guerra, I: 79-81. For a persuasive critique of Cuban military historiography, including its muted or absent treatment of Liberation Army defeats and reversals, as well as an account of the battle, see Mollin, 82-83, 86, and fn 230.



all as black as the ace of spades.”<sup>261</sup> These assistants’ labor in pitching camps, hauling supplies or wounded soldiers, foraging, cooking, and other menial non-combat tasks was one of the perquisites and privileges of rank within the separatist military.<sup>262</sup>

### Cuba Libre

The replication of highly unequal power relations in insurgent encampments often came into conflict with the rough and ready sort of equality caused by propinquity internal to the rebel army’s ranks and zones under its control in the subterfuge and refuge offered by the backlands. The Spanish officer held captive in western Oriente by Calixto García’s *mambises* in 1873, the same period as O’Kelly’s visit with Céspedes, wrote that almost all the combatants had been wounded at some point, they hardly ever had adequate food, and yet they could march great distances. The Spanish prisoner observed they could be “generous” with what little they had: three or four sharing a smoke for example. They “blindly obeyed the officers” often performing duties with “a ridiculous gravity.” Discipline was strict. Officers frequently imposed corporal punishment, beating subordinates with the flat of a machete (*dar plan*). Still others were bound with cords in uncomfortable, awkward, stressful positions in a humiliating punishment clearly derived from slave stocks. As for off-duty

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<sup>261</sup> O’Kelly, 223.

<sup>262</sup> Gómez, *El viejo Eduá*, 18-29; Rosal y Vázquez de Mondragón wrote that insurgent first and second lieutenants generally had one assistant, captains two, lieutenant-colonels and colonels three, brigadiers four, and major-generals and members of the Chamber of Representatives had access to the labor of five such assistants, see p. 20. A report found in *Operaciones. Diario de los practicados por la Columna de operaciones de Guantánamo, Enero-Marzo 1871* in AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 49, 14 folios, contained information about insurgent dispositions, some of military value, and other details such as the preferences of García and Gómez for white horses, provided by a black deserter, one Quintilio Bertot, who claimed to interrogators that he had been an assistant, “tired of fatigues and penalties he suffered” from Gómez himself. On assistants see also Ferrer, “Armed Slaves in Anticolonial Insurgency in Nineteenth-Century Cuba,” 308.

activities during respite from constant foraging and interminable forced marches, friendly foreign observer and Spaniard foe alike agreed that one “of the most striking features of the Cuban character ... is the passion for dancing.”<sup>263</sup>

The Spanish captive typecast the rebels in gendered language—as had other nineteenth-century observers of Cuban social customs—to be “high aficionados of dances, which they enjoyed as much as women.”<sup>264</sup> O’Kelly likened the “passionate joy while moving to the dreary, sensuous measure of the native *danza*” as resembling in some way “the craze of the opium eater.”<sup>265</sup> But class comportment and color intervened. Officers danced separately from the ranks. As for the assistants and other lower-class black Cubans, closer to the social conditions of involuntary servitude, O’Kelly ethnocentrically described neo-African dances, in which, to his perception:

It required an effort ... to convince one’s self that the spot where one stood was in America, and not in the African jungle. A group of black men were gathered around some dancers, who moved about with strange, uncouth motions to the monotonous chant of musicians, who seconded their vocal efforts with loud clapping of hands ... This was the Voudou dance, a religious ceremony, kept up by the African blacks ... Most of the colored people [*sic*] turned up their noses at this ceremonial dance and pretty freely characterized the people who took part in it as savages,—*barbaros*; but, except for its uncouthness, there was nothing offensive or repulsive, if we omit its utter stupidity [*sic*].<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> O’Kelly, 221. Ferrer, “Armed Slaves in Anticolonial Insurgency in Nineteenth-Century Cuba,” 314-15, expands on discipline and punishment in courts martial adapting punishments inherited from slavery. Of course coercive punishments and corporal punishments were common to military, naval, and slave discipline.

<sup>264</sup> Rosal y Vázquez de Mondragón, 8, 11-14. On social customs and dance, see also O’Kelly, 189-91, 221-223.

<sup>265</sup> O’Kelly, 221-223

<sup>266</sup> O’Kelly, 223.

The actual presence of women in prefectures and social proximity of whites and blacks horrified the aristocratic Spaniard's upper-class masculine notions of decorum, civility, and order: "they have women, but not many, and these are ugly, dirty and untidy":

They usually arrive at the camps of the *fuera* [combatants], but do not accompany them on their raids, with the exception of eight or ten who do not merit the rating of women, such is their look that they do not appear [feminine].<sup>267</sup>

His description of rustic hovels that sheltered insurgents in the backlands claimed a typical "poetic interior of a rancho *mambís* [*sic*]" consisted of a squalid, rudimentary thatched hut with hammocks or beds of tree branches, littered with a broken pot, gourd implements, a mortar and pestle for pounding and grinding coffee, "a rifle that does not work," and "as many machetes as there are males, ... a domesticated *jutía* [a type of tree-dwelling rodent indigenous to Cuba] sentenced to die one day not far off."<sup>268</sup> It seemed to him and other observers of the day that the rebellion had caused eastern Cuba to revert even further, or entirely regress, to a wild and primitive state.

Being isolated in the woods removed the insurgents from sources of clothing and shoes, which contributed to a ragged, semi-savage cast and countenance. The salient importance of costume and attire as not only a class marker but also as a dividing line between notions of civility and barbarism to nineteenth-century mentalities placed armed separatists in Oriente squarely within the ranks of the uncivilized. Slaves in the countryside had typically worn a once or twice yearly issued outfit of work clothes that was mended and patched until it was literally falling to pieces. Highborn and low-class insurgents, whites and

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<sup>267</sup> Rosal y Vázquez de Mondragón, 18.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

blacks, now found themselves reduced alike to similar levels of privation. On certain levels, life in rebel camps came to resemble that in maroon palenques.

The wife of a ruined Louisiana sugar planter who relocated after the U.S. Civil War to a similar vocation on a sugar estate in Matanzas wrote that in the 1870s she met an “officer of the Spanish army, who had been stationed in the extreme eastern part of the island” who told the migrant North American southerners “he was astounded to see, during some raids on insurgent camps, how primitive, indeed, how near to Adam and Eve, the country people remote from settlements were. He saw women, with even less adornment than Eve was constrained to wear, picking wild rice and digging roots in the wilderness.” If the rebels did not shelter in “rocky caves, their abodes are rude huts that scarcely deserve the name. Literally existing from hand to mouth, they toil not, neither do they spin.”<sup>269</sup> For his part, pro-separatist partisan O’Kelly expressed “some relief” on his first encounter with civilian denizens of *Cuba Libre* to find:

After all the stories told me about savage negroes [*sic*], ignorant as ferocious, wandering naked in the woods, respecting no laws, human or divine, and merely stopping short of cannibalism, it was some relief to me to be able to look around and find myself surrounded by persons of gentle, and even polished manners. It is true that clothing was rather scanty, but there was enough for decency, and in this favored clime little more is needed ... Indeed, considering that very many of these people had been slaves, —all of them except De la Torre were colored, —their conduct contrasted very favorably with what I have since observed among the white Catalans and Castilians who contemptuously look upon them as barbarians and *negros sueltos*, or to translate the idea, ‘runaway niggers [*sic*].’<sup>270</sup>

Many in insurgent prefectures were barefoot, or went about shod in improvised sandals. Some rebels were “completely nude, while others have as their only garment a bit of

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<sup>269</sup> Eliza Moore Chinn McHatton Ripley, *From Flag to Flag: A Woman’s Adventures and Experiences in the South during the War, in Mexico, and in Cuba* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1889), 148.

<sup>270</sup> O’Kelly, 182-83.

rag held by a belt that covers them to mid-thigh.”<sup>271</sup> The Spanish captive encountered one nearly naked, shoeless insurgent with only “a rifle, a cartridge-box, a spur on the right foot, and a *rayadillo* [blue and white pinstriped Spanish uniform] jacket ... elegantly cut and open in front.”<sup>272</sup> O’Kelly was probably not describing the same *mambí* when he recollected a “strapping brown man ... the impersonation of heroic patriotism” clad only in “the rim of a straw hat, through which appeared the crown of a woolly head, and something resembling a ragged and scanty dishcloth was bound around his loins. A rifle and *cartouchière* completed” his “costume.”<sup>273</sup> The only common possessions of the rebels that could be likened to any semblance of a uniform were an “enormous sack called a *jolongo*” worn on the back for carrying equipment and food items, and a hat of some sort. Officers, identified by rank insignia, many of whom carried a metal whistle, or a *foto* made from a conch shell for giving signals in camp and during battle, repeatedly patched and stitched their torn and threadbare clothing, while “some, like brigadier Maceo and his secretary Pedro Martínez, [were] able, I do not know how, to dress with a certain elegance.”<sup>274</sup> O’Kelly’s view reinforced such observations:

[Some separatist combatants] were in a frightfully ragged condition. ...

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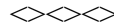
<sup>271</sup> Rosal y Vázquez de Mondragón, 31.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> O’Kelly, 220.

<sup>274</sup> Rosal y Vázquez de Mondragón, 21, 28, 32. See also Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 22-28, 33-34, 55-58, 61-62. A 1 October 1869 list of regulations to be observed by Prefects in rebel zones or prefectures appears in, Reglamento que deben observar los Prefectos para un Regimen y mejor Gobierno, AHN, SU, leg.4933, tomo 6, no. 41. It demanded that rebel officials group all families and individuals found in a zone, sending any fit for military service to armed insurgent units, while organizing the cultivation and distribution of food crops. As servants of the Republic, Prefects were to suppress and persecute “robbery, arson, rape,” and other crimes, enforce social control for the separatist polity, and seize swine or cattle belonging to enemies. Cattle could be taken from pro-separatists if a receipt was provided for future payment. It also called for special attention to the provision of salt and clothing—two necessities in scarcest supply.

Measured by the standard of my expectations, the force was well clothed and equipped; for the Spanish officers told me so many stories of the wretched condition of the Cubans that I expected to find soldiers and officers in uniforms closely resembling that of our first parents on leaving Paradise. ... All of the officers were well dressed, and some even tastefully. ... All were scrupulously clean.... In the ranks there was more diversity, and many of the soldiers were not alone ragged, but very nearly naked.<sup>275</sup>



A minority of the population in Cuba as a whole, and locally in Guantánamo too, sided with the different manifestations and varied projects of separatism. Where the separatists had broad popular support in Camagüey and western Oriente, regionalism, political patronage, factionalism, and racial divisions militated against unity. A majority of civilians in Guantánamo remained passive, hesitant, or non-committal. Still others actively supported a continuance of colonial hegemony. Those inhabitants engaged in armed struggle living in the *manigua* often became radicalized through their participation in the rebellion. New York-educated Fernando Figueredo, who served as Céspedes' private secretary until the president of the Republic in Arms' divestiture and removal from office by a vote of rebel Representatives in 1873, wrote with some bitterness in the 1880s

[It] would require volumes to be able to describe the atrocities committed by [integralist] Cuban volunteers against the patriots [i.e. separatists]; fearful that the Spaniards would doubt their loyalty, they exaggerated their role and became true furies against their brothers. The principle Corps ... were the

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<sup>275</sup> O'Kelly, 220. O'Kelly and Rosal y Vázquez de Mondragón differed a bit in description of the Liberation Army's armament by the fifth year of the war. Both noted numbers of unarmed personnel or those armed only with machetes. O'Kelly, 219, out of 400 men found "one-third of the whole number were armed with breech-loading rifles, the others" with Civil War-surplus "Springfield and Enfield muzzle-loading rifles." Rosal y Vázquez de Mondragón, 26, found that "[the enemy] affirm most armaments are taken from us [i.e. the Spanish forces]. Almost all their firearms are rifled and of the Remington [breech-loading] system; some Peabody [breech-loaders privately purchased for volunteers by Spanish clubs and *integralista* planters]; very few Berdan [a converted Spanish army rifle-musket] ... few are the [muzzle-loading] percussion rifles used by the *fuera* ... smoothbores and shotguns have passed down to the *majáes* [or, in Cuban Spanish, *majáses*, e.g. noncombatants]." Ammunition sent to Spanish troops and integralist volunteers in 1873 included metallic cartridges for Remington, and Peabody rifles and carbines, and paper cartridges for Model 1857 rifle muskets.

Squadron of Guantánamo, the volunteers of Bicana and of Búecito; the former in Manzanillo, the latter in Bayamo, in Oriente.<sup>276</sup>

Thus the rebellion seemed in many regards an intra-local civil conflict and an inter-regional war, pitting an armed minority against the colonial state's local military and para-police social control bodies in a situation where no "town, however insignificant, did not lack its section of [integralist] volunteers, all [composed of] Cubans."<sup>277</sup> In such a setting of shifting loyalties, desertions, defections and switching sides were frequent occurrences. But former combatants from pro-Spanish militia "were a constant source of disturbances and quarrels" for the separatist military since

[They] demanded rations equal to what they had with the Spaniards, and some even asked to be paid for their services ... growing tired of our [the Liberation Army's] manner of living, with its privations and sacrifices, they would go back over to the enemy's [the colonial state's] camp. ... To impress the Spaniard's with their change of loyalties having been with us ... they would assassinate the chief and take his head as a trophy in order to be well received; or they would take our weapons along with theirs to hand over, and sometimes seduced our soldiers [to turn themselves in].<sup>278</sup>

The Spanish also had many occasions to question the loyalty of Cuban-born militia. Defections from integralist ranks were frequent, and while soldiers' salaries were usually several months in arrears, the situation was aggravated when it came to the back pay for Creole volunteers. A November 1876 Spanish army report bemoaned the "penury" that undermined the struggle against the insurgency in Guantánamo and Baracoa: "in the sites in which before were [located] the palenques of the black *cimarrones* there is the danger of ... zones of cultivation, whose inhabitants in great part are inclined to the insurrection or already

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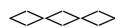
<sup>276</sup> Fernando Figueredo Socarrás, *La Revolución de Yara, 1868-1878* (1902, reprint; Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2000), 241.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

in coexistence (*convivencia*) with the insurrectos ... the cause of the disaffection of [the population] are very complex” but included “lack of tact of some local authorities and the abandonment” of some movilizados “from the penury of the State.”<sup>279</sup> Martínez Campos urged “the imperious necessity of sustaining the guerrillas and movilizados of the country” lest they “engross the enemy ranks,” and especially because the Creole integralist militia had detailed knowledge of “the *monte* and other localities.”<sup>280</sup> As will be seen later, defections to the rebel side would eventually come to include some key members of the Squadron of Guantánamo itself.

To separatists in arms, the “privations and sacrifices” endured in the woods and mountains became a badge of distinction and source of self-identification. Forms of artisan and peasant republicanism emerged within separatist circles from the participation of such elements within the insurrection, despite more elite leaders’ attempts to control policy. Inevitably, ineluctably, separatists came to develop intentions and aspirations of a post-war settling of accounts including land and wealth re-distribution at the expense of pro-Spanish elements to benefit a more egalitarian future Cuban state.



A set of reports on insurgents captured or taken into custody from nearby Santiago during the heavy blows struck against the rebellion there list men, women, and children, white, black and mixed race, slave and free who had been in prefectures or following *mambí* columns. In one case, a group in September 1871 made up of people from Jutinicú near

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<sup>279</sup> Informe sobre el Estado de la Guerra hasta el Mes de Noviembre (1876), AGM-M, caja 2552, car. 24, sub-car. 24.1.1, no. 1, pp. 47-52; and Ejército de Operaciones de Cuba. Estado Mayor. General Sección 3a., AGM-M, caja 2552, car. 24, sub-car. 24.3.1, no. 14, pp. 1-8.

<sup>280</sup> Ejército de Operaciones de Cuba. Estado Mayor. General Sección 3a., AGM-M, caja 2552, car. 24, sub-car. 24.3.1, no. 14, pp. 1-8.



Santiago and Guantánamo was brought into prison. The blacks, Agustín and Ignacio, were “sent back to the Señores Brooks y Compañía” presumably their former masters.<sup>281</sup>

Returning to the aforementioned April 1871 runaway coffee-farm slave list one final time, what was perhaps most striking emerged from juxtaposing it with August Spanish military reports on the rebel invasion of Guantánamo. For there was near exact correspondence of the coffee plantations and owners named in both sets of documents: Cafetal Luisa owned by Félix Arnaud, Pedro Planche’s El Dorado, four estates in the canton of El Toro including the Indiana, Oasis, Alegría, and Olimpo, co-owned by the Thomases and Antonio Carbonell, the San Juan de Buena Vista and Cafetal Yemen of Don Adriano Daudinaut (Daudinot), Santa María del Cusco of Pablo Lamot, the Chinese and slave-owning sugar baron José Baró’s cafetal Eliseo, and the Celina. These cafetales, along with the Soledad and Alma not mentioned in the report, were precisely those about to bear the brunt of Máximo Gómez’s offensive: the invasion of the Guantánamo jurisdiction in early August.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Relación nominal de los presentados, procedentes de la insurrección en este ppdo. a mi cargo desde Yaguas. 1o. de Marzo del presente Año, contained in Expediente manuscrito que contiene relaciones de los hombres presentados en los distintos partidos de la región procedentes del campo insurrecto, así como de los capturados por diferentes jefes de columna. Palma Soriano y otros lugares, Marzo 2 al 18 Diciembre de 1871, AHPSC, GP, leg. 735, exp. 7, año 1871, Materia: Guerra del 1868.

<sup>282</sup> Sucesos producidos por los insurrectos en los cafetales del Toro [Jurisdicción de Guantánamo] Mes de Agosto 1871, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R., leg.56, 23 folios. The owner of Yemen coffee plantation, Adrian Daudinot, his brothers, and two employees had a shootout with rebels or bandits in January 1871, which may have afforded the slaves Rufino, Eduardo, Segundo, Laureáno, Isidoro, Victoriano, and Macsimo, mentioned in AHPSC, GP, leg. 735, exp.7, the opportunity to escape, or possibly their forced removal from the estate. The skirmish at Yemen is contained in Partes de Novedades, 15 de Enero 1871, AGM-M, caja 2546, carpeta 21.3 Partes de Operaciones del Mes de Enero, sub-carpeta 31.3.3. While rather far-fetched and improbable, there is also at least the possibility that some among the captured slaves returned to the cafetales could have deliberately returned as cadre to subvert discipline on the plantation and prepare the dotación for the rebel invasion of the district.

## The Invasion

According to a report forwarded from Tiguabos by the military commander of Guantánamo to the head of the department, at four in the morning, just before dawn 22 May 1871, a sentinel outside the old maroon-hunter Miguel Pérez's cafetal, Canaan, heard noises in the dark. Fifteen integralist "movilizados" lay sleeping in hammocks at the estate while another fifteen were stationed in the Galiano coffee farm commanded by Pérez's son, Santos, just a quarter league away. The sentry called out "Halt! Who goes there?" Instead of the expected shouted countersign: "Spain!" the answering cry was "At them!"

Up to two hundred rebels led by Rustán's replacement, the "so-called Colonel ringleader Nicolás Pacheco" swiftly overran Canaan, killing eleven of the soldiers who scrambled out of their hammocks in confusion. The report claimed that Lieutenant Lorenzo Ruiz, Miguel Pérez, and Miguel Castellanos "made some resistance" that the writer classified "heroic": the aged Pérez, apparently with bullet wounds in the left hand, fired his revolver, killing Pacheco and another rebel before "miraculously saving himself."<sup>283</sup> On hearing shots, Santos led the garrison at Galiano to the aid of his father and the troops at Canaan. Similarly challenged by a guard, they countersigned with "Spain!" whereupon they promptly came under insurgent attack, but they repulsed the charge. The report expressed certainty that the integralist troops had inflicted considerable losses on the rebels, but this could well have been an attempt to mollify or mitigate the incident, "a true surprise with all its horrors" that

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<sup>283</sup> Ataque del Cafetal Canaan por los insurrectos, 22 Mayo 1871, which appears in duplicate in legajo 53, Sobre la creación de una Columna al mando del Comandte. Don Miguel Pérez, Jefe de la línea de Guantánamo, Mayo 1871 and Partes y diario de operaciones de la columna al mando del Comdte. Don Miguel Pérez, Jefe de la línea de Guantánamo, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R., leg. 53, 55 folios.

included the destruction of Canaan, Galilea, and a third coffee estate, together with removal of the slave dotación from Pérez's farm.<sup>284</sup>

Integralist soldiers took the remaining dotaciones of slaves from the other nearby coffee estates and the abandoned body of rebel chief Pacheco to Tiguabos. The slain Pacheco's sister, and an uncle with whom he "had lived for eighteen years," positively identified his remains.<sup>285</sup> Just eight days later twenty-five integralist militia would use "two large bottles of aguardiente" to wash and take for burial their commander Pérez's badly decomposed and "mutilated cadaver [upon] which the murderers [separatist combatants] had vented [their wrath], hacking it with machetes from the feet to the head ... cutting off the ears," after which, the body had lain to rot for 48 hours on the hill at Arroyo Pelado.<sup>286</sup>

As stated above in the introduction to this chapter, three days after the attack at Canaan, at approximately five in the afternoon 25 May 1871, the three "cafetales San Luis 1o.[primero], San Luis 2o. [segundo], and that of the widow of Bombous" had been burned. A column of "48 or 50" of Pérez's force "followed the tracks of the enemy from ... where they had camped overnight [from signs of] campfires and remains of birds that were eaten there." The "small phalanx" (*falange*) continued on, climbing to the top of a hill until they

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<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.* A Table accompanying this legajo from 26 April 1871 indicated there were 12 regular army officers and 173 troops, together with 3 militia officers and 166 members of the Squadron based at Vínculo, Tiguabos, Macuriges, Santa María de Agüero, Jarahueca, Mayarí Arriba, Sagua de Tánamo, and with the local "Contraguerrilla" for a total of 15 officers and 339 soldiers who had to guard convoys and perform similar duties. It advocated at minimum nine more officers and 251 extra soldiers to augment troop strength in the perimeter of Guantánamo. The death of "Pacheco who substituted for Rustán in command of the most important band" was reported in Count Valmaseda's Parte de Novedades, 30 Mayo 1871, AGM-M, caja: 2547, car. 21.7.2, no. 6, p. 69-70. The actions of Miguel Pérez in persecution appear in carpeta 21.7.2, no. 6, p.84.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> Letters Dando cuenta detallada de los sucesos habidos en las lomas y rio de Arroyo Pelado el 27 del actual, Guantánamo, 30 May 1871, and Dando conocimiento sobre los fuenerales ... Comte. D. Miguel Pérez, Guantánamo, 30 May 1871 from Felipe Plaza to commanding general of department in Sobre la creación de una columna al mando del Comandte Don Miguel Pérez de la línea de Guantánamo, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 53.

met their quarry—in number. The report about the recovery of Pérez’s remains indicated that he and a smaller group became cut off from the main force. Rather dramatically, it also said, “the trees were mute witnesses of this bloody drama—there were not any that were not cut and nicked by the lead that our brave soldiers fired ... against the cowardly, traitorous, and despicable enemy.” Outnumbered eight to one, some of the integralist militia from Guantánamo ran short of cartridges, whereupon the rebels shouted “*al machete!* They are out of ammunition!” It was supposed that Pérez tried to rally his troops: “Come on lads! [*arriba muchachos*] the column is almost here” when “a bullet in the head made him fall lifeless.”<sup>287</sup> His, and seven other slain soldiers’ bodies were abandoned on the hill. Later, Guillermo Moncada was rumored to have sent the sword and rank insignia of Pérez by special courier to Gómez.<sup>288</sup>

1861 tax records indicated a San Luis 1o (primero) cafetal owned by Luis Tarrosay and the “segundo” San Luis owned by Luis Bombous that very likely correspond to those burned a decade later, which act immediately precipitated Pérez’s fatal anabasis. The widow Bombous owned cafetal San Juan, which was the rural locale where old Eduá had left “his woman and two little children” when he departed for the war.<sup>289</sup> Eduá joined Gómez just two months after the cafetal burned, ten days before the main August rebel offensive against Guantánamo began. The 27-30 May reports two months before did not indicate what befell the slave dotaciones of the burned estates, but Eduá never reunited with his family during the Ten Years’ War: after most separatists surrendered at Zanjón in 1878, Gómez offered his

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<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>288</sup> Padrón, *Guillermón Moncada*, 30.

<sup>289</sup> Gómez, *El viejo Eduá*, 27; Libro talonario para la recaudación del impuesto municipal sobre fincas rurales en Guantánamo, ANC, ML, año: 1861, sin leg., no. 2.588, Fincas rurales. Impto de.

assistant a place alongside his own family as they prepared to depart Cuba for years of exile abroad. A tearful Eduá chose to remain in Cuba in order to look for his own missing dependents.<sup>290</sup>

The old pursuer of fugitives and bane of maroons, Miguel Pérez, was laid to rest “in a sumptuous internment” in a “well soldered zinc casket” paid for by the Spanish circle of Guantánamo, replete with a solemn mass.<sup>291</sup> Locally, news of Pérez’s death according to the report, “caused a profound sensation in all, or the immense majority of inhabitants, without distinction of colors.”<sup>292</sup> With Pérez dead, separatist rebels assailed the coffee plantations scattered through the mountains that he and the Squadron of Santa Catalina had once defended from the potential subversion or threats posed by maroons and resistance through slave flight. Locally, the arrival of abolitionism in the district through invasion from neighboring areas of Oriente, underscored by Pérez’s violent death, came to be viewed in retrospect as something of a micro-historic regional watershed. Where the Squadrons had previously ranged into the remotest reaches—ever on the offense—looking for concealed maroon *palenques*, by 1871 they defended the beleaguered fortified *cafetales* and patrolled the plain with flying columns against rebels.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Gómez, *El viejo Eduá*, 37-38.

<sup>291</sup> Sobre la creación de una columna al mando del Comandte. Don Miguel Pérez de la línea de Guantánamo, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 53.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> Operaciones. Diario de los practicados por la Columna de operaciones de Guantánamo. Enero-Marzo 1871, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 49, contains a captured rebel correspondence from Key West and from Ana de Quesada in New York to her husband, Carlos Manuel Céspedes, some in code, other messages translated, and a letter from Luis Marciano to “Citizen Colonel Jesús Pérez,” which may have been taken from the *pardo* prisoner Florencio Díaz, caught holding a “long smooth-bore musket” by the integralist guerrilla of Bueycito. Also reports of military actions—not only by the Squadron but by several units—near Santiago and Guantánamo such as February 24: “...an individual carrying *viandas* was seized, eight large huts were burned,

Separatist general Gómez had gradually accumulated enough munitions, men, and materiel to resume aggressive actions for a campaign season. In June he supervised the distribution of Remington and Spencer rifles from two supply expeditions emanating from Jamaica and Venezuela, and a few Latin American internationalist volunteers who arrived to help eject Spain from its remaining New World colonies. The Venezuelan party landed from an old Scottish-built Confederate side-wheel blockade-runner left over from the U.S. Civil War: the specialized smokeless anthracite coal-burning smuggling ship re-christened the *Virginus*, which two years later would be the cause of a diplomatic and political crisis and near war between the United States and Spain over Cuba when it was captured on the high seas and the Spanish military in Santiago executed fifty-three pro-separatist expeditionaries and crew including some U.S. citizens.<sup>294</sup>

Gómez also had to contend with strong Spanish countermoves in the wake of the death of the leader of the Squadron of Santa Catalina. Three battalions of insurgent infantry led by black *santiaguero* officials including Moncada, and the Maceo brothers, Antonio and José, repulsed two attacks by crack Spanish *cazadores* (light infantry) at positions atop the hills la Galleta and Estacada nearby Santiago in July.<sup>295</sup> Four hundred of these rebels,

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and plots destroyed...” March 4: “...passing the last plantations of the Sta. Ysabel cafetal, and after a good reconnaissance of its surroundings ... a small encampment was destroyed...” March 5: “...surprised a black woman and a ‘mulatica’ captured the latter ... the former got away and as a consequence [of the capture], five men and the mother of said *mulatica* ... destroying three ranchos ... leaving all in complete destruction after having recorded and registered the circumferences of the cited place with an object to see if it would be possible to capture [others].”

<sup>294</sup> Enrique Buznego Rodríguez, Gustavo Pedroso Xiqués, and Rolando Zulueta Zulueta, *Mayor General Máximo Gómez Báez: Sus campañas militares. Tomo I (1868-1878)* (Havana: Editora Política, 1986), 48-49. For more on the diplomacy and near outbreak of war between the United States and Spain over Cuba in 1873 after the seizure of the *Virginus*, see Richard H. Bradford, *The Virginus Affair* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1980). The executions came to a halt in November 1873 when Frederick W. Ramsden, the consul of Great Britain and member of Brooks & Co., summoned commander Sir Lambton Lorraine of the sloop-of-war *HMS Niobe* from Jamaica, which threatened the bombardment of Santiago de Cuba.

together with about six hundred women and other civilian camp-followers forming the improvised “*impedimenta*”—the medical, commissary, convoy, and quartermaster services of the column—moved from the mountains at Estacada to a camp amid the food crops and untended groves of the abandoned Armonía coffee farm.<sup>296</sup>

The opening battle of this force’s invasion of the district, the storming of the fortified Indiana cafetal, proved to be the costliest for the insurgents. Apparently emboldened by the success in July, Gómez rather incautiously and uncharacteristically initiated a frontal attack across ground dominated by “the plantation house, converted into a fort, composed of two floors, pierced with loopholes ... [painted in] loud colors” and defended by “close to two-hundred men – whites, blacks, and *mulatos*, including some Frenchmen; but the sharpshooters” in the redoubt were “forty-five soldiers of the Squadron of Guantánamo” according to the standard somewhat florid nationalist account written in the 1880s.<sup>297</sup> It was a civil war within the separatist war against Spain. Two multi-racial Cuban-born militias

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<sup>295</sup> Buznego et. al., 49-52; Rodríguez, 50-5, cites Pirala, II: 190. See also Sánchez and Campos, 77; Manuel de la Cruz Fernández, *Episodios de la revolución cubana* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1990), 140. Rodríguez, 61, asserted the five-hour running battle at la Galleta, 6 July 1871 left 118 Spanish casualties, including 38 dead, of 272 members of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of Cazadores de San Quintín. Bacardí, in *Vía Crucis*, portrayed a Santiago *comparsa* referring to the defeat, dressed as vultures and complete with biscuits, “galletas,” suspended on strings during Carnival later in July. Spanish after-action reports indicate that they sustained 37 dead, 52 wounded, including the commanding officer, and 22 injured. Found in “Batallón Cazadores de San Quintín No. 4 – Columna de Operaciones” in *Noticias sobre la penetración del enemigo en la Jurisdicción de Guantánamo, bound with Sucesos producidos por los insurrectos en los cafetales del Toro, Mes de Agosto 1871, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 56, 23 folios.*

<sup>296</sup> The roles of women in rebel prefectures and the “*impedimenta*” of columns of soldiers bear much similarity with the Mexican *soldaderas* during the 1846-1848 war against the United States, nineteenth-century civil wars, the war against the French intervention, and the Mexican Revolution in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Like asistentes, they served as the source of food and provisions, cared for the soldiers, and carried extra equipment, allowing the combatants to move faster. For fruitful comparisons see Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 76-79, 190, 239-40, and Shirlene Soto, *The Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940* (Denver: Arden Press, 1990).

<sup>297</sup> “La Indiana” in Manuel de la Cruz Fernández, *Episodios de la revolución cubana* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1990), 135-41, quoted in Buznego et. al., 52-55; Rodríguez, 62; and, without attribution, Varona, I: 552.

confronted each other – one separatist, the other integralist. Cuba’s war of independence would prove an internecine conflict between rebels and so-called ‘loyalists’ who rejected separatist demands and values, in addition to Spanish troops, exactly as in mainland South America’s wars of independence half a century earlier. The integralist marksmen in the fort, armed with recently imported American Peabody rifles and double-barrel shotguns, repelled repeated insurgent attacks.

After sustaining losses of sixty to seventy soldiers, and expending much of the munitions, powder and shot intended for the entire offensive, Gómez prepared to order his troops to retreat and disperse. Antonio Maceo realized that his younger brother, José, lay gravely wounded on the field. Earlier in the war he had lost his father, Marcos, and his sixteen-year-old brother, Julio, to enemy action; an older half-brother Justo had been executed.

According to nationalist hagiography based on an account by María Cabrales, Antonio Maceo’s wife, two days after Céspedes’ 1868 *Grito de Yara* the men folk of the Maceo family donated the family’s firearms to the rebellion while Antonio, José, and Justo volunteered for republican service. Mariana Grajales Cuello, the matriarch of the family, was to have taken up the icon of Jesus Christ from the household altar and sworn them all to “kneel before Christ, who was the first liberal man who came to the world, and swear to free the homeland or to die for it.”<sup>298</sup>

At cafetal Indiana, Maceo refused to leave without José, leading a group of insurgent veterans including Flor Crombet, the scion of a free coffee-farming family of color from El

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<sup>298</sup> Quote from Foner, *Antonio Maceo*, 18. Renderings of the incorporation of the Maceos in the rebellion include Foner, *Antonio Maceo*, 18, Pérez, *To Die in Cuba*, 108, and Stubbs, “Social and Political Motherhood of Cuba: Mariana Grajales Cuello” in *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective* edited by Verene Shepherd et al. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995).



Cobre, back to the stronghold.<sup>299</sup> They retrieved José, and managed to set fire to the main fort building of the coffee finca.<sup>300</sup> A nationalist narrative of the battle written in the 1880s claimed that the defenders chivalrously let the woman of the house out to be escorted from the fray by the decorous rebels, but that they vowed to “burn to a crisp before surrender.”<sup>301</sup> The mythologized account had them fighting to the bitter suicidal end as the house burned around them. Spanish military documents claimed two lieutenants and a handful of men escaped after their ammunition was exhausted, and the house engulfed in flames.<sup>302</sup> In any case, the insurgent victory was pyrrhic: costly in casualties, and ruinous in the amount of materiel expended. The tenacious defense of the doomed cafetal apparently contributed considerably to preventing the Liberation Army from carrying on to the main chance: into the sugar zone in the *llano*. Gómez never contemplated a similar attack on a prepared position.

One primary objective of this phase of the offensive, however, was tersely noted in the margins of the Spanish report. Insurgents had burned the Indiana and ten other coffee plantations, presumably inducting, incorporating, or press-ganging most of the dotaciones of

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<sup>299</sup> Buznego et. al., 54-55. As for the Maceo family, Antonio and José Maceo’s mother, Mariana Grajales y Cuello, had thirteen children, four from a previous long-term union, and nine with Marcos Maceo, her second husband. She died in exile in Jamaica in 1893 having lost her husband and many of her sons except Antonio and José in the Ten Years’ War. José died in action at Loma del Gato, 5 July 1896 and Antonio was killed 7 December 1896 in western Havana province. As a result of such sacrifice, Cuba’s Congress declared her “Mother of the Nation” during the Republic. For more on the Maceos in English see Foner, *Antonio Maceo* and Jean Stubbs, “Social and Political Motherhood of Cuba: Mariana Grajales Cuello,” in Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton, and Barbara Bailey, eds., *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995): 296-317.

<sup>300</sup> O’Kelly, 232-37, claimed that unlike the Spanish conscript army, the Liberation Army went to great lengths to avoid abandoning wounded on the field since in practice quarter was seldom given by either side.

<sup>301</sup> Cruz, 140.

<sup>302</sup> Sucesos producidos por los insurrectos en los cafetales del Toro, Mes de Agosto 1871, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R., leg. 56, 23 folios.

slaves into their ranks.<sup>303</sup> Another sixteen such coffee estates fell in quick succession, although many of their owners may have abandoned them beforehand.<sup>304</sup> In some cases slaves would have taken advantage of the chaotic situation to flee. Many ran off to join the insurrection, while still others tried to simply evade danger. Counterattacks on camps by integralist and Spanish forces sometimes “recovered the *negradas* [*sic*, the dotación of slaves]” of some cafetales.<sup>305</sup> In several cases masters took their slaves with them in their evacuation to cities such as Santiago and Guantánamo where they sold off their chattels in order to obtain cash from sugar mills in the valley or from western Cuba’s slave dealers who were short of cane cutters and other sugar workers, but bringing in record harvests. Of course, rumors of being sold and seeing families and communities broken up generated further slave resistance and flight. It was during such moments that the rhetoric of liberation prophesied or promised by Cuba Libre could persuade commitment. In still other cases, masters may have finally acceded to the manumission of some of their remaining workers. The irregular war initiated by rebellion sundered the fragile and contingent bases of social stability. Foreseen and unanticipated effects overtook planters, slaves, and free peasants with a force beyond their volition. For planters, the consternation produced by the insurgent invasion and threat of ruination was reflected in a Havana newspaper:

Will reinforcements arrive in time to halt these enemies of order and the riches of the country that continue their vandal system of hostilities on the rich sugar mills of that flourishing jurisdiction? Guantánamo is one of the most

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<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.* Buznego et. al., claimed twelve coffee fincas burned the first two days of the insurgent attack, 4-6 August 1871, 77.

<sup>304</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 56.

<sup>305</sup> Partes oficiales para la primera quincena de Septiembre de 1871, AGM-M, caja: 2547, car. 21.11, no. 2. and Parte de operaciones, 25 de Septiembre de 1871, AGM-M, caja: 2547, car. 21.11.1, no. 4. This selection of reports also includes the Indiana cafetal battle, although with numerous inaccuracies.

productive regions of this Department. In its countryside are situated the largest sugar mills of the region and it would be truly painful if the destructive charred brand made this magnificent emporium of production likewise disappear, that until now has been saved.<sup>306</sup>

Ultimately the plea to protect the sugar mills, at least, was heeded.

The irruption of rebels in the district led colonial authorities to reinforce Spanish troop strength. The sugar enclave and its railway gave the metropolitan government the means to bolster the mills of the *llano*. To this environmental factor of the terrain was added a complex architecture of social control in the form of blockhouses garrisoned by squads of militia or soldiers. The Spanish military and armed vigilantes set about fortifying strategic sites, building a fortified line or *trocha* of watchtowers and small forts enclosing the plain.<sup>307</sup>

#### A Decade of War, 1871-1880

In 1871 General Arsenio Martínez Campos, who would later restore the Bourbon monarchy to civil war-wracked Spain in 1874 before being promoted later to the captain-generalship of Cuba in 1878, was put in charge of defending eastern Oriente. Even captain-general Count Valmaseda himself visited the zone from headquarters in Havana 4 September

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<sup>306</sup> Rodríguez, 63, quoting the stridently integralist Havana paper, *Diario de la Marina*, 26 August 1871.

<sup>307</sup> [See illustrations “Octagonal towers for Guantánamo, 1874” and “Spanish Blockhouse from Cuba’s Wars of Independence, Central Argeo Martínez {formerly Esperanza}.”] For the *trocha* in Guantánamo, see Deposition of Ernest August Brooks p. 19, and Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 74, in United States National Archives II, College Park, MD, Record Group 76; Entry 352, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon). The *trocha* did not apparently include fenced enclosures, but rather a patrolled zone with a series of forts and guarded positions making use of terrain features such as watercourses, hills, and rivers. An 1895 military map at the Spanish Army Servicio Geográfico del Ejército, Madrid, displays a “Línea de Circunavalación” that probably corresponds with the *trocha* around the *llano*. Mapas sobre las Antillas, Sección de Ultramar, Cuba, H. 1895 “Guantánamo, llano de los ingenios Yateras y el Zoco”, por el Ejército Español. Ao. J-T.10 C.2a. 337 Rollo 25. For the fifty-mile *trocha* built across the narrows of Júcaro and Morón through Ciego de Avila in the Ten Years’ War, followed by a western line built between Mayana and Mariel during the 1895-1898 war in Cuba to isolate the insurgents, see Michael Blow, “The *Trochas*,” *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 10: 4; (Summer 1998): 46-51. Detailed drawings, blockhouse blueprints, and a map of the main *trocha* appear in SGE, SU, Cuba, 1895 “Plano general de la Trocha” Camagüey, Ao. J-T.10 C.1a. 257.

1871.<sup>308</sup> Martínez Campos vigorously pursued the rebels in the mountains and protected the capital-intensive sugar properties on the plain.<sup>309</sup> There were numerous skirmishes with Maceo and Moncada's forces, and the harried separatist rebels frequently dispersed, extending operations where they went throughout the zone's mountains as far as Baracoa. All the same, Martínez Campos increasingly came to view the situation as one that would have to be resolved by political rather than purely military means.<sup>310</sup> In 1877 and 1878, upon his return from Spain, when he assumed the captain-generalship for the island, he would ably exploit the bitter internal divisions and flagging morale of the separatists while offering limited political reforms to bring about defections followed by the surrender of the bulk of separatists in arms at Zanjón near Sibanicú in Camagüey. A journalist in the early 1870's described the situation in easternmost Cuba:

Every place in these districts is virtually an encampment. At Santiago, where is the chief command of the Eastern Department, life and property are somewhat safer; yet the beautiful coffee plantations established there and at Guantánamo by French fugitives from the Negro Insurrection of Hayti at the close of the last century, have in a great measure disappeared; and what cultivation still survives depends for safety on the immediate protection of the troops – a protection precarious at the best of times, and in return for which the wants of soldiers have yet to be supplied, and their comforts attended to:

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<sup>308</sup> Rodríguez, 66-80. On Martínez Campos, see Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, ch. 9

<sup>309</sup> The disposition of Spanish 4<sup>th</sup> Division troops including 37 "Gefes," 562 officers, and 10,991 men in early 1873 appears in Comandancia General 4a División, Estado General de fuerza del Mes de Enero 1873, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 151, 21 folios. This large document indicates units operating in columns, as well as each small contingent occupying forts and postings at sugar mills and coffee estates. Troops of the "Cuba" and Reus regiments, as part of their duties throughout Santiago de Cuba's environs, guarded Guantánamo's sugar mills: "San Yldefonso [*sic*]," Monte Sano, San Pedro, Santa Rosa, Soledad, Santa Fé, Nueva Fortuna, San José, Perseverancia, Esperanza, La Isabel, San Miguel, Santa Ana, Romelí[e], San Antonio, San Carlos, San Vicente, Santa Cecilia, Confluente, and the cafetales Prenda, María Luisa, Hermitaño, Virginia, San Fernando, Bella Vista, Palmarito, Naranjo, Perla, Clarita, Termópilas, Mégico, Ana Matilde, Potosí, as well as various other posts in towns. The "Flying Counter guerrillas" composed of Cuban and Spanish-born integralist volunteers in Bueycito, Bicana, and the Escuadras of Santa Catalina also appear together with other local militia, including about 350 militiamen "de Color."

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

for it is only by cheerfully submitting to be plundered by friends that the proprietor may hope to escape being pillaged by enemies. And even when no immediate danger arises from the approach of the Insurgents, the military authorities compel the planter either to maintain a large garrison at his own cost for his defense – the ordinary number is sixty men, volunteers or regulars – or else to remove all his movable property; to gut and un-roof his house, lest it should afford shelter and become a stronghold to the rebels.<sup>311</sup>

The grim situation in the countryside of irregular warfare in an agrarian society was reflected in reports to the Lieutenant Governor of Guantánamo.<sup>312</sup> Many cafetales lay abandoned, and so it was urged that integralist and Spanish troops burn them in order to deprive their use by the rebels. A letter of 5 September urged that cafetales that neither been abandoned, nor fortified should forthwith be reinforced. Under “Article 1” each should construct “two or more defensive towers” where during an attack, the “bozadas y negradas [*sic*, the African-born and Creole slave dotación]” could be housed and “defended by armed movilizados” in adequate number.<sup>313</sup> Article 2 obliged the militia to live in the fort and maintain vigilance at all times, and recommended whistles as a means of making alarm signals. Article 3 required that “every dawn [*madrugada*]” before the slaves were let out to begin work, “two movilizados and one or two blacks or dependents of the finca of more confidence will scrupulously reconnoiter the woods and pathways” looking carefully for “recent signs and footsteps” and posting a group of advanced scouts while work proceeded. Furthermore, a thousand cartridges were to be deposited in the “fort of the fincas” for each “system that the [militia’s] armament consists of.”<sup>314</sup> In 1873 O’Kelly visited a Santa Isabel coffee farm near

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<sup>311</sup> Gallenga, 145-46.

<sup>312</sup> Letters to the Lieutenant Governor of Guantánamo and Martínez Campos, 4 and 5 September 1871 in AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 57, 24 folios.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

Santiago, guided by “a reformed rebel, black ... our approach being announced by a loud barking of dogs, the garrison of six men got under arms in the little tower which acted as a citadel, while the fluttering lights told the tale of a household startled by the somewhat untimely visit.”<sup>315</sup> He observed “one dangerous feature to the Spanish government in these fortified mills and their armed garrisons” consisted of the practice that an “immense majority of the men are Cubans and people of color, who, at bottom, have more sympathy with the insurgents than with the Spaniards.”<sup>316</sup> The contingent loyalty to the colonial state by blacks arose, he thought, from their being “so thoroughly frightened by the defeats and sufferings during the first disasters of the insurrection, that they are afraid to take part with the men in the field, although in many instances an active correspondence is maintained between these posts and the insurgents.”<sup>317</sup>

Planters well understood the threat posed by inchoate rebellion, political disorder, and desultory warfare to their rural properties and slaves, resulting in a tendency to ship their bound laborers to the west. Within the *llano* protected by the military outposts of the *trocha* and flying columns of colonialist troops, ruined coffee planters frequently sold off any remaining slaves to sugar plantations. Unknown numbers of slaves rebelled and joined the insurrection, or were pressed into service by the separatists. Statistics suggested a total loss in slaves within the district of approximately 47 percent between the years of 1871 and 1878.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> O’Kelly, 127-30.

<sup>316</sup> O’Kelly, 121-23.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>318</sup> Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, “La región de Guantánamo: de la producción de consumo a la de mercancías.” *Del Caribe* 10 (1987): 18; Rodríguez, 119-21.

If the figure of 8,561 slaves within Guantánamo before the war represented an accurate statistic, then the direct and indirect losses in servile laborers during the conflict approached 58 percent.<sup>319</sup> Table 3.2 below illustrates the shift in bound labor from coffee to sugar while Table 3.3 suggests the blow struck by the separatist rebellion against the local institution of bondage and its social control measures:

Table 3.2  
Decline in overall numbers of slaves in Guantánamo, increased proportion in sugar mills, Ten Years' War.

Years	TOTAL	Coffee	Sugar mills	Percent in sugar mills
1862	8,561	4,219	2,356	27 %
1874	4,037	605	2,814	69 %

Source: José Sánchez Guerra, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros (1532-1899)* (Guantánamo: Editorial El Mar y la Montaña, 2003), 35.

Table 3.3  
47 % Decline in Regional Slave Population – Ten Years' War.

Year	Male Slaves	Female Slaves	Total
1871	3,504	3,296	6,800
1878	1,714	1,864	3,578

Source: Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, "La región de Guantánamo: de la producción de consumo a la de mercancías." *Del Caribe* 10 (1987): 18.

As may be seen in Table 3.2, some twenty-seven percent of slaves lived and labored on sugar mills in the 1860s. By the middle of the Ten Years' War, over two-thirds did, and the numbers of slaves on sugar ingenios had grown even though slaves had declined by more than half.

An unforeseen consequence of the rebellion and its suppression was to undermine rural stability in subjecting ill-defended or unprotected properties to the torch, while leaving the sugar enclave relatively untouched. Destruction wrought by the war, and the loss of labor

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<sup>319</sup> José Sánchez Guerra, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros*, 35-36.

in Guantánamo during the Ten Years' War disproportionately wrecked subsistence farms, tobacco vegas, and the fortified coffee estates scattered in the mountains, while causing relatively less destruction to the more valuable, and hence, better-protected sugar plantations. Slave resistance and flight increased, despite planter attempts to keep them under increased scrutiny and supervision within their barracks. The linear view of slave incorporation into *mambí* ranks prevalent in some accounts appears overstated, but certainly many Creole slaves found themselves in the insurrection, or within rebel prefectures hidden in inaccessible locations much like old maroon *palenques*. Of approximately 4,037 slaves remaining in the district by 1874, almost 1,500 of the 2,814 laboring on sugar mills worked in the nine largest steam-powered *ingenios*.<sup>320</sup> Table 3.4 indicates the distribution of this population:

Table 3.4  
1874:

Districts	Sugar mills: steam and ox-powered	Slaves	Percentage
Yateras	15	1,775	63
Tiguabos	9	1,020	36
Sagua de Tánamo [North coast]	1	19	--

Owners	Sugar mill	Slave dotación
José Baró	La Esperanza	557
Pons y Dancoura	Santa María	141
Brooks and Company	Soledad	138
Limonta and Brooks and Company	La Isabel	135
Widow of J. Faure	Santa Fé	101
Jean Rancoules	San Carlos	101
José D. Bueno	San Miguel	121
José D. Bueno	Confluente	100
Sucesión Jay	Santa Rosa	94
TOTAL		1,448 [53% of total]

Source: Sánchez Guerra, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros*, 36.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*



After almost a decade of conflict, only eighteen out of some 83 pre-war coffee farms remained, all but one of these in Yateras. A scant twenty-one tobacco *vegas* were spared in Sagua de Tánamo, out of over three hundred pre-war. Numerous small food-crop farms, apiaries, cattle, horses, mules, and donkeys had all been lost.<sup>321</sup> The Table 2.5 below lists the twenty sugar mills and eighteen coffee farms appearing in an 1878 municipal *padrón* of rural fincas:

Table 3.5

Twenty sugar ingenios and eighteen cafetales in Tiguabos and Yateras, Guantánamo, Cuba, at end of Ten Years' War, April 1878

Estate type	Estate name	Name of Owners
Sugar	Soledad	Brooks and Co.
Sugar	Santa Rosa	Jay heirs
Sugar	Santa Fé	Faures heirs
Sugar	San Yldefonso [ <i>sic</i> ]	D. Joaquín Jovellar
Sugar	San José	Fournier heirs
Sugar	Perseverancia	Alberni heirs
Sugar	San Pedro	Brauet and Co.
Sugar	Monte Sano	Ledesma and Bardañ
Sugar	Esperanza	D. José Baró
Sugar	San Miguel	Heirs of D. José D. Bueno
Sugar	Ysabel	Brooks and Limonta heirs
Sugar	Santa María	D. Fernando Pons
Sugar	Confluente	Heirs of José Bueno
Sugar	Santa Cecilia	D. Arturo Simón y Lucía
Sugar	San Vicente	D. Juan Rancoles
Sugar	Romelié	D. Santiago MacKinlay and Assoc.
Sugar	San Antonio	D. Luis Redor and A. Lescaille

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid*, 36-7. No *cafetales* are listed at all for Tiguabos, and only seventeen in Yateras, in an 1878 Padrón municipal de fincas rústicas para el año de 1878 a 1879 in ANC, ME, leg. 4098, no. An. Buznego et. al. stated 117 coffee farms in Guantánamo and nearby zones of Santiago fell victim to the insurgent invasion from mid-1871 to January 1872, 67.

Estate type	Estate name	Name of Owners
Sugar	La Luisa	D. Emilio Larlabous and Assoc.
Sugar	San Emilio	D. Emilio Charlot
Sugar	Prosperidad	Ysalgué heirs
Sugar	San Carlos	Mestre and Gorgas
Coffee	San Fernando	D. Fernando Pons
Coffee	Méjico	Durive and Lafargue
Coffee	Virginia	Tomás and Santiago Rousseau
Coffee	Naranjos	Chibas brothers
Coffee	Bella Vista	D. Juan Begué
Coffee	Ermitaño	D. Enrique Lescaille
Coffee	Perla	Da. Juana Duverger
Coffee	Jagüí	D. Jorge Preval
Coffee	Cubana	D. Valentín Sans
Coffee	Palmarito	Da. Juana Menas
Coffee	Campo Hermoso	D. José A. Morales
Coffee	Dios Ayuda	Da. Lucía Lafargue
Coffee	Las Gracias	D. Pedro Luis Guibert
Coffee	Diamante	Widow of Kolb
Coffee	Sta. Rita	D. Juan and Adriano Gaulhiac
Coffee	Victoria	D. José Carreras
Coffee	Monte Alto	D. Alejo Bazelais
Coffee	Antonio [Sagua de Tánamo]	Revé and Soto

*Source:* Data from Ayuntamiento de Guantánamo, Padrón municipal de fincas rústicas para el año de 1878 a 1879, ANC, Miscelánea de expedientes, leg. 4098, no. An. Note that Comandancia General 4a División, Estado General de fuerza de Mes de Enero 1873, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 151, 21 folios listed the sugar mills and cafetales San Fernando, Méjico [*sic*], Virginia, Naranjos, Bella Vista, Hermitaño, Perla, and others occupied by detachments of troops.

Much of the district, especially peripheral rural and mountainous zones, had suffered ruination and immiseration. The separatist struggle against colonial rule had roughly shoved eastern Cuba from semi-feudal mixed farming with some large estates to a more bourgeois pattern of landowners able to afford effective protection, ruined farmers, and of dispossessed landless workers. Wage work at sugar mills in the valley offered one of the only means of remuneration and source of scarce capital to start over for many rural residents, displaced and

dispossessed by the war, and thus converted into a semi-proletariat. While many rural denizens valued their autonomy and some form of subsistence farm, wage labor was vital to obtain but limited to sugar and the few towns.

The local sugar sector in the valley survived the war relatively unscathed in comparison with other parts of Oriente province. Out of some two thousand sugar mills in the entire island in 1860, only 1,190 remained by 1877.<sup>322</sup> A good measure of the decline may be accounted for by the consolidation and extension of decentralized production under the new *central* cultivation system, relying on contracted *colono* tenant farmers to provide the main mill with sugar in exchange for a percentage of the crop. The drop also reflected the ruination of eastern and central rural districts as a result of the conflict. Where fighting had been concentrated, a great many mills had been destroyed. But in Guantánamo, pro-Spanish militias, regular troops, and patrols supplemented by a fortified line of blockhouses and security forces on the largest estates had effectively transformed the sugar district into a Spanish bastion.<sup>323</sup> The sugar harvest, or *zafra* was made every year. Table 3.6, below, presents the number of sugar mills at the outset and near the end of the *Guerra Grande*:

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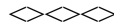
<sup>322</sup> Louis A. Pérez, Jr., "Vagrants, Beggars, and Bandits: Social Origins of Cuban Separatism, 1878-1895," *American Historical Review* 90 (December 1985): 1093. See also Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 127.

<sup>323</sup> Some of the orders for detachments guarding sugar mills appear in Instrucciones sobre la quema de Ingenios y sus zonas y disposiciones acerca de las contraguerrillas [documento mecanografiado, no. 18] in Comones. sobre operaciones, destacamentos, y otros servicios de campaña, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 334. See also, Remitiendo copia de las instrucciones para evitar en lo posible la quema de cañaverales por el enemigo en la zona del Llano, and Copia que se cita, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 331. The sugar mills did suffer various cane-fires, cattle thefts, and other depredations. Some of the incidents of relatively minor damages are contained in various subcarpetas from 1875, 1876, 1877 and 1878 in AGM-M, caja 2550 and caja 2552.

Table 3.6  
Jurisdiction and Number of Sugar Mills Before and late in Ten Years' War.

Camagüey [Puerto Príncipe] and Oriente [Santiago de Cuba] Provinces	Sugar mills, 1861	Sugar mills, 1877
Camagüey	100	0
Manzanillo	26	2
Holguín	63	4
Bayamo	26	0
Santiago de Cuba	100	39
Guantánamo	23	20
TOTAL	338	65

*Source:* Anton Allahar, *The Sugar Planters of Colonial Cuba* (Toronto: Two-Thirds Editions, 1982), 233.



By late 1871 Gómez left Maceo in charge of the offensive in the region against Martínez Campos while he urged the civilian republican leadership to allow him to both reinforce Maceo to drive into the low-country's sugar *llano*, and to carry out a Guantánamo-style invasion on a far larger scale, proposing to extend the revolution into the richest sectors of western Cuba. He argued that invading the sprawling sugar lands of Las Villas, Cienfuegos, Matanzas, and Havana itself was a necessity for the armed movement to be carried out before Spanish troops could arrive in large numbers from ongoing civil conflicts in Iberia itself to squelch the insurrection contained within the primitive and underdeveloped east of the island. At around the same time, he extolled the example of Guantánamo as suggesting the means to overthrow Spanish control and undermine the local structures that supported colonial rule. He and other rebel chiefs articulated a defense of their property destruction tactics, ascribing to them explicit leveling and redistributive purposes – a strategy that would include both a means and an end:

Cubans: In order to powerfully refute the principal sustainers of Spanish domination in this Island, who assure that there has not been much [attributable to] our immortal Revolution, it has fallen to the brave patriots of

the Division that I have the honor to command to invade and devastate the jurisdiction of Guantánamo ...

It is not my intention, however, to boast of such devastation and arson [.]. On the contrary, I lament it with all my soul. I only see such evils as necessary evils. ...

[T]he proprietors of that jurisdiction materially and morally supported the tyranny that the good Cubans fight against; it was cruelly necessary to deprive such means of support [to the metropolitan state]. ...

[M]any of [tyranny's] spontaneous and forced servants believed that the reconstruction [they desired] to give to the Colony – a feudal and sterile reconstruction that consists of reuniting the population in castles ringed by hamlets and plots was attainable; and it was cruelly necessary to demonstrate [that was] ... chimerical ...

Enough irresolution Cubans! In place of supporting here oppression, helping it filled with regret, and dying at its hands when one least expects it, instead of immigrating abroad to groan in shame and expire from hunger; come over to our side. Come [with us] to triumph over Spain, fulfilling the will of God who has given this century its character of the emancipation of América, or die cleansed by this divine aspiration.

Your compatriot and friend, Major General Máximo Gómez

October 24, 1871<sup>324</sup>

The uncompromising nationalist view of Gómez that civilians who remained in areas controlled by the Spaniards lacked sufficient revolutionary ardor or mettle, of being irresolute—not standing with the “good Cubans,” or supporting the yoke of Spain “filled with regret”—betrayed the defensiveness of the flagging separatist movement, as perhaps did the grim professions of the cruel means of waging anti-colonial war as being, in the final analysis, ultimately necessary. Spanish propaganda constantly reiterated that the callous separatist movement had created the conditions of a race war, and pointed to the wanton

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<sup>324</sup> Buznego et. al., 63-64, citing *La Revolución de Cuba*. New York, 18 November 1871; Rodríguez, 131-4 quoting Gómez in Ramón Infiesta, *Máximo Gómez* (Havana: Academia de Historia, 1927). This statement of Cuban proto-nationalism is suggestive of Barbara Ehrenreich's interpretation, informed by Benedict Anderson, that the nation “is nothing ... without a past. Even brand-new nations attempt to situate themselves within some long-standing tradition (the human struggle for freedom and self-determination, for example),” see Barbara Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), 199.

destruction of valuable property as beyond the pale of legality, justification, and humanity and entirely without any legitimacy. Whatever the merits of separatism, they were an armed minority, the line of reasoning went, and as the separatists were manifestly incapable of winning against the colonial state, it was thereby illegitimate and unjust for them to remain in the field. It was they who were to blame for the nature of the war, the same logic implied. Such claims made inroads among the civil population within the colony, especially in the west, and also informed public opinion abroad. O’Kelly responded to the claims of Spain’s supporters with vituperative and strident invective, claiming:

Much indignation is given vent to by Spanish officials and their foreign nigger-whipping [*sic*], sugar-worshipping sympathizers, noble Saxons, free Americans, and other worthy representatives of civilized communities, because the Cuban patriots burn down plantations which furnish the principal revenue to their Spanish enemies, and which are turned into actual forts, garrisoned by Spanish soldiers, but it never for a moment enters the minds of these defenders of property and its sacred rights that it is also a crime against civilization and humanity to burn down the leaf-thatched hut of the Cuban, and his young family—for young families are numerous in Cuba Libre—to die of starvation.<sup>325</sup>

Meanwhile, Antonio Maceo in command of separatists in Guantánamo, as historian Ada Ferrer has noted, attained an almost mythic status for people of color, embodying, as she put it “the link between antislavery and anti-colonialism” or black Cubans’ simultaneous struggles against racial and national oppression.<sup>326</sup> As she has demonstrated, the salience of slavery initially insulated eastern Oriente from western Oriente’s separatist appeals. But once numbers of free people of color joined the movement to combat national oppression as

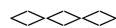
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<sup>325</sup> O’Kelly, 185.

<sup>326</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 68.

colonial subjects and racial oppression as once-marginalized Afro-descended people, those districts became separatist redoubts.

Late in the war, as Martínez Campos's strategy of promised reforms in the future combined with improved counterinsurgency tactics led to large-scale surrenders and defections, an incident in the peregrinations of rebel representative Figueredo from Holguín to Guantánamo offered an indicator of how districts with the most African-descended inhabitants had become the separatists' final holdouts. Figueredo, accompanied by his wife suffering thorns in her bare feet while carrying their young child "with incredible resignation," walked cautiously by candlelight, fearful lest they encounter integralist soldiers or ex-insurgents who had gone over as pro-autonomists to the Spanish side. Joined by a French "Lieutenant of Guantánamo," *Monsieur* José, and several other men and women, the small group continued searching for Maceo. Scouts of the column were instructed to approach anyone encountered surreptitiously, getting close enough "if they were black" to hear them speaking, "and if they spoke in French ... they would be the troop of Maceo." Writing of the successful search for Maceo in the late 1880s, Figueredo added "We had come to such an extreme in that parenthesis of the Revolution, that patriotism was shown by the color of skin! Oh! The caprices of the Cuban Revolution!"<sup>327</sup>



Integralist volunteers and Spanish arms effectively repressed and quashed separatist rebels throughout the island, especially in the towns, isolating the separatist Liberation Army to the eastern provinces where a lengthy process of attrition and exhaustion led to inexorable insurgent defeat. Multifarious factional disputes, material privation, and declining morale

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<sup>327</sup> Figueredo, 255-256.

sapped the faltering and failing revolution's strength. By 1878 most remaining rebel leaders accepted Spanish terms and surrendered. At a meeting in Baraguá near Santiago between Martínez Campos and Maceo, the remaining group of radical officers with Maceo refused to surrender without attaining independence or the complete overthrow of slavery. But after the bulk of the rebel army surrendered, the full weight of the Spanish military was brought to bear on the holdouts.

Part of the treaty ending the war, the February 1878 Pact of Zanjón, freed 16,000 former slaves and indentured workers who served in the insurrection, as well as several hundred who had served Spain in some capacity.<sup>328</sup> The remainder awaited the gradual and occasionally arbitrary application of laws permitting *coartación* whereby self-manumission or purchasing children or relatives out of servitude for a set price could be attained, as well as new regulations granting freedom to sexagenarians and children born after 1868. Granting liberty to former slave rebels was a portentous development: as Ferrer has written "with rebellion legally recognized as the precursor of freedom, the intermediate emancipation offered by the colonial government, and accepted by rebel leaders ... was not likely to cohere."<sup>329</sup> Slaves who had not gone over to the insurrection now found it opportune to do so. And in many cases, the ability to join up had been mediated by gender: a tendency to use slaves for military labor often left women behind on the plantations, or sold to other areas or towns. After the long war there was ample recognition that things, including traditional forms of corporal punishment and methods of inculcating labor discipline, would not be as they

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<sup>328</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 68, 76; Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, 115. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 125, 127, suggested a total decline in slavery in Cuba from 363,300 in 1869 to 227,900 in 1878 from application of the Moret Law, the war, slave mortality, manumissions, and other factors. Clearly the Ten Years' War had a greater impact on slave emancipation and manumission in the island's east.

<sup>329</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 71.



were before. Arsenio Martínez Campos circulated a reminder to his brigade commanders that use of the whip to flog and punish slaves had been outlawed under article 21, of the Law of July 4, 1870.<sup>330</sup> Vindictive treatment by overseers as word spread that slavery, while subject to legal constraints from the Moret Law and other regulations, would continue in peace time threatened to lead to further slave rebellion and flight.

Awareness of these legal codes and rights is suggested from a suit brought by a free black woman, Caridad Duran, against the administrator of the Santa Rosa sugar mill in January 1878. She brought the law to bear in behalf of her son Nelson who, still held on the plantation, had been beaten and threatened with sale to another estate.<sup>331</sup> Families among slaves had historically afforded owners a means of social control over their bondsmen and women: the threat of sale or retribution against relatives was conscious and deliberate. As slavery came to an end it was bound laborers who frequently used the provisions of laws and codes against the master class. A situation in which some family relations were free and others still held in bondage created a web of social connections that could be used to create spaces of autonomy or liberation from some of servitude's onerous burdens. Similarly, the deaths of the woman María Luisa and her son, apparently from a disease outbreak, while rented out to the San Carlos sugar estate generated a series of inquiries and reports into the conditions prevailing for the dotación remaining at the mill, and those rented for labor. It was claimed that all were treated equally, fed eight small or six large plantains a day, along with salt cod and other good food—sometimes with rice and beans—an issue of clothing

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<sup>330</sup> Las dadas sobre la forma en que han de ser tratados los esclavos al negarse a trabajar o faltan a sus amos, in AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 506.

<sup>331</sup> Letters concerning the case bound in AHPSC, GP, leg. 563, exp. 43, año: 1878, materia: Esclavitud.

every six months, and a rest period during the heat of the day from 11:00am until 1:30pm.

The representatives of San Carlos claimed that only stocks were used to punish recalcitrance and infractions.<sup>332</sup>

Since slaves had been set free for rebelling against Spain and their erstwhile master's authority, slaves who remained made claims to rights. Slaves who had practiced *attentisme*—going through the motions of remaining at work for their masters, remaining apparently noncommittal—now confronted a new prospective avenue for freedom. Many did not hesitate, but struck out to join the rebels at the last minute to be included in the final settlement. Antonio Maceo, sent into exile, gained renown for his “Protest of Baraguá” and refusal to surrender without guarantees of independence and the abolition of slavery, but the protest was given continual substance by black *orientales* who stood to lose the most from the separatist surrender at Zanjon.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, when another separatist rebellion broke out in August 1879 led by disaffected insurgents, including Moncada and José Maceo, the sugar mills experienced a renewed wave of political and labor unrest.<sup>333</sup> The Little War, as the conflict came to be termed from its short duration, and not from the initial scale of the uprising, which was wider than the start of the Ten Years' War, received support among sugar slaves as well as some of Guantánamo's traditional defenders of the status quo: Miguel Pérez's

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<sup>332</sup> En la Villa de Guantánamo a los veinte y tres días del mes de Febrero de mil ochocientos setenta y ocho dispuso el Sor. Teniente Gobor. [*sic*] librar oficio al Comandante de Armas de Jamaica para que comparezcan a declarar en este Gobierno cinco negros de la dotación del Ingenio San Carlos y tres trabajadores o cortadores de caña de condición libre de los que se encontraban en dicho Ingenio en la época que acació la muerte de la negra María Luisa y su hijo ambos de la propiedad del Dr. Dn. Ernesto Dufefay; y de haberlo verificado nos atestamos, in AHPSC, GP, leg. 563, exp. 47, año: 1878, materia: Esclavitud.

<sup>333</sup> For the Little War, see Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, especially ch. 3; Gott, 82-3; and Francisco Pérez Guzmán, and Rodolfo Sarracino, *La Guerra Chiquita: Una experiencia necesaria* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1982).

nephew, Pedro Agustín Pérez, defected to the Liberation Army along with about a hundred members of the Squadron of Santa Catalina.<sup>334</sup>

Why Pedro Agustín Pérez defected to the separatists after their defeat remains something of a mystery, open to speculation. It may be that the offers of land and other social benefits extended to insurgents to encourage their surrender, rehabilitation, and resettlement in the wrack and ruin of post-war Oriente, and to promote their continued adhesion to the Zanjón agreement were more generous than aid extended to Spain's local allies. Pérez's biographer, González Puente asserted that the *bayames* insurgent chieftain Silverio del Prado had been given a post-war *botella* as a customs official in the district by the Spaniards, and that he had convinced Pérez to join the separatist cause.<sup>335</sup> Such may be the case: the patriarch del Prado had gone off to war in 1868 with his retinue of clients and extended relations and kinfolk in much the same way as the Pérez clan, although in his case he had joined Céspedes. It may also be the case that Pérez had tired of pursuing runaway slaves, since evidence strongly suggests that slave flight increased greatly during the Little War.

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<sup>334</sup> González Puente, *Mayor General Pedro A. Pérez*, 9, asserted that the insurgent chieftain Silverio del Prado, who settled in Guantánamo postwar and was given a post by the Spanish government, won over Pérez to the insurrection. Pedro A. Pérez appears in *Desarme de los individuos de las Escuadras*, Octubre, 1879 in AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 519, *Oriental prisioneros y presentados, libres y esclavos*, as well as in *Fugados, Presentados y Prisioneros*. 2a. Brigada. Jurisdicción de Guantánamo, Enero 1880, in AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 534, 12 folios. After he escaped from prison in el Morro de Cuba, a description of him includes, in part, "Stature: regular, color: *trigueño*, beard: thick, eyes: black and a little sunken, nose: aquiline, hair: black and thick, age: between 32 and 36 years, he is thin, a bit bowed in the shoulders" contained in file 7, 272, in *Diciembre 1879, Comones. referentes a prisioneros presentados, extranados, y pasados al campo enemigo en distintos puntos*, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 522. He also appears in a prisoner list with no date, being transported on the steamer *Almanza* with 211 prisoners: 24 whites, 90 *pardos*, and 97 *morenos* in AHN, SU, leg. 4938, exp. 4, no. 272. A copy of a telegram to the Minister of Ultramar from the Governor General of the Island of Cuba. Havana 16 September 1879, AHN, SU, Cuba, Gobierno, leg. 4938, exp. 3, no. 24 noted: "The uprising grows in Cuba. Mayarí-Abajo attacked [by rebels] uniting with the enemy 150 volunteers of the Squadron of Guaso. Desertion to the enemy by the country people follows. ... The situation is grave."

<sup>335</sup> González Puente, 9.

In October 1879, during that conflict, slaves mutinied – or better, went on strike – at Esperanza, much as the Asian indentured workers had the decade before.<sup>336</sup> Spanish soldiers arrested ten from a group of slaves insisting that an unpopular overseer be removed. The arrests, in turn, provoked a riot, which the troops suppressed, threatening the Roman-style decimation of the mutineers if need be and making further arrests. In addition, an October 1879 list indicated that almost three hundred slaves, including 158 men and 89 women – mostly from sugar mills – had run away from their barracks, hiding in cane fields or joining the ranks of the insurrection.<sup>337</sup> A 19 January 1880 ciphered telegram from the chief of the first brigade in Guantánamo revealed a new and portentous rebel tactic: “José Maceo requests that each sugar ingenio, in order to not be destroyed, [must pay] twelve thousand cartridges and two hundred ounces [of gold].”<sup>338</sup>

The rebel attempt to reinvigorate the defeated independence struggle failed after almost a year of fighting due to war-weariness, and because a preponderance of support from restive slaves aroused whites’ fears of social upheaval. Insurgent leaders had to confront often hostile white reactions, and, as historian Ferrer has demonstrated, effective Spanish capitalization on the black mobilization in the conflict. In an open letter from the Cuban

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<sup>336</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 75-6, citing 25 October 1879 letter from Col. Aurelio Aguilera to Gen. Camilo Polavieja in Camilo García de Polavieja y del Castillo, *Campaña de Cuba: Recopilación de documentos y órdenes dictadas con motivo del movimiento insurreccional que tuvo lugar la noche del 26 de agosto de 1879 en la ciudad de Santiago de Cuba* (Santiago: Sección Tipográfica del E.M. de la Comandancia General, 1880), 63-4. A copy of Aguilera’s 22 October 1879 letter about the disturbance appears in E.M. Oriental, Partes de operaciones. Zona de Guantánamo, Octubre 1879, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 519. This same legajo contains a detailed list of 247 slaves – most from sugar mills – and 126 free people “presentado” or surrendered from insurgent ranks. A revised 29 December 1879 list of 278 slaves that superseded the earlier one appears in Fugados, Presentados y Prisioneros. 2a. Brigada. Jurisdicción de Guantánamo, Enero 1880, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 534, 12 folios.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> Telegrama cifrado del Jefe 1a Brigada del día 19 Enero 1880 desde Guantánamo, AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 534. This legajo also contains various references to further slave flight from cafetales and ingenios.

Revolutionary Committee, 26 September 1879 to Spaniards resident in Cuba, Calixto García and José Lamadriz acknowledged that numbers—a majority—of rebels were black. Yet, the authors wrote “where are the deeds, one could suffice, that prove that the groups of black insurrectos commanded by Maceo, Guillermón, and Crombet have assassinated whites without distinction? ... [None] Because all is a shameful lie ... to retard Cubans in defense of their cause, implanting a supposed common danger for the white race.” It was Spaniards and “certain cubanos españolizados (pro-Spanish Cubans)” who, the letter argued, “with the end of continuing to live at the expense of the work of the blacks ... in the shadow of the Spanish flag, protector of slavery” were engaged in “evil intentioned” propaganda designed to discredit the uprising as an “*insurrection of blacks* [*emphasis in original*].”<sup>339</sup> Yet, in an interview with General Calixto García—a white Cuban leader from Holguín in western Oriente province—in the *New York Herald* where he was asked “Do you fear the ascendancy of the colored people?” he contradictorily replied:

No, because the whites outnumber the colored people, and while not discriminating against them as a class, yet, by means of superior intelligence, hold a wholesome ascendancy at least in public affairs. In everything else both races are equal, civilly and socially, with only the line drawn by education in social intercourse.<sup>340</sup>

As in the Ten Years’ War, it would be black Cubans, in many cases, who would be the last holdouts within the insurrection. A list of runaways, surrendered rebels, and prisoners compiled by the Spanish military in January 1880 in the Guantánamo jurisdiction listed 148 rebels including Pedro A. Pérez and others presumably emanating from the Squadron of

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<sup>339</sup> Annex no. 1 to dispatch no. 185, *La Independencia* ORGANISMO DEL PARTIDO CUBANO INDEPENDIENTE, Año VIII, New York 26 September 1879, AHN, SU, leg. 4938, exp. 3, no. 96.

<sup>340</sup> Cuba’s Struggle. Recent Movements of the Revolutionists in the ever faithful isle and their plans for the future—interview with General Calixto Garcia. *New York Herald* clipping appearing in AHN, SU, Cuba, Gobierno, leg. 4938, exp. 3, no. 179.

Santa Catalina, together with 278 slaves from San Antonio, Isabel, La Luisa, San Miguel, San Fernando, and Romelié sugar estates.<sup>341</sup> By June 1880 Guillermo Moncada and José Maceo surrendered at San Idelfonso in Guantánamo along with their retinue of “370 supporters, the vast majority of whom were Cubans of color and 168 of them runaway slaves.”<sup>342</sup>

The contrast in the start of the Ten Years’ War in the district and the social composition of rebels in the Little War is interesting. In 1871 separatists from Santiago de Cuba had invaded the district, and eventually came to command the allegiance of free people of color and many slaves freed from coffee farms. By 1879 it was slaves remaining in the sugar mills who grew restive and often supported the insurrection. Postwar narratives of the Ten Years’ War and the successive Little War tended to blur the motivations of Maceo’s group from the Protest of Baraguá and the latter slave flight into a more heroic nationalist history, relatively free of the ambiguities and often bitter divisions prevalent at the time.

#### Conclusion: War and Abolition, 1868-1880

The years of fighting from 1868 through 1880, with their tumult and disruption and their accompanying political and military mobilizations, had gravely eroded the institution of slavery in Cuba as a whole, but especially so in the east, including the most slave dependent jurisdiction, Guantánamo. Slaves had been incorporated into the insurrection, and many had

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<sup>341</sup> Fugados, Presentados y Prisioneros de la 2a. Brigada—Jurisdicción de Guantánamo. Enero 1880 in AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 534, 12 folios. Some of the earliest last-names for slaves appear in such lists from the Little War, including Duruti, Pons, Ysalgue, Bueno, and Brook while most slaves appear with only a single name. Suggestively, one slave has “Cafetal” as his surname, while another is “Yateras,” which is indicative of coffee slaves who had been sold off to sugar mills.

<sup>342</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 85.

achieved their liberation through taking part in nationalist rebellion. Others exploited fissures that appeared in the social control of the slave system opened by the long decade of instability and turmoil. Still others found themselves sold off from many smaller properties, and in some cases to entirely different parts of the island. The social control of slaves by masters had come increasingly to rely on elaborate security measures backed by the direct presence of Spanish troops, while planters were frequently forced to offer improved material incentives and even monetary remuneration to the remaining bound workers.<sup>343</sup>

By 1880 Spanish legislation replaced slavery with “apprenticeship,” (the “patronage law”) where planters would make token wage payments to their *patrocinados*. When final abolition came two years ahead of the patronage law’s envisioned 1888 expiration, fewer than 30,000 remained in bondage island-wide.<sup>344</sup> Significantly, an enduring pattern had been established whereby plantation workers, largely incapable of creating organizations to ameliorate their social and working conditions, found sabotage and nationalist insurrectionary movements plausible responses and outlets to disaffection and grievances. A tradition of armed uprisings, and taking to the *monte* against governmental authority was to be reiterated in “1879, 1895, 1906, 1912, 1933, and 1956” somewhat as the edifice unveiled by the Cuban revolutionary state at Demajagua in 1968 celebrating “100 years” of revolutionary continuity would have it as mentioned in the introductory chapter, but hardly the pat teleology as we have also seen.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 76.

<sup>344</sup> Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 128. See Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, ch. 6.

<sup>345</sup> Gott, 72.

Within Cuban national historiography, the large-scale coda to this local micro-history, and hence overarching meaning ascribed to it, occurred in 1895, when the deferred struggle for independence led to another nationalist insurrection with Gómez and Maceo as military leaders. They organized a column in Oriente province, which crossed Spanish defensive lines, invading and torching the vast western sugar districts within the year. Locally, within the history of the region of Guantánamo, something of the momentous changes in personal political identifications was writ into the conflict between Miguel Pérez and Moncada. At the turn-of-the-twentieth-century, Guantánamo writer, Regino Boti, likened the clash “a hand-to-hand struggle sustained by two armies as if they had taken the form of two men, two aspirations, two antagonistic tendencies, two principal opposites: the Republic and the Monarchy.”<sup>346</sup> Yet Miguel’s nephew, Pedro Agustín Pérez embodied something of the momentous changes in personal political identification. He began his career as a member of his uncle’s pro-Spanish paramilitary force only to switch sides at the start of the Little War – placed under the command of his uncle’s nemesis, the black official of humble social background, Guillermo Moncada. By 1895 Pedro A. Pérez became insurgent chief of the district, where sugar plantations were subjected to payment of war taxes to a rebel treasury department backed by threats of property destruction irrespective of owners’ political loyalties.<sup>347</sup> This paradoxical transformation in political loyalties of a former integralist officer offers a clue to the micro-politics of how war-formed identities transformed some Cuban rural districts. Nowhere in Oriente was the transformation more acute than in Guantánamo. From a rustic reactionary Vendée opposed to the revolution begun in 1868, by

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<sup>346</sup> Varona, I:553, quoting Boti.

<sup>347</sup> Carlson, “The Cuban War of Independence in Guantánamo.”



the time of the Little War the old haunts of the maroons had become pockets of popular separatist nationalism among free black communities. Wrote one observer of Cuba in the 1880s:

Miles upon miles of thrifty plantations, with all their buildings and machinery, were laid waste, and remain so to this day.

Since 1876 there have been roving bands of insurgents in existence, causing the authorities more or less serious trouble, leading them at times to make serious attempts at their entire suppression. But the mountains and half-inaccessible forests of the eastern department still serve to secrete many armed and disaffected people, whose frequent outbreaks are made public by the slow process of oral information. The press is forbidden to publish any news of this character. Thus it will be seen that, although the spirit of liberty may slumber in the island, it is by no means dead, nor is the intense hatred which exists between the home-born Spaniard and the native Cuban growing less from year to year. [...]

The region where the insurgents have always made their rendezvous, and which they have virtually held for years, is nearest to Guantanamo and Santiago. This mountainous district is the resort of all runaway slaves, escaped criminals, and those designated as insurgents. These together form at the present time a roving community of several hundred desperate men. These refugees, divided into small bands, make predatory raids upon travelers and loyal planters, as we have described, to keep themselves supplied with the necessities of life other than those afforded by the prolific hand of Nature.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Ballou, 97.

## CHAPTER IV:

### Resettlement, Restoration, and the War of Independence, 1880-1898

*The production of coffee in this district is confined to the country surrounding this port [Santiago de Cuba] and Guantanamo, and is not sufficient to-day to supply the markets of the island. As these two ports are the centers of the only coffee producing districts, coffee is imported into the island from Porto Rico, and lately even from the United States. This state of affairs has been brought about by various causes. The first is the lack of capital to restore the old coffee estates destroyed during the first and second revolutions in 1868, 1878, and 1880, respectively. Then, during the prosperous years of the Cuban sugar industry, when the attention of every one was drawn to the cultivation of sugar, coffee growing was neglected and sugar-making was taken up. [...]*

*War, such as devastated the island seven and twenty years ago, is, in my opinion possible no more; even if possible it will be confined to other parts of the island. [...]*

*It is a wonder to me that American capitalists do not turn their attention to this industry. The climate can only be equaled in the south of Europe. As a winter resort the coffee-growing district of this province is unrivaled. Fevers natural to tropical countries are unknown here. The scenery is magnificent, vegetation beautiful in its tropic splendor, the rivers always full of water, and game, deer, wild pigs, and all sorts of fowl in abundance. Even our home fruits and vegetables thrive here, and with very little outlay it is possible to transfer all American home comforts to these mountains.*

*The remaining descendants of the old French planters, who still live on the estates they have been able to retain, are hospitable and generous to a fault, and are generally well educated and refined.*

—Otto V. Reimer, United States Consul, Santiago de Cuba 11 October 1887.<sup>349</sup>

Despite U.S. Consul Otto Reimer's enthusiasm for the mountains between Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo, which echoed Samuel Hazard's boosterism of the zone's potential in the years before the *Guerra Grande* began, and his similar keen interest in coffee, here expressed in the insistence that coffee production could be restarted to supply North American and Cuban coffee drinkers, peace never returned entirely to Oriente province after

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<sup>349</sup> U.S. Congress. House. *Production of and Trade in Coffee. Letter from the Department of State, Transmitting Reports from the Consuls of the United States upon the Production of and Trade in Coffee Among the Central and South American States*. 50<sup>th</sup> Cong. 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1887-1888. H. exdoc. 401. Serial 2561, pp. 116-19. [hereinafter cited as U.S. Congress. House. *Production of and Trade in Coffee*.]

the defeat of the separatist movement. Social control concerns for the colonial state remained paramount. Many restive peasant subsistence cultivators, small farmers and ranchers, ex-slaves, and slave “apprentices” resettled the despoiled countryside and rebuilt households in the wake of the wars. Quite a few remained loyal to separatist politics; the conflict had the effect of hardening and entrenching popular political sympathies. Colonial politics had been transformed into a liberal autonomist movement and a conservative party favoring the maintenance of centralized colonial control. But under the surface there remained a separatist strata that would develop during the almost two decades before conflict over the status of Cuba resumed. By 1895, there would again be a pro-independence revolt, gaining ground early on among the social milieu of Oriente province first.<sup>350</sup> By then the social base would be different in composition, and there would be no slavery since application of the Moret gradual emancipation law, self-purchase through *coartación*, and final abolition by 7 October 1886 accompanied the rise of wage labor systems and seasonal work patterns in rural areas of the island.

Surveying the immediate post-war 1880s, an early twenty-first century political lexicon would have likened eastern Cuba a “failed state.” The decade throughout Cuba was one of grinding poverty and economic depression. In key regards the fate of the east, especially in comparison with western Cuba, was to fall even further into economic destitution and social retrocession. Much of the fighting, pillage, and utter destruction had occurred in Camagüey and Oriente province. Devastation from warring groups had spilled

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<sup>350</sup> For a full discussion of the range and depth of societal and economic transformations of the 1880s in Cuba, see Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, ch. 1; Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, chs. 4, 5, and 6; Pérez, *Cuba Between Empires; Lords of the Mountain*; “Toward Dependency and Revolution: The Political Economy of Cuba between Wars, 1878-1895.” *Latin American Research Review* V.18 (1983): 127-42; “Vagrants, Beggars, and Bandits: Social Origins of Cuban Separatism, 1878-1895.” *American Historical Review* V. 90 (Dec. 1985): 1092-1121; Thomas, chs. XXII, XXIII, XXIV. See also Scott, “Class relations in sugar and political mobilization in Cuba, 1868-1899.” *Cuban Studies—Estudios Cubanos* 15, no.1 (1985): 15-28.

over the Spanish army's *trocha* into Sancti Spíritus and Las Villas. Western Cuba, including Matanzas, Cárdenas, Havana, and Pinar del Río had not escaped violence, deportations, and repression, however, its form and character were different. Cuba's west was wracked by debt, unemployment, and depression, but largely spared the disruptions and depredations of armed conflict apart from considerable *peninsular* settler violence and repression of Creoles from the pro-Spanish irredentist integralist volunteer movement. It remained home to the sugar monoculture economic centerpiece of the colonial economy. The 1880s, however, were years fraught with problems of stagnation, low productivity, and increased foreign competition in sugar. The situation in Oriente province, according to a Cuban economic historian, was as if civilization itself had to be reintroduced.<sup>351</sup> A historian of Spain likened the colonial authorities' actions in the interwar years after the cessation of hostilities as approaching collective punishment of the colony itself: "seventeen years of malign neglect."<sup>352</sup>

The post-war agrarian base of the Guantánamo district, apart from the sugar estates of the *llano*, lay despoiled, torched, ruined, and in a state of abandonment between the fires of contending armies. During the fighting properties great and small owned by small-scale farmers and planters, pro-separatist, pro-reform, and pro-Spanish *integrista* alike, had been leveled or burned out completely. Some, accused of supporting the insurrection had lost their property to destruction by Spanish forces or through seizure by vengeful colonial authorities. Feuds, cronyism, family politics, and interpersonal enmities enmeshed with the overarching politics further complicated the picture. Social control concerns, while becoming

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<sup>351</sup> Le Riverend, 455; Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 100.

<sup>352</sup> Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 1.

complicated by the rise of anticolonial politics and armed insurgency, had only become more marked with the insurrection and the social shifts that prevailed afterwards.

Suspicious political loyalties, support for bandits, and ongoing security concerns in the remote northern coastal zone of Sagua de Tánamo led Spanish Colonel Alberto Morera to send a list of “Inconvenient neighbors due to various concepts” in May 1880 to the military governor of Santiago de Cuba province, Camilo Polavieja.<sup>353</sup> The list compiled 27 presumed disloyal men, thirteen with the honorific “Don” and fourteen without. Two were born in Spain, one was Catalan; the remainder were Cuban born. Each bore a description of suspicions and accusations against them. At the end, ten men were designated “exile from the Island advisable [*conviene su destierro de la Isla*],” and another man recommended for removal to Tiguabos, from where he came from originally. Sixteen were marked with a small cross by their names and the annotation “his disappearance/ removal advisable [*conviene su desaparición*].”<sup>354</sup> Certain considerations were apparently made for two of the ten for whom exile was recommended. One, a youth, “may have been seduced” on account of his age and inexperience, while an elderly man had his status similarly contingent on his advanced age. Some had made utterances such as they had “washed their hands in the blood of Spaniards,” others were accused of thievery and criminal activity. Most were assumed to be separatists, while “in this area several men revolted under the orders of so-called Perico

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<sup>353</sup> Noticia de Vecinos inconvenientes por varios conceptos, in Archivo General de las Indias, Seville, Sección Diversos, Donativo Camilo García Polavieja y Castillo, leg. 8, R3, D7, Reservado D. Alberto Morera—Col. Jefe de la Zona de Sagua de Tánamo, 536-44 [hereinafter cited as AGI, SD, etc.].

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*

[Pedro A.] Pérez, together with a party of thirteen” others risen in arms against Spain’s authority.<sup>355</sup>

Many Cuban separatists had gone into exile at the end of the Ten Years’ War. Spanish General Camilo Polavieja, governor of the eastern province during the Little War, in turn, carried out a heavy repression against black Cuban separatists in Oriente. Guillermo Moncada was imprisoned for a time in North Africa. Calixto García served a sentence in Spain itself before being amnestied. José Maceo would escape from prison in Morocco, flee to Algeria, and thence to France. Rumors of still another separatist conspiracy in Oriente after the Little War had been suppressed saw a wave of deportations of 256 black *orientales* to Spain’s equivalent of the French Guiana “Devils’ Island,” the African penal colony of Fernando Póo in the Gulf of Guinea.<sup>356</sup> Something of the character of Polavieja, described by Benedict Anderson as “severely Catholic” and widely admired within Spanish military and conservative political circles for his “probity, loyalty, and military toughness” was perhaps visible in a telegram sent during the repression of the 6 December 1880 separatist conspiracy in Santiago:

Most urgent  
To Comandante [José] Moraleda

[Santiago de] Cuba  
*The Douverges must not escape. Take them alive or dead; it might be more convenient if they are dead. Take from this telegraph station the reel of tape that deals with this business including everything from now until later.*  
Polavieja.<sup>357</sup> [*emphasis in original*]

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<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>356</sup> Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 50-54.

<sup>357</sup> Letter from Governor of Santiago de Cuba province, General Camilo García Polavieja y Castillo to Comandante José Moraleda, 6 December 1880 in AGI, SD, leg. 8, R2, D4, Correspondencia particular D. José Moraleda, no. 4, Mayo-Noviembre 1880-1881, 453. It was Camilo Polavieja who, as captain-general of the Philippines during the suppression of the Filipino Katipunan nationalist movement signed the execution order of

Polavieja seemed to believe that sooner or later Spain would have to grant autonomy or even independence to Cuba, but also thought that any such move for decolonization should be on the terms of the colonial metropolis. By the early 1890s he would be captain-general of Cuba, where he would use his experience gained in Oriente in an island-wide bandit suppression campaign. In the meantime, with a shaky peace in place and a liberalized politics operating free of earlier restrictions, Cuba as a whole, and even distant Guantánamo underwent remarkable transformations during the 1880s and the first-half of the 1890s. Part of this development lay in the emphasis noted by Consul Reimer of “the attention of every one was drawn to the cultivation of sugar, coffee growing was neglected and sugar-making was taken up.”<sup>358</sup>

### The llano: Sugar and the Brooks and Company

The war's deleterious economic effects also hastened the demise of indebted sugar and coffee planters in myriad cases.<sup>359</sup> The 1880s saw the decline of many sugar estates with the fall of sugar prices, the growth of cane and beet sugar production worldwide, and the ongoing scarcity of labor. In the postwar setting, amid gradual abolition and foreign capital expansion, Cuban sugar production underwent a revolution in which larger, technologically intensive and much more expensive *centrales* acquired cane from estate-owned lands and

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José Rizal, the writer and nationalist, on 30 December 1896. See Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination*, 160-64.

<sup>358</sup> U.S. Congress. House. *Production of and Trade in Coffee*.

<sup>359</sup> Jules Benjamin, *The United States and Cuba: Hegemony and Dependent Development, 1880-1934* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1977); Iglesias García, *Del ingenio al central*; Instituto de Historia de Cuba, *Las luchas por la independencia nacional y las transformaciones estructurales, 1868-1898*; Dolores Bessy Ojeda, “Antecedentes de la Guerra de 1895 en Oriente.” *Santiago XX* (December, 1975): 157-79; Pérez, *Cuba Between Empires*, ch. 1; Thomas, chs. XXIII, XXIV.

*colono* growers. Some relatively large sugar enterprises became converted into satellites of the central, their owners into colonos growing sugar cane to be processed in the main mill. Throughout this decentralized transition within sugar production, converted former *ingenios* and tenant farmers alike grew and harvested cane under contracts with the central mill. In Guantánamo, twenty surviving mills consolidated through the 1880s and 1890s into thirteen centrales, many of them drawing cane from such *colonias*. Capital-intensive sugar mills were better poised to withstand economic depression and recover at the expense of both antiquated sugar estates and the ravaged coffee sector. Table 4.1 below shows the status of ownership of sugar cane agribusiness in the Guantánamo district immediately after the Little War:

Table 4.1  
Guantánamo, 1881-1882: Rural Estates: Sugar Ingenios, and Trapiches

Number	Name of Sugar mill	Where located within the municipio	Name of owner
1	Esperanza	Sigual	D. José Baró and his sister
2	Ysabel	Jamaica	D. Sucesión Limonta and Associates
3	San Miguel	Camarones	D. José [illeg.] Bueno
4	Soledad	Jamaica	D. Brooks and Associates
5	Sta. María	Arroyo Hondo	D. Fernando Pons
6	Los Caños	Camarones	D. Brooks y Ca.
7	Confluente	Camarones	D. Rosa y Da. Leticia Bueno
8	Santa Cecilia	Arroyo Hondo	D. Arturo C. Simon
9	Santa Rosa	Camarones	D. Sucesión Jay
10	Santa Fé	Camarones	D. Sucesión Faure
11	San Carlos	Arroyo Hondo	D. Mestre y Gorgas
12	San Yldefonso	Camarones	D. J. Bueno y Ca.
13	Romelié	Rio Seco	D. Santiago MacKinlay and Associate
14	San Antonio	Rio Seco	D. Luis Redor y Lescaille
15	San Emilio	Casisey	D. Emilio Charlot
16	San Vincente	Jamaica	D. Sucesión Rancole
17	La Luisa	Casisey	D. Emilio Larlabous and Associate
18	San José	Camarones	D. Sucesión Fournier
19	Perseverancia	Camarones	D. Manuel Masferroll
20	Montesano	Camarones	D. Ruperto Ledesma



Number	Name of Sugar mill	Where located within the municipio	Name of owner
21	San Pedro	Yndios	D. C. Brauet y Ca.
22	San León	Palma S. Juan	D. Félix Parrtó [illeg.]
23	La Unión	Palma S. Juan	D. Juan Díaz García

Trapiches

24	“	Ysleta	D. Duran Renda
25	“	Yndios	D. José de los Reyes Gonzáles
26	“	Tiguabos	Da. María Pérez Olivares

*Source:* Data from Expediente manuscrito que contiene una relación detallada de los ingenios y trapiches existents en el municipio de Guantánamo, 21 November 1881, AHPSC, GP, leg. 300, no. 6, año: 1881-1882, materia: Centrales.

These twenty-three sugar mills were connected to markets through the Brooks and Company that continued to operate the district’s railway line and shipping piers and port facilities on Guantánamo Bay at Caimanera.

Gradually, the merchant house began to extend their land holdings. An example of this consolidation was the sugar estate Los Caños at the northern shore of Guantánamo Bay late in the Ten Years’ War and the social disruptions and sugar slave resistance of the Little War. Despite the trocha erected by the Spanish military, and the use of armed guards at the sugar estates, there were cases of cane fires directed at the mills during the latter part of the Ten Years’ War and successive Little War. In February 1877, for example, insurgents burned standing cane and some buildings on the sugar property of Juan Rancole, who was indebted to the banking house operated by Brooks and Company.<sup>360</sup> The mobility of slaves bought and sold during the conflict that extended the possibility of abolition provoked unrest. In November 1878, five months after the Pact of Zanjón went into effect, and the Ten Years’ War had ended with amnesty for rebels including those of slave origins, seven slaves from an

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<sup>360</sup> See Abelardo Padrón Valdés, *Guillermo Moncada* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1980), 42 for information on the fire. Ownership information, and a destructive fire in 1877 along with the subsequent purchase of the estate found in Deposition of Ernest A. Brooks, [Ernest August Brooks] pgs. 33-35, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

estate near Santiago de Cuba to the ingenio— Cirilo, Santiago, Joaquín, Luis, Mamerto, Eusevio, and Rita by name – ran away from Los Caños. A patrol of the Civil Guard recaptured two near Tiguabos, but there is no indication of what fate befell the remaining five, who may have secured their freedom by flight from their new owner.<sup>361</sup> The sugar estate and its remaining dotación was sold off to the expanding Brooks and Company holdings in the *llano*.

By the conclusion of the eleven-month Little War in 1880, the Brooks family bought out Los Caños and adjacent properties, two nearby *colonias*, Las Lajas and Santa Cecilia— both former ingenios subsumed by the new operation— creating one of the largest sugar estates in the region. To improve the yield of cane in the arid and saline upper portion of the bay, an extensive irrigation works was constructed. A spider-web of narrow-gauge rails with a private fleet of small locomotives laced through the vast cane fields, and a shipping pier, warehouse, and lighters to take the cargo to steamers was erected on the upper part of Guantánamo Bay. Another linchpin of Brooks and Company sugar production, the Soledad *central* and other mills similarly underwent transformation and upgrades of the physical plant. A similar island-wide pattern resulted in the first substantial inroads by North American and British capital investment. Increasingly, foreign ownership of sugar production in British, Spanish, and American hands became a pattern in the industry. Cuban-born planters were becoming sidelined by the sophisticated capital-intensive cultivation system gradually taking root atop the earlier plantation economy.

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<sup>361</sup> “Expediente manuscrito que contiene la denuncia hecha por Juan Rancole sobre la fuga de los esclavos de su ingenio ‘Los Caños’ Guantánamo, Cuba, 2-28 Noviembre, 1879,” no. 28; AHPSC, GP, leg. 299, año: 1853-1878, materia: Esclavitud.

Los Caños produced over a \$70,000 sugar crop in 1892, 1893, and 1894. The last sugar harvest, or *zafra* in 1895, the first year of the War of Independence, commanded \$82,000, a record for Los Caños, while the Brooks & Co. ground large crops at their consolidated holdings such as Soledad, Romelié and Isabel sugar mills too.<sup>362</sup> The change in social composition of ownership included a diminution of French presence. Cubans of French ancestry became somewhat less of a separate group as numbers of frequently poor but ambitious Spaniards immigrated permanently or came seasonally to Cuba, establishing themselves as proprietors where possible, but also performing wage labor on sugar mills, in cigar factories, and other employments in the 1880s. In the sugar *llano* of Guantánamo, an 1890 American magazine article reported

M. Truy, French consul at Santiago de Cuba, says ... the cultivation of the sugar cane in the eastern portion of the island of Cuba is almost entirely confined to the districts of Santiago, Guantanamo, and Manzanillo. This cultivation, although it has experienced some extension of late years, is not in the flourishing condition it was twenty years ago [i.e. 1870]. This falling off is due to the civil war, which ruined many planters and discouraged others. The profits, however, realized for some time past by those planters who had sufficient credit, or confidence in the future, to continue to engage in this industry, have given a stimulus to the cultivation of the cane.

Sugar factories have been established in many parts, particularly in the district of Guantanamo and Manzanillo, old factories have been supplied with fresh plant, and planters, encouraged by high prices recently realized, have hastened to get their ground ready for cultivation. [...] The [Santiago de] Cuba market was some years ago controlled by French merchants, who owned the greater part of the sugar factories of the province, but since the civil war many planters sold their estates and retired to France.

A few estates, however, are still owned by Frenchmen, at Guantanamo especially. Those known as Sainte Marie, Sainte Cecile, and San Antonio [de Redor] are directed or owned by Frenchmen.<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Claimants' and Government Briefs* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 9: 4. [hereinafter cited as *Briefs*.]

<sup>363</sup> "Sugar and Sugar Cane in Cuba." *Scientific American* V. LXIII, No. 17 (October 25, 1890): 265.

The settlement of the frontier of easternmost Cuba that had once attracted planters from Ste. Domingue and the sugar plantation model in the early nineteenth century, underwent transformation from extension of the *central* system of the latter part of the century. The increasing prominence of sugar in the life and culture of the district would shortly arouse keen interest from the separatist movement. After the doldrums and downturns of the 1880s, prosperity seemed destined to return in the 1890s. The total Cuban sugar harvest of 1894 was the first over a million tons, and Guantánamo planters likewise had done well.<sup>364</sup>

### Separatism and State Formation

As the Cuban economy developed ever-stronger ties with U.S.-based investors and other sites in the North Atlantic system, the island itself was inundated by Spanish immigration. Immigration and population figures suggest a stream of 224,000 Spaniards, often Galicians, Asturians, and Catalans, coming as sojourners and permanent settlers between 1882 and 1894, and resulting in a situation where island-wide approximately one in four or one in five inhabitants were Spanish born.<sup>365</sup> Peninsular versus Creole conflicts became exacerbated. Nativism among the Cuban-born population grew. The demographic shifts were more pronounced in the west, where there was usually greater economic dynamism as a pull factor for immigration. With the decline of the African descended population, and the rise of significant influx of Spanish immigration—a pattern to which the island would return in the opening decades of the twentieth century, Cuba underwent a

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<sup>364</sup> Sugar production figures in Thomas, 1562.

<sup>365</sup> Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 143 citing Thomas, 276. On military conscription and service overseas as a stimulus to Spanish immigration see Manuel Moreno Friginals and José J. Moreno Masó, *Guerra, migración y muerte (El ejército español en Cuba como vía migratoria)* (Oviedo: Ediciones Jucar, 1993).

demographic “whitening” of the population. A net effect, as Tone has emphasized, was to make the division of the island between west and east, reinforced by the military *trocha* barrier to separate the two sides, even starker.<sup>366</sup> He provocatively asserted that to separatists the War of Independence beginning in 1895 was “at least in part,” the means to “halt this process” as much as it has become laden with Martí’s concerns over absorption by a North American cultural and economic juggernaut.<sup>367</sup>

Defeat for separatist insurgents in the earlier wars had indeed been bitter, but it had also introduced a range of tactics that had not been taken to their full extension. The strategy of invading the west, first modeled by the somewhat stillborn invasion of the Guantánamo district in Gómez’ 1871 offensive, for example, assumed a crucial focus among separatists in exile.<sup>368</sup> Accelerating changes in military technology strongly augured an unconventional warfare strategy emphasizing economic targets as concrete links of the colonial system. To many separatists the very wealth, prominence, and way in which sugar mills dominated certain areas of the island symbolized the very epicenter of Spanish control and source of revenue. The great disparity in power between the colonial edifice supported by the Spanish military along with their volunteers and locally recruited guerrillas, and the insurgent movement recommended to separatist rebels the trajectory for future revolt drawing on the earlier experience. Past wars had seen the fortification of estates and their use as bases by the Spanish. As the decade wore on without Spanish promises of political reform becoming

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<sup>366</sup> Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 28. See also, pp. 20-29.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>368</sup> Rodríguez. On property destruction and economic sabotage see literature on Ten Years’ War and Mary Ruiz de Zárate, *El general candela: Biografía de una guerrilla* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1974); Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*; and Gilberto Toste Ballart, *Bala, tizón y machete* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1990).

realized, planning for another uprising against the colonial system assumed a renewed urgency. The absence of unity within the separatist movement, and the relatively unformed composition of national identity, came under scrutiny as did the blinkered tactical and strategic vision of past wars. If the uprising being planned failed to bring about Spanish capitulation or collapse swiftly, there was no alternative envisioned to the total war strategy of economic warfare and wholesale disruption of life on the island. The failure of the past armed movement seemed contingent on the confinement of the insurgency to the relatively unimportant eastern provinces, where, faced with the greater weight and resources of Spain exhaustion and attrition defeated the insurrection.

In the unequal contest between poorly equipped, outnumbered *mambises* versus Spanish troops and militia, the rebels refined hit-and-run irregular warfare, economic sabotage, and the use of arson. Dispersed throughout the eastern countryside, insurgents operated in small bands to harass the heavily armed but cumbersome Spanish military and evade the locally recruited integralist guerrillas, such as the Squadron of Guantánamo, who often knew the terrain as well as the anticolonial rebels. Insurgent forces could try to temporarily coalesce into larger groups in order to execute ambushes and attacks, but major operations carried great risk of being exposed, isolated, and wiped out by superior Spanish strength. Spanish social order could draw support from sources beyond the capability of the separatists, including from among significant numbers of pro-colonial Cubans and Spanish *peninsular* migrants. In a pattern that prefigured many postcolonial twentieth-century wars of national liberation, the declining colonial power still possessed resources and capabilities far beyond the emergent nationalist movement.

Importantly, a hallmark of the Spanish imperial system was its system of taxation geared to supporting the metropolis at the expense of the colony. In fact, an onerous direct feature of this exploitation was to force the Cuban colony to cover the added expenses incurred from putting down the insurrection.<sup>369</sup> This large odious debt, which would be canceled by the United States after 1898, seemed to separatists and many autonomists an ever proliferating and crushing burden that foredoomed Cuba as long as it remained tied to Spain.

Separatists imagined that the total cessation of production was utterly essential in order to exhaust and defeat the Spanish colonial state and force as quick a capitulation as possible. If the coming war could not be won relatively quickly, it was thought that the economic warfare strategy of the past conflict applied on a larger scale would change the balance of forces so that attrition would be favorable to the insurrection rather than the colonial metropolis. Economic warfare became an essential element in the calculations of separatists planning the future insurrection.

A profound discomfort with the ramifications of the maximal employment of property destruction led to disagreement within remaining internal splits and divisions of the exiled separatist movement. Some veteran leaders such as Gómez came to favor a flinty and uncompromising vision of the use of economic pressure in its most complete manifestation against Spain and, by extension, since the war would be fought within the colony itself, Cuban society. If the planned future rebellion to be carried through by a simultaneous uprising by separatists in all provinces of the isle faltered, which was precisely what would occur in early 1895, then outright destruction of economic support for the colonial state, and

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<sup>369</sup> Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 26.

a principled refusal to enter into agreements with planters to safeguard property would be, according to this view, the most efficacious method to overthrow the colonial order. As Gómez once described the underlying rationale for a total war strategy of complete economic disruption and property destruction, “[t]he chains of Cuba have been forged by its own riches and it is necessary to put an end to this in order to finish soon.”<sup>370</sup> Other leaders, especially exiles in the United States, vainly hoped that destruction could be minimized. They banked on a spontaneous insurrection supplied by anticolonial landowners and sympathetic foreign governments that could sustain the cause. As plans for an uprising against Spanish control matured, it was often thought that property could be saved, provided that planters were not actively supporting Spain and recognized Cuban insurgent authority.

In Guantánamo, this internal conflict among separatists played out amid the terrain that had earlier undergone the 1871 invasion. There, by the end of 1895, a revolutionary general strike would counter the pro-Spanish Squadron of Guantánamo and local guerrillas and assail Spanish, Cuban, French, and British planters as pillars of Spanish colonial institutions. While the Liberation Army remobilized and organized a column to invade the western districts of the island, the separatist military leaders planned to extract the payment of war taxes from planters. As a state in formation, or would-be independent and sovereign state, the insurgents viewed matters through the lens of statecraft and its abstractions and nationalist calculi of means and ends. They would demand obeisance to their authority and criteria by the threat of sanctions in the form of Ten Years’ War-style scorched earth tactics. As before, the rebels would confront insuperable logistical difficulties, and a paucity of weapons, which would necessitate a thorough re-evaluation of political and military failure in

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<sup>370</sup> In Pérez, *Cuba Between Empires*, 133.



the past wars of independence. Such assessment came to include local manifestations of the need to paralyze the most profitable economic activity of the region, supply the insurrection, and to draw resources far beyond those of the earlier anticolonial conflicts.

An augury of this enfolding conflict, and perhaps an early model of how to expropriate funds from hesitant or recalcitrant landowners backed by the policing and military institutions of the colonial state, arose from the aforementioned phenomenon of social banditry. The long wars of the nineteenth century had created many men, and even entire isolated rural communities, skilled at living by their wits and securing what they demanded at the edge of a machete and the barrel of a gun.<sup>371</sup> Rural people had pursued their own objectives internal to the political motives of the competing sides. Some were not disposed to a return to civilian avocations, and harbored latent political motivations or justifications for their deeds. Robberies, kidnappings, and other extortions were frequent. By the early 1890s, Polavieja as captain-general embarked on a sustained anti-brigand campaign, noting

A truly exceptional situation has crossed this island. It is neither a state of peace nor of war; it sustains the absence of tranquility and tests the prudent and rational means to return the country to public repose; nor have the prisons worked for those with more or less wisdom branded accomplices, nor the Law of banditry and the recent lessons in the crimes covered by that law—nothing as given the healthy example that might have been expected.<sup>372</sup>

Polavieja vowed to “destroy and exterminate the parties of malefactors” with bodies of troops, volunteers, and the Civil Guard at his disposition. He warned against the provocations that would result from “transgressions against the country people” by pro-Spanish militia; if

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<sup>371</sup> On banditry see Pérez, *Lords of the Mountain*; Paz Sánchez, Fernández, López Novogil, *El bandolerismo en Cuba (1800-1933)*.

<sup>372</sup> Captain-general Camilo Polavieja to Minister of War, 20 September 1890 in *Escritos novedades del mes de Septiembre 1890*, AGM-M, caja: 2555, SU, Cuba, sección 2a., no. 00865, leg. 2, car. 26-4, Operaciones 1890, sub-c. 26-4-1.

well treated, civilians could provide intelligence against bandits or even be allied in pro-colonial guerrilla units. He stressed “the bandit in Cuba, as already stated, represents the primary obstacle to Spanish dominion, serving to maintain constant alarm and a nucleus for new separatist ventures,” so that the anti-banditry campaign was the exercise of social control over latent forms of resistance. He imbued the policy with a sense of destroying internal rivals to colonial authority, and thus, it was a form of state making.<sup>373</sup> Such moves against the threat posed by bandits, presumed to be a nascent “primitive rebel” threat to the social order resembled some features of the earlier struggle against maroons.

Spanish forces captured or killed many. In late 1891, forces from the Squadron of Santa Catalina killed “the bandit Juan Cufé, who formed part of the gang of Chino Velázquez” as well as “Magdaleno Moya Centeno ... last of a party of bandits that prowled the jurisdiction of Guantánamo.”<sup>374</sup> The attempt to re-extend colonial authority into the countryside encountered ample resistance. Nevertheless, as a fragile peace settled over the rugged, forested interior of the district, farming in remote areas and isolated valleys began to recover. One facet of this pattern was among the ruined cafetales in the mountains that elicited the entrepreneurial appraisals of Samuel Hazard in the 1860s and Reimer in the late 1880s.

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<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.* On making states, see Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in Evans et al. *Bringing the State Back In*, 181.

<sup>374</sup> Escritos sobre operaciones y novedades de octubre, noviembre y diciembre, 1891, letters from 10 November and 10 December 1891 in AHM-M, caja: 2555, SU, Cuba, sección 2a. no. 00865, leg. 26, car. 26-8-3, sub-c. 26-5-4. See also car. 26-6, Partes de novedades. Resultados obtenidos contra el bandolerismo. Bandos, sub-c. 26-6-4, Relaciones de bandoleros muertos, capturados y condenados a muerte, así como incendios de cañaverales (1891-1892), which lists the disposition of a total of 227 bandits island-wide: 43 killed, 164 captured, 20 “that have suffered the ultimate penalty.” For the Guantánamo district, see sub-c. 26-8-2, Operaciones en campaña: partida en Guantánamo, which contains preparations to counter an abortive 1893 separatist insurrection there. See also Expediente manuscrito relativo a las causas instruidas contra una partida de bandoleros capitaneada por Francisco Torres Arcadio Rodríguez, y otros, Guantánamo, 3 Octubre 1891—2 Febrero 1894, AHPSC, GP, leg. 155, exp. 36, año: 1891-1894, Materia: Bandolerismo.

The monte: Postemancipation Labor and Coffee—The Colonato System

As the consular official noted, the coffee sector began a halting, capital-scarce recovery from the devastations sustained during the war, and by the shift in labor after Cuban separatism had belatedly embraced an unambiguous overthrow of slavery and invaded the district in 1871. Ada Ferrer has written about post-war Santiago de Cuba province and Puerto Príncipe, the Spaniards in authority undertook some resettlement efforts. Model villages and re-populated towns were founded for veterans of the conflict, including demobilized Spanish regulars who decided to settle within the colony, integralist volunteers, and even ex-rebels.<sup>375</sup> Apparently many of the new and re-founded towns erected for displaced persons and settlers were concentrated in the western departments of Oriente where fighting had been the most protracted and where many residents had gone over to Céspedes' uprising early in the conflict. Thus areas between Santiago de Cuba, Bayamo, Manzanillo, and points further west including Las Tunas obtained an influx of inhabitants and small settlement towns. This belated post-war attempt to realize long dormant colonization schemes such as that of the Count of Mompox y de Jaruco and others that sought to settle the area and hold it for the empire through soldier-farmers failed to bring about the restoration of the colony and resumption of loyalty to the metropolitan state. Ferrer has convincingly pointed out that this attempt to bring social control and state authority to bear at the local level of isolated communities in eastern regions devastated by the war provoked unintended consequences of further alienating local inhabitants.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 99-111.

<sup>376</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 101-103.

In the case of Guantánamo, colonial authorities permitted some coffee farms to be rebuilt and even extended. Cafetales “Valparaiso,” “El Perú,” and “La Loli” were authorized to resettle and resume cultivation in Yateras in 1881, and Don Eugenio Rousseau returned to the cafetal “Alabama.”<sup>377</sup> Former slaves in many cases responded to their new status as freed people in the local time-honored fashion long familiar to a society that historically had a large free population of color, namely a quest for security provided by an autonomous, independent economic venture in the form of a farm or artisanal job, and access to wage labor to generate income. Such patterns of autonomy constrained by laws preventing them from certain professions and by the social stigma associated with darker skin underwent transformations at precisely the same time that abolition took effect.

Many freed people pursued subsistence farming supplemented by wage work on different estates, including the sugar mills. The population worked on their own in farming and ranching, rented land, squatted on vacant properties, or made various tenant farming or sharecropping arrangements with landowners. Dispersal of settlement patterns away from the confines and supervision of plantations characterized many free and freed rural denizens. Still other free people of color worked as artisans and laborers, following a readily emulated model of social mobility already long established in many cases. Since eastern society remained largely pre-literate and many arrangements were made by verbal agreements

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<sup>377</sup> Comunicación que hace el comandante militar de Guantánamo al Gobernador Civil de la Plaza, informándole que el coronel, jefe de ese distrito autorizó a Eduardo Talovayoski la reconstrucción de los cafetales “Valparaiso,” “El Perú,” “La Loli,” situados en el partido de Yateras. Fechado Stgo. 23-26 Septiembre 1881; Comunicación al Gobernador Civil de la Plaza donde se le informa que se autorizó a los Sres. Brauet Carreras y Ca. A reconstruir el abandonado cafetal “Victoria” situado en Guantánamo. Fechado Stgo. de Cuba 3-5 mayo 1881; and Expediente manuscrito formado por la instancia presentada por Don Eugenio Rousseau, intersando reconstruir el abandonado cafetal “Alabama” situado en Guayabal el cual fué destruido por motivo de la guerra. Fechado: Guantánamo 20 de julio – 22 agosto 1881 in AHPSC, GP, leg. 176, expedientes 5, 6, and 34 respectively, año: 1881, materia: Café.

instead of formal contracts, precise reconstruction of the arrangements made by peasant cultivators, colonists, displaced refugees, and dispossessed rural proletarians is difficult. Nevertheless, legal depositions made in the early twentieth century and preserved within the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission Records offer some insights into *colono* contracts and tenancy arrangements in postemancipation coffee fincas. These depositions are from close to Santiago de Cuba, but may reflect some of the prevailing systems of cultivation and rural labor in eastern Cuba, and can be generalized through techniques of “up-streaming” from the dates contained in the brief narratives of the testimonial records. That is, while the depositions were made in the early twentieth century, the respondents dated their tie to the verbal *colono* contract to the 1880s. The labor systems that replaced bond servitude in coffee farms can thus be reconstructed to a degree through their stories.

In February 1906, stenographers and lawyers recorded testimony concerning the destruction of the cafetal San Juan de Buenavista at the hands of the Spanish army in 1895, owned by a 48-year old widow and mother of seven children, Carmen de Villalon de Quesada. She had married Esteban Quesada, originally from Bayamo west of Santiago in New York in 1883.<sup>378</sup> She had left with her husband for Cartagena de los Indios in Colombia when the Cuban War of Independence broke out in 1895. Villalon filed a claim over the destruction of their 334 hectare coffee and cacao estate, inherited from her father, that had also included a 300 hive apiary to produce honey and beeswax, and over five hundred fruit trees cultivated by 42 *colono* families since 1884. The cafetal was located on the northern slope of the Sierra Maestra mountains, just northwest of Boniato near Santiago de Cuba. Among the witnesses from whom testimony was taken were three coffee *colonos*, or

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<sup>378</sup> Depositions of Telesforo Curubero, Aniceto Marques, Carmen Villalon de Quesada, Stephen E. Quesada, Epifanio Rizo, and Vicente Miniet in Claim no 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352, Boxes 117 and 118.

sharecroppers, Telesforo Curubero, Epifanio Rizo, and Aniceto Marques—46-years old, 60, and 73-years of age respectively. All were illiterate or semi-literate since their testimony was read back to them, and they signed their depositions with an “X.”<sup>379</sup>

It was impossible to determine their race, or if they were *libertos* since much information remained ambiguous. Nevertheless, they were from a region that demographically had a saliently black majority population. The eldest, Marques, would have been born in 1833. Therefore, he would have been 35 in 1868 and 62 in 1895. He responded to the query about what he did when the war broke out in 1895: “as I had been an insurgent I immediately went to the camp.” He was asked “Do you mean that you had been an insurgent in the first insurrection?” to which he replied “Oh yes sir, in ‘68.”<sup>380</sup>

Rizo would have been born in 1846, and Curubero in 1860. They reported that they began work at the cafetal in 1885, which would be the year before the final abolition of slavery with the end of the *patronato* apprenticeship system—freeing the last remaining 25,000 slaves in Cuba, of which, however, fewer than 800 were to be found in Oriente since slavery had been less prominent in the east apart from Guantánamo and Santiago de Cuba. The deposition of 46-year old merchant Stephen de Quesada reported that in 1871, when he would have been eleven, his mother, grandmother, and two siblings were exiled to the United States because their surnames were Quesada and Céspedes. All members of the land-owning family had been “in the war of 1868” but “not so in ‘95.”<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>380</sup> Deposition of Aniceto Marques in Claim no. 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352, Boxes 117-18.

<sup>381</sup> Quote from Deposition of Stephen E. Quesada in Claim no. 252, (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352, Boxes 117-18. See also Depositions of Epifanio Rizo and Telesforo Curubero.

San Juan de Buena Vista was re-started in 1884, at which time there were already some colonos living on the estate. The owners lived part of the time in Santiago de Cuba, and at other times they moved to a two room thatched roof house with a parlor in the center, a porch, and some more expensive trappings such as ironwork. The floor of the house was the earlier concrete structure of an abandoned coffee drying terrace. The 42 colonos on the estate lived in individual thatched huts with their families. Instead of a closely supervised village tied to the estate, which would have reflected the pattern during slavery, each colono “built his own house” with materials taken from “the woods on the plantation.”<sup>382</sup> For that reason, Curubero explained, if the colono left the finca, the house would belong “to the owners of the land, and as all the materials came from the plantation, they had to be left there—that is the custom here.”<sup>383</sup> Each colono had a private kitchen, a hen house, and their own cultivation grounds where, according to a saddler that grew coffee and cocoa from age fifteen through twenty-five, until the war broke out again in 1895 and he left, each colono “procured the vegetables themselves—biscuits also ... minor products [cassava, boniatos and other food crops], and of course it was to their interest to push the work so as to get corn” while the owner provided them with salt cod, meat, rice, salt, oil or lard while the land was cleared for planting.<sup>384</sup>

The colonos reported the value of the estate to the lawyers by remarking on the palm groves and fruit trees that included oranges, mamey zapotes, anónes (cherimoyas), avocados, mangoes, plums, lemons, grapefruit, and coconuts in addition to the coffee and

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<sup>382</sup> Deposition of Telesforo Curubero, Claim no. 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de.), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>384</sup> Depositions of Manuel Basset Bonne [*sic*, Bonne?], and Stephen E. Quesada, Claim no. 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de.), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

cocoa grown for market.<sup>385</sup> In trying to assess the value of the estate, destroyed and burned by Spanish troops during the 1895-1898 war, questions turned repeatedly to the trees, which none of the colonos had ever bothered to count, quantify, and affix a cash value to. Expert witnesses tabulated the expense of the apiary, while workers such as Marques who had lived on the grounds since the mid-1880s had never counted the hives “because he was very much afraid of” the bees.<sup>386</sup>

Some workers paid yearly rent of \$50 on a *caballería* of land, approximately 33.2 acres, while others paid no rent, but grew coffee and cocoa on shares. Each would clear two or three *carreaux* for the coffee and cacao trees—each *carreau* was about three and a third acres or one-tenth of a *caballería*—all of which would go to the colono until the trees reached maturity and peak fertility after a period of years, sometimes up to nine. Cacao took three to four years to bear fruit, while coffee from a seedling required two years, or four to five years if grown from a seed. Coffee trees bore cherries for about twenty years, while the green, brown, and orange cacao pods were borne by each tree on the *cacaotal* for almost a century—ninety years.<sup>387</sup>

The sharecrop system called for two-thirds of the harvest to go to the owner while the colono kept a third. Beasts of burden to haul and market the crop were rented in cash, or deducted from the share. According to Quesada, the estate workers had to supply their own tools, but they often supplemented their income as charcoal burners, a product that would

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<sup>385</sup> Depositions of Stephen E. Quesada and Epifanio Rizo, Claim no. 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de.), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>386</sup> Assessment of the value of trees found in the Depositions of Curubero, Marques, Quesada, and Rizo, Claim no. 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de.), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. Quote from Deposition of Marques.

<sup>387</sup> Deposition of Stephen E. Quesada, Claim no. 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de.), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.



then be sent to kitchens of towns and cities for “direct money without having to wait for anything.” From the stunted coffee trees grown on two *carreaux*, or six and a half acres of land, the colono family could expect yields in good years with plenty of rain of approximately twenty to twenty-two *quintals* (a *quintal* was about a hundred pounds, so two thousand pounds of green coffee beans would be a good harvest) of coffee and 1500 to 1600lbs. of cacao beans.<sup>388</sup>

Coffee production nearly collapsed in the early 1880s, but began to recover by mid-decade. In the aforementioned letter on coffee production emanating from Santiago and Guantánamo Reimer claimed:

In 1886 coffee cultivation increased, owing to the high prices prevailing. Prices as they now stand leave more than a handsome profit to the coffee planter, but capital is wanting to restore the old plantations. ... The French Creoles at that time entirely controlled the coffee industry of this district, and their estates produced a high grade of coffee, which found its way to France and thence to Austria and Russia. Then the grades and classes of coffee were many, and the small amounts shipped to the United States were invariably of superior quality. ... The cultivation of coffee is still in the same primitive state in which it was years ago. ... I would state that the shipments from here and Guantanamo during the past year amounted to 1,550,627 pounds; the local consumption in both places I estimate at 300,000 pounds. This makes a total of 1,850,627 pounds, which, allowing 10,000 pounds to the *caballería* (33 1/3 acres), would show about 6,100 acres under cultivation. This small area does not supply the island consumption.<sup>389</sup>

In his report he explained that an ideal site for a coffee farm lay at 1,000 to 3,000 foot altitude. Many coffee growers favored steep hillsides since it was thought to help shield the coffee trees from the fearsome Caribbean sun.<sup>390</sup> The presence of certain trees such as “lance-

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<sup>388</sup> Depositions of Curubero, Marques, Quesada, and Rizo in Claim no. 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de.), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>389</sup> U.S. Congress. House. *Production of and Trade in Coffee*, 117.

wood, redwood, and olive-wood” served “as a never failing proof that the land is adapted for the cultivation of coffee.”<sup>391</sup> *Candela* and the machete served as the pacific means to prepare the ground for cultivation, not just the wartime means of destruction: “larger trees are burned out and the smaller trees and brush chopped down with ax and machete” while a range of other cultigens such as “corn, plantains, and all kinds of vegetables” would be grown.<sup>392</sup> In addition, much like Hazard described two decades before, “at intervals between the rows, cacao, which however, does not yield a full crop until the coffee plant is exhausted, say, in ten or twelve years” would be planted to shade the coffee trees and serve as a further source of production for the estate. After stunting the coffee tree, by the “third year it [coffee] yields a half crop; on the fourth year a full crop, which runs from 10,000 to 60,000 pounds of coffee ready for the market, according to the condition of the soil.”<sup>393</sup> During harvest season from August to December, *colonos* or hired field hands were

paid for picking and delivering the berry at the *secadero* (a large platform made of stone, covered and smoothed with cement) 50 cents per bag. It is calculated that 100 pounds of berries yield 15 pounds of marketable coffee. Each bag of berries delivered at the *secadero* must contain 200 to 300 pounds, and a good workman can pick three bags per day.<sup>394</sup>

In Hazard’s day technological inputs had begun to make inroads, but after the war the crude means of St.-Domingue-era coffee bean preparation persisted. The beans were dried, then put into an ox or mule-powered, “molina de pilar” where a rough wheel hewn from hard

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<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-19.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

wood, “the rim plated with metal,” overrode the beans in a cement “circular trough” to remove the berry hulls. This process frequently crushed some of the beans, which reduced their market value. After being thus cleaned, they were sometimes returned to the coffee pulping mill “to be polished, sometimes with charcoal added.”<sup>395</sup> Other processes redolent of past practice included the shipment by mule train. Reimer illustrated the crisis of coffee cultivation with “the following statement of coffee shipments from the port of Guantánamo” here reproduced as Table 4.2:

Table 4.2  
Shipments of coffee [in lbs.] from Santiago and Guantánamo for 1867 to 1886

Year	Island of Cuba	United States	France	Mediterranean Ports	Spain	Great Britain	Sundries	Total
1867	4,089,120	2,980	1,540,560	1,781,000	506,480	13,000	10,300	7,944,340
1868	5,616,380		1,300,240	1,283,000	85,560			8,287,840
1869	6,103,180		1,809,640	1,533,000	666,680			10,112,500
1870	5,466,980	64,980	863,800	942,000	268,040		10,000	7,620,800
1871	3,192,980		499,940		70,400		1,260	3,764,580
1872	2,673,660		20,800		1,200	2,600	3,480	2,701,740
1873	1,658,340	300	55,800					1,714,440
1874	2,392,920		32,000				5,600	2,430,520
1875	1,788,780	1,800	190,200		1,000		5,100	1,986,880
1876	1,119,700	1,000	90,000					1,210,700
1877	1,487,140	2,000	33,360		2,600			1,525,100
1878	1,521,560					7,400	25,800	1,554,760
1879	1,285,000		31,314		800		5,000	1,323,114
1880	1,201,800		19,300		2,600		1,800	1,225,500
1881	464,340	2,500			4,200		2,300	473,340
1882	1,683,640	1,100	102,400		28,380		600	1,816,120
1883	401,662		19,100		2,200		1,200	424,162
1884	660,200							660,200
1885	504,340	1,531			2,864		1,900	510,635
1886	1,542,360	600			6,100		1,567	1,550,627

Source: U.S. Congress. House. *Production of and Trade in Coffee*, 116.

As may be seen, the separatist strategy against the economic life of the region had reduced coffee from 10,112,500 pounds in 1868 to 2.7 million pounds by 1872. By the Little War quantities exported were sharply reduced. Historian Hugh Thomas thought that the

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*

overthrow of coffee by sugar left “a discontented class of rural gentry” that viewed their ruination as caused “by sugar.”<sup>396</sup> To him, those coffee growers who did not also have a stake in sugar properties formed a base of support for separatism in the Ten Years’ War. In the case of Guantánamo, it seems that such a revolutionary propensity was formed during the 1880s as sugar became a focus of economic organization, while coffee foundered after its destruction between separatist and integralist armies.

Certainly this rural society proved to be susceptible to the entreaties of separatists when the war for independence began again in 1895. The mountainous zones appeared to be aligned against Spain to an extent greater than in the late 1860s. Most of the rural colono workers at San Juan de Buenavista cited above expressed fear of Spanish soldiery in their depositions. Some went over to the insurgency early, others did so later. In cases such as Rizo’s, perhaps too old, or simply cautious, for the life in the *manigua* among the rebels, he limited his participation to bringing clothes and supplies to a friend in their ranks. As will be seen, the changes in class structures, increased complexity of society, and subtle re-configurations of racial constructs after abolition shaped the way the next separatist uprising developed within the district.<sup>397</sup>

During the interwar years Guantánamo received an influx of population including migrants and relocated *orientales*; dispossessed families, *libertos*, and veterans of the fighting moved to the southeastern frontier to start over.<sup>398</sup> Migrants and peasant colonists

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<sup>396</sup> Thomas, 132.

<sup>397</sup> On the movements of the deponents during the war, see Claim no. 252 (Quesada, Carmen Villalon de.), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. The nationalist discourse on race—disarming the racist pessimism of Spanish propaganda—is well elaborated and convincingly argued by Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*.

<sup>398</sup> Demographic data from the period is fragmentary. See however, Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 73 and 100-106 and Pichardo, *Facetas de nuestra historia*, 126.

tried to put the war behind them, but often harbored resentments towards Spain. Displaced veterans uneasily re-assimilated into colonial society, but continued to evince pro-independence political stances. Guantánamo's coat of arms still bore the device with the motto of "loyal *ayuntamiento*," but groups such as these sustained ideals of a future republic, and laid the groundwork for the renewal of the revolution in 1895.<sup>399</sup>

### War of Independence

By 1894, fourteen years since the end of the Little War, and after the stagnation and depression of the 1880s followed by heady sugar boom years of the early nineties, came the crash. Economic downturn in the United States spiraled into the production of commodities exported from Cuba, and jarring hardships. The United States imposed new tariffs on sugar imports from the isle. Sugar plantation owners prepared for the harvesting and grinding season of 1895 with foreboding. The timing was now opportune for Cuban insurrectionists, recently unified by José Martí's Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC) in New York, leavened by supporters within exile communities, cigar workers in Tampa, and separatists throughout Cuba, to re-initiate the long deferred uprising against Spanish control.

Necessary elements—strategic and tactical, logistic and political—had been elaborated since their often fitful, piecemeal introduction during the failed earlier rebellions.<sup>400</sup> Cuban insurgents analyzed and studied past defeat. Many of the problems had

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<sup>399</sup> Pérez, "Vagrants, Beggars, and Bandits: Social Origins of Cuban Separatism, 1878-1895."

<sup>400</sup> Tactical innovation in the new insurrection appeared slight. The exaction of payments and war taxes by the Liberation Army from planters had been undertaken earlier. See Pérez, *Cuba Between Empires, 1878-1902*, 126. The Spanish military archives contain evidence of cane fires during the Ten Years' War, as has been seen, and also a ciphered telegram where, during the Little War, "José Maceo asks each ingenio that it will not be destroyed if twelve thousand cartridges and two hundred ounces [payments of specie or money]" would be given to the rebels. See Telegrama cifrado del Jefe 1a. Brigada del día 19 Enero 1880 desde Guantánamo,

been ignored, could not be readily overcome, or proved insuperable. In some cases, an attitude became manifest that no longer would partisans of *Cuba Libre* altogether cater to immediate interests of large landowners and other powerful sectors in the execution of policy, and the prosecution of the war against the colonial metropolis. The composition of elite sectors had undergone shifts during the intervening decade and a half. To many rebel military leaders, demands of the struggle came before any other consideration. Past defeat after sustained sacrifice in the face of total war in a colonial context had galled earlier Cuban separatists; the earlier failed efforts had radicalized some insurgents' political attitudes. Somewhat as before, political ends of the future republic remained vague, social policy hazy and ill defined, but revolutionary means were legitimated for the struggle with greater clarity.

The economic warfare strategy by veterans of the past wars conflicted with many civilian leaders of the new unified PRC embarking on a project of national liberation. In contrast with a movement toward the policies structured by reverses in the field, the articulation of attacking the economic base of the colony was explicit, direct, and immediate. The case for attacking the colonial economy directly and in pressing planters to provide essential resources to the anticolonial effort had been earlier advocated by Gómez and other leaders. Their thoughts may be further inferred from an 1894 letter where Gómez wrote, "rich people will never enter the Revolution" instead, insurgent plotters "must force the situation – precipitate the events."<sup>401</sup> The rebels of the 1890s prepared for upcoming uprising against Spanish control informed by the earlier hard lessons of lack of internal unity, and being isolated for the most part to the eastern third of the island. By 1895 they had elaborated

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AGM-S, SU, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 534. For cane fires, see 1876 correspondence in AGM-S, SU, 6a y 8a, 18-R, leg. 331.

<sup>401</sup> Cited in Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism 1895-1902*, I: 2.

plans to extend armed struggle throughout the island. Towards that end, a more flexible strategy against large property holdings in eastern Cuba had been developed, but it was ambiguous and ambivalent in many of its insurgent revenue generating dimensions.

The War of Independence began on 24 February 1895 with uprisings in Guantánamo, Baire, and other locales throughout the island. As during the Ten Years' War, Spanish colonial authorities and their local supporters concentrated in the west quashed the rebellion swiftly in Havana and Matanzas. Only in Oriente did the insurrection meet with significant popular support and avoid being suppressed by the internal social control mechanisms of the colonial state. On orders from the PRC in New York, and a pre-arranged plan from Antonio Maceo and other leaders, Pedro Agustín Pérez and about one hundred other pro-independence *guantanameros* read aloud the proclamation starting the revolt at the La Confianza estate near Guantánamo City, and then split up into various groups to begin operations. The intent of the initial actions was to clear almost deserted, remote coast of Spanish troops so supply expeditions and principal insurgent leaders in exile, including José Martí and Gómez, could securely disembark and march inland.

Pedro A. Pérez had defected to the separatist cause in the Little War after an earlier career as a member of the pro-Spanish Squadron of Santa Catalina during the Ten Years' War along with many family members, including his notorious maroon-hunter uncle and godfather Miguel Pérez Céspedes. Other Guantánamo insurgents in the initial uprising included Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría, a worker at the central Confluente near Guantánamo, Evaristo Lugo, a carpenter at the *ingenio* Monte Sano who fought in all three wars, and Enrique Thomas y Thomas, an administrator from Santa María sugar estate.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> Sánchez Guerra, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros (1532-1899)*, 45-46.

Some planters and other members of the middle classes had separatist sympathies, often framed in light of inadequacies and frustrations with the prevailing colonial system.

Members of this group included Frenchman Arturo Simón, an owner and manager at Santa Cecilia and Enrique Brooks, a stockholder in Brooks and Company and a cousin to Theodore Brooks who was one of the managers of the firm and a consular official for Great Britain.

The initial cohort of nationalist insurgents had a varied local coalition of supporters across class lines poised to implement insurgent tactics from the earlier wars in flexible, nuanced fashion—even if other elements were anything but subtle—keeping strategic necessities of the anti-colonial movement in view. The separatist network was far more rooted in popular support by the 1890s. A hallmark of irregular and guerrilla warfare was the intimate knowledge of the local terrain by the insurgents. In the case of Guantánamo, *insurrecto* familiarity extended from the *monte* to the *llano* and into the cane fields and operations of sugar estates at every level. It was no longer the case, as it had been in the Ten Years' War that the rebels were largely from outside the district. The planters too, had not been idle. They faced the prospect of rebellion with alarm, but were prepared to attempt a difficult process of preserving their estates by trying to play rebels off against Spanish authorities.

Leaders of the new insurrection included both old members from the earlier independence effort and newer positivist, progressive, and romantic nationalist ideological currents from the time period.<sup>403</sup> Poor blacks and whites, *libertos* and their descendants,

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<sup>403</sup> For a sense of the content of not only Cuban separatism, but also the milieu of Spanish oppositional politics, iconoclastic intellectuals, and wider anti-colonial movements, see Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination*; Ramón de Armas Delamarter-Scott, *La revolución pospuesta* (Havana: Centro de Estudios Martianos, 2002); Joan Casanovas Codina, *Bread, or Bullets!: Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1998); Ferrer, *Insurgent*



small holders, artisans, and proletarian communities in Florida and within Cuba, who often strongly identified with Cuban nationalist sentiments, formed the social base of *Cuba Libre*. Unlike the Ten Years' War, which had emanated from "the top down, that is why it failed" the newer, more explicitly revolutionary movement "surge[d] from the bottom up, that is why it will triumph" in the words of Gómez.<sup>404</sup>

At the outset the conspirators had to initiate the uprising and mobilize the Liberation Army anew. The first operations attempted to secure safe base areas to operate in, seize stocks of weapons, and to prepare the way for exiled leaders such as Antonio and José Maceo and supply expeditions emanating from abroad to arrive. In Guantánamo, twelve conspirators led by Enrique Tudela captured a Spanish sentinel position, a blockhouse near the coast at Jatibonico, seizing six Mauser rifles from the guard detachment.<sup>405</sup> Other separatist groups attacked Spanish posts within the region; Enrique Brooks' unit fired on the Civil Guard barracks that supplemented the Squadron of Santa Catalina in internal social control functions against bandits and anti-colonial conspiracy.

There had been desultory rebellions and political unrest alongside banditry since the Little War, but the 1895 uprising was organized differently and occurred at the start of the long sugar harvest. In Guantánamo, the *zafra* cane cutting and grinding season typically began sometime in December or January, and finished up by May, so area planters caught by the timing of the uprising were particularly concerned to secure their valuable crop and finish

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*Cuba*; Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All*; Lillian Guerra, *The Myth of José Martí: Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Helg, *Our Rightful Share*; Poyo; Scott, "Class Relations in Sugar and Political Mobilization in Cuba, 1868-1899," *Degrees of Freedom*, and "Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Cuba: A View from the Sugar District of Cienfuegos, 1886-1899."

<sup>404</sup> In Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 160.

<sup>405</sup> Varona Guerrero, I: 484-485.

the season without undue complications. Delays to the completion of the harvest occurred with the onset of martial law and increased Spanish military activity in response to the rebellion.

Newspaper accounts initially disputed the effectiveness and extent of the revolt and its extent. Four days after it started, a *New York Times* article, citing sources in Cuba including pro-Spanish accounts, argued that “bands of insurgents” in Oriente had

become thoroughly discouraged through lack of leaders” while the “entire island condemns the revolt and overwhelmingly approves the attitude of the Government. ... rioters in Baire, Precinct of Santiago de Cuba, have signified, through their leader, Rubi [*sic*, Jesús Rabí], that they would like to arrange an interview ... They profess a desire to discuss the reforms for which they took up arms as cover for a request for clemency.<sup>406</sup>

By March, rebels farther west in Matanzas and Jagüey Grande surrendered, while autonomists who had formerly been rebels were importuned to discuss terms with those who had risen in arms. As for Guantánamo, the *New York Times*, quoting sources on the island, reported that

Several members of Pedro Perez’s band have surrendered to the authorities. The officials of the district assert that the rebel force there numbers 180 men, who are poorly armed, and are unable to do much fighting, as their supply of ammunition is becoming low.

It is presumed that they expect a fresh supply from abroad and warships are cruising along the coast in order to intercept any vessels that may bring ammunition for the rebels.<sup>407</sup>

The imminent surrender of insurrectionists in western Oriente was anticipated. By March 13, a “dispatch from Guantanamo” reported that Pedro Pérez’ group had been dispersed, while

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<sup>406</sup> “Cuban Rebels Penitent—Those Who Were Fierce in New York Are Like Doves Elsewhere—Gomez and Marti are Invisible” *NYT*, 28 February 1895, p. 5.

<sup>407</sup> “Cuban Insurgents Subdued—Marrero and His Band Surrendered and Others Are Parleying.” *NYT*, March 5, 1895, p.5.

the Spanish authorities reported that they were confident of stamping out the revolt.<sup>408</sup> They were mistaken.

By April 1895 Antonio Maceo and a group of separatist leaders including Flor Crombet, many of them veterans of the Ten Years' War, landed from a schooner at a beach in Duaba near Baracoa on the north coast. The small party narrowly eluded patrols of local militia, including "Indians from Yateras," led by coffee planters and integralist veterans of the Ten Years' War, in this case guerrilla leaders Pedro Garrido and Félix Lescaille.<sup>409</sup> The militia from Guantánamo killed Flor Crombet during the pursuit. Also in early April, Guillermo Moncada, one of the main separatist conspirators, and the nemesis of Miguel Pérez during the Ten Years' War, succumbed to tuberculosis while in the field with rebels under his command. After a series of skirmishes and narrow evasions of Spanish and integralist troops, Antonio Maceo arrived in a relatively secure zone in the environs of Guantánamo. News spread by word of mouth rapidly of the arrival of Maceo. Although he had been in exile in Central America for many years after the first insurrection's defeat, his sense of purpose, tenacity, and principled refusal to surrender at Baraguá in 1878 during the Ten Years' War without having secured either independence for Cuba or the immediate abolition of slavery had made him a larger than life figure to many Cubans—especially

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<sup>408</sup> "Cuba's Noisy Insurgents—Various Bands Are Dispersed and Others Surrender or Fall—Rebels Are Braver in Key West." *NYT*, 13 March 1895, p.5.

<sup>409</sup> Lateulade, *Apuntes de la delegación de hacienda del distrito de Guantánamo* (Guantánamo: Imprenta El Arte Guantánamo, 1930), "Antecedentes." See Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, 1895-1902*, 1: 8. Garrido, a retired lieutenant of the Spanish Army, owned the coffee plantation "La Cubana" in Yateras, while Félix Lescaille owned another coffee estate "Deseada." See Expediente manuscrito que contiene la circular cursada por el Gobernador General de la isla en la que ordena que por lo civil y lo militar, se haga una información que demuestre el número de fincas quemadas por los insurrectos, aparecen en el mismo, comunicaciones de los alcaldes de la provincia, acusando recibo de dicho circular y enviando la información requerida. Fechado, Habana y otros lugares, Julio 11 al 19 de Octubre de 1897, in AHPSC, GP, leg. 742, no. 39, año: 1897, materia: Guerra del 1895.

among people of color. Many *guantanameros* promptly downed tools and headed to the *manigua* and the insurrection since he had first risen to national prominence during the fighting there after 1871. Reunited with Pedro A. Pérez, Jesús Sablón Moreno Rabí, and other veterans of the past independence struggles, and daily receiving new recruits, Maceo began a swift campaign throughout the province designed to organize and prepare the *mambí* army to carry the war into western districts. By devastating the west, it was thought, the Liberation Army might defeat the Spanish as quickly as possible.

That same month, 11 April 1895, José Martí and Máximo Gómez landed on the far southeastern coast near the Punta de Maisí at Cajobabo to begin an arduous trek inland to reunite with separatists operating in the east. By the 24<sup>th</sup> they had contacted José Maceo in the hills above Guantánamo, and in early May, convened a meeting with Antonio Maceo and other rebel leaders. By that time Martí would be dead, killed in a May 19 skirmish with a Spanish patrol near Dos Ríos between Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo. With the death of Martí, who had organized and prepared the national liberation struggle more than any other figure, leadership of the PRC in New York fell to a U.S. citizen, Tomás Estrada Palma, while Gómez continued as commander-in-chief of the Liberation Army. Gómez and his group entered Camagüey and began to organize additional Liberation Army groups while Maceo led continuous feints to draw off Spanish forces. These mutually supportive operations came to characterize large-scale insurgent movements, especially during the western invasion.

In some isolated regions of eastern Cuba, generalized support for the insurgent forces was such that José Grave de Peralta, Guantánamo City's mayor, "lamented that the few faithful subjects who remained dared not contradict such [pro-independence] assertions"

since pro-Spanish elements were completely isolated.<sup>410</sup> Some *guantanamero* insurgents formed up with units in nearby Santiago de Cuba, while others followed the personal leadership of Maceo as a charismatic *caudillo* figure. Still others remained in the district in two proto-regiments of the Liberation Army: some ex-integralist volunteers, including apparently, some Yateras Indians, signaled their break with Spain by adopting the name “Hatuey” after the sixteenth-century Taíno chief who chose to death at the stake at the hands of Spanish conquistadors rather than submit to conversion to their god. A second was named “Pineda” after the local ex-bandit rebel Rustán, who had died in 1872 during the Ten Years' War.<sup>411</sup>

By the end of April, Antonio Maceo and other insurgent commanders had set about organizing, recruiting, training, and equipping the First Corps of the Liberation Army in eastern Oriente, and a Second Corps in the west of the province. Insurgent decrees forbade communication and commercial contact with the revolution's enemies and prohibited transport of cattle to towns or camps held by the Spanish. At Arroyo Hondo, quite close to the *ingenio* Santa Cecilia and north of one of Los Caños' sugar cane *colonias*, General José Maceo, the younger brother of Antonio who had nearly been killed back in the 1871 invasion, and who had commanded rebels in the district during the Little War, together with approximately 200 *mambí* combatants ambushed and defeated a Spanish column of 600 soldiers of the Simancas Battalion operating from the city of Guantánamo. José Maceo also successfully supported Gómez and Martí's trek into Oriente after their landing on the coast,

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<sup>410</sup> Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 142.

<sup>411</sup> Rolando Zulueta Zulueta, "La Guerra de 1895 en el Departamento Oriental" in Francisco Pérez Guzmán, Rolando Zulueta Zulueta and Yolanda Díaz Martínez, *La Guerra de Independencia* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1998), 99.

and intercepted a valuable supply expedition. Through May, rebels in Oriente began to prepare the army of invasion. Military actions focused on improving the training, mobility and tactics of Liberation Army units, and as always, to obtain more weapons, horses, and equipment.

### Organizing the Army of Invasion

Throughout the War of Independence, as in the past conflicts, there would always be far more potential combatants than available weapons. Carlos “Guariche” Rodríguez who had been an overseer on Brooks and Company and Santiago Forbes MacKinley’s estates before becoming an insurgent officer, addressed the typical scarcity of arms among insurgents in 1904 testimony before the U.S. Spanish Treaty Claims Commission. He recalled having fifty men under his command, but only “15 at most” were armed: some with “single and double barrel guns, and some Remingtons [Model 1871 breech-loading, single-shot rifles]” and “[m]achetes yes, that goes without saying.”<sup>412</sup> In a similar statement Colonel Enrique Tudela claimed that “[o]n few occasions half” of the combatants “were armed. Whenever we had arms we lacked ammunition. The best arms and the greater part of the ammunition were always at Calixto García's Headquarters [in 1896-1897] around Tunas [in northwestern Oriente].”<sup>413</sup> The logistical problem of securing weapons and ammunition remained an urgent priority through the war. Supplying the movement required weapons in greater quantity than could be seized from colonialist forces and cached in the countryside;

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<sup>412</sup> Deposition of Carlos Rodríguez, pp. 2-4, 6-7, 11, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>413</sup> Deposition of Enrique Tudela, p. 5, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. See also Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 39-40.

stocks of ammunition, rifles, and other ordinance formed a problem that was to be assuaged by arms purchases abroad using insurgent funds to be smuggled to the island.

It was also in May 1895 when Antonio Maceo implemented a newly refined governmental function vital to securing improved supplies, weapons, and resources for the *mambises*. Since the separatist military in the field required funds far beyond what could be gathered from contributions abroad and supporters in the field, remittances from planters would prove vital. Taxes would be levied irrespective of political orientation or reluctance to support the insurgents' nationalist goals. As Cuban insurgents prepared to contest the colonial Spanish army amply supplied with modern weapons, furnished by a national treasury, supported by a large and influential constituency within Cuba itself, and typically manned by poor peasant conscripts, the leadership of both the Liberation Army and the PRC in exile imposed taxes on property owners. In Guantánamo, insurgents taxed coffee farms in the *monte* and the growing sugar estates of the *llano*.

Faced with the scarcity of weapons, paucity of resources, and the military need to extend the revolution clear across the island because it had failed in the west, Antonio Maceo demanded support from eastern Cuba's property owners. He circulated a communiqué indicating that planters were subject to war taxes and liable to provide supplies to the insurrection. Unlike later decrees, Maceo's initial circular implied that production could continue, provided a proportion of the proceeds went to the Liberation Army. Some planters, including those sympathetic to the rebellion, but also others hedging their bets between the Spaniards and the Cuban forces, convened several secret meetings to discuss the implications

of Maceo's order.<sup>414</sup> As some employees and acquaintances of landowners had already gone over to the rebellion, all that was needed to establish communication was a trustworthy intermediary known to all parties.

A group of planters, including apparently, sugar *colono* Miguel Labarraque, Arturo Simón (Santa Cecilia), Felix Begué (Bella-Vista coffee farm), Eugenio Redor (San Antonio), Fernando Pons (Santa María sugar mill and the Grignon and San Fernando coffee estates) and Santiago F. MacKinley (Romelié) found Emilio Lateulade as the go-between.<sup>415</sup> Emilio Lateulade, a Ten Years' War veteran, and familiar with many of the regional sugar planters, served as the local financial delegate of the insurgent treasury with the mission to "collect at all hazards" the taxes demanded by the revolution. His profession had earlier been a mechanic at both local coffee estates and a sugar boiler in the mills.<sup>416</sup> Skilled workers in the agricultural exports of the region commanded some of the highest salaries in the district,

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<sup>414</sup> As in the previous wars, identification with either Spain or an independent Cuba was frequently a conscious act of political allegiance. Some Spaniards served in the Liberation Army, while some Cubans sided with Spain. Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 94-95, found that most rebels were small farmers and peasants, many of whom, he thought, likely harbored resentments toward the sugar latifundia. Analyzing two regiments, he wrote that over ninety percent were unmarried, young men, and that only "4 percent" were foreign born ... "the troops were young, single peasants of African descent born in Cuba. The officers were whites from the city." In Guantánamo some nine hundred male district residents, possibly more, served in Spanish militias—a very significant proportion of the population—while 365 foreign-born insurgents could be found in the ranks of the First Corps of the Liberation Army in southeastern Oriente including 247 Spaniards, and 41 African-born soldiers; see René González and Bernardo Iglesias, *Presencia extranjera en la Guerra del '95: Estudio del Primer Cuerpo del Ejército Libertador*, Boletín del Archivo Nacional 2 (Havana, 1989), 64-87. The largest numbers included 247 Spaniards, 41 African-born insurgents, 30 Puerto Ricans and 11 Dominicans. For the reactionary volunteer movement of Spanish militia in the Ten Years' War see Domingo Acebrón, *Voluntarios y su papel contrarrevolucionario en la guerra de los diez años*; Gott, 74-76. For numbers in the *Escuadras de Santa Catalina* late in the War of Independence, (expanded to 876 men) along with other local military organizations such as the *Husares de Pando*, volunteers, guerrillas, etc. bolstered nominal troop strength to between 8,000 and 9,000 troops (including 7,000 Spanish regulars), see Deposition of Theodore Brooks, pp. 64-65, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. For slightly lower Spanish and volunteer troop strengths late in the war, see Deposition of Arturo Narciso Armesto who had been Guantánamo chief of police in early 1895, later the first clerk of the *ayuntamiento* and a captain of volunteers pp. 3-11, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>415</sup> Lateulade, *Apuntes de la delegación de hacienda del distrito de Guantánamo*, 16-18.

<sup>416</sup> Deposition of Emilio Lateulade, p.11-13, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76; Entry 352.



which made him a relatively privileged person. The start of the war found him installing machinery at a coffee finca.<sup>417</sup> During the insurrection, because of his acquaintance with the sugar industry and coffee growers, he could facilitate gathering war taxes to benefit the Cuban Liberation Army while recognizing tensions and obstacles planters faced.

In late May, Maceo confirmed Lateulade in the position of district delegate to collect taxes. Maceo had operated throughout southeastern Cuba seventeen years before, and knew it well. His proposal was to secure it as a base area for the army of invasion being readied to carry the war across the largest fortification erected by Spain in the Americas: the military *trocha* dividing the island in half at the narrows between Ciego de Ávila, Morón, and Jucaro. During the war, operating between the civilian insurgent authority, the *mambí* army, and the planters, Lateulade kept well away from large concentrations of enemy and allied troops with an armed escort of five or six men. Sums were paid to him directly, or through the PRC leadership abroad. Maceo had already made other Guantánamo district planters aware of insurgent taxation directly.

On 13 May 1895, Cuban insurgents took Ernest Brooks, the English manager of the Soledad sugar plantation northeast of Guantánamo, before General Maceo. During this phase of insurgent activity in Oriente province, a battle involving 400 Spanish troops occurred at Jobito astride the road between Tiguabos and Guantánamo quite close to the *ingenios* San Idelfonso and the Brooks and Company-owned Soledad.<sup>418</sup> Ernest Brooks and others from

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<sup>417</sup> Lateulade, *Apuntes de la delegación de hacienda del distrito de Guantánamo*, 15

<sup>418</sup> J. Frank Clark, "Insurgent Defeat at Jovito—Signal Success of Spaniards Against Maceo and Other Leaders," *NYT*, 17 May 1895, p. 5. "The Government has issued an official report of a battle which took place at Jovito, near Guantanamo, May 12. [...] the Spanish force lost seventeen killed and thirty wounded ... Spanish commander claims that the insurgents lost 300 killed and wounded. The insurgent force numbered 2,000 men, under command of the rebel leaders, José Maceo, Perez Rabi [*sic*, Pérez, and Rabí], and Cartagena ... Government troops ... held their own against the odds [*sic*] of five to one until they were finally reinforced

the plantation rode into the cane fields to see what the insurrection portended for their sugar harvest still underway due to delays.<sup>419</sup> His answer came from the top. Antonio Maceo needed funds, weapons, and equipment for Cubans joining the insurgency. Maceo told Ernest Brooks and other area sugar planters and coffee growers that they could continue to grind and collect the year's harvest, provided they contributed taxes on its total value, including five cents per bag of refined sugar. If the tax was not paid, or through other actions there was evidence of alliance with the Spanish, there would be reprisals, including the burning of fields and the destruction of buildings.

Guantánamo planters were by no means the only ones subject to insurgent taxation. Similar arrangements were made throughout Oriente province, the heartland of the rebellion. In Guantánamo, the demands led to negotiations with the planters until the invasion of the west in October of 1895, whereupon insurgent policy shifted to completely disallowing sugar grinding and other production, and levying taxes on the physical plant and buildings of area estates. It was this policy of impeding production, enforcing payment of war taxes and forced loans to the movement, that came to characterize insurgent attitudes toward the sugar sector and foreign owners in the Guantánamo district.

There were now two power centers vying for allegiance. The colonial state would redouble its efforts, and, much as it did in the Ten Years' War, would use its resources to recruit additional local forces to reinforce troops sent from Iberia.<sup>420</sup> Social control would be

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by troops from Guantanamo. Another engagement is reported between the Spanish and Cuban forces in Arroyo Naranjo, near Guantanamo, in which the insurgents were forced to withdraw. The rebels were commanded by the brothers Maceo.”

<sup>419</sup> Deposition of Ernest Brooks, p. 4, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>420</sup> Fighting at Sao del Indio, campaign reports, unit histories, casualty lists, recommendations for promotions compiled by month, year, and province without an index appear in “Operaciones de Campaña—Provincia de Santiago de Cuba” in AGM-M, SU, caja: 4023 and 4026, exp. 63 (for box 4023), exp. Agosto

primarily a military counterinsurgency policy for the duration of the war. On the other hand, the separatist polity would assert its rights to coerce demands from the population as though it were a constituted, established, and sovereign nation state. Upon forming a provisional government and civilian structure nominally in charge of the insurgent military and rebel-held prefectures, a Treasury Department that included delegates for each district took over the bulk of revenue collection activities.<sup>421</sup> Funds were obtained through contributions within Cuba and those made abroad to the PRC, via taxes on the total worth of property, and later through a forced war loan at six percent annual interest until the Republic of Cuba was constituted. The amount of the loan was reckoned at some 2 percent of property value.<sup>422</sup> As with Céspedes' attempts to convene an orderly and graduated abolition, the situation on the ground would soon render problematic the extension of a dual authority replete with the power to tax.

The Spanish military tried to shut the insurgents out of each plantation and town, and attempted to interdict support and supplies from reaching the rebellion. Much as they had in the Ten Years' War, an architecture of social control and the surveillance and management of

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1895 (for box 4026). See reports from Guantánamo. The Squadron of Santa Catalina, 250 men and “local guerrillas” were mentioned several times in the destruction of enemy camps, Pedro Garrido, the commander was cited for heroism. In Parte de Guantánamo, 2 de Septiembre de 1895, p.18, in AGM-M, SU, caja: 4023, exp. 3, it mentions “the cowardly and criminal conduct that our enemy displays, in addition to their treason to our adored homeland, is to employ against its loyal and worthy defenders the most barbarous elements [of warfare], severely punished by the laws of all civilized nations.” During an ambush on a column, the Liberation Army had “placed on ... the roads of that region dynamite mines so that as our forces passed, our valiant soldiers were sacrificed ... there was a formidable explosion as the column passed by, resulting in horrible mutilation of three individuals in the troop of the Squadron, gravely wounding the valiant lieutenant D. Francisco Ruiz Campos, who died the following day, and various grave wounds to the Captain of the Squadron D. Gregorio Romero Pacheco. This atentat, as criminal as cowardly, condemned by the laws of people obligated us to march with all manner of precautions to avoid new outrages...”

<sup>421</sup> A list of prefectures, apparently from late in the war, Lista de los empleados civiles del distrito de Guantánamo, correspondientes al servicio postal, prefecturas y guardia territorial, ANC, R95, leg. 36, exp. 5071 documents some of the duties in separatist civil zones.

<sup>422</sup> Lateulade, *Apuntes de la delegación de hacienda del distrito de Guantánamo*, 1. Also Deposition of Emilio Lateulade, p. 11, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

space was contrived by trying to fortify important sites: in most cases, a blockhouse was erected at each valuable estate giving visible manifestation of defending the prevailing social relations. In time, the Spanish forces and local militia compelled the abandonment of some estates, while most others had large defensive works erected. In the case of La Esperanza sugar mill owned by José Baró just north of Guantánamo City, where Chinese estate workers had rebelled before the Ten Years' War and later slaves had struck for their autonomy and some measure of control over their labor, seven stone blockhouses from the first insurrection were refurbished.

As the harvest and grinding of sugar was completed, the *batey* of each sugar mill was ringed with barbed wire and blockhouses around the outskirts. Structures outside the perimeter were demolished, clearing fields of fire. The blockhouses typically were situated on rising ground or built atop an earthen mound, with a lower story of masonry or heavy timber filled with gravel or rammed earth, and each had an upper story with a roof-top parapet for a sentry. Between five to seven blockhouses were typically erected on a given estate, with a squad of seven to ten soldiers posted in each.<sup>423</sup> At Los Caños, surrounded by flat terrain far from the rising ring of hills surrounding the valley, only four surrounded the sugarhouse and factory buildings along a rough square 300 meters to a side. The scale house was converted into one of these bastions, while a fifth, smaller post guarded the shipping pier on the shores of the broad bay at the end of the mill's railway track.<sup>424</sup>

As in the past conflicts, taxation was supplemented by direct expropriation and by supporters diverting goods to the rebellion. In a 29 September 1895 proclamation, the mayor

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<sup>423</sup> Details about local blockhouses from the deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 34, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>424</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p.32, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

of Guantánamo restricted sales of clothing, provisions, and even salt—of which the district had plenty given the sea salt works at Caimanera—in order to deny material aid to the insurgency.<sup>425</sup> In at least some cases estate managers provided the Spanish military with lists of the inhabitants so population movements could be controlled and quantities of food measured out to ensure that it was not being diverted to insurgents.<sup>426</sup> No longer could recruits go off to join the insurrection as readily as they had in May, when they requisitioned horses and mules at Soledad, helping themselves to supplies in the canteen, and committing other depredations against plantations.<sup>427</sup>

With the tightening of martial law, restrictions, and regulations, insurgents pressed their demands for funds from prosperous landowners. In the case of the Brookses, they responded by attempting to secure protection from the Spanish authorities, calculating that the Spanish military was stronger than the rebels, and to reduce the amount of their assessments by going over the heads of the insurgents in the field by appeals and negotiations with the PRC in New York. Antonio Maceo received a letter from PRC head Tomás Estrada Palma in September 1895 regarding payments made for the Brookses' properties in Guantánamo:

Mr. Alfa [Paul Brooks] has received a letter from his partner there in which he is assured that you threaten to destroy his properties if he does not deliver a considerable sum which he considers impossible. He has promised to

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<sup>425</sup> Bandos and Proclamations of the Governor Generals, and other Spanish Generals in Cuba, from 1895 to 1898, USNA, RG 60, Entry 160. Guantánamo has long been a center for the salt trade in Cuba, where sea-salt is extracted from the waters of the bay. Insurgents operated a salt works quite close to abandoned American iron mines at Sigua on the coast near Daiquirí and Santiago de Cuba during the war. Salt boilers were apparently insurgents detailed to the operation as punishment. Information contained in Spanish Treaty Claims Commission Records, Claim no. 272 (Brock), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>426</sup> Such a list for a sugar mill near Alto Songo close to Santiago de Cuba can be found in Claim no. 475 (Whiting and Taylor), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>427</sup> Deposition of Ernest Brooks, p. 5, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

contribute around \$2,500 annually for each of his sugar mills; that this is as much as he can pay, that he, in different ways, has aided the cause from the start, that he is putting into play here his influence with members of the Congress and with prominent people all this he claims he is doing in an effort to aid our cause [*sic*]. He is of the opinion that the destruction of properties must produce a bad effect on the outside without in any way benefiting the patriots.<sup>428</sup>

The promised payments of \$2,500 a year for the four Guantánamo area estates, the *colonia* of Santa Cecilia north of Los Caños and the railroad line connecting Caimanera with Guantánamo, Soledad, and Jamaica subjected the Brooks & Co. to pay a total of \$15,000.<sup>429</sup>

In October 1895, José Maceo wrote “Citizen Secretary of Hacienda,” Severo Pina, the criteria for levying taxes on sugar mills while carrying out decrees of a programmatic campaign of economic sabotage. He had to honor the most recent orders of Gómez to halt economic activity that might benefit Spain in some way, but also secure support for the invading columns heading into the west commanded by his older brother to carry out the destruction of the island’s economic core. As a result, the ability of the Liberation Army to carry out its threats had to be demonstrated, while at the same time, payments had to be assured. Communications between the field and the PRC offices in New York ensured that there was considerable room for planters such as the Brookses to try to minimize or evade payment of all the sums.

A report from José Maceo on the imposed contributions from estate owners in the region of operations of the First Division of the First Corps of the Liberation Army listed the

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<sup>428</sup> Lawrence R. Nichols, “Domestic History of Cuba During the War of the Insurrectos, 1895-1898.” (master's thesis, Duke University, 1951), 70-71. That “ALFA” of “Mr. Alfa” refers to the Brooks & Co., specifically to Paul Brooks, is confirmed by Deposition of Ernest A. Brooks, [Ernest August Brooks], p. 47, and facsimiles of receipts for payments given to Theodore Brooks in Guantánamo by insurgents found in Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. See also Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 36.

<sup>429</sup> Memorandum of Payments to the Cuban Revolutionary Junta and its Representatives for account of Estate “Los Caños,” marked T.B.T., p. 1, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

names of fincas, the name of owners, the amount paid to insurgent coffers, and the amount due.<sup>430</sup> A “verified” amount of 45,000 pesos from seven Guantánamo sugar mills from their “representative” code-named “A.l.f.a.”—Paul Brooks—was the first item, followed by a detailed list of fincas large and small.<sup>431</sup> The figure \$60,440.15 was assessed, with \$46,294 in arrears for 282 owners of a variety of estates, coffee farms, ranches, and the seven sugar ingenios.<sup>432</sup>

Eventually General José Maceo implemented the threatened property destruction against obstinate planters while his brother led the “army of invasion” into the west with Gómez. Antonio Maceo had written a letter to Brooks and Company demanding their “transaction” be carried out or retaliatory measures would follow “in the manner which I made known to you [Ernest and Paul Brooks] . . . if you do not decide to preserve your interest by the help of the Revolution which I direct in this Department.”<sup>433</sup> José Maceo reiterated the demands, and insurgents demonstrated their capability for sabotage against the railway, forcing the Spanish to build a line of blockhouses every half-mile along its entire length, and to principally rely on large convoys to supply their garrisons.

As Maceo and Gómez’s insurgent columns crossed into the western provinces and fighting spread to all parts of the island, Liberation Army units remaining behind sought to harass as many Spanish troops as possible to force them into physically occupying and defending towns and estates. The *mambí* troops remaining launched their own offensive aimed at those local planters who directly or tacitly supported the Spanish. The

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<sup>430</sup> Relación de las contribuciones impuestas a los hacendados que radican en el territorio de la primera division del primer cuerpo, firmado por Mayor General José Maceo, 24 October 1895, ANC, R95, leg. 14, exp. 1899.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>433</sup> Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 33.

noncompliance of Brooks and Company caused the insurgents to target their estates just as Theodore Brooks arrived from Santiago de Cuba to replace his American uncle Paul as the director of the company's Guantánamo operations in November.

### Guantánamo Between Two Fires

The night of 18 December 1895, three days after Antonio Maceo and Gómez destroyed a Spanish column at Mal Tiempo in Santa Clara north of Cienfuegos during their invasion of the west, while a ball was being held at the Spanish Club of Guantánamo in honor of a visit by the commander of Spanish forces in eastern Cuba, officers and local elites, along with many town residents, saw the sky lit up by a distant cane fire.<sup>434</sup> The conflagration emanated from the cane fields of the Los Caños and other sugar mills in the region, including some owned by the Brooks and Company, the “leading sugar planters as well as leading bankers of Eastern Cuba.”<sup>435</sup> During the day the wind shifted direction, strewing burned cane-straw, ash, and soot on the town “like a snow storm with black snow instead of white.”<sup>436</sup> Just two days earlier, a North American newspaper had reported, “In Guantanamo, in the heart of Eastern Cuba, grinding will commence in a few days. Confidence is returning, and if present indications hold, Cuba will make a full crop. It must be made if her economic balance is to be maintained.”<sup>437</sup> The centrality of sugar to the island economy made it the

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<sup>434</sup> On the battle of Mal Tiempo, see Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, ch. 10.

<sup>435</sup> “Martinez Campos’s Plans – Probability that He Will Place the Army in Pando’s Charge. A Receipt Given for Prisoners. Gomez Visits Santa Clara as a Fruit Vendor – British Citizens in Trouble Appeal in Vain to Their Consul.” *NYT*, 12 December 1895, p. 14.

<sup>436</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, pp, 83-84 and 171, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>437</sup> “Cuban Planters Confident—Full Crop Expected—Indispensable to the Island’s Economy.” *NYT*, 22 December 1895, p. 6. The article noted “From one hundred to two hundred men make an estate safe.”



target of the rebellion. The arson of cane fields was visible manifestation of an economic balancing act of a different sort.

Theodore Brooks, the manager of the Brooks-built railway and vice-consul of Great Britain, knew the fire portended retaliation by Cuban insurgents who had demanded prompt payment of the considerable war taxes levied against the firm. The “full amount asked for by them [the Liberation Army] was never paid, and it was on this account ... burning of the cane fields began.”<sup>438</sup> Then too, his nephew who had joined the rebels from the outset, Enrique Brooks, had told his superiors “that his Uncles were Spaniards at heart.”<sup>439</sup>

If the Cuban Liberation Army assailed the Brookses as foreign capitalists beholden to Spain, the Spanish military penalized the family-owned firm for making contributions to the Cuban separatists. A month earlier, another member of Brooks and Company who served as consul of China, Robert Mason, had called on a Spanish general on behalf of an arrested manager of the Guantánamo Railroad foundry. Interrupting the general’s breakfast, “as Mason entered the room the General began to insult him, and also the Messrs. Brooks, accusing them of helping the revolution with money.”<sup>440</sup> Mason had had to leave without resolving the case.

The British Consul for the nearby capital of the eastern province Santiago de Cuba, Frederick Ramsden, another “managing partner of the firm of Brooks & Co.” also experienced difficulties with the same general. It had been at his orders the Spanish had drafted many of the plantation laborers remaining after others had “taken to the woods” and

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<sup>438</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 186, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>439</sup> Deposition of Tomás Padró Griñán, p.25, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>440</sup> “Tyrant Helps the Cuban Cause – Cruel Acts in the Island Driving Men into the Insurgent Army.” *NYT*, 18 November 1895, p. 5.

joined the insurrection, as well as because of the “tribute” the company paid: “Gen. Canellas ... had evidently not forgotten that the Captain of Maceo’s sharpshooters, Henry Brooks, was at one time a member of the firm, and one of the first men of the island to take up arms in the present struggle.” Undeterred, Consul Mason pleaded for another arrested Brooks railroad employee, an Englishman who had

lived many years in China, and, according to Mr. Mason, lost his right to claim British protection by his acceptance of a commission in the Chinese Corps of Imperial Engineers for the building of a railroad in North China. Mr. Mason’s efforts, however, were unavailing, as the Spanish commandant quoted an old treaty between Spain, Holland, and China to the effect that no Chinamen outside of the territory of the Celestial Empire without a pigtail should be entitled to the protection of Chinese Consuls.<sup>441</sup>

The Brooks and Company, and indeed, all of Guantánamo, found themselves between two fires: the insurgent movement prepared to exact retribution for failing to heed their pronouncements, and a Spanish military that would retaliate if one did. As with their entreaties to Spanish officials, the Brooks and Company managers addressed the insurgents to ameliorate the situation faced by their sugar mills caught between the contending armies

In February 1896, two months after the December fire, and after additional cane fires in January, Lateulade wrote General José Maceo requesting an urgent interview concerning the sugar mills in Guantánamo.<sup>442</sup> “The landowners do not comprehend how it is that I am carrying quantities of money” his missive began “when the General of the Brigade orders

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<sup>441</sup> “Martinez Campos’s Plans – Probability that He Will Place the Army in Pando’s Charge. A Receipt Given for Prisoners. Gomez Visits Santa Clara as a Fruit Vendor – British Citizens in Trouble Appeal in Vain to Their Consul.” *NYT*, 12 December 1895. p. 14.

<sup>442</sup> Letter from Emilio Lataulade [*sic*, Lateulade] to General José Maceo, 16-17 February 1896, letter no. 5, Comunicaciones dirigidas al Secretario de la Guerra, firmadas por el Mayor General José Maceo, referents a resultado de expedición, desertores, e ingenios que pueden hacer la zafra, entre otros temas, 11 February 1896 to 27 February 1896, ANC, R95, leg. 14, exp. 1924.

that all their cane fields be destroyed.”<sup>443</sup> He desired to know whether to continue collecting taxes “in order not to receive the reproaches of the landowners” hurled at him during meetings with them, especially in view that they had made arrangements with the Revolutionary Junta in New York. The Brooks had written to the PRC in New York, while Soledad, Isabel, and Romelié had paid \$7,500: “I have collected \$34,000 until today.” Before the letter abruptly ended without a closing, he added, “I have \$10,000 in my power; what should I do with the sum, to whom do I send it?”<sup>444</sup>

### *Cuba Libre vs. Cuba Española, 1895-1898*

In the unequal contest between the cumbersome but numerous Spanish military forces, leavened by “as many Cubans as” the Liberation Army had in its ranks but “who were Guerrillas [pro-Spanish militia]” dedicated to enforcing social control and upholding the state within the colony, the insurgents not only tried to avoid being captured or killed, but generally halted production through enforcement of no-grind orders, sabotaged estates, and levied a war tax against often recalcitrant regional planters.<sup>445</sup> As in past conflicts, the Spanish and their militia allies targeted a suspect population that supported an irregular opponent either willingly or through compulsion, and an elusive, highly mobile foe; the Liberation Army could often select the timing, nature, and location of confrontation with an

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<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.* See also Estado demostrativo del movimiento de fondos recaudados por la Administración de Hacienda en Oriente en febrero de 1896, firmado por T. Padró Griñan, admon., 1 March 1896, in ANC, R95, leg. 51, exp. 7076 and Estado demostrativo de los ingresos y egresos de la Admon. de Hacienda del estado de Oriente en los meses de Septiembre de 1897 a Mayo de 1898, 31 July 1897-31 May 1898, in ANC, R95, leg. 51, exp. 7081, which contains several signed reports by Lateulade.

<sup>445</sup> Deposition of Enrique Tudela, p. 12, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

enemy increasingly confined to fixed garrisons and patrolling areas of civil population under their direct supervision.

As the war progressed and its grim tempo of raids, reprisals, and the burning of towns and estates accelerated and intensified, initiative slipped from the grasp of the Spanish military. The insurgents, often derided in contemporary accounts for their ragged condition, paltry weapons, and maddening refusal to join battle with the vastly superior Spanish could quite often employ greater economy of force. The incendiary's torch again became an iconic weapon to insurgents and a scornful emblem of rebel perfidy and vandalism to many, including the enemy colonialist army.

Sugar cane fields were often burned over with a controlled fire at harvest time to remove undergrowth and excess vegetation prior to cutting, stacking, and hauling the stalks. But fire was more frequently an enemy—too much heat, and the ample sucrose content ensured a hotter and longer fire that could char the cane rendering it useless for grinding.<sup>446</sup> Since fire posed such a threat to the sugar harvest, planters and sugar workers meticulously prepared and drilled fire prevention plans. Firebreaks at least 10 yards wide separated cane fields to permit ox carts to haul cane to train collection points at harvest time, but also to minimize and contain wild fires. Work regimens included strict prohibitions on smoking while in the fields. A rather breathless description of fighting cane fires from Matanzas, written in the early 1870s by a post-Civil War Louisiana sugar planter's wife who also weathered the terrible hurricane of 1871, demonstrated responses to the fire hazard faced by sugar *ingenios*:

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<sup>446</sup> For a history of fire in the Anglophone Caribbean, with ample comparisons to the Greater Antilles, see Bonham C. Richardson, *Igniting the Caribbean's Past: Fire in British West Indian History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

The first shout of “Fuego!” and a loud peal of the bell, started everyone to his feet. Several horses were kept saddled, and others hitched under the sugar-house shed, for such emergency. So well did they know the signal of the bell at an unusual hour, that with the first taps they were frantic to start, and, if a rider did not immediately appear, sometimes broke loose and ran at the top of their speed in the direction of the fire. [. . .] I snatched the key from its hook and hurried to unlock the store-room where Ciriaco [the Chinese cook] and Martha [an African American house worker] stood ready, each side of the door, to distribute *machetes* (cane-knives) – always kept in reserve for such an emergency – to the men who were at work about the sugar house. Those first ready mounted the tethered horses, sometimes two or three on one animal, and were off like the wind. It was an unwritten law that a fire-alarm *must* command an immediate response from laborers, white and black, on every plantation in sound of the bell. [. . .] Steam is shut off, fires hastily raked from under the sugar kettles, and all work at the sugar house abandoned. Every hand that could wield a *machete* sped to the fiery fields, only a few white *employés* remaining in the vicinity of the buildings.<sup>447</sup>

Insurgents from peasant and sugar work backgrounds knew first-hand the susceptibility of cane fields to fire, and with many men mobilized into the ranks of either the insurgent army or in Spanish militias, there would be fewer workers on hand to effectively combat the blaze. Spanish troops could not risk leaving their posts to fight the flames, lest the fire had been set as a ruse designed to draw them into ambush.

Insurgents often sabotaged production by removing cattle essential for haulage and by burning crops. Many rebels served far away from their home areas; others remained relatively close by estates that they had worked on or were familiar with. Examples of the cross-class composition of the Liberation Army may be seen in the depositions in the property destruction case of Los Caños sugar mill brought before the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission in the early twentieth century. Enrique Brooks kept insurgent leaders apprised of his “pro-Spanish” uncles managing the Brooks and Company; Lateulade had worked at Isabel and various other estates; Carlos Rodríguez, a former overseer, led the operations that

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<sup>447</sup> Ripley, 259-260.

burned the cane fields there; Agustín Charon, supervisor of the Las Lajas *colonia*, eventually joined the insurrection where he operated in Holguín, but also returned to Guantánamo to forcibly remove cattle from the estate.<sup>448</sup>

From late 1895 through early 1896, repeated fires destroyed much of the sugar cane at the Los Caños estate. Other blazes were set during the same period at Isabel, Romelié, San Antonio de Redor, San Carlos, Santa Cecilia, Soledad, Esperanza, and at various *colonias*.<sup>449</sup> The conflagrations were frequently timed with shifting high winds to maximize destructiveness. At night, the remaining workers were locked inside the gates of the militarized ingenios, thereby unable to combat the cane fire outside the *batey* and the forts. Later deliberate fires were set to destroy patches of unburned cane, and to further scorch and char stalks that, while damaged, could have been ground. Even in cases where cane was salvageable, the fire could disrupt the organization of labor for the harvest season. Years later, Theodore Brooks recalled that the torch came because the “full amount asked for by them [the Cuban insurgents] was never paid, and it was on this account . . . burning of the

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<sup>448</sup> The chain of command from José Maceo's general staff to Lieutenant Colonel Bejerano to Captain Carlos Rodríguez to destroy cane fields "beginning with those of Los Caños" contained in Deposition of Tomás Padró Griñán, p. 24, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. Deposition of Agustín Charon, p. 25, contains his wartime insurgent career.

<sup>449</sup> Expediente que contiene documentación de parte del Gobierno Español sobre la quema de caña de los centrales, 'Isabel,' 'Romelie,' 'San Antonio,' 'San Carlos,' 'Santa Cecilia,' 'Soledad,' 'Esperanza,' y colonias 'La Barreque' y 'Santa Irene de Confluente,' Stgo. de Cuba, Guantánamo, Dic[iembre]. 19-20, 1895, in AHPSC, GP, leg. 738, no. 14, año: 1895, materia: Guerra del 1895. Included is a telegram from the "French Society of Submarine Telegraphs from Guantánamo to [Santiago de] Cuba from Guantánamo mayor Peralta." It reads: "To Provincial Governor. Stgo. de Cuba. Yesterday cane field fires were declared [at] *ingenios* Isabel Romelie San Antonio San Carlos Santa Cecilia Soledad Esperanza colonias Labarraque Santa Irene de Confluente [...] although not extinguished it is to be supposed that eighty caballerías burned [...] fire intentional [...] insurrectos. Mayor Peralta." A second document reads, in part, ". . . As a continuation of the cablegram that I had the honor to direct to your Excellency yesterday night, referring to the incendiary [fires] of various estates of this *termino* [the fires were set by] the enemies of Spain and of public peace in their criminal intention to bring the country to ruin and desolation. According to data received by this *Alcaldía* by the representatives of the *ingenios*, Romelié has had 13 caballerías of cane burnt, Ysabel 3, Sta. Cecilia 8, Soledad 7, San Carlos 20, La Esperanza and Sta. Rosa 25, Los Caños 12, San Antonio 50, Confluente 8 ½, Colonia Labarraque 3 and Colonia [illegible] 8 ¼ caballerías. [...] signed José G. de Peralta." Note a caballería is approximately 33.2 acres.

cane fields began.”<sup>450</sup> Tomás Padró Griñán, part of José Maceo's general staff, similarly recalled from his perspective that Brooks and Company “resisted a great deal and we had to threaten them with the destruction of some of their property in order to make them pay up.”<sup>451</sup>

Understandably, Theodore Brooks complained to authorities about the lack of protection afforded the valuable crop, fuming at the inability of the Spanish to guarantee any meaningful security despite the quartering of troops in the blockhouses. Privately, a Spanish officer sounded out Brooks about whether he had made arrangements to pay the insurgents, expressing that “the sooner” done, “the better.” Other officers told Brooks to make the demanded outlay since the detachments in the blockhouses were a static guard, under orders to not pursue raiders, “but to pay as little as possible.”<sup>452</sup> In 1896 agents for Brooks and Company made payments to armed insurgents in the field such as Guantánamo Brigade commander Pérez and via the PRC in New York.

In 1896, Cuban forces operating in the district mostly halted grinding at sugar mills that were not immediately controlled or in close proximity to Spanish garrisons at Guantánamo and the town of Jamaica to which it was connected by rail. Spanish patrols and local militia vainly searched for insurgents. In a reprise of the wars sixteen years before, sometimes they located and destroyed rebel prefectures. Frequently the opposing forces vented their frustration on suspect civilians. The contending parties burned farms to deny them to the opposing side. A cycle of public violence, reprisals, and retribution accelerated.

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<sup>450</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 186, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>451</sup> Deposition of Tomás Padró Griñán, p. 20, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>452</sup> See Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 35. Also see Deposition of Theodore Brooks, pgs. 131, 186, and 253, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

Once again, more exposed small holders and coffee farms frequently faced the brunt of military actions.

The example of *mambises* overwhelming small, isolated garrisons acutely concerned planters who had rebuffed insurgent demands. In 1896 Theodore Brooks visited an acquaintance's ruined property:

In the same way there were villages which were surrounded by four block houses with the same number of men that we had on [Los Caños], that were destroyed. And in the mountains adjoining here every coffee estate which did not pay tribute to the insurgents had its buildings destroyed. Some of them had no troops on them, but one adjoining the village Felicidad . . . had a garrison and four block houses similar to the ones on our estates. That coffee estate and the adjoining village were burned down. Another coffee estate near here called the Cubana and belonging to Garrido the Commander of the Spanish irregular forces in this district [the *Escuadras de Santa Catalina*], was defended by spanish [*sic*] troops in its block houses, and its buildings were also destroyed, the troops being in the block houses at the time.<sup>453</sup>

While the insurgents doubtlessly lacked the capability to overwhelm larger Spanish forces, or to threaten directly more heavily defended estates, they could increasingly wage war on their own terms, evading Spanish patrols while probing for weaknesses. Both sides despoiled the countryside. Destroying the coffee farms of pro-Spanish leaders such as Pedro Garrido and Félix Lescaille and those of planters refusing payments arose as a means of targeting those considered enemies of the revolution or out of retaliatory motives for attacks on the property of insurgent supporters.<sup>454</sup> A thick list of burned fincas compiled in February 1898, on the

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<sup>453</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 183, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>454</sup> Expediente manuscrito que contiene la circular cursada por el Gobernador General de la isla en la que ordena que por lo civil y lo military, se haga una información que demuestre el número de fincas quemadas por los insurrectos, aparecen en el mismo, comunicaciones de los alcaldes de la provincia, acusando recibo de dicho circular y enviando la información requerida, Fechado Habana y otro lugares, 11 Julio al 19 de Octubre de 1897, AHPSC, GP, leg. 742, no. 39, año: 1897, materia: Guerra del 1895, which contains a list of burned estates in Guantánamo prepared by the mayor, José G. de Peralta as of 21 October 1897, listing both properties of Garrido and Félix and Enrique Lescaille as destroyed among a list of 94 burned coffee farms and 6 cattle ranches.



eve of U.S. entrance into the war, showed a staggering 262 destroyed properties for Guantánamo, without including data from the northern coast. Among them were those owned by eighteen Frenchmen, one British subject (Santiago MacKinley), and 243 Spaniards—each with a number of workers thereby bereft of employment—all torched by the *insurrectos* alone.<sup>455</sup> As in the Ten Years' War, the conflict swiftly devastated rural districts.

Seemingly unlike in the past wars, insurgents collected far greater sums of taxes from property owners fearful of seeing their valuable estates suffer a similar fate. The Spanish military frequently intercepted communications regarding payments, so they were well apprised of these arrangements. Elaborate security precautions for sending messages developed. Theodore Brooks received letters from “a negro boy, sometimes, by an old woman, generally by someone perfectly unknown” to him.<sup>456</sup> Over the course of the war, finance delegate Lateulade collected sums from many landowners, although the amounts received in Guantánamo or abroad were never as great as those levied. Lateulade increasingly assessed the planters for the payment of regular sums on the physical buildings and equipment of estates, while simultaneously enforcing the no-grind decrees emanating from headquarters.<sup>457</sup> In the case of Los Caños, the amount charged increased to \$8,000 in

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<sup>455</sup> Fincas: Relaciones de fincas quemadas por los insurrectos, 1896-1898, in AGM-M, cajas: 3475 y 3476, SU, letter from Guantánamo, 5 February 1898 and accompanying chart, unpaginated.

<sup>456</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 217, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>457</sup> There were several such decrees, but the most widespread general order was Máximo Gómez's circular from 6 November 1895 in which the Liberation Army “animated by the spirit of inflexible determination in carrying out the revolution,” ordered the immediate cessation of production, and destruction of all sugar cane, further threatening the execution of “any mechanic who by the strength of his arm” enabled the colony to function “to the end of raising triumphantly, though over ashes and ruin, the flag of the Republic of Cuba.” See William E. Fuller, ed., *Reconcentration and Other Proclamations of General Valeriano Weyler and Orders and Circulars of General Maximo Gomez* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 21.

late 1896; the amount went up to \$10,000 by early 1897. A Liberation Army expropriation decree of 4 July 1896 backed up the financial delegate's demands:

All lands acquired by the Cuban Republic either by conquest or confiscation, except what is employed for governmental purposes, shall be divided among the defenders of the Cuban Republic against Spain, and each shall receive a portion corresponding to the services rendered. . . . All lands, money, or property in any an all forms previously belonging to Spain, to its allies, abettors, or sympathizers, or to any person or corporation acting in the interest of Spain or in any manner disloyal to the Cuban Republic are hereby confiscated, for the benefit of the Cuban Army and of all the defenders of the Cuban Republic.<sup>458</sup>

Lateulade mentioned similar decrees and issued threats of more immediate destruction in letters sent out regarding nonpayment. Delegate Lateulade's own book, published in 1930, detailed the total loans, taxes, and other monies collected at \$341,817.12 from the Guantánamo district. He stressed that collection had been made possible through considerable negotiating skill, and a measure of voluntarism from planters, although only a few years after the war he claimed that tax payers and donors "paid because the revolution so demanded it, under the penalty of having their property destroyed."<sup>459</sup>

Destruction both wanton and deliberate escalated as the war progressed while owners attempted to reduce required outlays demanded from both the Spanish and Cubans. Brooks and Company ultimately contributed \$12,375 under duress to the insurgent state-in-formation for the Los Caños sugar *central* alone. After the cane fires the company petitioned the Spanish for exemption from taxes given the inability to grind and the straitened circumstances of the firm, indicative of the effectiveness of the rebel policy of economic

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<sup>458</sup> In Pérez, "Vagrants, Beggars, and Bandits: Social Origins of Cuban Separatism, 1878-1898," 1120.

<sup>459</sup> For the total sum, see Lateulade, *Apuntes de la delegación de hacienda del distrito de Guantánamo*, 138. For lists of owners and sums paid throughout the war, see pgs. 113-126. The quote comes from the Deposition of Emilio Lateulade, p. 11, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. See also Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 34.

warfare.<sup>460</sup> North American property owners reacted with indignation to the losses. In an 1897 magazine article, “The Wanton Destruction of American Property in Cuba,” Fernando Yznaga wrote that coverage of the “story of Cuba, as reported by the press, is a conflicting statement of glorious victories claimed by both parties” in which “while other points remain in doubt, authenticity of the accounts of the burning of plantations and farms has been established beyond question.”

Many provinces of the island have been absolutely wasted; and the work of destruction is energetically going on. It has even been announced, as a grand exhibition of patriotism, that the insurgents will sacrifice everything rather than have the Spaniards succeed, and will leave them a heap of ashes as the prize of victory. [...] From the proximity of Cuba, and the fact that we are by far the greatest consumers of its products, American capital has been one of the greatest factors in [Cuban] development. Many plantations belong to Americans; and debts, created by advances to make the sugar crops, have made them the owners of a still greater number. It is Americans who, in the majority of cases, are really the victims.

The writer then turned to the cruelty of total warfare itself within an agrarian society:

But there is a still more serious result. Engaged in the insurgent army there are perhaps 50,000 men. Of the remaining million and a half of inhabitants, nothing is told. Of their misery, of their poverty, of their actual starvation, no mention is made. [...] the real sufferers are the very great number of the inhabitants who must remain at home, unoccupied, helpless, and called upon to face the slow misery of starvation.<sup>461</sup>

His indignation turned on rebel actions and their effects on the vulnerable civilian populace, and the inadequate preparation the movement seemed to have given to form a government capable of addressing the problems of the island. His ire then returned to an oft-repeated prognosis that the salient black population would inhibit the island’s viability as an independent state. Could there be, he posed, “any possibility of such a government growing

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<sup>460</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 85, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); Entry 352; RG 76; USNA.

<sup>461</sup> Fernando A. Yznaga, “The Wanton Destruction of American Property in Cuba.” *Forum*, New York (January 1897): 571-75.

from this foundation of destruction and desolation?” To him, and members of his readership, the “Latin races in this continent have shown a distinct incapacity for self-government. The history of the several republics that have succeeded Spanish rule has been one of constant revolutions and disorders, with interludes of despotism.” But:

In Cuba the difficulties would be even greater, owing to the presence of the large negro element. The danger of this domination has always been felt by the white leaders in the insurrection. It was one of the causes that brought to an end the previous revolution. Should the Spanish inhabitants of the island emigrate, — as many of them undoubtedly would, should the insurgents succeed, — the two races would be nearly equal in number. The Cuban negro is a much later importation and is therefore much less civilized than his brother in this country. Many of them came from warlike tribes. The mulatto element is intelligent and ambitious. For years a negro republic, to include Cuba, St. Domingo, and Jamaica, the so-called Republic of the Antilles, has been spoken of. Without a great preponderance, it would be impossible for the whites to control this element. The same favorable conditions — the warm climate, the impenetrable forests, the abundance of food, — that favor the present uprising would render the suppression of revolt and the maintenance of order difficult if not impossible. From all indications, the future of the island under a native government would be even less favorable to our interests than under the present one.<sup>462</sup>

The author urged that only “annexation to the United States” could ameliorate the situation, indeed, the island would open a “vast field for American enterprise and capital” and could “easily produce not only all the sugar we consume but, in a few years, all the coffee” in keeping with consul Reimer’s pre-war appraisal of southeastern Cuba.

If American sentiment was divided over aiding a kindred liberal republican movement proposing to eject Spanish sovereignty from the island versus concern over the damage the struggle incurred to U.S. interests, for their part insurgent officers, notably Gómez, resented the payments of taxes and protection money, seeing in them a potential source of corruption reminiscent of the currying of planter favor that had interfered with the

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<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*

prosecution of the earlier wars. In correspondence between the commander-in-chief and Tomás Estrada Palma, Gómez once wrote that he “value[d] much the Cuban blood that is being shed because of sugar, and if the amount is not collected soon, the torch will adjust it all.”<sup>463</sup>

Gómez’ intransigent and uncompromising attitude toward privileged sectors hardened during his experiences in western Cuba. To him, as before in the Ten Years’ War, the property destruction strategy came to include both a means and an end. Fighting in Las Villas in the west in 1897, he expressed his rationale in a letter as including an explicit leveling and redistributive purpose beyond his declaration about the invasion of Guantánamo back in 1871:

When I put my hand on the suffering heart of the working people, and I felt it wounded with grief; when I touched, next to all that opulence, around all that astounding wealth, such misery and such moral poverty; when I saw all this in the house of the tenant, and found him brutalized by the cheating he endures, with his wife and children dressed in rags, living in a wretched hut erected on another’s land, when I asked about schools and was told that there had never been any ... then I felt enraged and profoundly disposed against the upper classes of the country, and in a moment of fury at the sight of such utterly melancholy and painful inequality, I cried out: ‘Blessed be the torch.’<sup>464</sup>

Other leaders were concerned, in a fashion similar to Yznaga’s magazine article, with looming issues of post-war recovery and the awesome destruction caused by rebel strategy and Spanish countermeasures. Given the absolute devastation and wholesale ruination

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<sup>463</sup> In Nichols, 76.

<sup>464</sup> Quoted in Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-colonial Imagination*, 147, fn 41 citing Félix Ojeda Reyes, *El desterrado de París. Biografía del Doctor Ramón Emeterio Betances (1827-1898)* (San Juan: Ediciones Puerto Rico, 2001), 340 and with the quote taken from Juan Bosch, *El Napoléon de las guerrillas* (Santo Domingo: Editorial Alfa y Omega, 1982), 13. A translation of Gómez that appears in Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of U.S. Imperialism*, I: 23, reads: “When I arrived in this land and saw the plight of the poor workers, I felt wounded with sadness. There was this poor wretch working beside magnificent grandeur; beside all that beautiful richness was so much misery and low morality. When I saw the wife and children of the poor worker covered with rags and living in a battered hut, I was touched by the enormity of the contrast. . . . I felt indignant and profoundly disposed against the elevated classes of the country. And in an instant I exclaimed to myself, ‘Blessed be the torch!’”

threatened by the nature of the war, the separatist gambit to bankrupt Spain and its local allies into quitting the island doubtlessly seemed mad, indiscriminate, and even suicidal. Generally, insurgents in Cuba relied on their own efforts to oust the Spanish army and eject colonial rule while exiled leaders hoped to influence foreign governments into recognizing Cuban belligerency.

*Mambises* on the island appeared to think that only a greater supply of weapons and ammunition was required to expand the Liberation Army's ranks from among the unemployed, and with it, broaden the struggle. Exiles in the United States, however, found it difficult to counter anti-insurgent propaganda that portrayed them as wanton arsonists and saboteurs willfully wrecking valuable properties and setting the stage for permanent wrack and ruin. In a letter to insurgent commander Calixto García in 1896, PRC head Estrada Palma wrote of the advantages, as he saw them, to ongoing negotiation and the collection of taxes:

On the one hand, this sum of taxes paid right now will effectively aid the swift triumph of our arms; on the other hand, we will save from destruction many millions in properties that will immediately serve after the triumph, as the pacific occupation of the immense majority of our soldiers.<sup>465</sup>

Oriente province in general, and Guantánamo particularly, demonstrated that the collection of funds figured as an attempt to support the all-important war effort in the west. The PRC purchased quantities of munitions abroad, sometimes only to be interdicted by the U.S. Treasury as violating the Neutrality Act, or impounded after Spanish agents alerted foreign authorities to the war-making cargo of supply ships. As conditions in Cuba grew ever more

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<sup>465</sup> Tomás Estrada Palma to Calixto García, 14 September 1896, *La revolución del '95 según la correspondencia de la delegación cubana en Nueva York* (Havana: Editorial Habanera, 1933), 5: 306.

desperate, the total eradication of the island's exports became increasingly imperative to the rebels.

The campaign against property produced several other effects, as was intended. Sometimes civilians remaining in plantation towns subject to Spanish occupation, or in pitiable condition on idled or wrecked estates, joined the insurgency directly, fleeing to prefectures hidden in remote, inaccessible areas to harvest food crops for themselves and the Cuban forces. As in the Ten Years' War, this precarious and often dangerous existence reinforced insurgents with food, staff for impromptu hospitals, new recruits, and some makeshift manufactures such as cartridge belts, hats, and weapon repairs. Inhabitants of these prefectures carefully kept lookout for roving Spanish patrols, prepared to scatter further into the woods when danger threatened under the protection and control of rural guardians. Living in hastily constructed huts, usually for only one harvest season, such male and female *pacíficos* were often compelled to move to ever more remote locations. As before, men, women, and children in these prefectures formed the impedimenta of the Liberation Army, frequently following an armed band to perform guard functions, cook, forage, run errands, and deliver messages. Recent arrivals, internal refugees, convalescing soldiers, and cattle herders driving requisitioned oxen, mules, and horses also temporarily populated these insurgent held zones.

Eventually, the Spanish military embarked on a counterinsurgency strategy designed to separate the civilians supporting the rebels from combatants. They began enforcing population removal—the campaign known as *reconcentración*—in the district by late 1896 and early 1897, driving the rural population into towns, cities, and sugar mills under their control and systematically burning homes and farms outside the perimeter, Cubans were

often forced to decide between the two extreme environments: that of an impoverished *Cuba Libre* in the prefectures hidden away in the hills or a *Cuba española* in the towns. In the case of the Los Caños estate, many residents did not wait for captain-general Valeriano Weyler's reconcentration orders to be carried out locally. Marcos Murgadas, the Spanish company storekeeper at Los Caños, moved his family to Caimanera early in the war. He claimed that only two hundred people remained at the mill by spring 1896 out of a normal complement of six to seven hundred men, women, and children. Left without food or work, all but ten or twelve old men "took to the field" going over "to the Insurrection, that's understood."<sup>466</sup>

Since military labor and soldiering were male gendered occupations thought unsuitable for women, there was a tendency for insurgents' families to be shielded from the rigors of life in the *manigua* that subjected them to perhaps a similarly miserable existence remaining behind in towns and mills. Clandestine visits occurred despite the efforts of the Spanish army to prevent them. Usually, food, clothing, and supplies were scarce and expensive, but frequently people left under Spanish control would divert what they could to those hiding out in the hills and forests. Of greater concern to the occupying Spanish garrison, those residing in towns could provide intelligence on troop movements and social conditions. Some measure of collaboration between town residents was perhaps inevitable, but the Spanish and their local allies attempted to prevent it as much as possible through a system of military passes, restrictions on movement, and other strategies. The rigid constraints of the former slave barracks could no longer be replicated, however, and

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<sup>466</sup> Deposition of Marcos Murgadas, pp. 4-5, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.



insurgents not only penetrated the sugar zones with greater facility than they ever had in the Ten Years' War, they increasingly contested the actual sugar mill itself.<sup>467</sup>

There are some examples in Guantánamo of how altered class relations in the sugar industry enabled pro-insurgent workers to sabotage mills from within and even assist the insurgents directly, including the damaging of machinery, signaling the rebels, and gathering and imparting intelligence to the Liberation Army in contravention to the social control prerogatives of the military situation. At the guarded Santa María estate, owned by Fernando Pons, the processing and grinding of sugar cane in contravention to Gómez's work stoppage orders was disrupted for ten days when a worker "maliciously mixed in with the bagasse" a steel slug which damaged the axle of the main crushing wheel.<sup>468</sup>

Within the *batey* enclosed by barbed wire and Spanish blockhouses, the loyalties of workers were a constant source of preoccupation. Collaboration with insurgents transpired despite the presence of guard detachments. In the case of the Isabel sugar estate, in early 1896, a group of mounted insurgents showed up early one morning demanding five teams of oxen. Records of a military trial of two *morenos*, overseer Victor Bombalé and Primitivo Wilson (Gülsen), revealed that some workers on plantations cooperated with armed parties out of fear, while others, including three *morenas*, Celestina, Glandina Gülsen, and María de la Cruz Crucenque, often smuggled food and clothing past guards to the rebels before the morning bell sounded because their men folk were with the *mambises*. In the trial testimony of Bombalé and Wilson for complicity, collusion, and collaboration with the rebels, including depositions by *morenos* Benito, Mauricio, and Salvador Brook, the accused offered

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<sup>467</sup> Scott, "Class Relations in Sugar and Political Mobilization in Cuba, 1868-1899," 24-25.

<sup>468</sup> Claim of Fernando Pons, p. 83, Claim no. 397 (Pons); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

as defense that it was generally understood within the sugar workers' barracks that *insurrectos* visited their families on the estate. Before the military tribunal the defendants argued that the insurgents coerced them into providing the estate's oxen. They clearly could not alert the corporal in the nearest blockhouse if armed insurgents were hidden in the cane fields.<sup>469</sup> As social control revolved around military situations, supporters of Spain could only redouble their coercive measures by penalizing workers for giving aid to the insurrection irrespective of political sympathy, family ties, or fear.

On Los Caños, Agustín Charon, the main *colono* who directed the Las Lajas *colonia* and its sixty workers at the western margins of the estate, joined the insurrection in early 1896. His decision was motivated, he said, "Because they [the Spanish and their militia] considered all native born as a mambic [*sic, mambí*] or an *insurrecto* and they had no more consideration for those who did not go to the fields than they did for those who remained" so that he "did'nt [*sic*] care to wait for them."<sup>470</sup> From an overseer on a cane *colonia*, his nativist reaction to the conflict led him to becoming a rebel lieutenant directing operations nearby. He led raids on the corrals of the sugar mill, carrying off oxen to his comrades-in-arms. At times cattle were seized in full view of the blockhouses, but the Spanish troops could only trade shots with the raiders rather than give pursuit.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Record of this trial contained in Expediente manuscrito relativo al testimonio de la sentencia recaída en la causa seguida por la jurisdicción militar de Guantánamo contra Victor Bombalé y Primitivo Wilsson [*sic*], por complicidad en los hechos ocurridos en el Ingenio Isabel [Brooks] en Mayo de 1896, a quienes se les fijo residencia habitual determinada en esa villa, Febrero 2-22, 1897, AHPSC, GP, leg. 742, no. 35, año: 1897, materia: Guerra del 1895.

<sup>470</sup> Deposition of Agustín Charon, p. 20, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>471</sup> Deposition of Agustín Charon, p. 13, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. See also Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 30.

Agustín's brother, Víctor Charon commanded the group that burned down the *colonia* of Santa Cecilia in early 1896. He appeared with eight men and a signed order from General José Maceo to destroy the entire *colonia* by fire. The manager attempted to stop the action, but, in the face of the signed order and armed retinue, could not persuade them to spare the property. The insurgent band initially left some quarters for laborers and the canteen unburned, but returned some days later and torched the canteen as well.<sup>472</sup>

By February 1896, Spanish General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau became captain-general of Cuba, with the mission to defeat militarily the insurrection with all means at his disposal. Vowing to “fight war with war” he prepared to implement brutal counterinsurgency strategies equal to the scale of the methodically conceived task that lay before his commanders, namely, how to deprive the insurgents of combatants, supplies, food, and supporters in order to crush the separatist movement.<sup>473</sup> Towards this end, most of the island's population was to be placed under direct Spanish supervision, while the thorough ruination of the countryside would be completed at the Spanish military's hands to deny sustenance to the rebels. The Spanish military intended to place all Cuba under siege in country and in town. Cubans would be forced into Spanish controlled cities and estates surrounded by a garrison, while rural districts were burned and cleared. Patrols would search for any groups failing to respond to the order. Little provision had been made for the influx of dispossessed people in the towns; disease, hunger, and misery killed approximately ten percent of the island's population, perhaps an even greater proportion.<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 8.

<sup>473</sup> In Pérez, *Cuba Between Empires*, 54. On reconcentration, see Francisco Pérez Guzmán, *Herida profunda*, (Havana: Ediciones Unión, 1998); Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, chs. 12 and 14.

The grim policy was first undertaken in the west of Cuba, where Antonio Maceo and his *orientales* operated, before being applied to Guantánamo by late 1896 and early 1897. Weyler had been informed of the payment schemes worked out between willing, unwilling but also hapless planters in Oriente and the insurgents. Now Spanish authorities forbade the sugar harvest of 1896-1897 to deprive the insurgents of revenue while striking at their popular base and attacking the columns of Maceo and Gómez in the west of the island.<sup>475</sup> Geographic proximity in Oriente province was enough for support for the rebels to be assumed.

Reconcentration had been foregrounded against the first insurgency and rural inhabitants in Oriente during the Ten Years' War; this time the draconian population removal and social control strategy effected the entire island, starting with the west. Weyler's plan was to first renovate and reinforce two fortified, 200 meter-wide *trochas* bisecting the island at its narrowest points. Equipped with an armored train, ringed with forts, barbed wire entanglements, and watch towers, the first such line west of Havana extending from Mariel to Majana would try to contain and isolate Antonio Maceo and his Sixth Corps in Pinar del Río in the far west. Sizeable Spanish columns would hammer Maceo's troops against the anvil of the *trocha*. Weyler sought to defeat the insurgency and reverse its trajectory: whereas the Cuban forces had arisen in the east and invaded the west, he proposed starting farthest to the west, intending to roll up the island from west to east. If the insurgency could again be contained east of the earlier constructed Júcaro – Morón *trocha*, a process of attrition similar to the Ten Years' War would lead ineluctably to insurgent defeat.

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<sup>474</sup> A recent revision of the numbers killed, and a literature review of the fluctuating casualty figures as a result of the policy is advanced by Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, ch. 14.

<sup>475</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 105, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. See also Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 18-19.

After the death in combat of José Maceo at Loma del Gato near Santiago de Cuba on 5 July 1896, Calixto García led a column through Guantánamo and other parts of Oriente to reinvigorate and reorganize insurgent forces. The war entered a crucial new phase as Weyler prepared to defeat the Cuban insurgency, backed by the government of conservative prime minister Antonio Cánovas del Castillo who staked Spain's relatively weak status and position among European powers to the maintenance of colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, and who countenanced waging war in Cuba to "the last man and the last *peseta*."<sup>476</sup>

### Through 1898 and the U.S. Intervention

Prior to enforcing Weyler's reconcentration decree in Guantánamo, it appears the Spanish expanded troop levels and mobilized more Cubans into local militias. Security functions on many estates would now be relegated to *movilizados*, a hastily formed ad hoc force controlled by pro-Spanish volunteers. Continuous reinforcements of regular soldiers and conscripts arrived by steamer at the port of Caimanera. Spanish troops forced civilians in outlying areas into the towns of Guantánamo, Jamaica, Felicidad and Perseverancia as well as the sugar estates of Esperanza, Santa Cecilia and three Brooks & Co. mills astride the railway: Soledad, Isabel, and Romelié.<sup>477</sup> Infantry patrols and pro-Spanish guerrillas combed the rural districts, razing crops, farms, and homes.

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<sup>476</sup> In Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 171. This quote, "to spend the last peseta, and offer up the last drop of blood of her sons" is misattributed to Cánovas del Castillo, when, according to Anderson, it was apparently uttered by the liberal prime minister Práxedes Sagasta. See, Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 144-45.

<sup>477</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 137, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. See also "Auxilios que deben recibir en las fincas y zonas de cultivo—Derechos y deberes. Mes de noviembre de 1897 in AGM-M, caja: 4204, Alzados y Presentados (1895-1898), exp. 2, car. 16 that contains a printed circular about post-reconcentration "cultivation zones" that likely corresponded to the limits of the earlier Reconcentration zone: "Terrain composed between Caimanera, the railroad of Santa Catalina, the sugar mills San José, Santa Fé, La Esperanza, Santa Isabel, and San Antonio, Manatí, and the bay, with an extension of 240 square kilometers."

Civilians faced a difficult choice. They could move to the centers of reconcentration, where food already had grown scarce, and there confront hunger, disease, and possible abuse at the hands of *voluntarios* or Spanish soldiers, or they might try to elude population removal, fleeing to the prefectures of *Cuba Libre* ahead of any Spanish troops who might discover them. In an April, 1897 letter, Theodore Brooks described the imposition of Weyler's decree to his mother living abroad, Mariane Elisa Adams:

The "Reconcentration" orders of Weyler, of whose effects in the other provinces you will have read, is being carried out here and is causing immense misery – The only estates in which inhabitants are allowed, besides the most indispensable employés are Soledad, Esperanza, Romelie, Ysabel and Sta. Cecilia – The people from the other estates . . . are forced into these already overcrowded estates, so that you can easily imagine the misery that prevails, made worse by the prevalence of small-pox everywhere. Many of these people, as was to be expected, have already taken to the woods, and doubtless more will follow – preferring the hardship of that life to the almost certain death from starvation in the towns.<sup>478</sup>

Brooks went on to describe three suicides in town including an old carpenter who hanged himself; another man first killed his wife, then himself. Brooks wrote that from five to six people died per day.<sup>479</sup>

The majority dispossessed by reconcentration could only watch as their homes and unmovable belongings were destroyed, and trek to the nearest Spanish controlled zone. In effect, the depopulated countryside had been converted into a free-fire zone. Anyone resisting the reconcentration decree could be severely punished, even killed as a suspected rebel. Many who had cautiously avoided taking sides in the conflict, hoping to preserve

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<sup>478</sup> Theodore Brooks to his mother, 30 April 1897; Boston Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts; Letters of Theodore Brooks [hereinafter cited as BPL].

<sup>479</sup> Theodore Brooks to his Mother, 30 April 1897; BPL, Letters of Theodore Brooks.

themselves, their families, and their property from harm, now had to choose between two painful alternatives: the occupied town or the *manigua*.

Due to the hilly, broken terrain, many small valleys, and the relative strength of the insurgency, displaced civilians and *mambises* could resist reconcentration and evade detection. In an insurgent census prepared for the PRC and Estrada Palma in late 1897, over 120,000 rural supporters of the Liberation Army were reported in the prefectures of Oriente province.<sup>480</sup> At least twenty concealed rebel cultivation zones existed in the mountains to the northeast and southwest of Guantánamo, some quite close to Soledad sugar mill.<sup>481</sup>

Life in rebel prefectures was difficult and harsh. María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno recalled family oral histories about Cuba's thirty-year struggle for independence from before she was born in 1902. Her paternal grandfather was killed in the Ten Years' War. Other relatives fled to Jamaica during the War of Independence. Two died in prison at Ceuta in Spanish Morocco. Several others served in the Liberation Army. Her mother, Isabel, lost her oldest son to smallpox. Following a *mambí* column, Isabel became the partner of Carlos Castillo Duharte – María de los Reyes' father – with whom Isabel had three children during the conflict. None of these children survived the war years.<sup>482</sup>

Despite the harrowing troubles of life in encampments concealed in the mountains, the women and men in the prefectures potentially had greater access to food. The crops grown in the *manigua* by those noncombatants not following insurgent parties as

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<sup>480</sup> Nichols, "Domestic History of Cuba During the War of the Insurrectos, 1895-1898," 144.

<sup>481</sup> Depositions of Ernest Brooks, p. 7, and Emilio Lateulade, pp. 8-10, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>482</sup> María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno as told to her daughter Daisy Rubiera Castillo, *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century* trans. Anne McLean, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 34, and 41-42.

impedimenta could often feed dispersed groups somewhat better than people in the crowded towns and cities. Hunger and privation worsened due to the nature of the conflict. By late 1896, insurgents carried off the last remaining herd of oxen in the district from Soledad. Theodore Brooks received a message from his half-brother Ernest that the Spanish cavalry posted at the sugar mill had been redeployed. The opportunity was immediately seized by Cuban troops who carried off five hundred oxen and cows, fifty mules, and at least thirty horses from the mill.<sup>483</sup> The cattle raid not only stole the largest store of meat in the district away from the Spanish and the civilian population relocated in the mill town, it also disrupted any future sugar production at Soledad. Even though people driven to the plantation because of reconcentration might have been able to work the *zafra* under guard, the large numbers of oxen required to haul sugar cane to the railcars and mill were gone.

By 1897 the bulk of Guantánamo insurgents operated outside the jurisdiction, many reinforcing Liberation Army forces near Holguín in northern Oriente. After the Spanish imposition of reconcentration locally, some 1800 combatants within the district and numerous unarmed camp followers under General Pérez attempted to contest control of the district against several thousand Spanish troops and militia.<sup>484</sup> Despite the disparity in troop strength, command of the district eluded the Spanish because the greater part of the soldiery occupied the towns and civilian population zones, and manned blockhouses, including those around estates and towns, as well as those built every half-mile along the railway leaving fewer to patrol against the rebels. Urged to undertake more aggressive, offensive activity by

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<sup>483</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, pgs. 48-53, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>484</sup> Insurgent strength found in Deposition of Enrique Tudela, p. 8, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. Spanish troop strength in Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 62-65, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.



commanders, much of the Guantánamo City garrison left for operations around the town of Jamaica, leaving a formidable body of volunteers and militarized firemen to guard the defenses. Some two hundred Cuban insurgents led pack mules over the city moat, cut the barbed wire fence, and sacked two stores of supplies. The group proceeded to march on the jail, but when heavy firing broke out, the raiders successfully fought their way out of the city.<sup>485</sup>

Similarly, very late in 1897, fifty insurgents entered Caimanera past a blockhouse in which the volunteers went over to the insurrection. They expropriated three cash boxes and other supplies, remaining in the town for fifty minutes and leaving with numbers of townspeople who defected from the Spanish side.<sup>486</sup> The insurgents were becoming bolder. Spanish garrisons were pulled back from outlying areas to shorten their supply lines and concentrate troops into less exposed and isolated positions.

Weyler's policy to deny the insurgents material aid and popular support, including prohibiting grinding to try to prevent payments to insurgents, had exacted heavy tolls.

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<sup>485</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 183-186, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. Also Expediente manuscrito relativo al ataque a Guantánamo por parte de una partida insurrecta los que trataron de violentar la puerta de la carcel e incendiaron varios comercios, llevandose además, prisioneros al tte. de bomberos Juan Fernández y al bombero José Guevara Biamonte siendo puesto en libertad el primero, por orden de Periquito [Pedro Agustín] Pérez, Guantánamo, Agosto 5 al 10 de 1897, AHPSC, GP, leg. 741, no. 19, año: 1897, materia: Guerra del 1895.

<sup>486</sup> Expediente manuscrito que contiene informe sobre la incursión hecha por una partida de insurrectos en el poblado de Caimanera, los que llevaron cajas de dinero del habilitados, desapareciendo tambien varios voluntarios y vecinos, Stgo. de Cuba, 3 de Diciembre de 1897, AHPSC, GP, leg. 742, no. 20, año: 1897, materia: Guerra del 1895; Antonio González Pando to captain general, 17 December 1897 Con copia de un oficio dando cuenta de haber sido robado, despues de herido grave el habilo del Tercio de las Escuadras y Guerrillas de Guantánamo, in AGM-S, 6a y 8a, 17-Q Guerrillas Locales y Volantes de Cuba, leg. 7, car. Guerrillas de Guantánamo, 1871-1898; "Spain Betrayed in Cuba. Rebels Enter Caimanera Through the Treason of an Officer." *NYT* 10 December 1897, p.1: "The insurgent force ... are alleged to have plundered a store and to have carried off the sum of \$30,000, which was on a wharf ad which had recently arrived at Caimanera from Havana. It is also said that the insurgents killed the Police Inspectors and two gendarmes on duty and seriously wounded a Spanish Paymaster named José Vigil. More Spanish guerrillas, the official announcement concludes, have joined the insurgents."

Antonio Maceo had been killed 7 December 1896, and the rebellion had been suppressed in much of the west, leading to numbers of desertions. Nevertheless, in central and eastern Cuba, it would appear that the insurgency controlled much of the countryside, and evaded the Spanish army. Popular unrest in Spain itself mounted, given the scale of the death toll disease produced in the ghastly colonial war in the tropics. Spanish troops died in large numbers in Cuba, and Guantánamo was no exception. Historian Tone's study of the war found that Spain dispatched to Cuba a large conscript army of 190,000 backed by some 60,000 Cuban auxiliaries against the poorly armed rebels, who they outnumbered ten to one. Total Spanish combat casualties numbered 4,032 battlefield deaths and 10,956 wounded, but tropical diseases ultimately claimed fully twenty-two percent of the Spanish colonial army in Cuba, a toll of over 41,000 soldiers.<sup>487</sup> During the summer drought of 1897 Theodore Brooks wrote, "Fully 60% [of Spanish soldiers] are down with fevers and dysentery. I fear that when yellow fever begins it will assume an epidemic form and play great havoc among the poor men."<sup>488</sup> The Spanish army may have had a near inexhaustible pool of peasant conscripts, and far greater quantities of modern armaments than the Cuban separatists, but a wholly inadequate medical system and barely competent commissary, increasingly incapable of keeping the army fed, paid, or in the field were leading to disaster and defeat.

Proximity to the United States and porous Caribbean borders allowed the rebels to smuggle in weapons and supplies. Funds paid by supporters and taxes exacted by the movement paid for much of this materiel. Of forty-five total supply expeditions, fifteen

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<sup>487</sup> Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 9-10, 97. A recent study by Cuban military historian Raúl Izquierdo Canosa, *Viaje sin regreso* (Havana: Verde Olivo, 2001) suggested a Spanish death toll of 37,721 for 1895-1898.

<sup>488</sup> Theodore Brooks to his mother, 22 June 1897; BPL, Letters of Theodore Brooks.

landed successfully in 1896; another ten eluded Spanish patrol boats in 1897.<sup>489</sup> Little by little the insurgents were accumulating a few heavier weapons to supplement the small arms most boats brought in. Some small Hotchkiss cannon and Sims-Dudley pneumatic dynamite guns that lobbed “aerial torpedoes,” manned by North Americans and Cubans, began to be employed to take towns in eastern Cuba, such as Jiguaní and Las Tunas in mid-to-late 1897.

Dramatic as such insurgent battlefield successes were, the aggregate of many small actions of sabotage, arson, and harassing ambushes such as typified the experience in Guantánamo wore down the Spanish military. Total war in Cuba produced frightful suffering and privation, but Spanish control could no longer be assured. The Liberation Army's ability to remain in the field, combined with the near-collapse of the island's strained economy and the tremendous expense for Spain to maintain 200,000 troops across the Atlantic in inhospitable tropical conditions and extended occupation, sapped the colonial power's ability to prosecute the war. A new Spanish government recalled Weyler, replacing him with Ramón Blanco as captain-general, extending overtures of autonomy to the colony.

It was at this point, with autonomy was in the offing, that Spanish military authorities in Guantánamo rescinded their prohibition on cultivation and harvest, and prepared to allow sugar estates to grind again. The proscription on the harvest had not appreciably dried up sources of supply to the insurgents, but had materially diminished the amount of revenue extracted from the colony. “The Captain General has issued an order to local bosses to do all in their power to protect planters and assure the sugar crop being made” wrote Theodore Brooks, but “[a]t present I do not see what they can do to help us in this district, so we can do

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<sup>489</sup> Raúl Izquierdo Canosa, *Días de la guerra* (Havana: Editora Política, 1994), 133; César García del Pino, *Expediciones de la Guerra de Independencia. 1895-1898* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1996), claimed a total of 48 expeditions that disembarked 2,146 men, about 27,000 small arms, fourteen cannon, and 18,800 pounds of dynamite, among other supplies.

nothing but fold our arms and wait.”<sup>490</sup> Notwithstanding the enhanced security at Soledad, well protected by seven blockhouses and frequently a detachment of cavalry, insurgents again torched cane fields.<sup>491</sup>

The Spanish zone of control extended no further than their perimeter guarded by frequently ill, unpaid soldiers. Spanish troops and local militia in fortified towns and plantations “were almost impregnable” while Cuban insurgents in control of the rural districts “were virtually unconquerable.”<sup>492</sup> More and more, however, the insurgents began to test weaknesses in the defensive system. Able to harass convoys provisioning estates farther out, insurgent actions provoked the Spaniards to recall and pull back garrisons. Spanish supply and communication lines grew shorter, but their zone of control diminished still further.

As the sugar-grinding season for 1897-1898 drew near, the Spanish, committed now to safeguarding the harvest in the face of deepening paralysis, hastened to rebuild the local fortified *trocha* from the Ten Years’ War around the *llano* to at least shut out the insurrectionists from the sugar zones that had then existed relatively unmolested. The effort came too late. The Spanish and local supporters, falling back on their former methods, intending to replicate past successes, now only reinforced failure.

Local planters and members of the business community remaining in Guantánamo seemed to have lost faith in the Spaniards’ abilities to guarantee meaningful security. They despaired of being able to restart cultivation, fearful of further losses. Destruction of fields,

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<sup>490</sup> Theodore Brooks to his mother, 17 November 1897; BPL, Letters of Theodore Brooks.

<sup>491</sup> Deposition of Ernest Brooks, p. 11, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352.

<sup>492</sup> Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 168.

irrigation, railway facilities, and livestock had rendered production a difficult, near impossible proposition. The threat of losing the core factory buildings and sugarhouses easily worth a quarter of a million dollars or more, as had happened in many cases farther west, was unthinkable. Planter payments to the insurgents and the purchase of bonds from the PRC in New York were expensive, but surer, options than relying solely on Spanish security as evidenced by their inability to vanquish the insurgency and stop cane fires, cattle raids, and many other damages inflicted by the warring parties.

At a public meeting, the Spanish commander assured Guantánamo planters that every effort would be made to help them grind the crop. Theodore Brooks, and other attending business representatives, explained that the promised protection and assistance were insufficient. Ernest Brooks from Soledad, the British Consul Theodore Brooks, the French Consul, and two other planter's counsels formed a delegation to negotiate with the insurgents, receiving passes from the Spanish to travel. They met with General Pérez of the Guantánamo Brigade in an encampment of five hundred people southwest of the city to ask whether insurgent policy could be modified to allow cultivation. But with victory seemingly on the horizon, the insurgents maintained their no-grind policy. Bans on economic activity useful to the colonial metropole were more firmly enforced. Permission to grind was denied and Pérez reiterated that attempting to grow or harvest the patches of cane maturing in many fields not overgrown with weeds and scrub would result in the destruction of the *batey* itself of an offending estate.<sup>493</sup> There was to be no change in insurgent policy. Only after the

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<sup>493</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, pgs. 110-111, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon); USNA, RG 76, Entry 352. The pass for Ernest and Theodore Brooks, Vicente Venet, Agustín Saavedra, and others to pass “to the enemy zone ... and return to their homes” appears in Escrito del Gen. Pedro A. Pérez permitiendo el pase a la zona enemiga de Teodoro Brooks y otros, 14 January 1898; see also the late March 1898 summons to Theodore Brooks “to deal with important business concerning *la Hacienda Pública* and the interests of all the sugar fincas in the perimeter of Guantánamo, it is indispensable that on 10 April that you attend the General Quarters of the

unequivocal, complete constitution of Cuban independence would production resume.

Cuban sovereignty seemed to have been extended *de facto* if not *de jure* in the hesitancy of the planters to give credence to Spanish claims and offers.

Insurgents had effectively applied tactics both new and from the Ten Years' War including dispersal of forces and civilian supporters in remote camps, the exaction of war taxes from planters, and the sabotaging of production. Much of Guantánamo and indeed, most of the island, lay in smoldering ruins. But before the flag of the Republic of Cuba could be raised, North American intervention drastically changed the factors conditioning independence, greatly shifting the balance of forces. The entry of the United States into the war was ostensibly to halt the fighting and suffering just off American shores, but the timing suggests that intervention was designed to ensure a guiding U.S. presence at the outset of Cuban independence. The Liberation Army warily awaited the coming of the North Americans while the pro-Spanish party reacted with fury at news of war between Spain and the United States over Cuba in the spring and summer of 1898.

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1<sup>st</sup> Division with out any excuse {save illness} where we will meet General Pedro A. Pérez, Col. Tomás Padró Griñan, Lt. Col. Dr. García Vieta, the administrator of *Hacienda* for the state of Oriente, Comandante Rafael Pullés Palacios, and I, the writer” also in ANC, Documentos del Museo Nacional, caja: 11, no. 48.

## CHAPTER V:

### 1898—U.S. Intervention and the First Occupation

*It has not been known by Army Officers, nor by the people of the United States, why the seven thousand Spanish Regulars, and Guerillas [sic] stationed in and about Guantánamo City, during the War, never marched to the Relief of Santiago ...*

*The late General [William R.] Shafter, a few weeks before his death [in 1906], said to me in Santa Barbara, in the course of conversation: 'I never understood why those Spanish troops at Guantánamo did not attack my rear at Santiago.' I was, of course, very pleased to explain how much the Nation is indebted to a small force of Cubans – about a thousand in all – for having, with assistance from my forces, 'contained' such a large contingent of the enemy so near to Santiago; rendering them innocuous and useless in the campaign. And as the world is in ignorance of the magnificent work of this detachment, I am happy to tell the story, if only to do tardy justice to our Cuban Allies.*

-- Bowman Hendry McCalla, commander *USS Marblehead*.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Bowman Hendry McCalla, "Memoirs of a Naval Career" 4 vols. (Unpublished Manuscript, Washington DC: Library of Congress, 1910), III: ch. XXII, 22. McCalla's biographer, Paolo E. Coletta, *Bowman Hendry McCalla: Fighting Sailor* (Washington, DC: University Press of American, Inc., 1979), 97, briefly made mention of this exchange. See also Robert Debs Heinl, Jr. USMC, "How We Got Guantanamo," *American Heritage* V. 13, No. 2 (February 1962), 18-21, 94-97, p. 96. McCalla's Memoirs make the Cuban role much more explicit. See also Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 274-280, although he argued pp.276-280: "insurgents and the American marines did not possess forces sufficient to stop [Spanish general] Pareja from breaking out...the [Spanish] brigade was hors de combat, not essentially because of anything the Cubans and Americans did, but because Pareja adhered to ... poor strategy... The Cuban attempt to claim credit for "pinning down" Spanish forces during the advance on Santiago is farcical. The insurgents participated in the fighting at Daiquirí, Guantánamo, Santiago, and elsewhere, but their role seems to have been insignificant." McCalla's comment here in the epigraph should indicate that it was not just a "Cuban attempt to claim credit" for pinning down the garrison in the district, although one could counter that McCalla's memoirs similarly sought to exaggerate his own role in decisively shaping the events of the war. The battle of Guantánamo in the 1898 Spanish-Cuban-American War remains little studied and largely confined to the role played in it by U.S. forces. Even Tone's important and meticulously researched recent revisionist contribution missed some crucial details, as will be seen in this chapter. The most recent secondary work on this important combined Cuban-U.S. operation is not widely available: José Sánchez Guerra and Wilfredo de Jesús Campos Cremé, *La batalla de Guantánamo, 1898* (Havana: Ediciones Verde Olivo, 2000). I am indebted to José Sánchez Guerra, historian of the city of Guantánamo, for making available to me his unpublished manuscript and later a finished copy of this work during my research visits to Cuba. Spanish military reports for the district from April to July 1898 may be found at the Archivo General Militar de Madrid (formerly the Servicio Histórico Militar), Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797. See also General Félix Pareja's cable to Ramón Blanco, AGM-M, Sec. Capitanía General de Cuba, leg. 67, car. 18 and Cándido Pardo González, *La brigada de Guantánamo en la Guerra Hispano-Americana: Notas de mi cartera de campaña* (1930, manuscript AGM-M, Microfilm, roll 60) cited by Tone, 274-76.

Ragged, tired, and filthy, seventy Cuban insurgents and two fishermen from Caimanera in whaleboats and launches led by Colonel Enrique Thomas y Thomas approached the unarmored cruiser *USS Marblehead* and the light-house tender *Suwanee* off the western shore of Guantánamo Bay.<sup>495</sup> The Cubans had force-marched from Tiguabos for more than a day, briefly stopping to consume meager rations – perhaps some mangos or a sweet potato or two – and to rest before starting out again just after midnight toward the coast. They had come quickly on receiving orders to reinforce American marines who had landed the day before on the eastern side of the bay. As the U.S. sailors pulled the boats alongside the *Marblehead*, Captain Bowman McCalla waved his cap and shouted “Viva Cuba Libre!” The *mambises* returned the cheer enthusiastically. It was an auspicious beginning of joint Cuban and U.S. military operations against Spanish forces in the district.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> Enrique Collazo Tejada, *Los Americanos en Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta C. Martínez y Compañía, 1905) I: 212-13. For information on U.S. ships during the War of 1898, see the Department of the Navy Naval Historical Center Website, Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships: <<http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/>> The *USS Marblehead* [see photo “*Marblehead* in Guantánamo Bay”] was an unarmored cruiser launched in Boston in 1892. It was 269ft. long, 2,072 tons displacement with a crew complement of 274 officers and men. The ship was armed with nine 5-inch (127mm) guns – eight mounted broadside in barbets in the hull, one as a bow-chaser – six 6-pounder (57mm) guns, two 37mm cannon, and two machineguns. The ship landed U.S. Marines at Bluefields, Nicaragua 7 July 1894. Under McCalla’s command, the vessel called at a diplomatic dispute in Haiti in 1897, and at tiny Navassa Island before returning to Key West in January 1898 after the Spanish government proclaimed autonomy in Cuba in November 1897. See McCalla’s “Memoirs” and <<http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/m4/marblehead-ii.htm>> for information on the *Marblehead*.

<sup>496</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 4-5. José Sánchez Guerra and Wilfredo Campos Cremé, *La batalla de Guantánamo 1898* (Havana: Ediciones Verde Olivo, 2000), 69-71 [hereinafter cited as Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*]. McCalla – who together with García Vieta had summoned the Cuban troops – learned Spanish and French at the U.S. Naval Academy, and had served in the Caribbean and off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Latin America for much of his lengthy navy career. He had called regularly at Havana during the Ten Years’ War, where among Cuban acquaintances he had developed a sympathy for Cuban separatism – tinged with paternalism perhaps—maybe even a latent “anti-colonial imperialism” long imagined by North Americans with regard to Cuba—but nevertheless earnestly expressed in the correspondence appearing in his memoirs. Aboard the side-wheel steam frigate *Powhatan* he had even called at Guantánamo Bay in the summer of 1880 during the Little War while the U.S. North Atlantic Squadron steamed around Cuba “in consequence of complaints ... that Spanish Guerrilla [sic] were interfering with [U.S.] merchant shipping.” The *Powhatan* had not stayed long: yellow fever aboard a Spanish frigate at anchor curtailed the visit. McCalla also had prior experience



Once aboard the *Marblehead* and the *Suwanee*, naval personnel served their Cuban allies lunch. Someone aboard the *Suwanee* took a photograph showing curious U.S. sailors crowding around while the Cubans ate. Afterwards, they were issued white cotton canvas suits, new shoes, rifles and ammunition from navy stores “in place of the rags which they wore” but retaining “the very good straw hats which they brought with them.” Already aboard, the *habanero* Lieutenant Colonel of Sanitation Dr. Gonzalo García Vieta with “his little soldier servant” – his young black batman – and the New Orleans-born Cuban pilot, Colonel Alfredo Laborde, served as interpreters.<sup>497</sup>

Thus began a largely forgotten sideshow in the 1898 U.S. intervention into the 1895-1898 Cuban separatist rebellion against Spanish colonial rule: the joint U.S. and Cuban collaboration in the seizure of the lower portion of Guantánamo Bay. For the Spanish army defending the district, the Cuban separatist insurgents were opponents they had faced in the 1870s and again from 1895-1898 as we have seen. The North Americans were another

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landing marines and bluejackets: he commanded a contingent in the 1885 U.S. intervention in Aspinwall, Colombia (modern-day Colón, Panama) during a Liberal Party rebellion there. On McCalla's ports of call in Cuba, starting first in 1865 in Matanzas and Havana, but including July 1869 to spring 1871 concentration of the U.S. fleet in Florida (where he experienced the great 1871 Matanzas-Florida hurricane) and military exercises during the 1873 *Virginius* affair and diplomatic crisis between the United States and Spain, and yet again in 1879-1880, see ch. IV, 8-14, ch. V, 16, 34-37, 50-52, ch. VIII, 11, 13-16, ch. IX, 4. The *Powhattan* in the Windward Passage is mentioned in ch. IX, 13.

<sup>497</sup> Biographical information on insurgent officers found in Amels Escalante Colás, Angel Jiménez González, et. al. *Diccionario enciclopédico de historia militar de Cuba: Primera parte (1510-1898). Tomo 1: Biografías* (Havana: MINFAR; Ediciones Verde Olivo, 2001). This secondary work is problematic because of the general lack of footnotes. Alfredo Laborde had left the U.S. Merchant Marine to join the insurrection in the Department of Expeditions. Captured aboard the *Competitor* by a Spanish gunboat, he faced execution at Las Cabañas fortress until freed by the intervention of the U.S. Consul, Fitzhugh Lee. Admiral Sampson sent him as a pilot to McCalla at Cienfuegos in late April. Coletta, 81. In August 1898 he met the Cuban-American South Carolina reporter Narciso González at Máximo Gómez's camp on the north coast of Las Villas at El Mamon. See N.G. González, *In Darkest Cuba: Two Months Service Under Gómez Along the Trocha from the Caribbean to the Bahama Channel* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1922), 315-317. The description of García Vieta's batman is from photo caption in McCalla's memoirs. The practice amongst Cuban Liberation Army and some Spanish Army officers of having *asistentes* – typically black men – to cook, forage, carry equipment, and build encampments remained commonplace throughout Cuba's nationalist rebellions. Compare observations of Grover Flint, *Marching with Gómez*, on the 1895-1898 War with those of the Ten Years' War from Gómez, *El viejo Eduá o mi último asistente*. For late in 1898, see also González, *In Darkest Cuba*.

matter. It had been 157 years since the summer of 1741, when, during the Anglo Spanish War of Jenkins' Ear, several hundred colonists accompanied Vice Admiral Edward "Old Grog" Vernon and General Thomas Wentworth's invasion force of "8 warships and 40 transports, 4,000 soldiers, [and] a troop of 1,000 blacks from Jamaica" at "Walthenam Bay [*sic*, a corruption of Guantánamo]" and "Cumberland harbor"—named for a son of the British monarch.<sup>498</sup> In that earlier failed invasion the British intended to outflank Santiago's harbor defenses and wrest control of the largest Antillean isle, or at minimum, eastern Cuba and the Windward Passage with it, from their imperial adversaries. Harassed by Spanish crown militia and felled by yellow fever, malaria, and dysentery while the British and colonial levees attempted to build a suitable overland road to the main objective, Vernon and Wentworth's expedition ended in failure.

Over a century and a half later, the U.S. military intervention into the ongoing colonial war placed three militaries—Spanish, Cuban, and U.S.—with competing and conflicting aims and national interests in very different circumstances. In 1898, the U.S. Navy's task of creating a base and coaling yard for the Caribbean blockade squadron led to a small battle that would have unforeseen and portentous consequences. The lower part of the bay would eventually be site of an enduring U.S. military installation of periodic notoriety. In addition, the intervention into a revolution that had targeted local elites as pillars of colonial rule with the extraction of war taxes—and raising the specter of postwar land and

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<sup>498</sup> Gott, 39-41; Heintz, 19; Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Una derrota Británica en Cuba* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2000); Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 141. On North American colonists' participation in these military endeavors, including Lawrence Washington (George's older brother, and hence "Mount Vernon" from Edward Vernon), see Albert Harkness, Jr. "Americanism and Jenkins' Ear" *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* V. 37 No.1 (June 1950): 61-90; Marion Emerson Murphy, *The History of Guantanamo Bay* (Guantanamo Bay: District Publications and Printing Office, 1953), 1. See also, Pezuela y Lobo, II: 497; Forrest Sherman, "The British Occupation of Guantanamo Bay" *United States Naval Institute—Proceedings* 57 (April 1931): 511.

wealth redistribution as seen last chapter—the United States replaced Spain as guarantor of social stability and ultimate arbiter and guardian of the skewed distribution of wealth on the island. Indeed, the U.S. would come to restore in many cases the *status quo ante* for certain members of the oligarchy.

## 1898

In the wake of war-fever in the United States after the *USS Maine* explosion in Havana harbor 15 February 1898, the U.S. military prepared for a ground campaign in Cuba, and naval actions in the Caribbean and Pacific against Spain and its colonial possessions. U.S. officials dispatched the *Maine* to Havana upon the January request of U.S. Consul Fitzhugh Lee after pro-colonialist *peninsulares* and Volunteers had rioted against liberal and autonomist newspaper and political offices. This instability came amid fears stridently pro-Spanish elements might target North American symbols too, after a new government in Madrid announced their intention to grant autonomy to the island, and the recall of Weyler as captain-general. The mysterious and shocking explosion of the U.S. battleship and tragic deaths of 260 crewmembers came while the United States and Spain were locked in a diplomatic imbroglio over the status of Cuba. The loss of the warship and much of its crew was, for the United States' public, a precipitous *causus belli*. The source of urgency to government leaders was the prospect of a Cuban separatist resurgence in the face of belated and faltering Spanish reform efforts designed to salvage whatever authority Madrid had left, and assure the continued prominence of the island's bourgeoisie. American public outrage placed constraints on U.S. government leaders' range of actions and responses that already had narrowed precipitously after Cuban insurgents had weathered Valeriano Weyler's "war

with war” repressive strategy and prepared to go back on the offensive confronting Spanish overtures of autonomy and home-rule.

Conditions on the island after three years of war were such that the separatists refused to recognize the belated autonomous government; they held out for victory and independence, ignoring captain-general Ramón Blanco’s unilateral cease-fire proclamation. By 11 April, U.S. President William McKinley requested the power to intervene from Congress “to secure a full and final termination of hostilities between the Government of Spain and the people of Cuba, and to secure in the island the establishment of a stable government, capable of maintaining order and observing its international obligations.”<sup>499</sup> After a week of debate, the U.S. Congress passed the Joint Resolution calling for the future independence of Cuba as a general principle, and furthermore demanding that Spain “relinquish its authority and government in the Island of Cuba and withdraw its land and naval forces.” It also granted war powers to the President, and lastly, through the Teller Amendment, promised to leave Cuba in the control of its inhabitants once conditions there had been settled, thereby prohibiting U.S. annexation of the island.<sup>500</sup> In effect, the Joint Resolution was tantamount to a statement of hostilities, but the actual declaration came on the 25 April, after shots had been fired three days before by a navy flotilla off the northern cities Cárdenas, Matanzas, and Havana to halt shipping to and from those ports.

U.S. intervention in the ongoing and protracted Cuban War of Independence first assumed the form of this naval blockade of the island’s north coast starting on Friday, 22 April. These hostile actions were followed by reciprocal declarations of war from Spain and

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<sup>499</sup> In Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 19.

<sup>500</sup> Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 21.

by the United States. Meanwhile, the U.S. Army precipitously readied expeditionary forces at camps in the south and in Florida to invade Spanish possessions in the Caribbean, starting with Cuba.

In order to carry out naval operations in the Caribbean and Atlantic, the U.S. Navy implemented contingency war plans drawn up against Spain between 1894 and 1897.<sup>501</sup> A corollary to these various scenarios called for coaling stations, repair yards, and warehouses to be established in order to supply the ships for extended duty. The search for a suitable harbor in a strategic location was to have important and lasting ramifications for the Guantánamo region because of its ideally sheltered bay. Given that the U.S. Army faced grave shortages of equipment and difficulties in mobilization, most staff officers envisioned a summer campaign in eastern Cuba, to be followed by an offensive directed against Puerto Rico. After the end of the rainy season and, it was hoped, the period of greatest susceptibility to yellow fever, a final main effort with the bulk of the U.S. Army commanded by General Nelson Miles would be launched together with Máximo Gómez's insurgent forces against Havana in western Cuba. Thus, the U.S. Navy was faced with defeating the Spanish fleet and conducting multifarious complex operations in the Atlantic and Caribbean. Aside from improving logistics, a forward safe harbor and base close to the principal theaters of action would provide shelter for vessels should the war last into the autumn hurricane season.

The task of creating such a base and coaling yard for the Caribbean blockade squadron during the war of 1898 directly led to a joint Cuban-American operation in Guantánamo that has been largely overlooked or misunderstood by historians. At the time, the 10 June landing of U.S. forces at Guantánamo Bay – the first U.S. troops to set foot in

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<sup>501</sup> David F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898* (New York: MacMillan, 1981), 72-80.

Cuba during the war – elicited interest from the press.<sup>502</sup> Much U.S. newspaper coverage, however, was devoted to the Pacific and Commodore George Dewey’s 1 May 1898 one-sided naval battle of Manila Bay. The chaotic landings of the 17,000 troops of the Army Fifth Corps at Daiquirí and Siboney on 22- 24 June and subsequent encirclement and siege of Santiago de Cuba then eclipsed Guantánamo as the main story in the Cuban theater of operations. What transpired elsewhere, much less at Guantánamo constituted facts that would receive little attention and scant retrieval. To paraphrase from historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s observation on written history and uneven archival power, figuratively “unearthing” the collaborative aspects of the battle, and situating it within a regional context required putting extant facts culled from national, regional, and military archives into a “new narrative” that brings Cuban, Spanish, and North American historical agency into a more complete sequence.<sup>503</sup>

Competing nationalisms and even branches of service have heretofore sidelined aspects of 1898 in historical narratives. Amidst the furor that summer, an initial American enthusiasm for cooperation with the Cuban *insurrectos* was among the first casualties. On arrival in Cuba, U.S. troops largely responded to the poverty, threadbare conditions, and large preponderance of blacks in Cuban insurgent ranks with racist disdain and frequent hostility. Both Cuban and American societies were acutely racist as a result of their heritage of chattel slavery, but as has been seen, exhibited specific manifestations and idiosyncrasies.

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<sup>502</sup> “All Cuban Cables Are Now Severed,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 9 June 1898, p.1; “Our Marines at Guantanamo,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 13 June 1898, p.6; “Marines are Safe,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 15 June 1898, p.1; and “Marines Repel Another Attack. Enemy Driven Off at Guantánamo with Rifles and Field Gun,” *NYT*, 14 June 1898, p.1.

<sup>503</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), ch. 2, quote from p. 58.

In the military sphere, a racially integrated and poorly armed irregular force – and one in which black officers exercised command in many cases – encountered a standing professional, if antiquated, regular army that practiced racial segregation in its ranks. Such factors, combined with the language barrier, unfamiliar cultural norms, and differing conceptions of a postwar Cuban state fomented and exacerbated mutual suspicion, misperception and miscommunication. Of course, a pragmatic collaboration between United States forces and Cuban separatists initially promised a workable and satisfactory alliance, but over time irreconcilable national interests sundered any such expectations given the differing purposes and motives of a great power bent on exerting control over Cuba and an internally divided separatist movement combining tendencies ranging from annexationism to differing strands of *independentista* nationalism. The latter groups were often committed to total victory that would result in independence and uncompromised sovereignty after decades of anti-colonial organizing, mobilization, and sacrifice. Ultimately there would be a complete rift between the two erstwhile allies, punctuated by General Calixto García's letter to U.S. Fifth Corps commander, General William Rufus Shafter, when the Cuban forces were excluded from the Spanish surrender negotiations and prohibited from entering Santiago de Cuba at the end of the war.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> For friction between North Americans and Cubans, see Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *Cuba Between Empires*, chs. 10 and 11; *The War of 1898*, ch. 4: Constructing the Cuban Absence. See also Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 283-285; and Alice Wexler, "Pain and Prejudice in the Santiago Campaign of 1898," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* V. 18, No. 1, (February, 1976): 60, about turn-of-the-century U.S. racism towards Cubans of color and cultural deprecation of Hispanics in general. On the experiences of black American troops see Eliades Acosta Matos, *Los colores secretos del Imperio* (Havana: Mercie Ediciones, 2002); Willard R. Gates, "*Smoked Yankees*" and the Struggle for Empire: *Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898-1902* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), and Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 166-177.

In August 1898, the convalescing North American cavalry commander, Major General S.B.M. Young in command of the forlorn Montauk Point quarantine encampment for soldiers afflicted with malaria, dysentery, typhus and yellow fever, described Cuba's inhabitants as being "generally of little good ... no more capable of self government than the savages of Africa. The average Cuban is of a very low order of mankind. ... a mixture of Spanish, Indian, Italian, and negro, and he inherits the bad qualities of all." He claimed the insurgents were "a lot of degenerates, absolutely devoid of honor or gratitude. ... They would loot everything in sight and then

Hindsight indicated that irreconcilable national interests and greatly unequal power relations militated against cooperation. At the time the events unfolded, sources of tension included very different aims and ways of waging war. To *mambí* sensibilities, shaped by years of irregular warfare, frontal attacks against the modern repeating rifles of the Spanish seemed a suicidal strategy, wasteful of soldiers' lives. To North Americans, avoiding sustained contact with the enemy in favor of stealthy ambushes and attacking property was un-soldierly and un-manly – even barbarous. Cuban tactics reminded U.S. regulars of their Apache Indian opponents in the recently concluded wars on the western frontier. George Kennan, who arrived with the American Red Cross to alleviate the suffering of reconcentrados and war refugees described Cuban mambises near Siboney—“Cuban insurgents from the army of Garcia, and dirty, tattered refugees ... attracted to the beach by ... the prospect of getting food”:

They did not, at first sight, impress me very favorably. Fully four fifths of them were mulattoes or blacks; the number of half-grown boys was very large; there was hardly a suggestion of a uniform in the whole command; most of the men were barefooted, and their coarse, drooping straw hats, cotton shirts, and loose, flapping cotton trousers had been torn by thorny bushes and stained with Cuban mud until they looked worse than the clothes that a New England farmer hangs on a couple of crossed sticks in his corn-field to scare away the crows. If their rifles and cartridge-belts had been taken away from them they would have looked like a horde of dirty Cuban beggars and ragamuffins on the tramp. I do not mean to say, or even to suggest, that these ragamuffins were not brave men and good soldiers. They may have been both, in spite of their disreputable appearance. When, for months together, a man has lived the life of an outlaw in the woods, scrambling through tropical jungles, wading marshy rivers, and sleeping, without tent or blankets, on the ground, he cannot be expected to look like a veteran of the regular army ... The Cubans disappointed me, I suppose, because I had pictured them to myself as a better dressed and better disciplined body of men, and had not

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start in and rob one another. ... I have a great deal more confidence in the Spaniards than I have in the Cubans.”  
“Americanize Cuba, Says General Young. Cubans Thriftless and Incapable of Self Government, He Says.,”  
*Brooklyn Eagle*, 6 August 1898, p.3.



made allowance enough for the hardships and privations of an insurgent's life.<sup>505</sup>

Furthermore, from initial shock and mistrust, relations frequently moved to outright deprecation and disdain. There would be numerous cases of Spanish and North American fraternization postwar in which the two former foes “share[d] their scorn for the colonists as inferior people.”<sup>506</sup> During the Santiago campaign in eastern Cuba, U.S. soldiers ordered Cubans about, reacting in exasperation and later with anger to demands for provisions, clothing, and weapons; inter-service rivalry seemingly blinded the army to the fact that the navy had been supplying armaments and rations collected from the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC) and supporters in the United States along Cuba's coast.<sup>507</sup>

Cuban histories found instances of collaboration between Cubans and Americans to be problematic, implicating, as they did, many Cuban separatists' alignment with some U.S.

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<sup>505</sup> George Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba* (1899 reprint; Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1971), 90-92.

<sup>506</sup> Freidel, *The Splendid Little War* (NY: 1958 reprint; Short Hills, NJ: Burford Books, 2002), 236; Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 284-285. See also Pérez, *Cuba Between Empires*, 213-4, 217.

<sup>507</sup> Initial U.S. strategy contemplated – and quickly rejected – recognition of Cuban belligerency, and supplying Gómez and the Liberation Army in Las Villas. A classic “blue-water strategy,” the plan called for the navy blockading Cuba and engaging the Spanish fleet while the Liberation Army would be reinforced as the land force. Another early plan called for 6,000 U.S. troops to be landed near Trinidad on the south coast of Las Villas province to link up with Gómez, while still another emphasized invading western Cuba and besieging Havana. While the U.S. Army was directed to prepare an expeditionary force, there were some landings of weapons and supplies for the Cuban insurgents in Banes and other locations. The Banes landing deposited four hundred Cuban exiles, ammunition, weapons, provisions and clothing for the insurrection, see Collazo, II: 5-8; Freidel, 40. For one such expedition of the Cuban-American *Maine* Brigade, mostly Tampa cigar-rollers led by PRC chiefs, that included a contingent of black troopers from the 10th U.S. Cavalry and their white officers in late June 1898, see N. G. González, *In Darkest Cuba*. On early U.S. war plans for Cuba, see Peter S. Kindsvater, “Santiago Campaign of 1898: Joint and Combined Operations,” *Military Review* (January, 1993): 3-5; and Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire: The United States in the Spanish-American War* (1971; reprint. College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1998), ch. 3. The light-house tender, *Suwanee* landed at least “70,000 rounds of ammunition, 5,000 rifles, 1,000 carbines, 2,000 machetes and hundreds of pounds of bread, bacon and other provisions” on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of June. “All Cuban Cables Are Now Severed,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 9 June 1898, p.1; “Marines are Safe,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 15 June 1898, p. 1.

objectives.<sup>508</sup> Often stung and appalled by the postwar political settlement, frequently underscored by marginalization and high-handed dismissal of Cuban sacrifices and claims after thirty years of anti-colonial struggle, some Cuban nationalist historians tended to downplay such instances that occurred of pragmatic collaboration between the Cuban Liberation Army and the United States during 1898 in favor of narratives in which the Spanish had already largely been beaten during the previous three years of warfare.<sup>509</sup> Cuban historiography highlighted Cuban contributions, but tended to focus on leaders of the Liberation Army such as Gómez and García. To be sure, like U.S. historiography, the first generation of Cuban historians writing about the war included many participant observers with first hand experiences and members of the general staff, such as Enrique Collazo, Cosme de la Torriente, and José Miró y Argenter.<sup>510</sup> Their accounts often reflected a nationalist hagiography and romantic historical basis to the recently formed independent

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<sup>508</sup> Lillian Guerra, *The Myth of José Martí: Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 13-18. Guerra persuasively argues that mostly white, educated professionals and middle-class exiles who openly emulated and admired the United States, formed a constituency for a Cuban “pro-imperial nationalism.” Revolutionary nationalists, including many insurgent officers, in the separatist camp favored a “top-down, state-engineered approach” to social and political change. In her schema, blacks, *mestizos*, veterans, the working class, and many women constituted a third “popular nationalism.” In contrast to her tripartite classification, I would posit that pro-imperial nationalists were often in conflict with revolutionary nationalists while both were subjected to periodic popular nationalist pressures from historically marginalized sectors of the population, and separatist supporters from the lower classes. Nevertheless, in my view, the general absence of programmatic forms among many of those groups renders their classification as an entirely distinct and separate third nationalist tendency problematic.

<sup>509</sup> As but one (early) example, the dedication to Enrique Collazo’s book, *Los Americanos en Cuba*, I: 5, read “A weak people who confer to a powerful and strong neighboring people the defense of their liberty and rights deserve to be, and will be, slaves. We learn from the history of our past not to confide in our humanitarian protectors, seeking in peace the development of our riches in order to make ourselves strong in order to conserve the absolute independence and freedom for which we have struggled half a century.” See also Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Cuba no debe su independencia a los E.U.* (Havana: Sociedad Cubana de Estudios Históricos e Internacionales, 1950).

<sup>510</sup> Succinct appraisals of Cuban historiography on the process of Cuban independence and the 1898 war include Duvon C. Corbitt, “Cuban Revisionist Interpretations of Cuba’s Struggle for Independence,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* V. 43, No. 3 (August, 1963): 395-404, and Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 425-527, especially 437-42, and 453-9 and *The War of 1898*, 159-168. See also the revisionist history by Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*.

nation that has not been superseded by post-1959 historiography. A further tendency in some Cuban scholarship pointed to the exhausted condition of the Spanish Army after three years of war, which clearly underlay the relative ease and short duration of the U.S. invasion, but downplayed how the U.S. intervention hastened the surrender and removal of that defeated army – and how it negated Spain’s sea power much the same way the United States was indebted to the intervention of the French fleet in 1781 contributing to the American victory at Yorktown. Cuban nationalist trends arguing that the Ejército Libertador could have vanquished the defeated Spanish army without direct North American intervention amplified the role of commanders such as García in achieving victory, yet they muted the case of collaboration that resulted in what became, after 10 December 1903, the site of the first permanent extra-territorial U.S. Navy base and enduring physical symbol of the Platt Amendment’s constraints on the exercise of Cuban national sovereignty and independence of action.

Not only competing nationalisms and national interests with resultant friction between Cubans and North Americans, but also inter-service rivalry within military institutions, became reflected in curiously blinkered historiographies that obscured those few cases of pragmatic collaboration such as occurred for a few weeks at Guantánamo. After the war, the military historiography in the United States downplayed, denigrated, or ignored Cuban contributions to the outcome. The emphasis on decisive battles reflected the overwhelming naval victories of Manila Bay and Santiago de Cuba that destroyed Spain’s Pacific and Caribbean squadrons, and the 1 July land battle at San Juan Hill and El Caney that ultimately led to the surrender of Spanish troops at Santiago de Cuba and gubernatorial and vice-presidential ambitions for Colonel Theodore Roosevelt of the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Volunteer

Cavalry, popularly known as the “Rough Riders.”<sup>511</sup> Focus upon the war’s major naval battles, won at virtually no cost to the United States, and romanticized versions of the costly infantry attacks at El Caney, Kettle and San Juan Hills obscured widespread ineptitude and command failures; the Spanish Army’s baffling inability to capitalize on several potentially disastrous U.S. Army gaffes, and their own tactical and strategic blunders created an enduring paradigm of the war of 1898 as something of an *opera bouffe*. By-and-large what transpired in other parts of the world during the conflict, let alone in nearby areas of Cuba, was ignored. The events at Guantánamo lacked the strategic significance of the former naval engagements, and the heavier casualties of the crucial land battle: signal events in what has been remembered, after all, as a relatively brief “splendid little war.”<sup>512</sup>

#### Guantánamo Bay: June-July 1898

The discord that waited in the immediate future was less evident in mid-1898. Segments of the Liberation Army, including commanding General Máximo Gómez in Las Villas, analyzed U.S. actions in recognizing neither the Cuban Army nor Provisional Government with increasing alarm. Some insurgent leaders saw in U.S. intervention a means of shortening the war against Spain while radical separatist leaders including the late José Martí and Antonio Maceo had long warned of the dangers attendant with North American

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<sup>511</sup> For a succinct review of the historiography of Spain’s year of *el desastre*, the United States’ “Spanish-American War” and the Cuban *guerra hispano-cubano-norteamericana* see Duvon C. Corbitt, “Cuban Revisionist Interpretations of Cuba’s Struggle for Independence,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 32 (August 1962): 395-404; Philip S. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism* 2 vols. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972); John L. Offner, *An Unwanted War: The Diplomacy of the United States and Spain over Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); indispensable to any survey of the literature is Pérez, *The War of 1898*. See also, Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, Preface, chs. 1, 2, 3, and 18.

<sup>512</sup> Freidel, 1, citing the U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom John Hay in a letter to Theodore Roosevelt; Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 282.

involvement. Separatist leaders in exile, however, had lobbied the U.S. Congress to accord the Liberation Army belligerent status. The radicals wanted to rely on their own efforts to defeat the colonial regime, while many exiles and some soldiers in Cuba favored North American support, forming an influential body of what historian Lillian Guerra has termed “pro-imperialist nationalists” that undercut any unified nationalist responses to what historian Victor Kiernan has named the United States’ proselytizing and missionary “anticolonial imperialism.” The United States, for such pro-imperial nationalists, was a model to be emulated, an incontestably powerful ally to be enlisted in ejecting Spanish control, even a *deus ex machina* to salvage or assure their political position postwar. The separatist civilian leader Bartolomé Masó welcomed a “magnanimous” U.S. intervention as assuring the victory of Cuban arms.<sup>513</sup> He later strenuously opposed the Platt Amendment, and the lease on Guantánamo Bay, but at the time, buoyed by the anti-annexationist language of the Joint Resolution and the Teller Amendment, he and other separatists overlooked any cross-purposes and aims to United States government policy. In Oriente, General Calixto García ordered his forces to fully cooperate despite darkening misgivings about the onset of U.S. intervention. For the time being, overtures of assistance and alliance were extended against the Spanish and their supporters.<sup>514</sup>

On May 28, after the Spanish fleet of Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete had been sighted in Santiago’s harbor, U.S. Secretary of the Navy John Long cabled Commodore Winfield Scott Schley to remain in position off eastern Cuba. Also included in the

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<sup>513</sup> Gott, 101.

<sup>514</sup> Collazo, I: 210-11.

communication came the order “Can not you take possession of Guantanamo [and] occupy as a coaling station? [sic]”<sup>515</sup>

By 7 June 1898 U.S. Admiral William Sampson ordered McCalla to assist the converted passenger liner *St. Louis* in cutting the transatlantic cables as part of the blockade of the island.<sup>516</sup> The *St. Louis* and the tug *Wompatuck* had earlier been driven from Guantánamo Bay by hostile fire from shore and the tiny Spanish *guardacosta* gunboat *Sandoval*.<sup>517</sup> The *Marblehead* together with the schooner-rigged auxiliary steamer *Yankee* bombarded the “antiquated” Spanish sand fort situated at the narrowest choke point of the inner bay at the peninsula of Cayo Toro and the fortifications of Caimanera.<sup>518</sup> “The insurgents co-operated on the land side,” noted a press account.<sup>519</sup> The U.S. ships could not maneuver in the narrows because of the forty-six “Bustamante torpedoes” or anti-ship mines that Spanish engineers and the crew of the *Sandoval* laid from the very day President

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<sup>515</sup> Heinl, 19; Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 69. On the chronology and timetables of Cervera’s fleet and other movements, see Felipe Martínez Arango, *Cronología crítica de la guerra hispanocubanoamericana* (Havana: Cuadernos de Historia Habanera, 1950, reprint; Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1973), 66.

<sup>516</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Lessons of the War with Spain* (1899, reprint; Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 138, 172-174.

<sup>517</sup> Campaña contra los Estados Unidos: Partes de los sucesos ocurridos en Guantánamo desde el comienzo de la campaña hasta la capitulación. Abril a Julio 1898. División de Cuba/ 2a. Brigada – Ejército de Operaciones, in AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto 5797.1, pp. 4-22, 21 May 1898 report by General Félix Pareja.

<sup>518</sup> Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 275, citing Cándido Pardo González, *La brigada de Guantánamo en la Guerra Hispano-Americana: Notas de mis carteras de campaña* AGM-M, Microfilm, roll 60, correctly noted that the forts “defending the mouth of the harbor” did not impede the U.S. Navy. He wrote that the defenses at the mouth of the bay included relics from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Unaccountably, he failed to address the sand fort at Cayo Toro with its armament, about which more later. Perhaps it is a moot question, since the Spanish were in fact quite outgunned with the arrival of the *Marblehead* and the *Yankee*. Nevertheless, the sea mines emplaced at Cayo Toro were a curious omission since they certainly did impede any immediate U.S. advance on Caimanera or into the inner bay—the ensenada de Joa. As for the *Yankee*, it was one among numerous civilian ships commandeered by the U.S. Navy during the war for use as auxiliaries: in this case, the Southern Pacific screw-steamer *El Norte*.

<sup>519</sup> “All Cuban Cables are now Severed,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 9 June 1898, p.1.

McKinley had declared the blockade around Cuba in late April. The U.S. flotilla's heavy bombardment chased the outgunned *Sandoval* into the mouth of the Guaso River at the upper part of the bay. The Spanish General Félix Pareja reported to his superiors that the Americans fired one thousand shells in six hours while the fort at Cayo Toro's gun crews manning obsolete 160mm brass muzzle-loaders responded with five rounds and with a further eight from a more modern 90mm Krupp gun.<sup>520</sup> The *St. Louis* cut the westbound cable to Santiago at 7:30 a.m.; the *Marblehead's* boat cut the eastbound cable to Haiti and thence France by 11:00.<sup>521</sup> Obeying orders from General Calixto García, two Cuban officers including García

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<sup>520</sup> The fort at Cayo Toro had a battery of three antiquated bronze muzzle-loading 6.4-inch (160mm) cannons, rifled with three grooves, and two modern Krupp rifled-guns – a 3.5-inch (90mm) and another 3-inch (76mm) – in sand batteries. Two obsolescent muzzle-loading field guns guarded the minefield. During the battle for the bay the Spaniards apparently added some 80mm mountain guns from the seven based in Guantánamo City. Another battery of three muzzle-loading 6.4-inch rifles was emplaced at Caimanera along with bomb-proofs, trenches, and the blockhouses built at the start of the war against the separatist insurgents. The Scottish-built 117-foot *Sandoval* had a 57mm gun and a Maxim one-pounder automatic cannon and a crew of twenty-one. Together with the forty-six contact mines or “Bustamante torpedoes,” these forces made up the sea defenses of Guantánamo Bay. McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 10-12.

In 1892 Spanish military engineers had carried out elaborate survey work and military architecture drawings to design three modern forts, never realized or built, that would have placed the entrance of the bay under a formidable crossfire. The plans may be found in the AGM-M together with topographical maps, soundings and depth charts of the entire bay.

<sup>521</sup> The Spanish account of the cable-cutting operation and bombardment lists six wounded, two at Cuzco in the hills of the present-day USN base, two at Caimanera, and two at the fort on Cayo Toro. Contained in AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto: 5797.1, doc. 3, p. 27-41, 30 June 1898. McCalla had performed a similar cable-cutting operation 11 May 1898 at Cienfuegos with the *Marblehead*, *Nashville*, and *Eagle* sending out crews in launches and boats with hacksaws to cut them. The ships fired shells and machineguns over their heads to suppress the Spanish positions, but ten U.S. sailors and marines in the boats were wounded, two fatally. This action led to the largest number of U.S. Congressional Medals of Honor for the war being bestowed. McCalla also delivered food, supplies, dynamite, arms and ammunition to Cuban insurgents from separatists in Key West after he exchanged intelligence with five Cuban soldiers who rowed out 36 hours from the west of Cienfuegos. See McCalla, III: ch. XXI, 6-18. See also Willis Boyd Allen, *Cleared for Action: A Story of the Spanish-American War of 1898* (New York, E.P. Dutton, 1899), ch. IX, which used the device of a letter exchange between a sailor on the *Eagle*, “Dave R.” and his sister “Annie, aka Anemone” to portray operations off Cienfuegos and gendered expressions of nationalism and patriotism on the U.S. home front; Evelyn M. Cherpak, “Cable Cutting at Cienfuegos” *Proceedings – United States Naval Institute* 113 (February, 1987): 119-22.

Vieta joined McCalla to serve as liaisons between the insurgents under the *guantanamero* Pedro Pérez and the North Americans.<sup>522</sup>

McCalla had also been ordered to land U.S. Marines on the eastern shore of the lower part of the bay to establish a coaling station and logistics base for the blockading navy ships. Approximately a hundred marines from contingents aboard the *Marblehead*, *Oregon*, and *New York* landed to complete the destruction of the cable station and carry out a reconnaissance of possible landing sites while the main force disembarked from Tampa, Florida.

Three days later, on Friday, 10 June 1898, 647 marines from the first battalion – one fifth of the entire U.S. Marine Corps, commanded by grizzled U.S. Civil War-veteran Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Huntington, landed at Fisherman’s Point on the arid eastern shore of Guantánamo Bay from their civilian transport *Venezuela*, rechristened with the more bellicose name *Panther*.<sup>523</sup> While the *Marblehead*, *Yankee*, and the Civil War-era monitor *Yosemite* shelled known and suspected Spanish positions, the U.S. troops burned the ruins of the fishing village, a Spanish blockhouse, and the French-owned telegraphic cable station as a precaution against yellow fever. Later they erected a tent encampment around the ruins of the hilltop blockhouse dubbed “Camp McCalla,” raised the U.S. flag and naval ensign, and built entrenchments to protect it. As stated previously, this force constituted the first the United States landed in Cuba. Amid the thorny scrub, cacti, and brush, the Americans were far from home. The army’s Fifth Corps destined for Santiago de Cuba was still milling in confusion and loading transports in Tampa Florida and their landing in eastern Cuba at

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<sup>522</sup> Coletta, 92 citing *Marblehead’s* log; Heinl, 20.

<sup>523</sup> Heinl, 20, claimed the *Panther*, commanded by Civil War-veteran, G.C. Reiter was originally the S.S. *Venezuela*.



Daiquirí and Siboney remained two weeks away; only the ships and the Windward Passage lay behind them; inland there were only unknown numbers of Spanish troops and, farther out, Cuban insurgents.<sup>524</sup>

During the night of Saturday 11 June, starting about 5:00pm, the marines received their baptism of fire. Five hundred Spanish soldiers from the Simancas and Príncipe regiments and the Squadron of Santa Catalina, together with 100 reinforcements including irregulars from the sugar mill-town Romelié, attacked the beachhead during a rainsquall.<sup>525</sup> The Spanish could not spare more troops because they manned the numerous blockhouses dotting sugar mills, and much of the landscape, including those that had recently been reconstructed around the eighty-kilometer *trocha* around the *llano* and its cultivation zone from the period of reconcentration. The attempt to defeat Cuban insurgency and restore the colonial regime had created an extensive architecture of outposts and communications that required a substantial garrison.

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<sup>524</sup> North American accounts include John D. Clifford, "My Memories of Cuba," *Leatherneck* 12 (June 1929): 7, 54-55; Stephen Crane, "Marines Signaling under Fire at Guantanamo," *McClure's Magazine* 12 (1898-1899): 332-336, "War Memories," *Wounds in the Rain* (London: Methuen and Company, 1900), and "The Red Badge of Courage was his Wig-wag Flag," reproduced in R.W. Stallman and E.R. Hagemann, eds. *The War Dispatches of Stephen Crane* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 140-54; Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 65-75; Charles L. McCawley, "The Guantanamo Campaign of 1898," *Marine Corps Gazette* 1 (September, 1916): 221-42. See also, Marion Emerson Murphy, *The History of Guantanamo Bay* (Guantanamo Bay: District Publications and Printing Office, Tenth Naval District, 1953); Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 60-64; Carolyn A. Tyson, ed., *The Journal of Frank Keeler. Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, 1898* (Quantico: Marine Corps Paper Series, 1967). [See photo "Marine encampment at Camp M'Calla {i.e. McCalla}]. Total troop levels in eastern Cuba are open to widely varying estimates. For the entire Guantánamo district Sánchez and Campos in *La batalla* cite seven thousand Spanish troops: 5,500 regulars and 1500 irregulars, while the allies consisted of five thousand three hundred composed of 4,000 insurgents drawn mostly from the Hatuey and Guantánamo infantry regiments and 1300 North Americans including the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. See Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 143-4.

<sup>525</sup> AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto: 5797.1, doc. 4, p. 41-50, 20 July 1898. It is likely that most of the personnel in the Squadron of Santa Catalina and irregulars from Romelié would have been pro-Spanish Creoles meaning that Cubans were involved as combatants on both sides.

The 600 Spanish regulars and local militia sent to dislodge the Americans began shooting from the thickets of brush and thorn-scrub in a night attack against the beachhead. The Spaniards were the first enemy using smokeless powder faced by the U.S. Marines, which made them difficult to spot; the marines responded to the harassing fusillade in some confusion. They returned fire from field guns and rifle volleys, while signaling to the flotilla of ships for support. The *Marblehead* and the dispatch ship *Dolphin* scanned the shore with powerful searchlights and fired their cannon. Smoke wreathed in the glare of the lights, lending an eerie quality to the scene.<sup>526</sup> Journalist Stephen Crane wrote of “a thousand rifles rattling ... field-guns booming ... diabolic Colt automatics clacking” together with “the roar of the *Marblehead* coming from the bay, and, last, with Mauser bullets sneering always in the air a few inches over one’s head” – by which sound all knew the Spaniards were “on three sides of the camp.”<sup>527</sup> In his memoirs McCalla recalled that from his vantage point on the *Marblehead* he bemoaned the lack of “fire discipline shown by the Marines, in the trenches on McCalla Hill” as the Americans shot at shadows, and responded to the distinctive sound of the Spaniards’ Mauser rifles with “a roar of musketry” so that “there was an almost incessant roll of rifle fire, mingled with the reports from automatic and three-inch guns.”<sup>528</sup> He estimated that in a single night the 650 Marines had “expended between thirty and forty

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<sup>526</sup> The USS *Dolphin* was a three-mast schooner-rigged steel dispatch boat launched in 1884. Capable of speeds of 15 1/2 knots, it was 240 feet in length, displacing 1,486 tons, and armed with three 4-in. guns.

<sup>527</sup> Crane, “Marines Signaling Under Fire at Guantanamo,” *Wounds in the Rain*, 178-9. See also, Allen, *Cleared for Action*, 231-133.

<sup>528</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXI, 24.

thousand rounds.”<sup>529</sup> A correspondent in the press dispatch boat *Dauntless* wrote that “given a free rein with repeating rifles, 500 nervous troops can waste 10,000 rounds of ammunition, killing shadows, in a single night, and not think even then that they have done much shooting.”<sup>530</sup>

The following morning allowed the American invaders to survey the damage. There were nineteen wounded, a sergeant killed, and two dead marines – possibly victims of so-called friendly fire.<sup>531</sup> In addition, the popular navy surgeon John Gibbs had been killed outside his tent.<sup>532</sup> The bodies of the two marines had been abandoned for a lengthy period and rumors and press dispatches initially misreported that Spanish irregulars had mutilated the bodies.<sup>533</sup> The marines thought they had beaten off the attackers with heavy losses, but

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<sup>529</sup> This trigger-happy behavior may have indicated panic from unseasoned troops in unfamiliar terrain. It also might have been due to the type of straight-pull bolt-action rifle issued to them. This weapon, the 6mm Model 1895 Lee, or “Winchester-Lee,” was the first repeater in widespread US Navy service, loading from a clip that made putting individual cartridges into the five-round magazine difficult. Therefore unable to “top off” the magazine after firing a few shots, some troops may have fired all of the bullets remaining in the magazine and then added a full clip. In any case, the officers viewed it as a failure of training. Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 275, described the “First Marine Battalion, an elite force of 647 officers and men equipped with rapid-fire artillery, a Gatling gun, and modern Krags [M1892 Krag-Jørgensen .30-40cal. rifles], occupied the hills east of the city.” This statement was in error: it conflated the weapons of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps with those of the regulars of the U.S. Army’s Fifth Corps. The marines did have an artillery battery — three-inch Hotchkiss field guns—but also possessed at least two Model 1895 Colt machine guns and the aforementioned small-caliber repeating arms.

<sup>530</sup> “Ships Demolish Caimanera Forts,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 16 June 1898, p.1.

<sup>531</sup> Heintz claimed six casualties: three dead and three wounded, 94. Some sources indicate that the two privates were killed the evening of June 11, but Stallman and Hagemann cited marine privates William Dunphy [sic, Dumphy], and James McColgan killed late June 10, Sgt. Charles Smith, USMC, and John Blair Gibbs USNR (whose father had died with Custer at the Little Bighorn in 1876), killed the night of June 11-12, and Sergeant-Major Henry Good killed during the night attack on June 12-13, p. 146-7, and 268, footnotes. Cuban Col. Enrique Thomas claimed, in Collazo, *Los Americanos en Cuba*, I: 213, that his men recovered the body of a marine sergeant and that Spaniards had taken his weapon and ammunition.

<sup>532</sup> It may be the death of either Gibbs, Sgt. Smith, or Sgt.-Major Goode that Crane wrote: “He was dying hard. Hard. It took him a long time to die. He breathed as all noble machinery breathes when it is making its gallant strife against breaking, breaking. But he was going to break. ... Ultimately he died.” See “War Memories” in *Wounds in the Rain*, 238 and Stallman and Hagemann, eds., 268.

Spanish reports indicate they had a soldier and sergeant from the Príncipe unit “mortally wounded” and twelve wounded or injured in the dark.<sup>534</sup> The Spaniards settled upon such harassing night attacks, probing the lines for weak spots and denying their enemies rest in subsequent days.

In view of the unsettled and perilous situation support was required. Marine Major Cochrane later “described the fight” to Red Cross official Kennan: He “said that he slept only an hour and a half in four days ... many of his men” were “so exhausted that they fell asleep standing on their feet”; indeed some marines under the harassing fire “slept only two hours out of one hundred and fifteen.”<sup>535</sup> García Vieta, the Cuban liaison, agreed with McCalla that Cuban troops should reinforce the marines’ positions.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> Lurid and sensationalist accounts of the war included stories that insurgents obtained footwear by lopping off the feet from fallen soldiers and the like. The *Brooklyn Eagle* “Our Marines at Guantanamo” 13 June 1898, p.6 reported the mutilation of privates William Dumphy and Charles McColgan, stating that the “dead were chopped with machetes and stripped of shoes” only to retract the story later. See “No Mutilation at Guantanamo.” 23 June 1898, p.6. Spanish records at AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto 5797.1, doc. 4, p. 45, 20 July 1898 reported that two of three American outposts or sentries were killed by Spanish troops, and that their weapons, munitions, etc. were taken. This removal of equipment and the number of bullet wounds may have been the source of the mutilation rumors. The Spaniards fired on the conspicuous white tents throughout the night. Spanish Army casualty lists accompany this document. The U.S. Navy Department requested confirmation of the mutilation story, and Admiral Sampson replied: “I have to report that a careful investigation has been made and it is reported to me that the apparent mutilation was probably due to the effect of smaller caliber bullet fired at short range and I withdraw the charge of mutilation. SAMPSON [sic].” *Brooklyn Eagle* front page “Sampson Withdraws Charge of Mutilation of Bodies.” 25 June 1898, p.1. The same paper, in its retraction, published “Though we hear much of Spanish treachery, it must be owned that since the blowing up of the *Maine* our foe has conducted himself with the same courage and uprightness that we would have expected of the French or the Germans. ... It is a pleasure to know that we are not dealing with a people who resort to mean or underhand measures to gain their ends.” “No Mutilation at Guantanamo.” 23 June 1898, p.6.

<sup>534</sup> AGM-M, Fondo: Documentación sobre Cuba, Caja: 5797, Asunto: 5797.1, doc. 4, p. 46-50 and accompanying casualty list, 20 July 1898.

<sup>535</sup> Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 71, 263.

<sup>536</sup> Allen, *Cleared for Action*, 233, cited a journalist who wrote, with some melodramatic hyperbole, “how long is this gallant company of first class fighting men [the marines] to be left to withstand assaults of four times their number...?” As we have seen, the Spanish garrison in Guantánamo was of formidable size, but the troops detached to the mouth of the bay were roughly equal in number to U.S. forces.

García Vieta was typical of Calixto García's staff officers: white, highly educated in the United States, proficient in English. An example of historian Guerra's "pro-imperial nationalist" after his years of living abroad, he had been active in Cuban exile circles and the Department of Expeditions, arriving in Cuba on 30 May 1896 in one of the supply landings of the small wooden ship *Three Friends*.<sup>537</sup> A medical doctor, he was first the head of military sanitation under General García before going back to New York to arrange the delivery of artillery supplies to the Liberation Army. In Cuba in May 1898, he had met with Enrique Collazo and U.S. General Nelson Miles' emissary Lieutenant Andrew Rowan to facilitate coordination and collaboration between Cuban and U.S. forces. Familiar with the United States and its dominant ethnic and class norms of masculine comportment, he was chosen to arrange collaboration between the insurgents in Guantánamo under the command of General Pérez.

Such officers formed a means of bringing insurgent chiefs directly under García's control and achieving unity of command while the insurgent headquarters moved closer to where the U.S. Fifth Corps intended to land at Aserraderos on the southern coast just to the west of Santiago de Cuba in the Sierra Maestra mountains. It also served to impose a white leadership on the racially heterogeneous eastern Cuban Army. Social control prerogatives became remanifested as Spain's defeat neared. The higher education of these officials commended their advancement, but in many cases less educated black officers with longer combat experience and seniority of rank viewed their sidelining with disfavor.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> Escalante, Jiménez, et. al.; García del Pino, 79.

<sup>538</sup> See, for example, Ada Ferrer "Rustic Men, Civilized Nation: Race, Culture, and Contention on the Eve of Cuban Independence." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78 (1998): 663-86 for an account of the black *santiaguero* General Quintín Bandera [also rendered as Banderas] being removed from command in Las

Cuban separatists had mobilized blacks and whites in pursuit of an equal citizenship in a common project of a future progressive Republic. In separatists circles, an inclusive and color-blind nationalist rhetoric cohabited uneasily with long-held racist notions from a presumption of inherent racial inequality to euro-centric norms of civility leavened by positivist and Social Darwinist doctrines, and among a few Cuban whites, even an imagined postwar “white man’s nation” resembling the separation and segregation practiced in the United States.<sup>539</sup> As termination of the war neared, in ways subtle and explicit, the irregular forces attempted to adopt the trappings and manifestations of a fully constituted nation-state—one in which white leadership patterns and prerogatives often became re-asserted. García Vieta relayed written orders to the white *cobrero* Colonel Thomas in Tiguabos that included the following:

I must advise you that the troops and officers under your command will have the honor to cooperate with the brilliant American Army. Furthermore, the regiment that has disembarked here is the most brilliant of marines that they have; in consequence it is most important to correct any indiscipline among our troops. It is urgent that all together we leave a good impression and account of ourselves in the name of our beloved homeland. I do not refer to acts of valor ... I refer to details like salutes and other actions that are common among our troops<sup>540</sup>

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Villas for failing to prosecute the war with sufficient vigor, and for living with his mistress during this same later phase in the war. See also Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 152; Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 147, 202 on Bandera, and 69, 91, 94, 139, and 179-80 on racism in Cuba and within the social composition of the Ejército Libertador, see also Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 95.

<sup>539</sup> On racially egalitarian features of Cuban nationalism in internal opposition to racism, see Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, and Helg, *Our Rightful Share*. See also the only extant memoir by a black *mambí* soldier, who served mostly in Matanzas: Ricardo Batrell Oviedo, *Para la historia: Apuntes autobiográficas de la vida de Ricardo Batrell Oviedo* (Havana: Seone y Alvarez, 1912). Note that while some scholars would characterize certain nationalist constructs as “racially inclusive” others would suggest that they could also rhetorically serve “racially evasive” ends. See also, Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 94-5, 139-41.

<sup>540</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 68-69, cites Enrique Thomas’ diary of operations in Enrique Collazo, *Los americanos en Cuba*, I: 211-12.

The anxieties and sense of inadequacy among middle-class white Cubans interacting with North Americans and the disheveled and disorderly realities of their native land were keenly felt. Crane later described Cuban insurgents – “a hard-bitten, undersized lot, most of them negroes, and with the stoop and curious gait of men who had at one time labored at the soil ... in short ... hardy, tireless, uncomplaining peasants” being “adjusted one by one at the expense of considerable physical effort” by Cuban officers with “an idea that their men must drill the same as marines.”<sup>541</sup>

Officers such as García Vieta tasked with working together with the two allied armies were similarly awkwardly positioned before the technological might and professional organization and disciplined regular U.S. military in comparison with the penury and poverty of their own Liberation Army. In McCalla García Vieta had a sympathetic American interlocutor. The U.S. Navy captain was receptive when García Vieta suggested that men experienced with Spanish small unit tactics could be provided, but that the U.S. armed forces would have to clothe, provision and “give them arms and ammunition, as only a small portion [of Cubans] had rifles.” McCalla noted with satisfaction in his postwar memoir “co-operation between us was most perfect.”<sup>542</sup>

Thomas carried out the order, and a group of insurgent veterans and men familiar with the waters of the bay were dispatched rapidly. After being armed by the navy, and completing a few hours of drill, Thomas—who had been an administrator at the Guantánamo sugar mill Santa María before the war—conveyed to McCalla through García Vieta that as “decided patriots” and “men of honor” he promised to change the situation within three days.

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<sup>541</sup> Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 141-42.

<sup>542</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 2.

If not, it would “be because no Cuban remains alive.”<sup>543</sup> The Spanish had regrouped and attacked again during the night and earlier in the morning, intending to seize or spike the U.S. Marines’ Hotchkiss field pieces and two machine guns. Some advanced American pickets were cut off for a time and had to be relieved.<sup>544</sup> A total six marines died: three Irish immigrants, one Canadian and two U.S. “American born and bred.”<sup>545</sup> The marines shifted the campsite closer to the bay and supporting naval flotilla on the other side of the hill’s crest away from the Spanish line of fire. Once again the artillery from the ships impeded the Spanish, who could not launch a heavier attack on the beachhead without risking prohibitive losses. They sustained one killed and twenty-nine wounded, but continued to fire desultorily on the U.S. encampment.<sup>546</sup>

The U.S. ships shelled the heights around and above the camp, driving off and scattering the Spanish troops there while the Cubans “dressed in the white duck clothes of the American jack-tar ... some” with new “shoes slung around their necks with a string” landed at Fisherman’s Point.<sup>547</sup> They “quickly built themselves comfortable huts, from the palms and trees along the shore” before moving out as skirmishers and flankers in pairs, “burning the brush and undergrowth as they advanced.”<sup>548</sup> McCalla “felt great relief” because “the

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<sup>543</sup> Collazo, I: 213; Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 72. On Enrique Thomas’ pre-war position at Santa María, see José Sánchez Guerra, *El azúcar en el valle de los ingenios guantanameros*, 46.

<sup>544</sup> Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 171-72.

<sup>545</sup> “Marines are Safe,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 15 June 1898, p. 1.

<sup>546</sup> AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto: 5797.1, doc. 5, p. 61-76, 20 July 1898.

<sup>547</sup> Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 141.

<sup>548</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 5-6. See also Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 37 and Martínez Arango, 74-75 and 154-155. These secondary works cite a 23 July 1898 speech at the parting of the allied force in which



Cubans with their knowledge of the ways of the enemy” augmented the U.S. troops: “The example of assuredness shown by the Cuban contingent” proved “beneficial ... after the night of the twelfth [of June], the fire control in camp, was perfect.”<sup>549</sup> The value of Cuban reinforcements—“mostly negroes, with Cuban officers”—in “pointing out” Spanish “tricks” was noted approvingly in North American press accounts.

Spanish dead recovered after night attacks were found wearing the issue straw hat and blue and white pinstriped *rayadillo* tropical army uniform, but during the day they adopted camouflage developed from the long irregular struggle against the Cuban insurgents. Spanish and Creole troops “wore scarcely anything except big plantain leaves bound around their foreheads in lieu of hats. ... an effective disguise in the bush.” While others were found “stripped to a pair of dirt colored trousers, [and who] tied branches around their waists, reaching shoulders high, ... they could even cross open ground without being detected” still others made screens “of two or three big palm leaves, almost impossible to detect where stunted palm everywhere rises out of the chaparral.” In a post-war short story Crane would later write that the marines’ Creole opponents “had schooled from the Cubans insurgent to Spain. As the Cubans fought the Spanish troops, so would these particular Spanish troops

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Commander Bowman McCalla, USN, commented that he could not thank the Cubans enough for their timely assistance to the American beachhead, avoiding a possible disaster in the face of harassing Spanish night attacks.

<sup>549</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 5-6. The Spanish were also loath to continue the attack because they lacked artillery while the Americans had heavy fire support from the ships. AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto: 5797.1, Doc., 5, p.65-68, 20 July 1898. From an encampment near the Fifth Army Corps base in Tampa, Florida, Narciso González – a Cuban-American journalist of the Democrat paper *The State of Columbia*, South Carolina – wrote 15 June 1898 that “The cheerful idiots who a few weeks ago were boasting that one American could whip ten Spaniards, that the United States could wrest Cuba from the Spanish in a fortnight with 10,000 or 15,000 men, and who sneered at the long and patient operations of the insurgents, are beginning to be shocked, I observe, at the reported loss of four American marines [sic] at Guantanamo and at the fact that the Spanish made a 13-hour guerrilla fight against the landing party.” See González, *In Darkest Cuba*, 57. [See photo “Hoisting the flag at Guantánamo, June 12, 1898.]

fight the Americans. It was wisdom.”<sup>550</sup> The Cuban troops, “hawk eyed woodsmen, breaking even with the Spaniards in every device of bush craft” gained the confidence of the marines, who, “at first, were inclined to discount them. But this morning they spoke enthusiastically of the auxiliaries for their daring.”<sup>551</sup>

### Fight at Cuzco Well

The cooperation of the Cuban insurgents had other immediate benefits as well. On the recommendations of the Cuban Colonels Thomas and Laborde, a combined U.S. and Cuban force, with assistance from the gunboat *Dolphin*, moved against the well at Cuzco – five miles southeast of the allied base, and the only water source within twelve miles of the eastern shore. The plan of action called for the joint allies to destroy the well there in order to inhibit continuing Spanish operations against the base of operations at the bay’s entrance. With the well filled in, “an arid zone almost twenty miles wide between the enemy and the” Cuban and U.S. “base camp” would render further Spanish offensive actions much more difficult.<sup>552</sup> On 14 June 1898, marine captains George F. Elliot of Company C, and William F. Spicer of Company D, and Cuban Col. Thomas led two hundred and thirty men – two companies of marines and fifty Cubans – in two columns, converging on the ruined estate defended by six companies of Spanish and Creole soldiers – five hundred in all – from Simancas, Príncipe and the Squadrons of Santa Catalina. *New York World* correspondent

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<sup>550</sup> Crane, “The Sergeant’s Private Madhouse,” in *Wounds in the Rain*, 147.

<sup>551</sup> “Ships Demolish Caimanera Forts,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 16 June 1898, p.1.

<sup>552</sup> Crane, *Wounds in the Rain*, 251.

Crane accompanied the column as “sailor-clad Cubans moved slowly off on a narrow path through the bushes, and presently the long brown line of marines followed them.”<sup>553</sup>

Scouts apprised the officers of the whereabouts of the Spanish troops in a valley on the other side of steep hills. Both contending parties attempted to scramble to the high ground near Cuzco, but the Cubans and Americans reached it first, “tearing themselves on the cactus and fighting their way through the mesquite.” “The brown-clad marines and the white-clad Cubans were mingled in line on the crest” of the dominating hill; “The marines were silent; the Cubans were cursing shrilly.”<sup>554</sup> Firing along the line soon became general. Crane wrote “the rifle locks were clicking incessantly, as if some giant loom was running wildly, and on the ground among the stones and weeds came dropping, dropping a rain of rolling brass shells. ... Two hundred yards down the hill there was ... a thicket whose predominant bush wore large, oily, green leaves. ... alive with the loud popping of the [Spaniards’] Mausers.”<sup>555</sup>

The *Dolphin* provided artillery support corrected by flag signalers in the sharp battle for the hilltop. At one point, the *Dolphin*’s gunners began to shell unwittingly a marine position. Marine sergeant John Quick stood conspicuously on the crest line with an improvised semaphore flag made from “a blue polka-dot neckerchief as large as a quilt ... on a long, crooked stick,” thereby exposed to considerable rifle fire in order to communicate with the ship and correct its aim – a deed which earned him the Medal of Honor.<sup>556</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 142.

<sup>554</sup> Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 144.

<sup>555</sup> Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 145.

<sup>556</sup> Crane, *Wounds in the Rain*, 184-89; Heintz, 20, 95.

The U.S. Marines had been provided thoughtfully with khaki uniforms modeled on British colonial practice in India, but campaign hats were in short supply, and many had been left aboard the *Panther*. With only their round blue undress caps suitable for parade-ground drill available to curb the fierce Caribbean heat on “a blazing, bitter hot day” twenty-two marines and Captain Spicer himself “were prostrated by the effect of the sun.” Crane wrote, “everybody’s face was the colour of beetroot and men lay on the ground and only swore feebly when the cactus spurs sank into them.”<sup>557</sup> McCalla wrote that two Cubans were killed in the battle: one among the three wounded brought aboard the *Dolphin* died, while another reportedly died on the field, uttering the last words: “Viva Cuba Libre!” Two marines were wounded by Spanish fire.<sup>558</sup>

Once again, as in repulsing the earlier night attacks, the artillery support supplied by the gun crews of the U.S.N. ships was too heavy for the Spaniards to withstand. In the three previous years of irregular warfare, Cuban *insurrectos* had used their scarce ammunition parsimoniously. The use of artillery, especially in quantity, was unprecedented. Eventually groups of Spanish troops broke from the thicket and ran, exposing themselves to American and Cuban small-arms fire from the hill a few hundred yards away. “Cubans to the number of twenty chased on for a mile after” them, according to one of Crane’s accounts.<sup>559</sup> The U.S. forces thought they had driven the Spanish back towards the city of Guantánamo and the fort at Cayo Toro “with a loss from forty to sixty killed and wounded; capturing one officer and

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<sup>557</sup> Crane, *Wounds in the Rain*, 250.

<sup>558</sup> Crane, *Wounds in the Rain*, 185; McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 6-8. McCalla repeated this story to George Kennan, see *Campaigning in Cuba*, 73. Clifford claimed that USMC losses at the “Battle of Cuzco Well” were five killed in action and eleven severely wounded, but this likely represented a conflation of total casualty figures for the campaign.

<sup>559</sup> Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 147.

seventeen men” – one of whom, it was claimed, said it was unfair for the Americans to “have shot so fast.” Actually, while the Spanish had been ejected from the area, they reportedly sustained casualties of thirteen dead, and thirty-four wounded. The eighteen captured were initially listed as missing [see photo “Spanish prisoners aboard collier *Abarenda* at Guantánamo June 14, 1898]. In field reports, the Spanish commander claimed his men eventually re-took Cuzco when it was abandoned by the allies, but noted that the well had indeed been destroyed, along with the heliograph tower communicating with Caimanera and Guantánamo City.

As expected, this battle forced the Spanish to abandon the area near the base and fortify Dos Caminos to prevent possible enemy movement against Guantánamo itself. Spanish scouts could only operate in the vicinity of the U.S. positions burdened with several lengths of bamboo cut to hold two liters of water, on top of their regulation water bottle and wine-sack. With “Cubans” going “far out in the chapparal” few would have wanted to be so encumbered.<sup>560</sup> The U.S. Navy ships provided the allies – reinforced by a further hundred Cubans sent by General Pérez – with food rations and distilled water.<sup>561</sup>

Spanish forces retreated to Caimanera. There they assisted in the evacuation of the civilian population to Guantánamo City aboard Brooks & Co. railroad trains, which had previously been removed from such an exposed position down the sixteen-miles of track

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<sup>560</sup> “Campaign in Eastern Cuba,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 June 1898, p.4.

<sup>561</sup> Accounts of the battle for Cuzco Well taken from Crane; Heintz; McCalla, III: ch. XXII, p. 6-8; Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 140-54; AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja 5797, asunto 5797.1 doc. 6, p.77-86, 20 July 1898; Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 71-3. Also, see Murphy, *The History of Guantanamo Bay*, 4. Clifford’s brief 1929 account claimed North American casualties of five killed and eleven wounded, along with two Cuban dead and two wounded. See Tyson, ed., *The Journal of Frank Keeler. Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, 1898*, 16-18. Sánchez and Campos cite Spanish losses of thirty dead, seventy-two wounded, and twenty-eight prisoners, Cuban casualties of six killed, nine wounded, and U.S. casualties of two dead, two wounded, and the twenty-three heat stroke cases. See Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 77-8.

guarded by thirty-six blockhouses. The battle for the lower half of the bay had been won by the U.S. Navy, Marines, and the Cuban Ejército Libertador. The Spanish garrison remained in the forts surrounding Guantánamo City and various mill towns swollen with *reconcentrados* and refugees, and the cultivation zone ensconced within their reinforced trocha.

The three year separatist insurrection tied down the 200,000-strong Spanish army in Cuba—noted by no less than U.S. General Nelson Miles in his retrospective of the U.S. Army’s performance in the field, but a decisive factor overlooked in much subsequent writing about 1898. Guantánamo suggested to some at the time that joint actions could also hasten U.S. victory.<sup>562</sup> After the first week of fighting, the North American press noted that “General Peirce [sic, Pérez], commanding the eastern division of the insurgent army, called on Captain McCalla of the *Marblehead* yesterday [Thursday, 16 June] and reported that he had three thousand men, of whom twelve hundred would reinforce the marines in a few days.” The paper noted that the “insurgent forces, ... armed and equipped by Captain McCalla, not only prove to be daring scouts, but turn out to be brave fighters and good shots with the Lee-Metford rifles [*sic*, actually 6mm-caliber Model 1895 Winchester-Lee repeaters, and obsolescent single-shot .45-70-caliber Model 1873 Springfield weapons]. Our own men

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<sup>562</sup> Schoultz, 140-1. The Guantánamo campaign and other instances of collaboration should qualify the statement “[Calixto] García agreed to provide covering fire if needed during the U.S. landing east of Santiago [i.e. Daiquirí and Siboney], but beyond that there was no joint activity.” Similarly, it is my contention that *contra* Tone, 274, that it is perhaps not “an exaggeration to say that Cuban forces had the Spanish ‘pinned down’ at Guantánamo or anywhere else in Oriente...” Tone asserted that Pareja could have moved his over 7,000 men had he chosen to do so, and that neither the Cubans nor U.S. troops could have prevented it. He simply remained inert, passive, and on the defensive. Tone noted that the Cubans prevented communications between the Santiago garrison, assailed by the U.S. Fifth Corps, from reaching Guantánamo. That these communications precisely ordered Pareja to do just what Tone argued he could have done, had he decided to disobey his last orders, strike this writer as somewhat tendentious. One could similarly counter-factually argue that the U.S. Marines, unassisted, would have prevailed in any case against Pareja’s Spanish troops. Fair enough. But surely the campaign could have proved longer, bloodier, and with unforeseen developments arising without Cuban cooperation.

are warm in their praise and look for unexpectedly strong co-operation upon the part of the Cuban army.”<sup>563</sup> Crane disparaged the Cubans’ marksmanship, claiming they could not “hit even the wide, wide world” but did not impugn their courage as he would later with the U.S. Army at Santiago: “As for daring, that is another matter. They paid no heed whatever to the Spaniards’ volleys.”<sup>564</sup> A range of opinions appeared in Kennan’s dispatch: After “the marines were joined by eighty or a hundred Cuban insurgents” North American “opinions differ as to the value of the latter’s coöperation” with some speaking “favorably of them, while others said that they became wildly excited, fired recklessly and at random”—an

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<sup>563</sup> “Campaign in Eastern Cuba,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 June 1898, p. 4.

<sup>564</sup> Crane in Stallman and Hagemann, 146-7; Compare this statement with Crane’s notorious description of U.S. Army Fifth Corps officers’ and soldiers’ “most lively contempt” for Cubans operating near Santiago, 181-82. Crane’s opinion changed during the lull in fighting: “[At Guantánamo] Cubans built themselves a permanent camp and they began to eat, eat much, and to sleep long, day and night, until now, behold, there is no more useless body of men anywhere! ... So much food seems to act upon them like a drug. Here with the army the demoralization has occurred on a big scale. It is dangerous, too, for the Cuban. If he stupidly, drowsily remains out of these fights, what weight is his voice to have later in the final adjustments? ... The situation needs a Gomez. It is more serious than these bestarred machete bearers know how to appreciate, and it is the worst thing for the cause of an independent Cuba that could possibly exist.” This critical statement, of course, understated and reflected dismissive U.S. attitudes of the Cuban Provisional Government and Liberation Army, which lay behind the breakdown of cooperation and surely constituted a more profound source of demoralization than the sudden availability of food. The U.S. intervention itself had taken the “cause of an independent Cuba” out of their hands. At a certain rupture, U.S. national interests proved incompatible with Cuban separatist goals. Cuban insurgents were often ill disposed to accepting a client role *vis-à-vis* their powerful and ambitious neighbors. In fact, Col. Thomas refused an overture of U.S. General Miles to provide the expeditionary force destined for Puerto Rico with interpreters and scouts. See Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 94-5. And, it must be said, Crane’s and other North American’s disparagements rather ignored and understated the widespread privation and hunger within Cuban ranks. The USMC and Navy halted their offensive operations once the base was established, and the Cuban army lacked the heavier weapons to drive on the Spanish fortified positions on the *llano*. Therefore a lack of offensive activity came to characterize the wait for the war to be settled elsewhere on the Santiago front. Attempting to smooth-over such conflicts, Kennan wrote of the Liberation Army that “As a whole, they have rendered good service, and it is much to be regretted that correspondents unable to distinguish between an army corps and a brigade, and to make allowances for differences of character and methods, condemn them as lazy and worthless. No doubt they do smoke cigarettes in the shade, consume a good deal of food, of which they have long had only too little, and that blankets and equipment left by the wayside do disappear, as they would under like conditions in New York. Their disinclination to work in the trenches and their inability to fight well in masses do, no doubt, tend to exasperate hardy and active soldiers from the North, unaccustomed to the ways of Spanish speaking peoples; but men who for three years have, under the most unfavorable conditions, resisted the great Spanish army cannot be wholly worthless” in Kennan, “Our Cuban Allies” *New York Observer and Chronicle* V. 76, No. 20 (July 28, 1898): p. 106.

attribute leveled at the marines as we have seen—“and were of little use except as guides.” After Cuzco well “Captain Elliot, who saw” the Liberation Army “under fire, reported that they were brave enough, but that their efficiency as fighting men was on a par with that of the enemy.”<sup>565</sup>

The stage was set for the siege of the eighty-kilometer *trocha* around the *llano*'s sugar mills, with U.S.-supplied insurgents under General Pérez's command pressuring the line from the west, and the U.S. Navy continuing to attack the sea defenses and build up their base. The Spanish Army and Volunteers controlled the towns and zones of reconcentration via their hastily reconstructed *trocha* from the Ten Years' War extending some 240 square kilometers, while small units of insurgents operated in the hills and on all sides of the plain.<sup>566</sup> The Spaniards could not counterattack the invaders successfully without artillery. Meanwhile, the limited U.S. effort to establish a base and remove the seaborne defenses had largely succeeded, so the allies were content for the moment to reconnoiter Spanish positions. For the U.S. Navy the militarily significant geography was the sheltered cove for warships at the lower part of the broad and deep bay. For the Spanish and their remaining adherents, it was the upper part of the bay, the *llano* studded with mill towns, and the land itself that constituted the prime objective.

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<sup>565</sup> Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 73.

<sup>566</sup> A perhaps optimistic or idealized 240 square kilometer “post-reconcentration” Guantánamo “cultivation zone” (*zona de cultivo*) from late 1897 during the time of Weyler's recall from Cuba, appears in AGM-M. Among a list of such zones throughout Cuba for reconcentrated civilians in Spanish held cantonments was one enclosing Caimanera, the Santa Catalina railroad to Guantánamo proper, the margins of the bay, and the sugar mills San José, Santa Fé, La Esperanza, Santa Isabel, and San Antonio de Redor found in the printed circular “ZONAS DE CULTIVO” in AGM-M, caja: 4204, Alzados y Presentados (1895-1898), exp. 2, no. 16, Ejército de Operaciones de Cuba-EMG, Presentados (A.G.), Auxilios que deben recibir en las fincas y zonas de cultivo.—Derechos y deberes. Mes de noviembre de 1897.



The overall U.S. theater commander General Shafter had studied the 1741 British debacle in attempting to take Santiago de Cuba by landing in Guantánamo Bay and then marching almost seventy miles overland. His staff's grave concerns with malarial and yellow fever outbreaks convinced them to land much closer to Santiago. The main U.S. Army and Navy attack would be directed forty miles away at eastern Cuba's largest city and capital, Santiago de Cuba, the base where the bulk of Spanish troops and the Caribbean fleet were located. That the Spaniards had also given some thought to the eighteenth-century battle was evident in the reinforcement of the Guantánamo garrison from 2,000 troops in October 1897 to double that number by November, and up to seven thousand men at arms by April 1898.<sup>567</sup> Nevertheless, the sea defenses remained feeble and antiquated apart from the sea mines. The Spanish garrison in the Guantánamo district remained cut-off in a pocket of their own making, harassed from without and effectively isolated. Commentators then, and contemporary historians, have been baffled by the "timid, irresolute, or demoralized" behavior of the garrison: "If General Parrajo [*sic*, Pareja] had had a little pluck and self-reliance, and had used his seven thousand men, as he might have" to attack General Shafter and the U.S. Fifth Army Corps "it might ... have changed the whole course of the campaign."<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Kennan, "The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo" *Outlook* V.61, No.17 (April 29, 1899): 957 [hereinafter cited as Kennan, "The Regeneration of Cuba."].

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid*; see also Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 274-76, who argues that while Spanish military institutions did not go to war with the United States convinced beforehand that defeat was a foredoomed inevitability, nevertheless ascribes "poor military performance" to "the lack of strategic imagination displayed" by officers. The Liberation Army and U.S. forces could not have stopped Pareja's break-out "if he had tried" and therefore the isolation of the garrison was somewhat self-imposed. The Spaniards themselves abandoned much of the countryside to the Cuban insurrectionists, as we have seen, and communications proved impossible between the isolated commands. Thus, as will be seen, this narrative is at some variance with Tone's analysis.

## The Blockade

*Much abuse and severe criticism were heaped upon the Cuban Army, whose co-operation our Commanding General earnestly sought, before and after War was declared. I believe these strictures to have been unjust, and to have been made by superficial observers; or by persons who had a motive in disparaging the patriotic efforts, which the Cubans continued for many years in the hope of gaining their freedom.*<sup>569</sup>

-- Bowman Hendry McCalla.

*At Guantánamo, your cooperation was so useful, in every way, that the task given to General Pérez by General García was made easy, and was crowned with success; principally owing to the base, which your ships gave to all our manoeuvres, which otherwise and perhaps with any other officer without your constant zeal and extraordinary tact and knowledge of the Cubans; the cutting off of the Guantánamo Spanish Forces would have been another lamentable source of unnecessary friction between Cubans and Americans...*<sup>570</sup>

-- Postwar letter from G. García Vieta to McCalla.

The U.S. Navy lodgment secured from land attack, the ships of McCalla's command turned their attention to the remaining shell-cratered and battered Spanish positions at Caimanera and Cayo Toro at the narrows between the lower and upper parts of the bay. American colliers and supply ships could begin to call at Guantánamo Bay, while the siege of Spanish forces, townspeople, and reconcentrated civilians grew ever tighter.

At 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, the day after the battle of Cuzco well, the Americans reduced and razed the remaining Spanish defenses of Guantánamo Bay, which had been hastily repaired since the bombardment of 7 June that accompanied the telegraph cable cutting and initial mine clearance operations. The *Marblehead*, joined by the ill-fated *Maine*'s sister-ship *USS Texas*, and the lighthouse tender *Suwanee*, bombarded the fort at Cayo Toro and "the brick fort and earthworks at Caimanera."<sup>571</sup> Spanish after-action reports

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<sup>569</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 1.

<sup>570</sup> Cited in McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 29.

<sup>571</sup> "Ships Demolish Caimanera Forts," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 16 June 1898, p.1.

seeking commendations and medals for meritorious service, including for an officer convalescing from yellow fever who had returned to his post, indicated that the crews of the muzzle-loading guns managed to respond with six shells before they were knocked out, while the more modern Krupp fired only five.<sup>572</sup> One of the muzzle-loader's seventy-pound "lead studded shells" skipped like a flat stone across the water in front of the *Marblehead*. It continued "ricocheting slowly half a dozen times at shorter and shorter distances," only to finally sink some ten yards from the ship's hull. More alarmingly, the crew found that a snag picked up while the ship closed on Caimanera proved to be one of the Spanish mines. It was hoisted aboard where it was discovered that the detonator had not been struck hard enough to set it off.<sup>573</sup> The *Texas* similarly had a mine glance off its hull without exploding.<sup>574</sup>

While the U.S. flotilla destroyed the fort's gun emplacements by 6:00pm, and damaged the piers and railway of Caimanera, the Spaniards' land defenses around the *llano* of Guantánamo came under insurgent attack. The nature of the Cuban attacks remains unclear, perhaps limited to volleys fired at blockhouses accompanied by shouted insults from emboldened hidden rebels; nevertheless they reinforced the defensive attitude of the Spanish and Volunteers manning the *trocha*. The blockhouses afforded the Spaniards and Volunteers

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<sup>572</sup> AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto: 5797.1 doc. 7, p. 95-107, 20 July 1898.

<sup>573</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXIII, 17. [See photo "USS *Texas*, Spanish mine taken up in Guantánamo Bay"] Medal of Honor recommendations were ultimately made to four crewmembers of the *Marblehead* for mine clearance operations. See "Medal of Honor, announcement and recommendations for 4 crewmen of U.S.S. *Marblehead* for disarming harbor mines at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (S.l.: s.n.), 1898. Congressional Information Service, U.S. Executive Branch Documents, 1789-1909: no. N113-1.500.

<sup>574</sup> "Campaign in Eastern Cuba," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 June 1898, p. 4. Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 74, claimed that the firing mechanism of the mines was eroded and covered with "marine growth during their long immersion" but the photograph of the mine raised by the *Texas* does not indicate very many barnacles and the mines had only been in the water since late April.

protection from small-arms fire, but they surely knew that the increasing use of artillery by insurgents and the U.S. military in other parts of the island rendered them vulnerable.

General Pareja's last order before the cable had been cut on 7 June told him to defend and hold the Guantánamo region. Pareja could not contemplate dislodging the marines from their foothold without reinforcements and artillery. In addition, such an offensive move implied the abandonment of much of his position. These same conundrums prevented any attempt to come to the aid of Santiago de Cuba later that month.<sup>575</sup> The U.S. fleet wreaked havoc in the bay. American weapons and equipment reinforced Pérez's insurgents enabling them to press some land attacks. On the 17 and 18 of June insurgents attacked the fortified ingenios Santa María, San Vicente and San Carlos; the Spanish reports expressed disquiet among pro-separatist sympathizers and *reconcentrados* within the towns with the insurgents so near, and with political conditions appearing to shift decisively against the continued viability of the colonial regime in the immediate future.<sup>576</sup>

This siege characterized the situation in Guantánamo for the remainder of the brief war in the summer of 1898. As the main forces of the U.S. Fifth Army Corps commanded by General Shafter besieged Santiago de Cuba in late June and early July, the Spaniards there attempted to contact in vain the seven thousand troops in Guantánamo to march to the aid of the capital of Oriente province. By 1 July the U.S. Fifth Corps launched a frontal attack designed to take the main city, but encountered stiff resistance at the stone fort of El Caney and the blockhouses and trenches at San Juan heights in Santiago's outskirts.<sup>577</sup> Spanish

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<sup>575</sup> Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 276.

<sup>576</sup> AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto 5797.1, doc. 8, p. 137-212, 25 July 1898.

<sup>577</sup> Part of the U.S. Army's motive in attacking Caney was to block a possible move from Guantánamo, which of course, did not occur.

resistance there was overcome, but the losses convinced Shafter to try to lay siege to the city—now brought within artillery range—where he calculated that lack of food and threats to bombard the town would force a surrender without further costly attacks, and (it was vainly hoped) before malaria, yellow fever, and other tropical maladies began seriously to deplete U.S. ranks in much the same way they had the Spanish over the years. With the city and harbor within artillery range, captain-general Blanco transmitted orders for Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete to attempt to break out of the U.S. blockade and run along the southern coast to Cienfuegos. On 3 July, Admiral Cervera, knowing that the mission was practically suicidal, carried out the sortie rather than surrender the fleet without a shot fired. The entire Spanish squadron of four decrepit armored cruisers and two torpedo boat destroyers was smashed at a cost of 321 dead, 151 wounded and 1,813 sailors captured.<sup>578</sup> The U.S. blockading fleet that annihilated the Spanish ships trying to escape from Santiago's harbor sustained a single fatality. Throughout these primary offensive efforts by the North Americans and Cubans against Spanish troops that would settle the outcome of the brief war, a similar siege took place in nearby Guantánamo.

The U.S. sea blockade interdicted attempted communications coming by boat, while the Cuban insurgents intercepted and shot or hanged between ten and fifteen messengers as spies.<sup>579</sup> As Santiago became surrounded, and the siege tightened, the commanders there

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<sup>578</sup> Some standard accounts of the Santiago campaign from Cuban, Spanish, and U.S. sources include José Müller, *Combates y Capitulación de Santiago de Cuba* (Madrid, 1898); D. Víctor M. Concas y Palau, *La Escuadra de Almirante Cervera* (Madrid, 1900); Severo Gómez Núñez, *La Guerra Hispano-Americana* (Madrid, 1899); Dierks, *A Leap to Arms: The Cuban Campaign of 1898*; A.B. Feuer, *The Santiago Campaign of 1898* (Praeger, 1993); Freidel; Tone; Trask; Gustavo Placer Cervera, *Guerra hispanocubanonorteamericana: Operaciones navales* (Havana: 1997).

<sup>579</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXI, 39. AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto: 5797.1 doc. 11, p. 146-7, 15 August 1898. See also "Campaign in Eastern Cuba," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 June 1898, p. 4.

attempted repeatedly to signal the beleaguered garrison of Guantánamo, but to no avail. Cuban insurgents' relatives apparently slipped information to their kin, or to political allies, providing intelligence on Spanish actions and social conditions. The Liberation Army also shared with U.S. forces the messages taken from the hapless couriers.<sup>580</sup> Pro-Spanish spies and scouts supplied General Pareja's command with intelligence, but the information often only confirmed the growing desperation of their position. By 17 June, five days before the main Fifth Corps landings at Daiquirí and Siboney some fifteen miles from Santiago, the *Oregon*, *St. Paul*, and eleven auxiliary vessels and colliers joined the *Marblehead*, *Dolphin*, and *Suwanee* in the lower part of the bay.<sup>581</sup>

The naval blockade around the island, combined with the shrinking area of Spanish control, combined to make food, never in good supply during the war, ever scarcer. Cuban and U.S. forces were apprised of intelligence of growing desperation: "Advices received by Commander McCalla of the *Marblehead*, from the City of Guantánamo, show that the deaths from starvation there average fifteen daily. General Pérez ... has given up hope of succor, and the town could readily be taken were it worthwhile to risk the lives of the American troops" read one Associated Press dispatch by 8 July.<sup>582</sup> For Spanish troops and inhabitants of the towns and mills at the start of hostilities between the United States and Spain there was little to eat but some rice, salt cod, and such local produce as coffee, sugar, and aguardiente.<sup>583</sup> An

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<sup>580</sup> One such message translated to English appears in "Starving Spaniards, Only Enough Supplies at Guantanamo for Rest of Month," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 June 1898, p. 1.

<sup>581</sup> "Campaign in Eastern Cuba," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 June 1898, p. 4.

<sup>582</sup> "Starving at Guantanamo. Fifteen Deaths Occur There Daily From Starvation – Perez Gives Up Hope of Succor," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 10 July 1898, p. 1.

informant was later to tell Kennan that “the supply of food became so reduced that a single tin of sardines and one pound of rice constituted five days’ rations.”<sup>584</sup> The Spanish commander had ordered that soldiers who had been peasants and farmers before their conscription into the army should plant extra food crops and animal fodder in the cultivation zone, but by 20 June, six days after the battle at Cuzco well, the garrison went on half rations.

After 27 June no bread or biscuit could be supplied, while the civilians under their control were reduced to worse levels of privation. Theodore Brooks and the Spanish commander conceded free passage on the trains for civilians to the shores of the bay to fish and hunt for land crabs or the *mambí* staple, the *jutía*, to eat. There was little to be had.

During a postwar visit to Guantánamo, journalist and Red Cross official Kennan wrote:

Not only did [people in Guantánamo] eat horses, mules, and even dogs, but the poorer people and the reconcentrados were eventually forced to go to the woods and hunt for land-crabs, which, when caught, they brought back to their homes and made into a stew with grass, herbs, or such edible roots as they were able to get. Finally, when crabs began to be scarce and hard to find in the woods adjacent to the town, and when the strength of the half-starved crab-hunters had so failed that they could not walk to fresh fields or range over a wider stretch of country, the Caimanera Railway Company began to carry them to and from the more distant woods in a special free train ... At a stated hour every day six or eight hundred emaciated and half-starved people, with empty sugar or rice sacks slung over their shoulders, assembled at the railway station and took this train for the marshy woods and jungles near the head of the bay, where crabs were still comparatively abundant. ... There is no other instance, I think, in history where people living in a fertile and fruitful country, and in a town not attacked nor closely besieged, have been reduced to such extremities ... But the country around Guantanamo, fertile and fruitful although it was, had been reduced by Weyler’s reconcentration policy, and by the operations of the insurgents, to an uncultivated and uninhabited wilderness.<sup>585</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 111. Also Theodore Brooks to his mother, 14 July 1897, 6 October 1897, 14 May 1898, 18 July 1898, 25 July 1898, 31 July 1898, and 9 September 1898 for deteriorating food and increasing hunger, in BPL, Letters of Theodore Brooks.

<sup>584</sup> Kennan, “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo.”

In his memoirs McCalla reported that:

the most popular duty among the Spanish soldiers was to be stationed at an outpost, quite near to the North shore of Guantánamo Bay, from which, at night, during our occupation, they could forage for, and eat the food thrown from our ships at anchor in the Bay, and which was left on the beach by the action of the wind and tide.<sup>586</sup>

In a letter to his sister just before the 17 July Spanish capitulation to the United States at Santiago de Cuba, businessman Theodore Brooks described the grave lack of food. Hundreds of people had fled to the devastated countryside, nearly every palm tree had been cut down to extract and chew the heart of palm inside.<sup>587</sup> Two days after the Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera y Topete had been destroyed attempting to break out of the U.S. blockade of Santiago, on 5 July, Spanish troops in Guantánamo received no rations at all. They resorted to green corn and the meat of their horses and mules. A cable from Pareja to Blanco after the surrender concisely and depressingly clipped out: “Resources gone, embargo on commerce. I used horses, mules, green corn to feed forces. Privations all around, especially outer trenches, mortality rising terrible rate. From May end July 756 dead rising this month 400 result work [and] poor diet. Nine emissaries sent Santiago giving account situation hanged. I knew

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<sup>585</sup> Kennan, “Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo.” Use of the train for foraging came initially from José Sánchez Guerra, conversation with the author, also Sánchez Guerra and Campos Cremé, *La batalla*, 112. Also mentioned in Theodore Brooks to his sister, 15 July 1898; BPL, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Letters of Theodore Brooks. Spanish military sources confirm this aspect of the 1898 war as well, AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto 5797.1, doc 11, p. 151, 15 August 1898. On horses and mules being slaughtered and eaten, see p. 159. These military records recount that malnutrition increased the risk of disease, reporting a death rate of 101 for May, 173 for June, and 265 for July, with a total of 736 soldier deaths, the majority from disease. Sánchez and Campos cite an urban death rate of 525 for 1894, 891 for the first year of the war 1895, and 1,279 in 1898. See Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 113.

<sup>586</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXI, 21-22.

<sup>587</sup> Theodore Brooks to his sister, 15 July 1898; BPL, Letters of Theodore Brooks.



nothing until July 25 when I received order from General Toral to capitulate name of Government and Your Excellency. I obeyed lack of means subsistence.”<sup>588</sup>

The U.S. fleet dominated the entrance to Guantánamo Bay, from where the expedition to invade Puerto Rico on 21 July 1898 was organized, while the insurgents, few in number certainly, threatened the district except for the Spanish-controlled railway, sugar mills, and coffee plantations along with the towns of Guantánamo and Caimanera. Militia guards at the Los Caños sugar mill, described by Theodore Brooks as “mostly colored men, and naturally one might say sympathizers with the insurrection” deserted the blockhouses of the plantation, going over to “the insurgents, carrying off everything they could lay their hands on on the estate.”<sup>589</sup> Extreme privation, the scarcity of food and the continued spread of disease ravaged the population remaining under Spanish control until well after the 12 August 1898 armistice between the United States and Spain that followed the surrender of Spanish forces in eastern Cuba at Santiago on 17 July.

While the guards at the Brooks and Co. estate may well have been “sympathizers with the insurrection,” sensing that the political winds were blowing favorably for the separatists with the U.S. intervention, they may have thought that food was more available. News must have spread quickly that “from Point Leeward, twenty miles from the Cuban

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<sup>588</sup> Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 276, citing AGM-M, Sección Capitanía de Cuba, leg. 67, car.18. See also aforementioned AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto 5797.1, doc 11, p. 151, 15 August 1898. On horses and mules being slaughtered and eaten, see p. 159. See also Kennan, “Regeneration of Cuba.”

<sup>589</sup> Deposition of Theodore Brooks, p. 20, Claim no. 120 (Sheldon), USNA, RG 76; Entry 352. Also Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, *Briefs*, 9: 64.

Camp” the Americans not only “communicated with General Pérez; arranged for co-operation” but also “landed food, medical supplies, arms and ammunition.”<sup>590</sup>

Well before the U.S. expeditionary force bound for Cuba had been assembled, Clara Barton of the Red Cross had proposed delivery of “food to the starving people of Cuba,” in particular the reconcentrados, “under the flag of the Red Cross, the one international emblem of neutrality and humanity known to civilization.”<sup>591</sup> She had obtained “permission to take and distribute food to the suffering people in Cuba” from the Spanish government in Madrid, but had asked permission from the State and Navy Departments prior to asking Spanish authorities in Havana. Rear-Admiral Sampson, however, in carrying out the blockade deemed it “unwise to let a ship-load of such supplies be sent to the reconcentrados,” because they might “be distributed to the Spanish army.”<sup>592</sup> Both General Shafter and Admiral Sampson conceded to the Red Cross permission to relieve Cuban civilians and refugees behind US lines once hostilities commenced.<sup>593</sup> The Red Cross Steamer *State of Texas* landed near US Army Fifth Corps’ positions on June 25 and inquired of Sampson if conditions permitted them to begin landing supplies. He advised that the ship should go “to Guantanamo Bay, where Captain McCalla had opened communications with the insurgents under General

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<sup>590</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 2.

<sup>591</sup> Letter quoted in Kennan, “George Kennan’s Story of the War: Under the Red Cross Flag” *Outlook* V.59 No.4 (May 28, 1898): 215.

<sup>592</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>593</sup> For Shafter’s remarks, see Kennan, “George Kennan’s Story of the War: Introductory Letter from Key West” *Outlook* V. 59, No. 3 (May 21, 1898): 167. For Sampson and the Navy Department, see above.

Pérez, and where” it was presumed the humanitarian organization “should probably find Cuban refugees suffering for food.<sup>594</sup>

The Americans had seen the ragged and impoverished condition of Cuban insurgents, and the needs of civilian populations became evident as well. The *State of Texas* “entered the beautiful Bay of Guantanamo about half-past five o’clock on Saturday afternoon” June 26, and steamed past the “white hospital steamer *Solace* ... the *Dolphin*, the *Eagle*, the *Resolute*, the *Marblehead*, and three or four large black colliers from Key West.”<sup>595</sup> The following morning Kennan of the Red Cross found McCalla—who he had met before the war—regaling fellow navy officers about the *Marblehead’s* narrow escape after being fired upon by the blockading squadron outside Santiago as a misidentified Spanish torpedo boat. In person, Kennan “almost failed to recognize” McCalla “in his Cuban costume” of “undershirt, canvas trousers, and an old pair of slippers.”<sup>596</sup> McCalla had distributed “all the food he himself could spare” but thought that via the command of General Pérez, with whom he “was in almost daily communication,” supplies could be delivered to “a large number of people who had taken refuge in the woods north of the bay and were in a destitute and starving condition.”<sup>597</sup> Prompt arrangements were made, and “a special courier from the detachment of Cubans then serving with the marines” took the Red Cross letter to Pérez.<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>594</sup> Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 63-4.

<sup>595</sup> Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 66.

<sup>596</sup> Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 66-8.

<sup>597</sup> Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 68-9.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*

In his postwar memoirs, McCalla wrote of the distribution of “the first Red Cross supplies for the starving Cubans, in that part of the Island”:

having been given by Miss Clara Barton, President of the Red Cross society, and Mr. George Kennan, who, owing to a suggestion from Admiral Sampson, had come to Guantánamo in charge of the steamer *State of Texas*, after vainly endeavoring to supply the suffering Cubans, at other places on the coast. The news of the landing of these provisions spread far and fast; people came from points ninety miles distant to obtain them, and as we had transported many tons, it is difficult to overestimate the great good that Miss Barton did at this time. Even after hostilities had ceased, mere skeletons of women and children found their way into Guantánamo City on foot, in quest of these supplies – the saddest evidence of the terrible straits to which they had been subjected during the last days of the struggle for freedom. Curiously enough, what was most wanted were salt and soap; then clothing for women and quinine; and my wife to whom I had written of these needs, was able to obtain large quantities of these necessities from friends, and from some of the merchants of Newport [Rhode Island], where she was ...whence they were transferred to General Pérez for distribution.<sup>599</sup>

Clara Barton herself sent a telegram on 15 July from Guantánamo’s Playa del Este detailing the urgent need for provisions, clothing, and medicines for civilians streaming towards United States and insurgent lines. Later, other centers for the distribution of relief supplies had been set up at El Caney, Siboney, and other towns surrounding Santiago. She added that “Commander McCalla of the *Marblehead* called ... for 100,000 rations, medicine and clothing for the refugees in the woods and country surrounding Guantamo.”<sup>600</sup>

The understated but plaintive description of grim privation and widespread starvation could be generalized for other parts of Cuba after three years of war as well. The Cuban separatists under Máximo Gómez often had vowed to raise the banner of a free and

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<sup>599</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 9; see also, Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 107: most of the food consisted of “beans, rice, hard bread [hard-tack] and South American jerked beef [*tasajo*] ... we saw a large party of Cubans carrying the boxes and barrels up the bank.”

<sup>600</sup> “Red Cross in Cuba, Miss Barton Cables That Relief Work Continues,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 17 July 1898, p. 32.

independent Cuba even over ashes and ruin. Such seemed the situation by 1898 indeed, except for the complication that the United States had moved in. In the district of Guantánamo, neither warring side was strong enough to directly attack the other without reinforcements. In the meantime, starvation and disease moved to force the issue. Developments in nearby Santiago de Cuba and the wider war soon overtook the local situation.

#### The Spanish Surrender, U.S. Occupation, and Theodore Brooks

Surrender negotiations with the U.S. military began 19 July in the midst of looming catastrophe from the lack of food and spread of disease. As soon as General Linares at Santiago surrendered all troops in eastern Cuba to the U.S. General Shafter, a French cruiser – the *Amiral Rigault de Genouilly*, named after Napoleon III’s Minister of the Marine and Colonies who had led the invasion of Vietnam in 1858 – arrived to remove “indigent French subjects” trapped in Guantánamo. The ship had been dispatched at the news that the U.S. Navy had severed the international cable to France. Permission to take the French citizens was denied as was an attempt to supply their nationals with food, but the French Consul and the Catholic bishop of Guantánamo City who had come down from the upper part of the bay in the *Sandoval’s* launch were at least able to receive news reports of the surrender at Santiago.<sup>601</sup> It may be that the French Consul informed the Americans of the conspicuous role he and the British Consul in Guantánamo had played in bringing the Little War to a close in 1880.

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<sup>601</sup> “Indigent French Subjects. Conference With Commander McCalla Regarding Their Removal,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 17 July 1898, p. 1. See also in the same paper from the Associated Press, “Starving Spaniards Give Up Guantanamo, They Had Received No Food for Eight Days. Were Too Weak to Stand Up,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 28 July 1898, p. 2.

The Spaniards and civilians in the *llano* had but fifteen to twenty days of food stocks left when a U.S. launch under a white flag of truce opened surrender negotiations at Caimanera. A host of ships had come and gone through Guantánamo Bay, including those bearing the captured Spanish sailors from Admiral Cervera's hapless fleet to prisoner camps in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. By mid-July there were large numbers of U.S. troops and ships gathered at the base in Guantánamo, including General Nelson Miles himself, preparing to steam to the new front in the Caribbean theater: Puerto Rico. The main Spanish garrison defending Santiago de Cuba had surrendered. During the ceremony, the U.S. forces refused to permit the entrance of Cuban troops into the city, which led to the resignation of General Calixto García after he wrote a sharp letter to the American commander in protest.<sup>602</sup>

A delegation of Spanish officers accompanied by the British Consul, Theodore Brooks, went to meet Commander McCalla and later Rear Admiral William Sampson too, under a similar flag of truce from Caimanera. The U.S. officials showed the Spaniards foreign newspaper accounts describing the surrender, but General Félix Pareja demanded to receive a first-hand account directly from his headquarters, dispatching three officers to Santiago for verification. After repeated refusals, the Spanish accepted an offer of food aid from the Americans, who delivered 559 bags of wheat flour by 24 July.<sup>603</sup> General Pareja ordered these taken to Guantánamo where the town bakers made bread for distribution to the population. Apparently an unscrupulous group among "the public bakers of Guantanamo

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<sup>602</sup> General Calixto García's 17 July 1898 letter appears in Hortensia Pichardo, ed., *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*. 5 vols. (*Tomo I: Época Colonial*) (Havana: Consejo Nacional de Universidades, 1965), I: 456-9. A translation by Luis Martínez-Fernández appears as Appendix 9 in Martínez-Fernández, Figueredo, et. al. eds. *Encyclopedia of Cuba*, II: 633-4.

<sup>603</sup> AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto: 5797.1, doc. 11, p. 155-64, 15 August 1898.

attempted to steal and sell for their own benefit a part of the very first flour that was sent to them to be made into bread for the relief of the hungry, sick, and dying people” but were prevented by one U.S. Lieutenant Frazer of the commissariat under Lieutenant-Colonel Ezra Ewers “who enforced his demands with a Colt’s revolver.”<sup>604</sup> Postwar, the North Americans would determine that the death rate “among the townspeople increased from an average of 195 per month in February, March, and April to 332 in July and 431 in August, while the death-rate among the Spanish soldiers in the overcrowded barracks was even greater.”<sup>605</sup> There was some indication that Spanish troops had not received any food since the 20<sup>th</sup> of July. Some were so weak they were allowed to sit while on guard duty. Others collapsed while trying to reinforce trenches.<sup>606</sup> During the first months of occupation it was estimated that in the “summer months of July and August, 1898, there perished in the town and garrison of Guantanamo no less than 1,539 persons, or more than ten percent of the whole population.”<sup>607</sup>

Illness abounded. An Associated Press correspondent wrote that “To grim famine in Guantanamo City and its environs is added the ravages of yellow fever, which seems to be much more virulent in type than it is further westward,” adding that fatalities “from yellow jack average fifteen per day. This report is official and from Porez [sic, Cuban General Pérez] himself.”<sup>608</sup> To all manner of tropical maladies such as *paludismo* or malarial fevers,

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<sup>604</sup> Kennan, “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo.”

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>606</sup> “Starving Spaniards Give Up Guantanamo,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 28 July 1898, p. 2.

<sup>607</sup> Kennan, “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo.”

dysentery, and yellow fever was added smallpox and other contagions. Still another press dispatch claimed “1,700 of the Spanish troops of the Guantanamo district are on the sick list.”<sup>609</sup> As for the townsfolk, “the half-starved and enfeebled survivors” were unable to “care for the thousands of sick, or even to bury the dead, and the sanitary condition of the place became shocking beyond description.”<sup>610</sup>

Meanwhile, the U.S. and Cuban forces were separated, foreshadowing the statecraft of Spain and the United States over Cuba. The Spanish would not contemplate surrender to an insurgent force, one whom they had long dismissively termed bandits, but only to another recognizably state-organized power. The United States desired the largest sphere of action possible, much as it had illustrated in the carefully worded declaration of war, unconstrained by considerations of belligerent rights, recognition of potentially radical political movements, or even, apparently, any possible interference generated by inclusion of the colonial subject peoples including Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Filipinos. The exclusion would be long remembered. The main Spanish garrison in eastern Cuba defending Santiago de Cuba had surrendered to the United States not the Cuban Liberation Army. At Guantánamo U.S. forces would take over the *trocha* from the Spanish, while the Liberation Army would remain in their camps in the denuded landscape of the *manigua*. The ouster and denial of the Cubans at Santiago would be replicated; the Spanish Army would surrender to the Americans only.

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<sup>608</sup> “Yellow Jack at Guantanamo,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 25 July 1898, p. 1. See also Kennan, “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo” where he claimed “the reconcentrados and poor people of Guantanamo, who, even before that time, had been living from hand to mouth, found themselves compelled to eat land-crabs and roots, or perish. Hundreds of them died, as it was, from malarial fever, yellow fever, beri-beri, enteritis, dysentery, and intestinal disorders of various kinds brought on by insufficient and unwholesome food.”

<sup>609</sup> “Surrender of Holguin is Expected Shortly,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 26 July 1898, p. 1.

<sup>610</sup> Kennan, “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo.”



The Spanish waited for confirmation from headquarters. U.S. occupation forces readied the arrival of special “immune” troops out of the fear of yellow fever prevalent in the zone. Restive Cubans awaited the determination of their status by insurgent leaders in Cuba and abroad, amid the uncertainty of impending U.S. occupation.

McCalla did not explicitly refer to the nature of the Spanish surrender and the sidelining of Cuban participation in his memoirs, but some of his statements suggest that disquiet was not wholly confined to Cuban ranks alone. Earlier, after the battle of Cuzco well, General Pérez had visited the *Marblehead* to meet and confer with the navy commander, and to review the Cuban troops he had dispatched to fight alongside the North Americans. McCalla flew the Cuban flag from his ship’s mainmast, and greeted Pérez in the manner befitting a general, complete with “his men drawn up as a guard of honor.” Standing at attention, in their new uniforms, Pérez asked McCalla in jest “who” these *mambises* “were!” McCalla complained that “sea lawyers” protested his actions “for in their opinion I had recognized a New Nation [sic], by thus honoring the Emblem, under which the Cubans had fought for so long – and they said that my action was in violation of International Law.”<sup>611</sup> As the forces split up 23 July, McCalla gave a brief speech of thanks to the soldiers of the Liberation Army, remarking that although they arrived practically naked and unarmed, they had helped stiffen allied resolve in the face of a perilous situation.<sup>612</sup>

Apparently cognizant of the diminution of the Cuban role and participation in the War of 1898 in postwar narratives, McCalla offered an assessment of the insurgents in his memoirs from the vantage point of his retirement from active duty:

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<sup>611</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 5.

<sup>612</sup> Collazo, I: 220.

It is true that the Cuban soldiers were in rags. Many were without any clothing; ammunition was scarce; a large proportion were only armed with Machetes ... All were starving; and such food as they were able to obtain, consisted of edible grasses, wood rats [*sic, jutías*], wild fruits, and an occasional sweet potato. But their spirit and discipline were good; many of their officers were highly educated, accomplished in their professions and excellent soldiers. ... to be captured was certain death; - to be found ill in an extemporized hospital, by the Spaniards or the Guerrillas [irregular troops], was to be butchered in their hammocks; and their mothers, wives and daughters, surprised in their villages and camps, in the absence of their relatives, by this same soldiery, were brutally murdered, or suffered a worse fate ... the characteristic quality of courage cannot be denied to either the Cuban men or the Cuban women, who at all times, have encouraged and helped their soldiers, as women have done in all ages.<sup>613</sup>

Further, using language similar to Garcías protest to Shafter, he wrote that Americans should consider how it would have been if, after Yorktown, the French had excluded the patriots for similar concerns as those expressed by Shafter and the Spanish Army. As to the fears of reprisals and killings, he described that at Gibara, on the north coast of Oriente province near Holguín, that the Spanish had in fact abandoned their sick and wounded to Liberation Army forces under García; they were well cared for in liaison with the U.S. Navy commander of the *Nashville*: “all was satisfactory, until part of one of our Regiments of Immunes, from the south side of the Island appeared on the scene, several months after García’s arrival; they occupied the city, seized the Red Cross stores, and from want of tact and consideration, created confusion and distrust among the Cubans and Spaniards alike.”<sup>614</sup> McCalla may have been venting against the army in the inter-service rivalry tradition to a degree in writing the statement. He also might have been expressing a thinly veiled racism if the “immunes” in

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<sup>613</sup> McCalla, III, ch. XXII, 30-1.

<sup>614</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII: 35-7.

question were black American troops. But his rejection of the widespread disdain and disregard of Cuban insurgents contrasted with many standard U.S. accounts.

The Spanish officers returned to Guantánamo from Santiago de Cuba on 25 July confirming the surrender. Conditions in the capital were atrocious, but compared favorably with those prevailing at Guantánamo.<sup>615</sup> Indeed, during the US occupation Kennan “was not a little surprised to learn” from Theodore Brooks and Colonel P.H. Ray that Guantánamo “although not directly attacked or besieged by the American army, suffered even more, perhaps, from hunger and disease than Santiago.”<sup>616</sup> Three days later a small group of U.S. troops commanded by Lieutenant Colonel P.H. Ray of the Third Volunteer Infantry and Lieutenant Colonel Ezra P. Ewers of the Ninth Infantry together with Lieutenant Colonel Bisbee of the First Infantry headed up the railway from Caimanera to Guantánamo proper before the main U.S. Army occupation troops arrived.<sup>617</sup> In the meantime, the marines that had landed 10 June boarded another transport 5 August for duty off Manzanillo to the west. The marines would return to Portsmouth, New Hampshire by the end of the month. By 8 August, two companies of U.S. Army troops commanded by Lt. Col. Ewers took up positions along the trocha and railway between the insurgents and the mills and towns, replacing the Spanish garrisons that concentrated at the Confluente and Santa María sugar mills, awaiting ships to take them to Spain on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September.<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>615</sup> “Troops at Caimanera Lay Down Their Arms. The Captives are a Ragged and Hungry Lot. Place Strongly Defended,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 27 July 1898, p. 1, and “Starving Spaniards Give Up Guantanamo.” 28 July 1898, p. 2.

<sup>616</sup> Kennan, “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantánamo.”

<sup>617</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 120. McCalla, III: ch. XXIV, 2-3. “Surrender of Holguin is Expected Shortly,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 26 July 1898, p. 1.

Previously, the Spaniards had disarmed and disbanded the numerous formations of Volunteers and irregulars, including the recently formed Hussars of Pando made up of urban merchants and shopkeepers, and the old Squadrons of Santa Catalina del Guaso who had enforced social control in the district for much of the century – both Spain’s control over the colony itself, and the maintenance of hierarchies within it. The Cuban insurgent forces remained at camps close by, but were forbidden to enter the towns – where many insurgents’ relatives lived among Spaniards, Volunteers, and refugees alike – because of the same fear of reprisals that Shafter had argued at Santiago. Spanish General Pareja seemingly played to this fear when he requested, without success, that Ewers deploy troops in the thirty-six blockhouses guarding the railway track between Guantánamo and Caimanera lest “the Cubans should attack the trains carrying the Spanish troops to their Transports [*sic*].”<sup>619</sup>

It was during this period that Theodore Brooks of Brooks and Co. was appointed agent for the U.S. Navy. His duties included accompaniment of Ewers to prepare for the U.S. occupation and the evacuation of the Spanish garrison. In addition, when an irate McCalla discovered that the Spanish lieutenant of the *Sandoval* had scuttled his small ship rather than turn it over to the victorious Americans, Brooks provided him with sugar lighters, used to transport sugar from the railway pier to ships, to assist in raising and restoring the trophy vessel to seaworthiness.<sup>620</sup>

Theodore Brooks’ enlistment by the U.S. military was a practical matter insofar as he was the head of the railway, and representative of several large estates, where, after all, much

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<sup>618</sup> AGM-M, Documentación sobre Cuba, caja: 5797, asunto: 5797.1, doc. 11, p. 164, 15 August 1898. Theodore Brooks to his mother, 9 August 1898; BPL, Letters of Theodore Brooks.

<sup>619</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXII, 36.

<sup>620</sup> McCalla, III: ch. XXIV, 4-5. See also “Surrender of Holguin is Expected Shortly,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 26 July 1898, p. 1; “Troops at Caimanera Lay Down Their Arms,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 27 July 1898, p. 1.

of the civil populace had been relocated. He had been regarded with suspicion by the Spanish military authorities and insurgents alike. They had subjected his firm to increasingly ruinous demands for support and the payment of war taxes. But as a result of his position between the warring sides he knew the local district as well as anyone, and had had dealings with key figures in the warring camps. Then too, he spoke Spanish, French, and English, was Vice-Consul of Great Britain, and a nephew of Paul Brooks, who had been the last U.S. consular official for the district.<sup>621</sup> But his new role also gave concrete form to the passing of the regional elite from Spanish to United States hegemony and auspices. The symbolism was reinforced with the triumphal entry into Guantánamo on 10 October, the thirtieth anniversary of Céspedes' *Grito de Yara* at La Demajagua, of General Pérez—shortly to be appointed mayor by the U.S. authorities—and other insurgent leaders together with Colonel Ray underneath a victory arch constructed by Brooks & Co. to honor the uncertain beginning of United States occupation and future Cuban independence.<sup>622</sup> As crowds variously cheered “Viva Cuba Libre! Long live General Pérez! ... the Liberation Army! ... the United States! ... absolute independence” and other cries, they melded with the din from the sounding of “the sirens of the Esperanza, San Carlos, Santa Cecilia, Santa Maria, and Confluente sugar mills” along with the steam-whistles of the trains in the rail yard.<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Recall that the consul for Great Britain at Santiago de Cuba up to this time was Frederick W. Ramsden, also a member of Brooks & Co. He became ill during the siege of Santiago de Cuba and died shortly after the surrender after being moved to Jamaica. During the US occupation, Gen. Leonard Wood occupied his former residence.

<sup>622</sup> Sánchez and Campos, *La batalla*, 149. Negotiations between the Spanish and Americans with Theodore Brooks contained in Theodore Brooks to his mother, 25 July 1898, 26 July 1898, 31 July 1898, and 9 August 1898; BPL, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Letters of Theodore Brooks.

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid*, 149.

Also late in 1898, George Kennan of the Red Cross returned to see how the US military occupation was coming along. He had left the Santiago district's war zone in August for New York, stricken with "calenture, or Cuban malarial fever."<sup>624</sup> His post-bellum arrival began much like that of Samuel Hazard's 1860s antebellum visit in Chapter II. His steamer entered Guantánamo Bay, "past the now abandoned camp of the marines on the hill back of Fisherman's Point," to lay anchor off "the wretched little village of Caimanera...seaport for the inland town of Santa Catalina de Guantanamo [*sic*]."<sup>625</sup> He "was surprised to see such an amount and such a varied assortment of merchandise landed at Caimanera, for a town as unimportant—not to say insignificant—as" he "supposed Guantanamo to be" as the ship off-loaded 275 tons of goods, while some passengers disembarked for the trip up the railway line to Guantánamo proper. On their return "they were accompanied by Mr. Theodore Brooks, of the well-known and long-established Anglo-Cuban firm of Brooks & Co., and by Colonel P. H. Ray of the Third U.S. Volunteers."<sup>626</sup> Colonel Ray had enlisted after marching "eleven hundred miles up the valley of the Yukon" and commanded an "immune" regiment of troops mostly from Georgia and Louisiana.

Like Hazard some three decades before him, Kennan's return on "the steamer *Thomas Brooks*" from Santiago to Caimanera and left him to make the brief train trip, in this case with Lt. Colonel Wylly the US commandant of Baracoa, past "the dreariest, most unhealthful, and most uninteresting country" on another of the "hot, sunny days which are so

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<sup>624</sup> Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba*, 220-21; "The Regeneration of Cuba: I. Santiago de Cuba Revisited" *Outlook* V. 61, No. 9, (March 4, 1899): 497.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*

common in southeastern Cuba” past abandoned blockhouses to the train station.<sup>627</sup> He called on Ray and Ray’s wife for meals, as well as “Mr. Theodore Brooks” of “Brooks & Co., which has been engaged in business in Santiago and Guantanamo for three generations, and which owns or manages several of the largest sugar plantations in the province.”<sup>628</sup> The Oxford-educated Brooks, “A man of high literary culture as well as of practical business ability” along with “his mother and sister, in a large and comfortably furnished house ... filled with evidences of English taste and culture” such as “a large and well-selected library of standard and modern books in English, German, and Spanish” told Kennan about life during “the insurrection, and” discussed Kennan’s travels, together with “books, art, music, Russia, the Santiago campaign, the Cuban character, and the Baracoa trail.”<sup>629</sup> They related to Kennan important details of the catastrophe occasioned by the war, including statistics of civilian deaths, which appears in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 Deaths in Guantánamo Civil Population, April 1896-October 1898

<u>Date</u>	<u>Total Deaths</u>
April	76
May	66
June	79
July (Weyler’s first concentration)	131
August (concentration)	174
September	114
October	89
November	119
December	117

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<sup>627</sup> A composite of Kennan’s train trips, the first with Lieutenant Laird prior to his overland trip to Baracoa, and his later trip to Guantánamo from “The Regeneration of Cuba: II. A Horseback Ride to Baracoa” *Outlook* V. 61, No. 11 (March 18, 1899): 627, and “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo.”

<sup>628</sup> Kennan, “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo.”

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Total Deaths</u>
Total in nine months	965
1897	
January	111
February	70
March	79
April	66
May (Weyler's second concentration)	100
June (concentration)	134
July	165
August	187
September (missing)	No data
October	125
November	109
December	164
Total for twenty months	2,275

1898	
January	158
February	111
March	104
April	100
May (establishment of U.S. blockade)	153
June	209
July (period of starvation)	332
August (starvation)	431
September (after American occupation)	70
October (after American occupation)	50
Total for thirty months	3,993

*Source:* George Kennan, "The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo" *Outlook* V.61, No. 17 (April 29, 1899): 957 citing record kept by Mr. Theodore Brooks, and furnished by him to the American Marine Hospital Service.

Kennan wrote, "at the time of my visit there was still a great deal of sickness, suffering, and destitution" and that food aid in quantity was being distributed "to the indigent and the reconcentrados." He described the "condition of many of the children in Guantanamo" as particularly grave:

I should have thought it impossible that childish faces—faces of boys and girls only five and six years old—could so completely lose every vestige of youthfulness, and acquire such an expression of apathy, debility, and decrepitude. ... pale, anaemic children, who could not have been more than



five years of age, but who looked like worn, sickly dwarfs of fifty. ... I have since seen, in other parts of Cuba, more emaciated children, and children nearer, perhaps, to death; but never elsewhere have I seen children with the five-year-old bodies and the fifty-year old faces of the children in Guantanamo.<sup>630</sup>

In the countryside was evidence of gradual recovery. Kennan “was glad to see so many evidences of industry and thrift and so many indications that the rural population of eastern Cuba is slowly but surely getting on its feet.” Many had “been robbed and harried almost incessantly for two years or more by both Spaniards and insurgents” but he was sure that “American administration and control” would allow Cubans to prosper.<sup>631</sup> Like many Americans, including as we have seen, McCalla, his humanitarian impulses were often inextricably interwoven with a profound desire to exert “American methods of control and direction” forming a liberal humanist desire to promote reform, but also Kiernan’s anticolonial imperialism. Kennan was gratified by evidence of agricultural production and economic activity from “diminutive donkeys laden with bags of charcoal or small bundles of firewood ... led into the city by half-naked children from palm-thatched huts in the bush” and black “truck-farmers, with baskets of lettuce, radishes, and string-beans on their heads ... from their little gardens four or five miles away” to the larger sugar enterprises of “great economic importance, and” source of “occupation to a very considerable part of the local population ... protected from the torch of the insurgents and ... now in active operation.”<sup>632</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>631</sup> Kennan, “The Regeneration of Cuba: II. A Horseback Ride to Baracoa.”

<sup>632</sup> *Ibid* and “The Regeneration of Cuba: V. A Few Days in Guantanamo.”

## Conclusion

Memory of hostilities in Guantánamo receded quickly with the coming of peace between the United States and Spain and the onset of the U.S. occupation. McCalla and other U.S. troops were sent to the Philippines after February 1899 for the burgeoning post-occupation conflict that assumed form as the Filipino-American War—understood at the time as the “Philippine Insurrection.” The battle had begun with the Spanish military corralled within the *trocha* surrounding the arable and flat plain of Guantánamo with its large capital-intensive sugar mills linked by rail to the shipping pier at Caimanera. U.S. involvement in the war initially assumed the form of blockading the port, and later cooperating with insurgents in landing marines at the lower part of the bay. At the time, North Americans were conscious of the role played by the Cuban Liberation Army in securing the outcome. In later years, the Cuban role receded or disappeared from published U.S. histories.

The battle proved somewhat peripheral to the outcome of the war itself, and the emphasis on operational histories rendered it all but forgotten apart from rather myopic lenses devoted to the immediate marine landings and the actual territory of the navy base itself. U.S. Navy vessels used Guantánamo Bay as an important station throughout the war, and it served as the base of operations against Puerto Rico, but the U.S. occupation appeared unremarkable. Precisely how the U.S. Marines knew that the estate of Cuzco contained the only fresh water supply, as but one example, or why the numerically strong Spanish garrison could not launch a more robust counterattack, and similar questions simply remained unasked, or explained handily by presumptions of Spanish incompetence, demoralization or timidity; the political and social aspects of the so-called “Spanish War” in the colonies where it was fought remained unexamined. For these reasons, the preceding chapter has offered a

chronologically driven military history through the lenses of a social and cultural historian, seeking to highlight overlooked aspects of this admittedly small part of the War of 1898.

As peace negotiations between Spain and the United States were underway in Paris, without representation of the former colonial peoples themselves, much of “Uncle Sam’s ‘Quaker colored’ [the leaden, oatmeal gray wartime paint scheme] war fleet” languished in southeastern Cuba, during which time it grew abundantly clear to many “officers of the North Atlantic squadron” that “there [was] not an anchorage [in the U.S. South or the West Indies] that can compare with” Guantánamo’s broad and deep bay. The idea of retaining the bay in perpetuity by the U.S. Navy gained adherents among officers immediately.<sup>633</sup>

Their opinions apparently were a consideration to Alfred Thayer Mahan and the Naval War Board who sent a 15-20 August 1898 report to Secretary of the Navy John Long. Between Santiago and Guantánamo Bays “the Board” found it “very difficult to choose ... it suggests that before a decision is reached” about which inlet to retain as a coaling station, “the advice of officers experienced in entering and using both harbors be taken.”<sup>634</sup> Mahan urged, “it must be remembered that the Windward Passage, between Cuba and Haiti, is the great direct commercial route between the whole North Atlantic coast and the Isthmus. No solution of the problem of coaling and naval stations [for the U.S. Navy] can be considered satisfactory, which does not provide for military safety upon that route.” As a result, when “Cuba becomes independent, the United States should acquire, as a naval measure, one of

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<sup>633</sup> “Harbor of Guantanamo. Naval Officers Think We Should Hold the Bay as a Permanent Base,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 17 August 1898, p. 12.

<sup>634</sup> 15-20 August 1898, Naval War Board, Washington D.C. to John D. Long, Secretary of the Navy, in Robert Seager II and Doris D. Maguire, eds. *Letters and Papers of Alfred Thayer Mahan* 3 vols. (Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1975), II: 588. I am grateful to Dirk Bönker for urging me to examine the Naval War Board of 1898.

these ports, with a portion of adjacent territory.”<sup>635</sup> The Board recommended four coaling stations in the Pacific, with a further two acquisitions near Central America’s isthmus and a further two in the Caribbean. At the time, Guam, Manila, Subic Bay, and/or all of Luzon in addition to one of the Chinese islands near the mouth of the Yangtze River, and Pago-Pago in Samoa were included as the desired locales in the Pacific. On the Pacific coast of Central America an island in the Gulf of Fonseca “belonging to the Republic of Salvador” or two sites in Costa Rica would be forward operating bases near a future canal. On the Caribbean side, Almirante Bay was mentioned, while in the Caribbean Sea, the “east end of Cuba, embracing Santiago or Guantanamo Bays, and preferably including the Bay of Nipe,” and lastly, either St. Thomas in the Danish Virgin Islands, Samaná Bay in the Dominican Republic or Culebra Island—in short, the Windward and Mona Passages.<sup>636</sup> In 1910 as the trans-isthmian canal neared completion, and while a retired McCalla was writing his memoirs in California, Mahan wrote from Long Island that in a possible future conflict a “fleet pivoted on Guantanamo covers effectually the whole Gulf coast” and that “having regard to the military, commercial, and industrial interests” of the expanding United States “and to its security, there are five principal naval positions to be maintained as naval stations: New York, the Chesapeake, Guantanamo, Puget Sound, [and] Guam” along with the additions of “Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and Key West.”<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, II: 590.

<sup>637</sup> 24 September 1910, Marshmere, Quogue, Long Island to Commander Philip Andrews, in Seager and Maguire, eds., III: 354-356.



On 1 September 1898 Spanish authority and sovereignty left the Guantánamo region as the soldiers departed along the very railway built by slave and indentured labor in the 1850s to transport agricultural exports from the district's plantations. This last garrison had been built up progressively to contain the separatist insurgency that had disrupted the earlier pattern of colonial social control based on maintenance of racial hierarchy, and a specialized militia oriented to slave patrols. After the resumption of armed conflict between separatism and integralism both contenders demanded allegiance from the region's denizens. The sides attempted to exert control over society, and their efforts intruded into most facets of life, work, and culture. The rapidity with which conditions of food crisis and disease emerged in 1898 indicated the degree to which the island had been despoiled by the conflict prior to North American intervention.

With peace, a period of recovery and rebuilding could begin, but since it coincided with the U.S. military occupation and the resultant formation of Cuba as a quasi-independent nation state or U.S. protectorate, the questions of social control and restarting export production once again came to the fore. Insurgents had disrupted and largely halted production as a plausible means to achieve nationalist ends: the liberation of the island from Spain. The questions of labor, social order, and production loomed large for the region's elite. The difficulties and solutions to these dilemmas are explored in the following chapter on postwar recovery, heavy U.S. investment, and nation-state formation in the early twentieth century.

## CHAPTER VI:

### CONCLUSION—“On Trial Before the World”: Social Control and Public Violence in the Mediated Republic

*Señor Perez, the new Mayor of Guantanamo, called upon Gen. [Leonard] Wood and reported his experience during the first day of his Mayoralty. Gen. Wood said to him in the course of the interview:*

*“You Cubans are now on trial before the world, and you must show what you are able to do in the matter of self-government. The Americans would be pleased to give a stable Government to Cuba in the course of a twelvemonth. Let us see if the Cubans are able to govern themselves, or if it will be necessary to make some other arrangement...”*

—“General Wood’s Inspection Tour” *New York Times*, 12 November 1898<sup>638</sup>

*Cuba is going to offer the last great industrial opportunity of this century, and so soon as the Spanish flag ceases to float there tens of millions of money and tens of millions of men will rush to its exploitation. In my judgment Americans, and not the Cubans, will be the greater gainers. The Cubans will satisfy their sentiment – they will have liberty, but the Americans will make the money.*

—Nestor Gener Gonzalez, 26 May 1898.<sup>639</sup>

*The Republic of Cuba last May [May 20, 1912] was in the throes of a lawless uprising that for a time threatened the destruction of a great deal of valuable property—much of it owned by Americans and other foreigners—as well as the existence of the Government itself. The armed forces of Cuba being inadequate to guard property from attack and at the same time properly to operate against the rebels, a force of American marines was dispatched from our naval station at Guantanamo into the Province of Oriente for the protection of American and other foreign life and property. The Cuban Government was thus able to use all its forces in putting down the outbreak, which it succeeded in doing in a period of six weeks. The presence of two American warships in the harbor of Habana [sic] during the most critical period of this disturbance contributed in great measure to allay the fears of the inhabitants, including a large foreign colony.*

—William Howard Taft, 1912 State of the Union Address.

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<sup>638</sup> “Gen. Wood’s Inspection Tour” *NYT*, 12 November 1898, p. 3.

<sup>639</sup> Nestor Gener González, *In Darkest Cuba*, 52.

Guantánamo emerged from the grip of thirty years of anti-colonial revolutions and entered the twentieth century under U.S. military occupation. Some Spaniards retained control of political offices, while others came under the purview of certain ex-insurgent leaders such as Pedro Agustín Pérez. Colonel William Ray, the U.S. official responsible for the district, appointed Enrique Brooks as head of the Rural Guard, a constabulary designed to serve in parapolice functions in some ways similar to the recently disbanded Squadron of Santa Catalina.<sup>640</sup> Pérez assumed the role of mayor after the departure of Spanish forces September 1, 1898.<sup>641</sup> A small force of Cubans and Americans jointly occupied the battery in Guantánamo Bay temporarily, while some twenty Cubans and the Cuban flag were posted at the main fort in Guantánamo. On 11 November, the U.S. Governor of the Military Department of Santiago, General Leonard Wood, who would govern all of Cuba for much of the 1899 to 1902 military occupation after replacing General John Brooke, made a tour of inspection of the district, visiting the town of Jamaica and two sugar plantations recently vacated by Spanish troops and now under U.S. military supervision, and where he made the comment in the epigraph of the chapter above to Pérez.<sup>642</sup> He entertained suggestions from the U.S. Third immune regiment that they be allowed to play an American football match against U.S. soldiers based in Santiago, quoting the “Duke of Wellington that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton.”<sup>643</sup> His visit encountered “not only the

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<sup>640</sup> Expediente manuscrito que contiene la relación de los jefes, oficiales, clases y soldados del Ejército Libertador que desempeñan empleos en la administración municipal, entre los que se encuentran el mayor General Pedro A. Pérez ocupando el cargo de alcalde municipal y el tte. General Emilio Giró Odio, como recaudor, Guantánamo, Marzo 3 de 1899, in AHPSC, GP, leg. 515, no. 31, año: 1899, materia: Ejército Libertador, contains the list and salary of Liberation Army veterans employed by the municipality.

<sup>641</sup> Theodore Brooks to his mother, 9 August 1898; BPL, Letters of Theodore Brooks.

<sup>642</sup> *NYT*, 12 November, 1898, p.3.

fearful effects of the last three years of internal struggle, but also the prosperity that is gradually returning.”<sup>644</sup> According to the brief *New York Times* article, Wood was headed to Jibara, but Rebecca Scott found that on 14 November, the Santiago de Cuba Rural Guard had a fatal skirmish with Louisiana African American “immune” volunteers in San Luis over the theft of a pig that necessitated the urgent return of the American general.<sup>645</sup> *Guantanameros* faced prodigious difficulties that had arisen from the devastation and grim consequences of the war. In much the fashion as after the earlier revolutions, motivations centered on access to adequate food and wage labor, as Rebecca Scott has written.<sup>646</sup>

The prevailing social conditions were frightful, and the ability to revive production would prove to be slow and halting. As soldiers demobilized, and the reorganization of production was contemplated, the sheer scale of destruction and impediments to recovery became apparent. Eventually, other U.S. forces from the 8th Cavalry and the 5th Infantry regiments arrived later to bolster U.S. authority, spread thinly though it was. These forces remained on occupation duty as part of the overall 1899-1902 occupation of Cuba until 1900, when the 10th U.S. Negro Cavalry replaced them for the last two years of the first American intervention in the island.<sup>647</sup>

As may be seen, Cuban War of Independence came to an end with a potential social revolutionary component directed against area landowners curtailed by the U.S. presence and

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<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>645</sup> See Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 175-78.

<sup>646</sup> Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, ch. 6.

<sup>647</sup> Letter of George Leland Dyer to his wife, 19 March 1899, p.4, Eastern Carolina University, J.Y. Joyner Library, Manuscript Collection; George Leland Dyer Papers, Record Group 340, Correspondence, folder #340.14. Hereinafter cited as ECU.



the realignment that transpired in its wake. A conflict in which insurgent tactics against property, both human chattel and access to fertile farmland, developed over the course of separatist wars in the 1870s had been refined and used to great effect against Spain in a destructive colonial war by the end of the nineteenth century. Final, outright victory had not come about, however, after Cuban insurgents' three-years' efforts and the culmination of thirty years of struggle. Instead, the end-result was imposed from without through the intervention and occupation of the United States.<sup>648</sup> It would be inevitable that the problems assailing the early formative years of state formation at the outset of the republic would be viewed as missteps out of kilter with the promises and aspirations that had served as motivations during the dark, dismal years of warfare.

A painful recovery began. The U.S. authorities swiftly demobilized the Cuban Liberation Army, paying veterans \$75 dollars for turning in their rifles. In place of the army, U.S. officials put a carefully vetted Rural Guard in its place.<sup>649</sup> The United States military would assume the primary role of defending Cuba, particularly as the 1901 Platt Amendment that placed significant constraints on the exercise of sovereignty by an independent Cuba

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<sup>648</sup> On the U.S. occupation see Collazo, *Los americanos en Cuba*; Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism*; Helg, ch. 3; Gott, 104-112; Sir Harry Johnston, "An Englishman's Impressions of American Rule in Cuba" *McClure's Magazine* New York (September 1909): 496-505; Pérez, *Cuba Between Empires*; *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 188-217; "Insurrection, Intervention, and the Transformation of Land Tenure Systems in Cuba, 1895-1902" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 65 (2), (1985): 229-254; "The Pursuit of Pacification: Banditry and the United States' Occupation of Cuba, 1889-1902; Thomas, Book IV.

<sup>649</sup> For the Cuban Rural Guard see Allan R. Millett, "The Rise and Fall of the Cuban Rural Guard, 1898-1912" *The Americas*, V. 29, No. 2 (October 1972): 191-213. The disbandment of the Cuban Liberation Army, see Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Lords of the Mountain*, 63 and *Cuba Between Empires, 1878-1902*, especially chs. 12-13 for the dissolution of the insurgent military and ch. 18 for the creation of the Rural Guard. Insurgents were obligated to turn in guns to receive cash payments and other assistance during the early occupation. A list of 216 firearms handed over may be found in Expediente manuscrito relativo al estado demostrativo de las armas del Ejército Libertador existentes en Guantánamo, que por orden de la secretaria de estado y gobernación, deben ser remitidos al chief adenaunce [*sic*, ordenance?] office de Stgo. de Cuba. Guantánamo, Septiembre 11 de 1899, AHPSC, GP, leg. 515, no 9, año: 1899, materia: Ejército Libertador.

went into effect. It was a sign of protectorate status to North Americans. For many Cubans it would be a sign of intermeddling by the colossal neighbor to the north. The coastal artillery batteries designed by Spain to defend Havana harbor would suffice for Cuba's military forces: the U.S. occupiers organized an artillery unit for that purpose. Cuba would shelter behind the U.S. fleet, according to this U.S. Navy strategic view, operating from the Guantánamo coaling station as an important forward base in the Caribbean basin and guardian of the future Panama Canal. In the countryside, however, insecurity was rife. Rumors circulated—and were given continual substance—about groups of insurgents, bandits, and ex-integralist irregulars refusing to disarm and return to civilian life. Bands would kidnap people for ransom, set fire to cane fields, extract the payment of protection money, and destroy property. The destructiveness of the insurgent economic warfare policy, the armed general strike against production, and property destruction tactics, loomed large in the minds of area planters gripped with uncertainty in the new order.

In Guantánamo in late December 1898, not too long after General Wood's brief tour of the district, Lt. Col. Ray encountered a conflict with a Cuban subordinate, Colonel Francisco Valiente, "Chief of Gendarmerie" who was accused of lax security over arms that had been diverted into the hands of bandits:

Major Harris, representing Lieut. Col. Ray at Sagua de Tánamo, ...[promised to supply rations to Valiente, who] turned over to several Cuban Captains the ... rifles that were stacked by his men when they were disarmed. [...] Col. Ray says the course taken by Col. Valiente explains the existence of the troublesome bands of robbers who have infested the district around Guantnamo. In one case a Cuban Major went so far as to order the proprietors of a sugar estate not to grind. Col. Ray sent a company of United States troops to guard the estate, whereupon the Cuban Major took to the woods with a band of men, who ever since have been robbing and pillaging estates near by. As a result of this condition of things Col. Ray's entire regiment, with the exception of two companies, is now scattered about the country guarding private property.

Col. Ray told Valiente he had the names of several prominent Cubans who had censured Valiente for turning over his arms to Cubans. Valiente replied that he had the arms under guard, and would keep them safe until it was seen what the United States would do. [Ray] intends to mount some of his own men and to capture the robber chief. Meanwhile, except on the guarded estates, work in his district is practically at a standstill.<sup>650</sup>

The social control concerns that had persisted through the early nineteenth century with slave resistance through flight into the inaccessible interior, the rise of banditry, and finally, the emergence of anti-colonial insurgency persisted. In 1899, an Associated Press correspondent tried to debunk the unsettling stories of insurgents refusing to disband and go back to work in an article “Cuban Canards. Untruthful Reports of Disturbances in Guantánamo – Thousands of Insurgents at Work”:

There has been rumors [*sic*] of organized bands of insurgents refusing to disarm, of some of them banding together for the purpose of burning the cane, and so on, [. . .] Even prominent business men residing in Guantanamo, of American sympathies, owning large estates in the country, have been led to believe that their plantations are in danger, and have asked Col. Ray for protection. [. . .] A visit to the plantations themselves, and long talks with the managers and with ex-insurgent officers, give convincing proof that there is practically no trouble worth mentioning in the district of Guantanamo. One plantation alone, that belonging to the Brooks Brothers at Soledad, managed by Ernest Brooks, employs some 500 men, every one of them was in the insurgent army. These men seem perfectly contented with their lot, and from what Mr. Brooks and his assistants say, are only too happy to be once more earning their livelihood. At other plantations within a radius of ten miles of Guantanamo there are in the neighborhood of 5,000 ex-insurgents at work, and nine out of thirteen are convinced that the reports of trouble are entirely without foundation.<sup>651</sup>

Nightmare visions of property destruction and insurgent mobilization continued for some time, being given continual substance by repeated deliberate fires at different estates. In

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<sup>650</sup> “The Guantanamo Bandits.” *NYT*, 26 December 1898, p.2.

<sup>651</sup> Newspaper clipping, Correspondence of the Associated Press, “Cuban Canards: Untruthful Reports of Disturbances in Guantanamo – Thousands of Insurgents at Work.” n.d. Found in Letters of Robert Mason, BPL.

several cases, unemployed veterans and former pro-Spanish irregulars turned to banditry. Property destruction had been a drastic means to achieve political ends: the overthrow of Spanish colonialist control and the establishment of a Cuban Republic. Now, with the independence envisioned thrown into doubt with the nature of the post-war settlement, and U.S. occupation amid continuing hardship in the region, disillusioned armed men employed property destruction for their own private uses, extorting ransoms through threats against life and property.

Whatever worry existed about banditry was greatly magnified in contemplating continued political unrest and the potential challenge to elite prerogatives aroused by popular mobilization during the war. Cuban separatists had created a rebel army to attack private property as the most direct means of defeating Spanish political control. The United States intervention frequently gave pre-war elites an escape hatch from any post-war redistribution or reckoning with small holders, peasants and mill workers that may have arisen. Fears of expropriation were voiced in private conversation. While having his hair trimmed in early 1899 in Santiago de Cuba, the North American Navy officer George Leland Dyer talked with Theodore Brooks about their shared dim views of an independent Cuba.

[Theodore Brooks] is much concerned about the condition of affairs in Cuba. He with all others having interests here, does not know what to do. He even says he would prefer to this uncertainty to have the Americans withdraw and let the surely ensuing conflagration commence. Then the American sentimentalists and emotionalists would see the utter futility of the attempt at self government by the Cubans and interfere with a strong hand. I agree with him. . . . We will clean the island, get the finances in order, suppress brigandage, and [start] a comprehensive system of public works and then we will see. I don't care a cent for the island or its worthless inhabitants, . . . Mr. Brooks wants to go ahead and plant cane and introduce some more machinery into his mills but he dares not and all others are in the same position, others who have interests. The mass which has no property want us to leave to give them a chance to make the property owner divide. There is the possibility of a

very ugly state of affairs growing out of this early attempt to establish a Cuban gov't. and the uncertainty the situation imposes.<sup>652</sup>

This idle barbershop conversation revealed the grave misgivings, even disdain, shared by both North Americans and many regional elites towards Cuban self-government and the potential disruption of the resumption of work and investment. As it happened, the sugar mills of Guantánamo restarted cultivation and production greatly hampered by the destruction wrought by the war, the almost total lack of domesticated animals, and a scarcity of almost everything but able to gradually repair the links of the sugar enclave with infusions of outside capital.

By 1900, as planters continued to revive sugar production, eleven of Oriente's twenty-four reconstructed sugar centrals were within the region of Guantánamo.<sup>653</sup> Sugar mills reassumed a central role in the economic life of the district, and were an important source of wages, even if miserly, for many of the regions inhabitants. And as in the 1880s, coffee cultivation and production began again, although it would remain a shadow of what it had been previously until later in the twentieth century.<sup>654</sup> For now, sugar would reemerge as the commanding heights of the district's agricultural export economy. In this, Guantánamo shared a postwar trend where principally enormous U.S., but also other foreign investment, would remake eastern districts, especially the terrain around Manzanillo, Holguín, the Bay of

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<sup>652</sup> Letter from George Leland Dyer to his wife, 1 April 1899, pgs. 5-7, ECU, Manuscript Collection; George Leland Dyer Papers, Record Group 340, Correspondence; folder #340.14.

<sup>653</sup> Hoernel, "A Comparison of Sugar and Social Change in Puerto Rico and Oriente, Cuba: 1898-1959," 84.

<sup>654</sup> Expediente que contiene un inventario de los rendimientos y costos de los cafetales de la provincia de Oriente. Además tiene informes de la producción de café y cacao del termino de San Luis, in AHPSC, GP, leg. 176, no.9, año: 1901-1902, materia: Café.

Nipe, and Camagüey.<sup>655</sup> This transformation of land tenure frequently meant the dispossession of rural peasants from eastern districts, as sugar and other agribusinesses, frequently vast in scope, engrossed much of the arable, readily cleared, farmlands. In the case of Guantánamo, U.S., French, and Spanish investors would implant early on atop the pre-existing sugar enclave built up in the late nineteenth century. Guantánamo Bay would become a strategic asset of the United States for hemispheric defense, exercising control over the Panama Canal once it was completed by 1914, and for intervening in Cuba and other Central American and Caribbean island nations. The land at the lower part of the bay would be negotiated as site of the United States Naval Station, formally negotiated as paragraph seven of the Platt Amendment agreements curbing Cuban sovereignty in 1901 and additional treaty arrangements in 1903.<sup>656</sup>

Postwar land speculation, the American Guantánamo & Western Railroad Company, and the acquisition and merger of several Brooks and Company estates by the new Guantánamo Sugar Company (GSC) by 1905 exemplified the transformations underway in the early Cuban republic. The enormous sugar-trust of B.H. Howell & Son—the National Sugar Refining Corporation of New Jersey (NSRC), in turn, controlled the North American GSC, which was grafted onto the roots of the early sugar enclave built up since the creation of the railway connection to Caimanera by Brooks and Company in the mid-nineteenth century. Under President James Howell Post and its Vice President Theodore Brooks, the former manager of the Anglo-Cuban Brooks and Company, the Guantánamo Sugar Company as part of the NSRC reflected a local manifestation of a new resultant hybrid in Cuba: part of

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<sup>655</sup> Hoernel, “Sugar and Social Change in Orient, Cuba, 1898-1946.”

<sup>656</sup> Gott, 111.

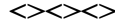
what historian César Ayala has termed “the American Sugar Kingdom” of the twentieth century.<sup>657</sup> Table 6.1 below shows the first sugar harvest in Guantánamo after the end of the first U.S. occupation, just before the onset of the GSC acquisitions.

Table 6.1 Guantánamo *Zafra* of 1903-1904

Sugar Mill	Owner	Arrobas of cane ground	Sugar sacks	Arrobas	Sugar from syrup	Total Sacks	Total Arrobas
Confluente	J. Sánchez de Toca	869,200	6,760	85,852	759	7,519	95,491
Esperanza	E. Brauet & Co.	4,700,535	33,323	426,534	3,560	36,883	472,102
Isabel	Sucesión Jorge Nariño [Brooks & Co.]	5,900,000	48,999	621,287	2,910	51,909	658,244
Los Caños	Brooks & Co.	2,159,840	14,100	180,480	2,250	16,350	209,280
Romelie	Brooks & Co.	3,903,989	30,879	302,163	3,179	34,058	432,526
San Antonio	Luis Redor	3,686,900	27,100	346,880	3,900	31,000	396,800
San Carlos	José Gorgas	2,120,120	11,100	140,970	1,815	12,915	164,020
Santa Cecilia	Arturo Simon	1,500,000	11,375	145,600	2,443	13,818	176,870
Santa Maria	Fernando Pons	2,050,000	14,242	120,911	1,938	16,180	195,523
San Miguel	Suc. J. Bueno Y Co.	2,038,100	13,360	170,911	2,100	15,460	207,791
Soledad	Brooks & Co.	5,764,600	43,990	558,673	2,700	46,690	592,963

Source: AHPSC, GP, leg. 304, no. 1, año: 1904, materia: Centrales.

<sup>657</sup> César J. Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 80-81. See also Zanetti and García, *Sugar and Railroads*, 232-233. The NSRC also controlled the New Niquero Sugar Company, and the enormous Cuban American Sugar Company, who operated the largest sugar mills in the world during the first decades of the twentieth century—the Chaparra, and Delicias in Puerto Padre—that “produced 77,246tons and 68,413tons respectively” and along with Central Boston and Preston of the United Fruit Company were the four largest mills in twentieth-century Cuba. See Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*, 208-210.



The story began with colonial ruling class social control concerns. In southeastern Cuba, the crown created a militia geared for slave patrols and paramilitary functions, the *Escuadras de Santa Catalina del Guaso*, or the Squadron of Guantánamo to inhibit and control slave flight and rebellion, and thus destroy internal rivals and the prospect of possible challenges to colonial rule and social control. This rural *gendarmerie* came into conflict against the first Cuban insurrection in the nineteenth century, becoming a counterinsurgent militia. As Cuba recovered from that protracted struggle, and capital-intensive sugar mills extended in the region, a former commander of this unit went over to the Cuban separatists, becoming a local insurgent chief by the 1895-1898 renewal of armed conflict. The U.S. occupation authorities, in turn, appointed him the first mayor of the city of Guantánamo, a post he held during the 1912 peasant rebellion or “Race War” when the recently constituted Cuban Permanent Army, the Rural Guard, and regional militia violently suppressed rural society and manifestations of political rebellion in the early years of the Cuban Republic.

This dissertation has argued that the social control over this remote, sparsely populated frontier district relied on a variety of enduring structures. Among them were racial constructs and forms of racial oppression that privileged persons with salient European features as “whites” over persons with African features as either “non-white” or “of color” or even “black.” These racial constructs, once legacies of slavery and its social relations in the Caribbean and wider African Diaspora, have proved persistent and frequently pernicious. Social control initially centered on maintaining control over the colony against imperial interlopers during the period of rivalry in the Caribbean by European empires. In this setting, with its emphasis on military security, people of color could achieve advancement as an



indispensable social control stratum. When the French Revolution led to the St.-Domingue slave uprising and resultant Haitian Revolution, the free population of color in eastern Cuba became subject to greater scrutiny and urgent attempts at control. As the model for colonial Cuban society and economic prosperity followed the exploitation of African and Creole slave labor cultivating, harvesting, and processing agricultural exports, and replacing Haiti as a leading sugar and coffee producer, the geographic peculiarity of the Guantánamo region led to the establishment of a rural militia as a prop for planter authority and Spain's imperial control. Guantánamo remained a small backwater, but its emphasis on slave-based development, originally in indigo, cotton, coffee and sugar like Ste. Domingue, but increasingly just coffee and sugar, made it distinctive in comparison with other districts of Oriente that maintained a more diverse picture of variegated land tenure patterns, types of farms, and cattle ranching.

The paramilitary militia, reconfigured during the rise of colonial plantation agriculture within the island as a whole, and in the immediate vicinity of southeastern Cuba to suppress maroons, became a counterinsurgency unit for the Spanish during the first wars of independence, and also operated against the endemic banditry encouraged by the terrain and demography of the zone. And yet, eventually, some of the locally prominent rebel leaders would stem from this same body of militia. That first war of independence did much to overturn and disrupt slavery, first in the coffee sector, later, and belatedly in the sugar mills of the district. A contention of this study is that an optic geared to a regional level in an understudied part of Cuba allows historians to recapture a keener texture of how local divergences within the overarching history played out during the waning years of Spain's control and the rise of Cuban nationality during the thirty year process of independence.

Guantánamo would remain an understudied and peripheral region that would elicit little sustained attention from scholars. Seemingly of little relevance to the overall trajectory of Cuban historiography with its emphasis on western sugar monoculture, only its geography, the presence of the all-important bay, and the U.S. development of the naval base there generated much scholarly interest. Little about the immediate hinterland of the base appeared remarkable. The base itself drew numbers of British West Indians as laborers in a twentieth-century inter-Caribbean migration pattern. As seen in Chapter V, the story of U.S. entry into the bay, and the Cuban War of Independence, was rather more complex than the military histories of 1898, with their emphasis on U.S. action and agency, might suggest. In fact there was considerably more Cuban involvement, both in crucial provision of intelligence and support, but in other dimensions of collaboration as well. And Cuban integralists resisted the intrusion of the North Americans alongside the Spanish in much the same fashion that they had long assisted in the suppression of separatist and black political rebellion. The base itself would become a salient component of U.S. strategy in the Caribbean, from planning against European rivals, to a role in securing the trans-isthmian canal, to future interventions by the United States in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Cuba itself. In 1912, U.S. Marines would take the train from Caimanera under the command of Colonel Lincoln Karmany to Soledad and other sugar mills during the violent suppression campaign known as the “Race War.”<sup>658</sup>

On 20 May 1912, the tenth anniversary of Cuba’s belated independence from the United States—thirteen years after separation from Spain—a small independent black political party, the *Partido Independiente de Color* (PIC), outside the established Liberal and

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<sup>658</sup> “Fighting in Cuba; U.S. Marines Go” *NYT*, 24 May 1912, pp. 1-3.

Conservative party system that had arisen during the U.S. occupation, ill-advisedly launched an “armed protest” against the proscription of the party by a law passed by the black Liberal senator Martín Morúa.<sup>659</sup> Leaders of the party included two veterans of the lengthy struggle against Spain from the War of Independence: Pedro Ivonnet and Evaristo Estenoz. Police, the Rural Guard, and the post-1909 Permanent Army, supplemented by volunteer militia quashed the rebellion swiftly at the behest of José Miguel Gómez, the Liberal Party president of Cuba who viewed it as a threat to his term of office and a possible incitement to bring about unwelcome U.S. intervention.<sup>660</sup> Soldiers were dispatched to Oriente from Havana in warships under the command of José de Jesús (“Chucho”) Monteagudo.<sup>661</sup> Quite apart from the revolt of the *Independientes*, elements of peasant insurgency came to characterize responses to the outbreak in Guantánamo. As has been recently argued by Rebecca Scott, it was the salient black majority in regions of the east such as San Luis, Alto Songo, El Cobre, and Guantánamo, that lent them the character of serving as a potential enduring base of support for the party.<sup>662</sup> It was in the east, in areas north of Santiago de Cuba, and surrounding the *cuenca* of Guantánamo where the response of military, police and militia to desultory instances of looting, fires against public buildings, stores, and shops, and cases of

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<sup>659</sup> On the “Race War” of 1912, see Rafael Conte and José M. Capmany, *Guerra de razas (Negros contra blancos en Cuba)* (Havana: Imprenta Militar de Antonio Pérez, 1912); Rafael Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba: La guerrita de 1912* (Montevideo: Ediciones Géminis, 1974); de la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 66-90; Helg, *Our Rightful Share*; Serafín Portuondo Linares, *Los independientes de color* (1950 reprint; Havana: Editorial Caminos, 2002); Thomas Orum, “The Politics of Color: The Racial Dimension of Cuban Politics During the Early Republican Years, 1900-1912” (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1975); Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, ch. 8; Thomas, 522-524.

<sup>660</sup> On the formation of the Cuban Permanent Army see Pérez, “Supervision of a Protectorate: The United States and the Cuban Army, 1898-1908” *Hispanic American Historical Review* (May 1972): 250-271.

<sup>661</sup> Portuondo Linares, 151; Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 241.

<sup>662</sup> Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*, 236. See also, pp. 234-243.

assaults and cane fires were met by an indiscriminate response by roving groups of government forces that killed between 3,000 to 6,000 mostly black *orientales* even though some of the adherents to the rebellion were mixed-race or whites. In Oriente, the underlying social and economic sources fueling rebellion were separated from the immediate racial and political causes of the *Independiente* revolt. They were rooted in the drastic transformations occurring in the war-ravaged landscape during a steep rise in the birth rate in the early decades of the twentieth century, and declining access to small properties during the land speculation and infusions of foreign capital and expanding monoculture during the period.<sup>663</sup>

The long rebellious history of Oriente in the nineteenth century, from the *palenques* of fugitive slaves to the thirty-year independence struggle, and into the twentieth century had a salient influence in the Cuban state's responses to the region when rebellion again seemed in the offing. While the tragic events and appalling massacre of 1912 have received much recent scholarly attention, this study suggests that the social control concerns elicited by the region and the sheer destructiveness of the preceding decades clearly influenced the Cuban government response, particularly when the national leadership and many people at the provincial level were veterans of the wars of independence. It is therefore the case, as George Reid Andrews has recently written, that the massacre of 1912 certainly was terrible, but it was, perhaps, unsurprising that the Cuban government "resorted to such savage repression to put down the rebellion" when

with the arrival of U.S. sugar companies, the stakes at play in such rebellions were higher than ever before. Peasants in arms threatened not just public order and security; by placing in jeopardy tens of millions of dollars in foreign investments, they directly threatened Cuban national sovereignty as well. During the years of the export boom, the United States sent troops repeatedly

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<sup>663</sup> Pérez, "Politics, Peasants, and People of Color," 509-539.

into Caribbean nations, including Cuba. The most frequent justification for those interventions was the protection of American economic interests, and a peasant rebellion aimed at U.S.-owned sugar companies obviously endangered such interests. The Gómez administration therefore had to repress the revolt immediately and remove the threat of future such uprisings.<sup>664</sup>

In preparing to not only destroy the PIC for rebelling against the authority of the government, and extirpate the threat posed to the newly constituted republic by rural rebellion with a long nineteenth-century lineage, old racist stereotypes and notions of savagery and barbarism were consciously employed to justify the actions of the military and volunteer formations, but also the actual memory of lived experience through the war of 1895-1898 clearly played a role. For it was not just the ideology accompanying the daily structural violence of slavery and economic exploitation that had carried over into independent Cuba, but also the total war that had seen competing forces target civilian supporters of the enemy, burn villages, and torch properties. If the events of 1912 in Guantánamo implicitly were a *denouement* of leveling and redistributive aspirations carried over by black Cubans from the independence struggles that many of them had sustained during the armed struggle, they also drew on the legacies of continuous resistance to attempts to enforce social control and exert highly unequal power relations over the land and its residents.

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<sup>664</sup> Andrews, 132.

## APPENDIX OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

**1. Mapa histórico de Carlos Manuel de Céspedes: Centenario de su caída, 1874-1974.** (Havana: Imprenta Federico Engels, BNJM, ANC, 1974). The tree and gear wheel at La Demajagua appear on the left, the plantation bell appears to the right.



**2. Cafetal Isabelica.** This nineteenth-century *cafetal*, abandoned in the Ten Years' War, had a *dotación* of approximately 40 slaves. It is located at Gran Piedra to the east of Santiago de Cuba. Today the site forms part of the UNESCO World Heritage Slave Trade project.



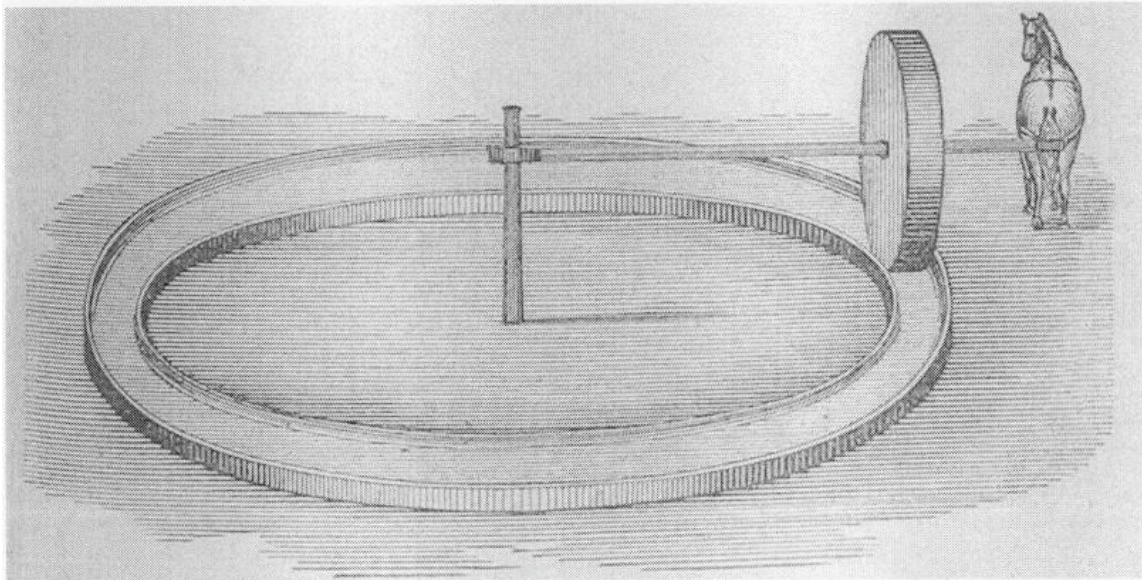
*Source:* Author's collection, summer 2003.

**3. Arms of Guantánamo,** “The most illustrious and loyal *ayuntamiento* of Guantánamo” adopted in 1870. It depicts a beehive surrounded by sugar cane, tobacco, and coffee.  
*Source:* Author's collection.





4. St.-Domingue, “Ancient mill of the French for crushing the exterior covering of the coffee berry.” *Source: U.S. Congress. House. Production of and Trade in Coffee.*



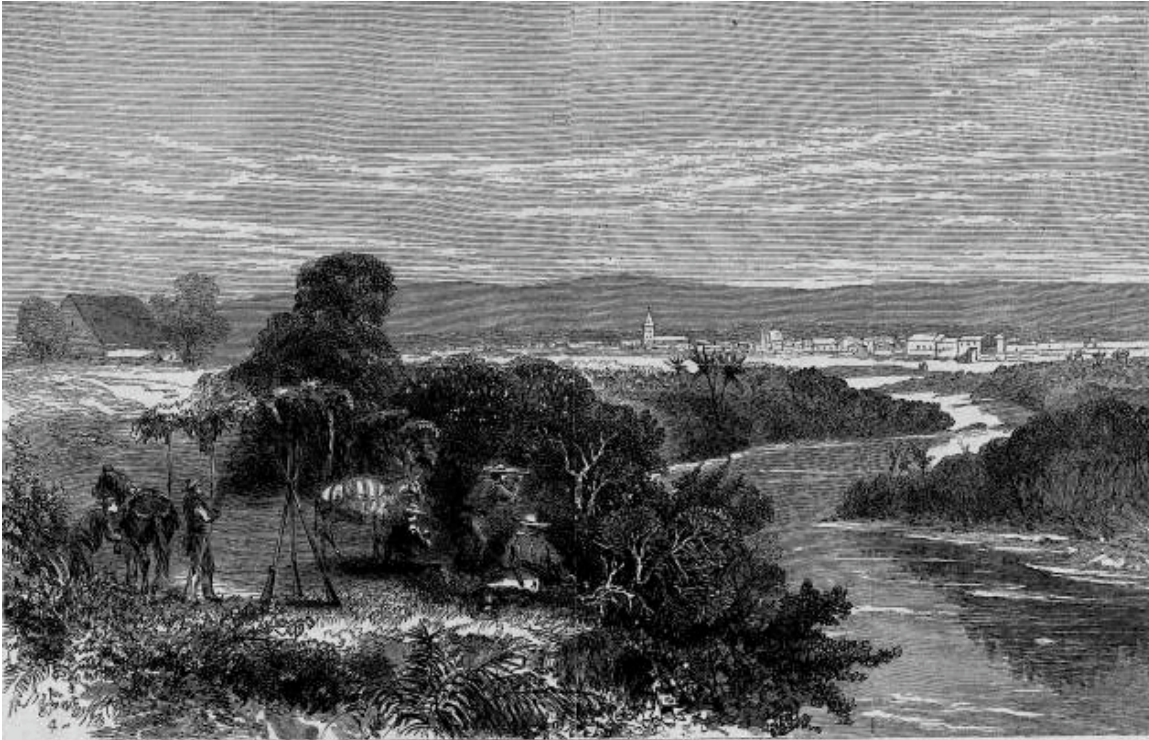
Ancient mill of the French for crushing the exterior covering of the coffee berry.

5. Coffee pulping mill, Cafetal Isabelica, Santiago de Cuba.

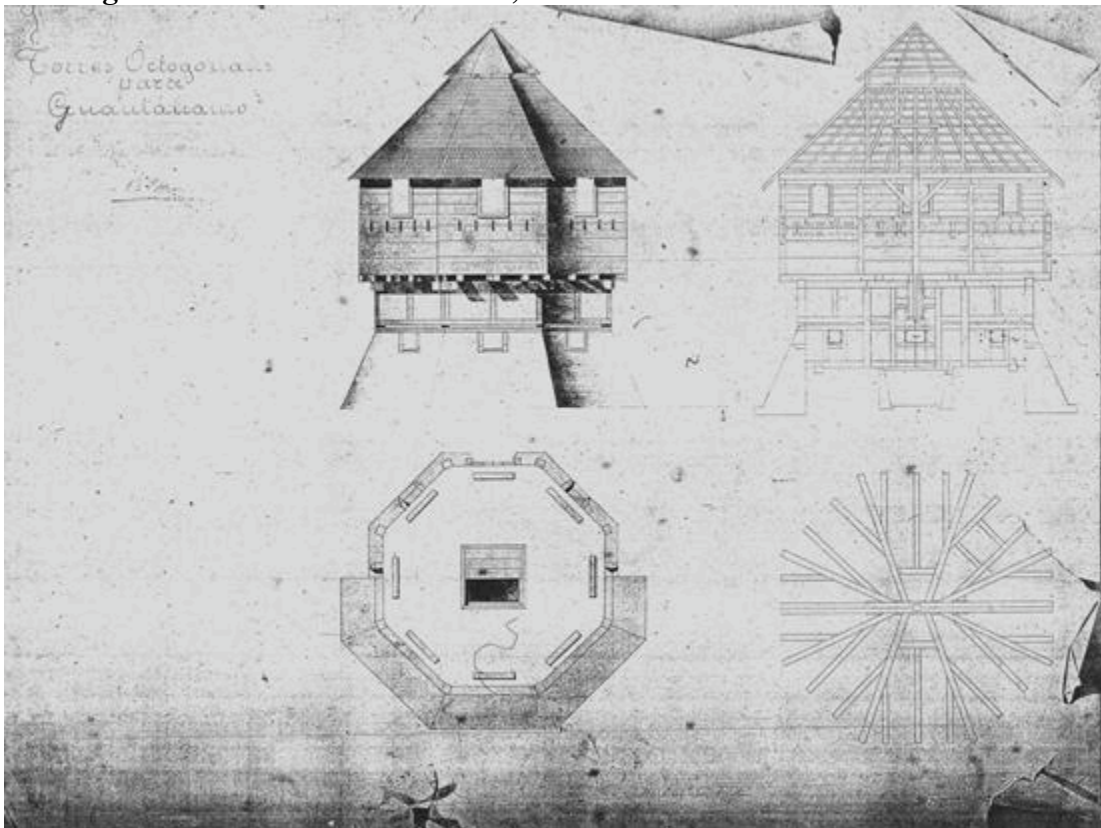
*Source: Author's collection, summer 2003.*



**6. Santa Catalina, District of Guantanamo, Cuba.—From a Painting by Captain P. Jackson.** *Source: Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization* V. XIII, No. 627, New York (Saturday, January 2, 1869), 13.



## 7. Octagonal towers for Guantánamo, 1874.



Source: AGM-M, 059-070. América Central/ Cuba no. 12727 Torres octogonales para Guantánamo. Año: 1874.

**8. Spanish Blockhouse from Cuba's Wars of Independence, Central Argeo Martínez (formerly Esperanza). *Source:* Author's collection, summer 2003.**



**9. Ruin of San Ildefonso, site of surrender of Guillermo Moncada and José Maceo, Little War, 1880, Guantánamo.**



*Source:* Author's collection, summer 2003.

10. Map of Isabel Sugar Mill, ca. 1880 (Brooks and Company). Neighboring estates appear around numbered cane fields and other lands. A blockhouse appears on western bank of river NW of batey. Source: Author's collection. ANC Mapoteca.



**11. Upper part of Guantánamo Bay, showing railway from Caimanera to Guantánamo and forts, 1897.** The railway line branches east to Jamaica along the northern edge of the map. Los Caños estate is visible on the northern shore of the *Bahía de Guantánamo*.



*Source: Ejército de Tierra, Servicio Geográfico del Ejército, Madrid. Atlas correspondiente a la memoria presentada por el capitán de EM D. Salvador Salinas. 1897. Croquis de los alrededores de Guantánamo. Scale: 1:50,000*

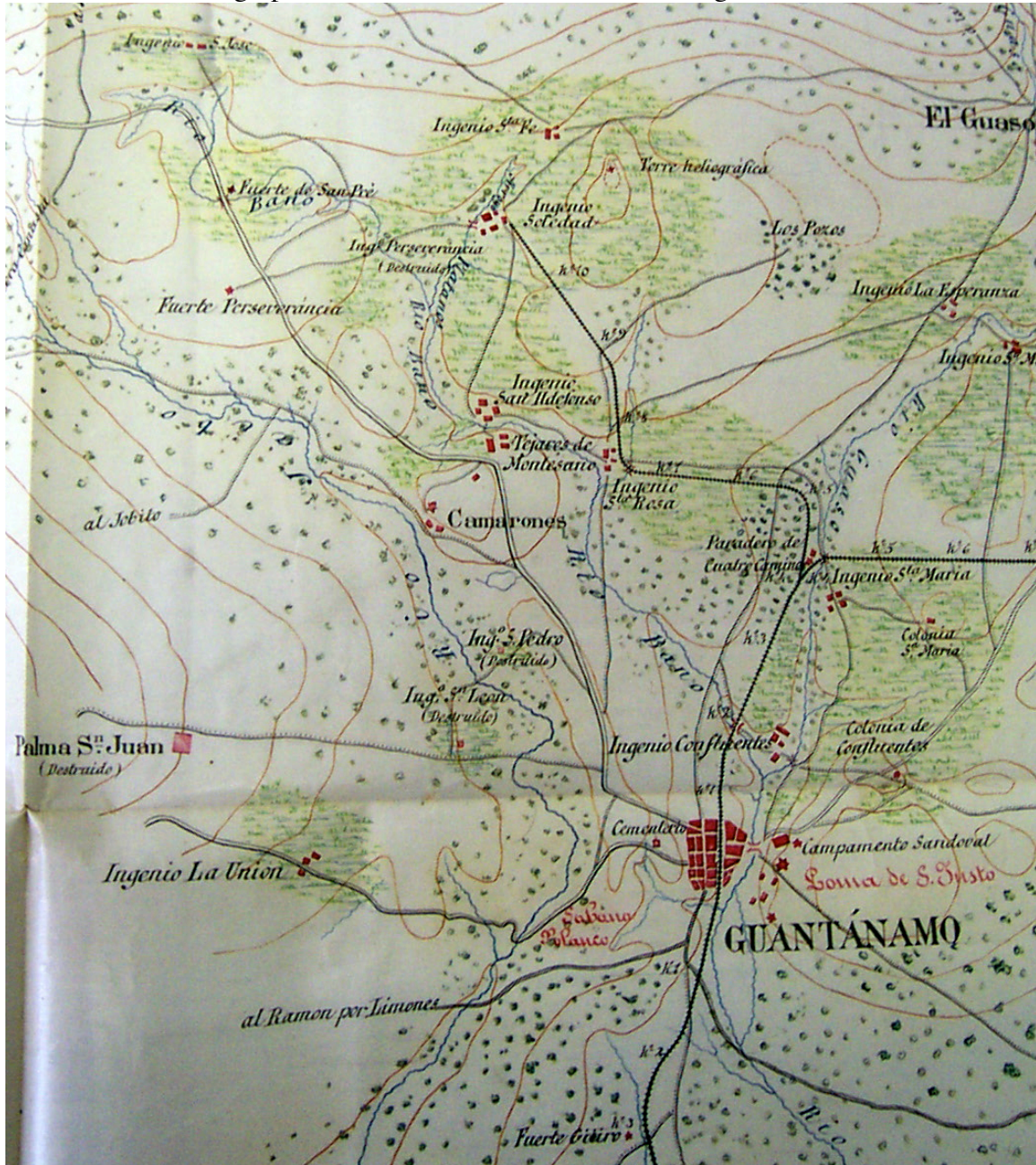
**12. Zone of Cafetales around Felicidad, Yateras, Guantánamo 1897.** Note the Cafetales Griñán, Diamante, Monte Alto, Santa Rita, Bella Vista with heliograph tower, Virginia, and the forts around Felicidad and at La Piedra.



Source: D. Salvador Salinas, *Croquis de los alrededores de Guantánamo* in *Atlas Correspondiente a la memoria presentada por el capitán de E.M. D. Salvador Salinas, 1897* in Ejército de Tierra, SGE, Madrid. Scale 1:50,000.



**13. Sugar Ingenios North of Guantánamo, 1897.** Moving north, then east along the railway, Confluente, Sta. María, Esperanza, Sta. Rosa, San Ildefonso, and Soledad may be seen. Note the heliograph tower NE of Soledad and forts along the main road.



Source: Ejército de Tierra, Servicio Geográfico del Ejército, Madrid. *Atlas correspondiente a la memoria presentada por el capitán de EM D. Salvador Salinas. 1897. Croquis de los alrededores de Guantánamo.* Scale: 1:50,000

**14. USS *Marblehead* in Guantánamo Bay, 1898.**

*Source: Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, available online <[www.history.navy.mil/danfs/m4/marblehead-ii.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/m4/marblehead-ii.htm)> (14 May 2005).*

This illustration shows the wartime gray paint scheme of the warship.

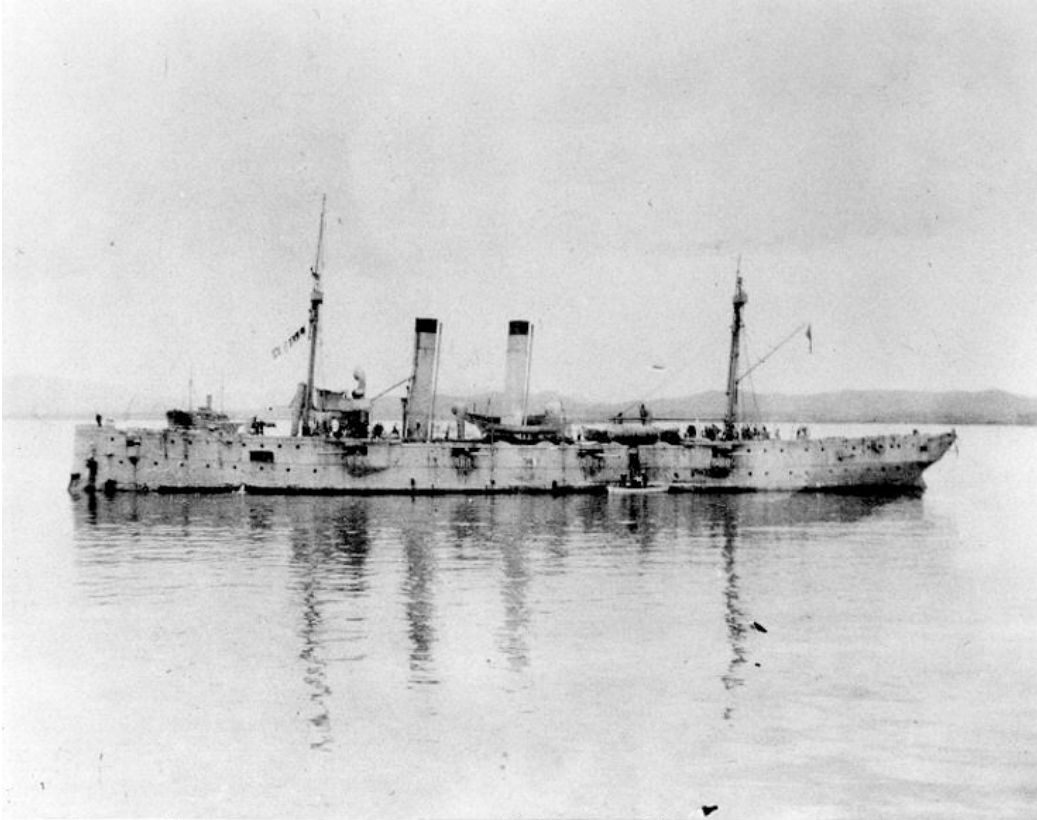


Photo # NH 47159 *Marblehead* in Guantánamo Bay

**15. Captain McCalla at the Time of the Spanish War.**

*Source:* Bowman Hendry McCalla, "Memoirs of a Naval Career" Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division.



**16. Cuban soldiers having lunch aboard *USS Suwanee*, 1898.**

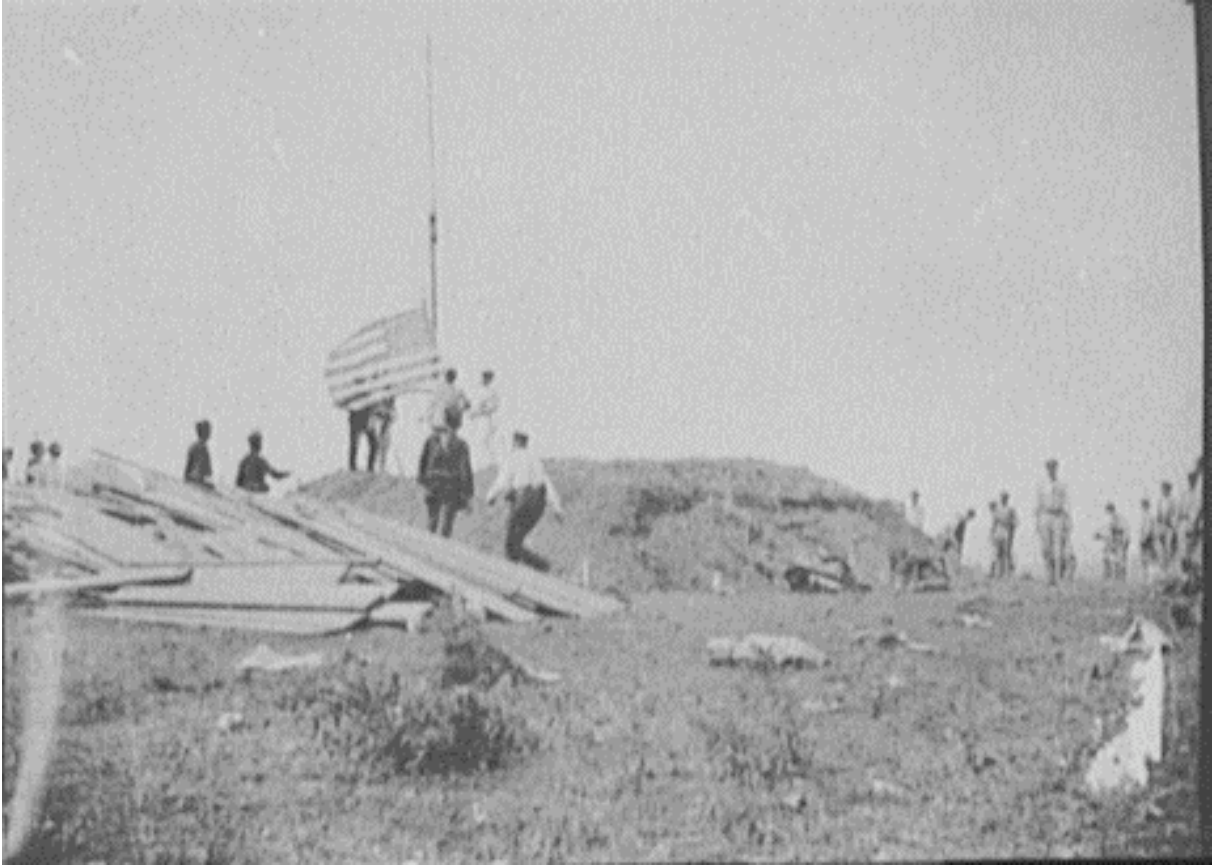
*Source:* Bowman Hendry McCalla, "Memoirs of a Naval Career" Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division.



**17. Hoisting the flag at Guantánamo, June 12, 1898.**

*Source:* Library of Congress Photographs, American Memory Collection: Touring Turn-of-the-Century America: Photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company, 1880-1920.

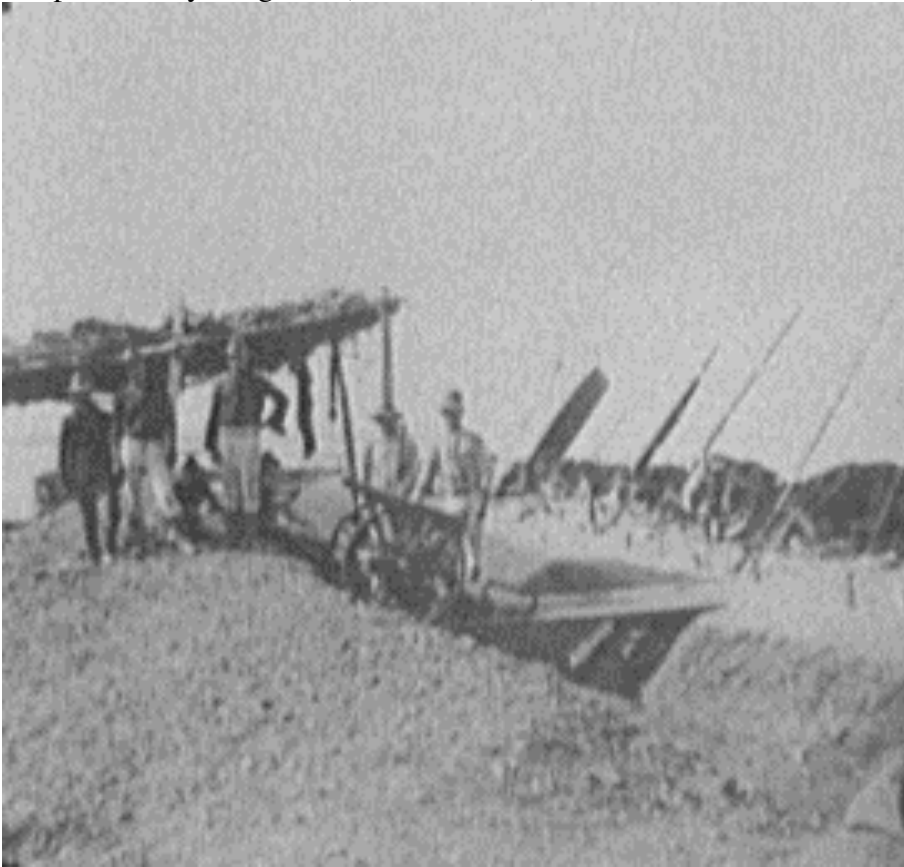
<http://memory.loc.gov/> (June 17, 2005).



**18. Marine encampment at Camp M'Calla [i.e. McCalla], Guantánamo, June 1898.**

*Source:* Library of Congress Photographs, American Memory Collection: Touring Turn-of-the-Century America: Photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company, 1880-1920.

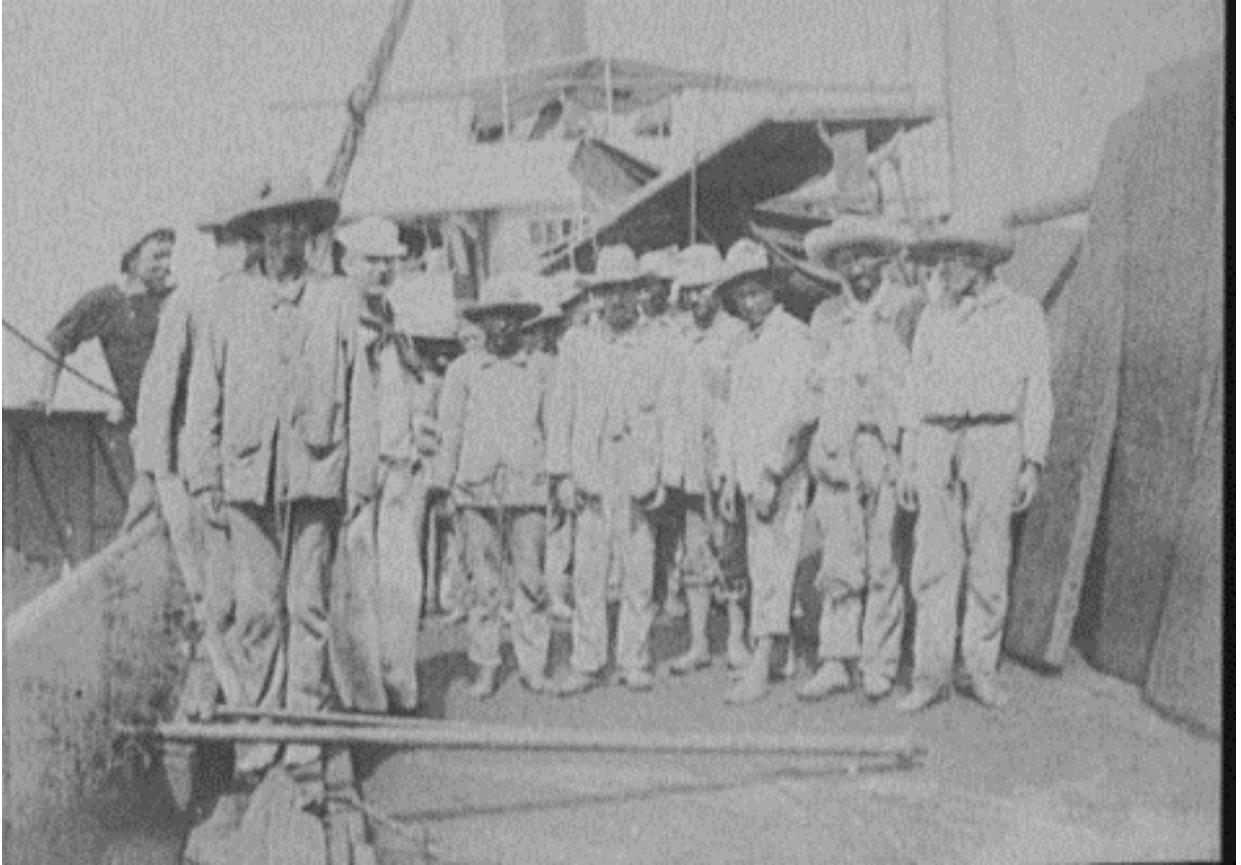
<http://memory.loc.gov/> (June 17, 2005).



**19. Spanish prisoners aboard collier *Abarenda* at Guantánamo, June 14, 1898.**

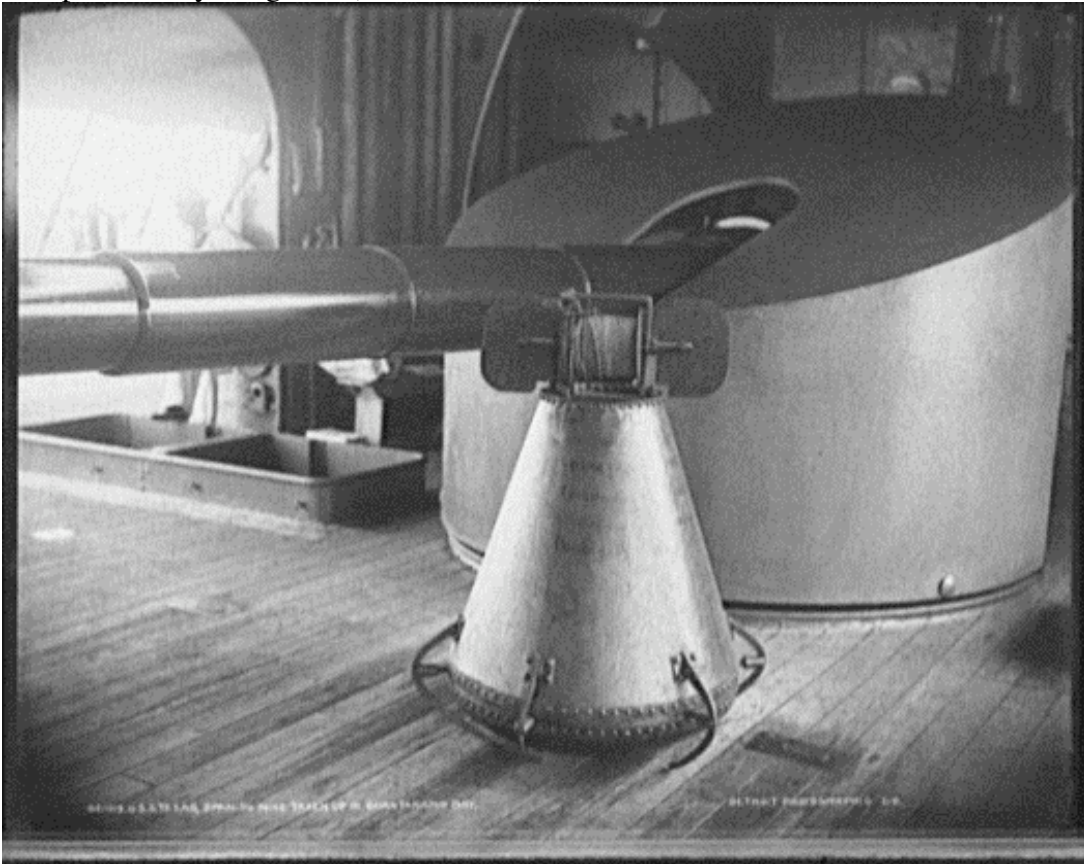
*Source:* Library of Congress Photographs, American Memory Collection: Touring Turn-of-the-Century America: Photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company, 1880-1920.

< <http://memory.loc.gov/> > (June 17, 2005).



**20. USS Texas, Spanish mine taken up in Guantánamo Bay.**

*Source:* Library of Congress Photographs, American Memory Collection: Touring Turn-of-the-Century America: Photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company, 1880-1920. < <http://memory.loc.gov/> > (June 17, 2005).





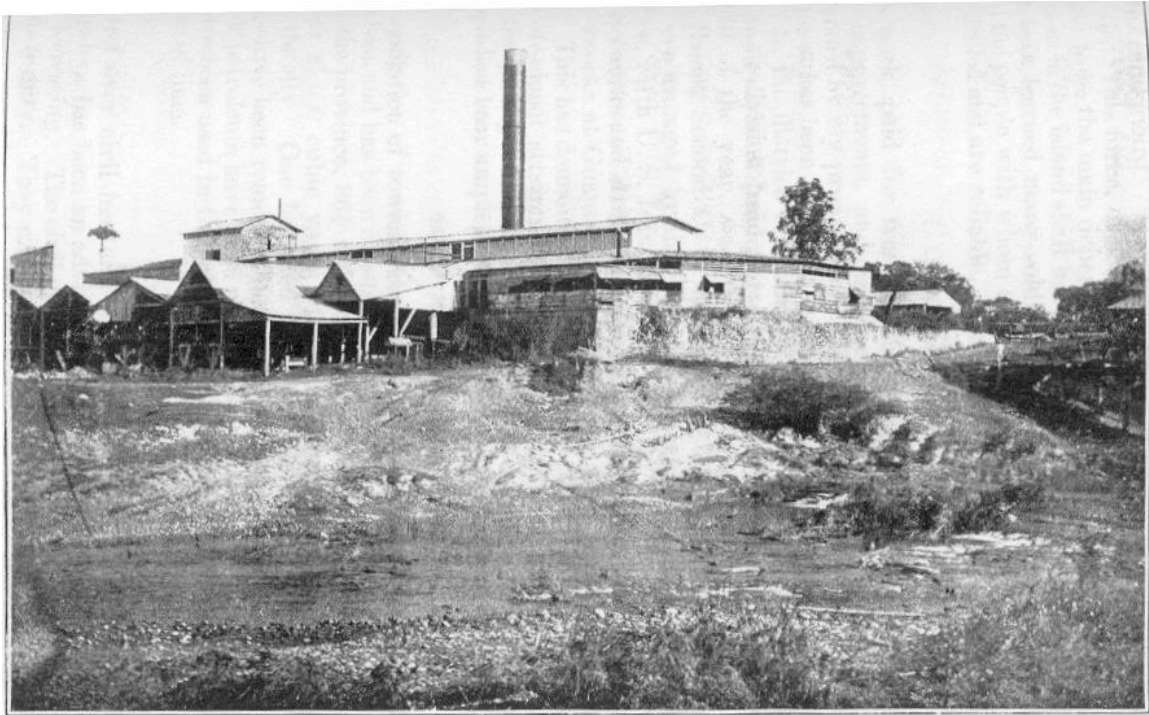
**21. Spanish Intrenchments [sic] on Plantation "Soledad," Guantanamo.**  
*Source: Harper's Weekly 11 June 1898, 564.*



SPANISH INTRENCHMENTS ON PLANTATION "SOLEDAD," GUANTANAMO.  
SPANISH STRONGHOLDS IN SOUTHEASTERN CUBA.—FROM RECENT PHOTOGRAPHS.

**22. Sugar Estate, "Confluente," Guantanamo, Cuba.**

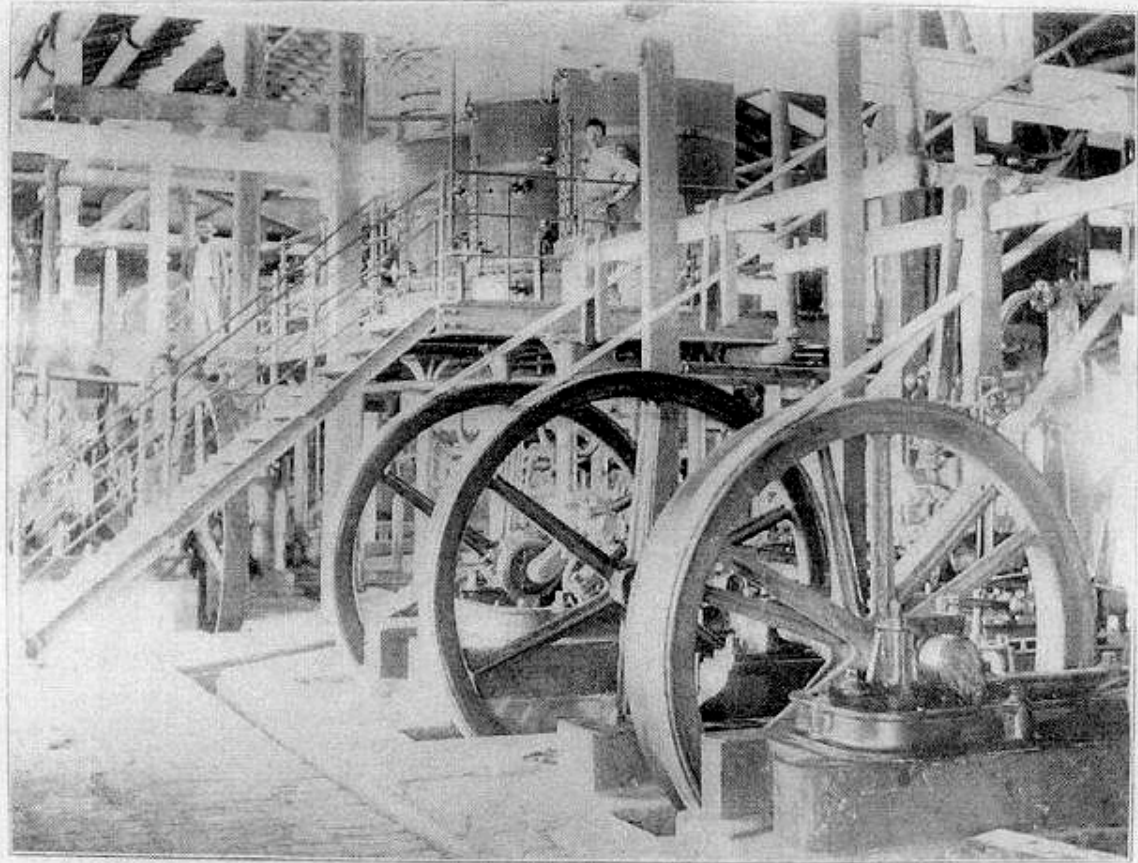
*Source: United States War Department. Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1900. Report of the Lieutenant-General Commanding the Army. 10 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900).*



SUGAR ESTATE, "CONFLUENTE," GUANTANAMO, CUBA.

**23. Boiler House at the Sugar Estate "Confluente," Guantanamo.**

*Source: United States War Department. Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1900. Report of the Lieutenant-General Commanding the Army. 10 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900).*



**BOILER HOUSE AT THE SUGAR ESTATE "CONFLUENTE," GUANTANAMO.**

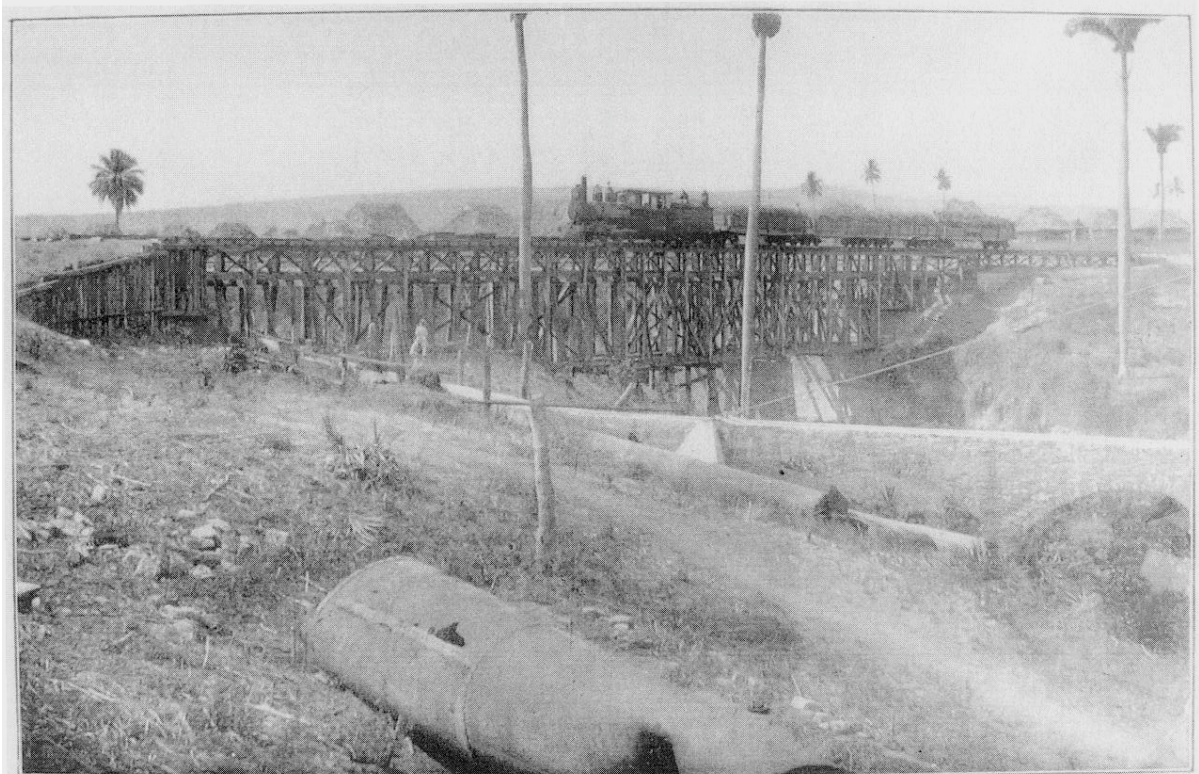
**24. Suburb of "Soledad" Sugar Estate, Guantanamo Cuba.**

Source: United States War Department. *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1900. Report of the Lieutenant-General Commanding the Army.* 10 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900).



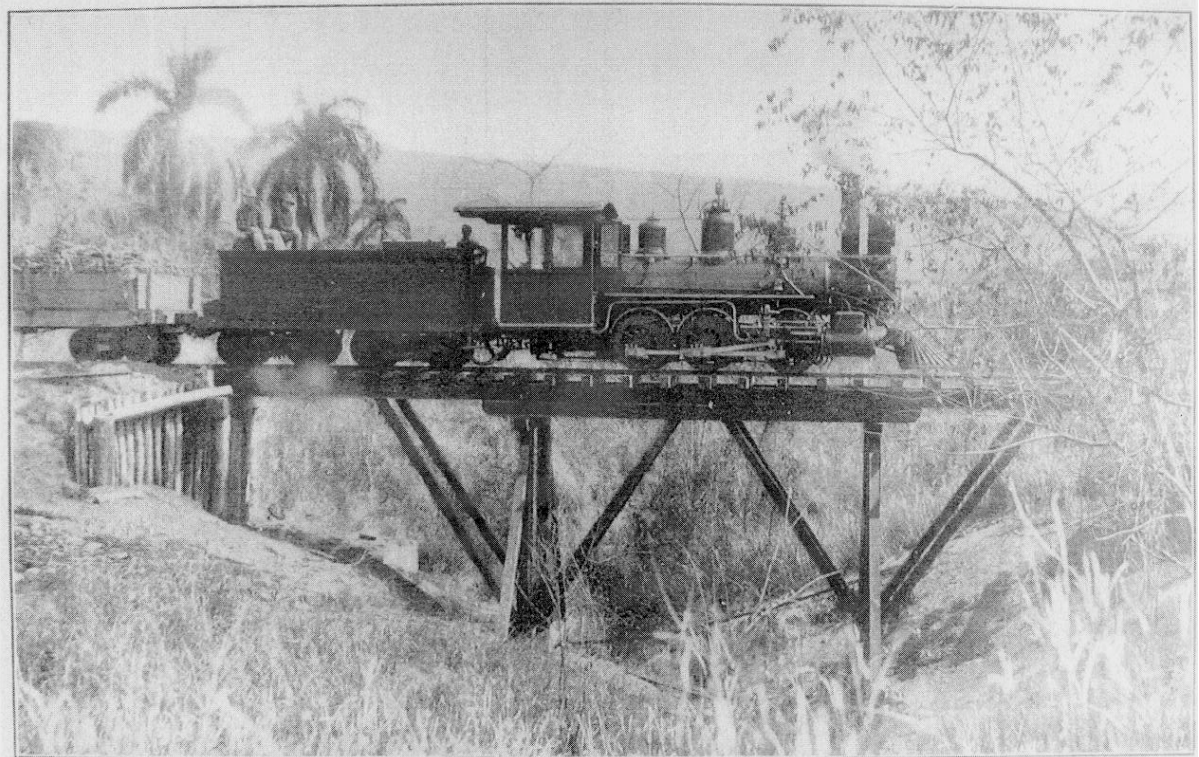
SUBURBS OF "SOLEDAD" SUGAR ESTATE, GUANTANAMO, CUBA.

**25. Bridge at Arroyo de los Platanos, Soledad Plantation Railroad, Guantanamo.**



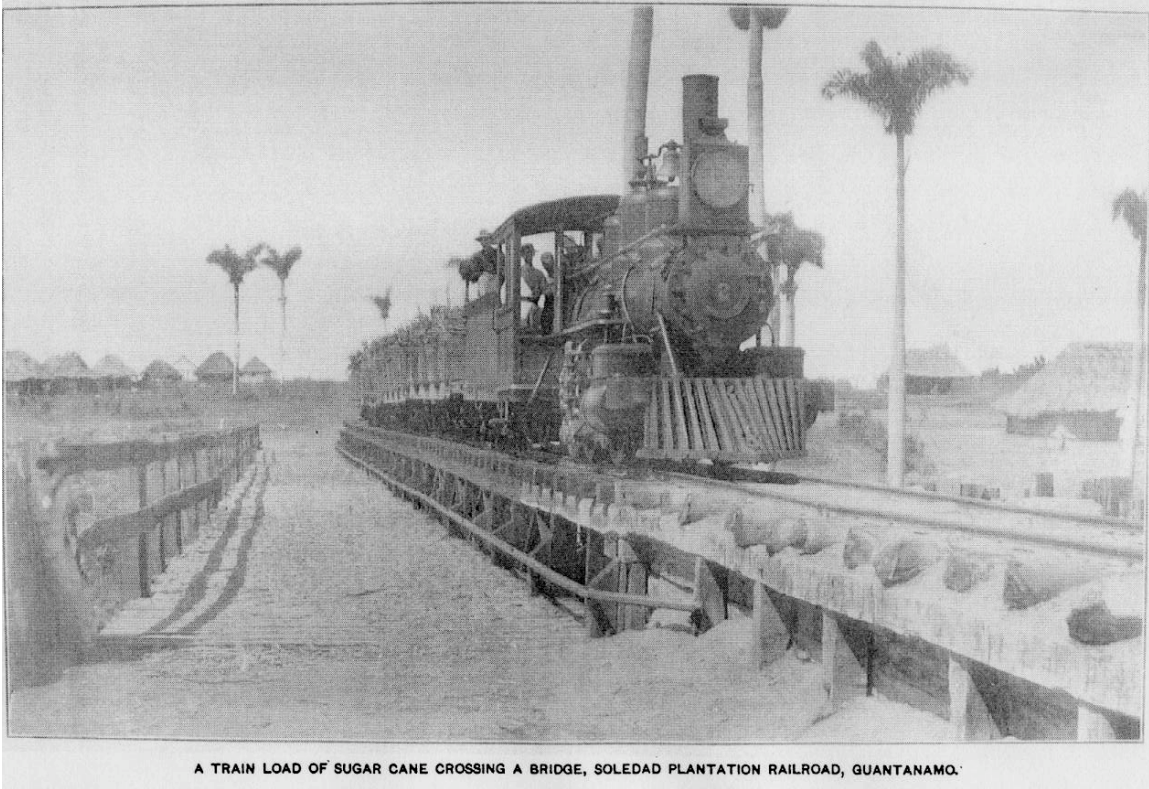
BRIDGE AT ARROYO DE LOS PLATANOS, SOLEDAD PLANTATION RAILROAD, GUANTANAMO.

**26. Scene on Soledad Plantation Railroad, Guantanamo.**



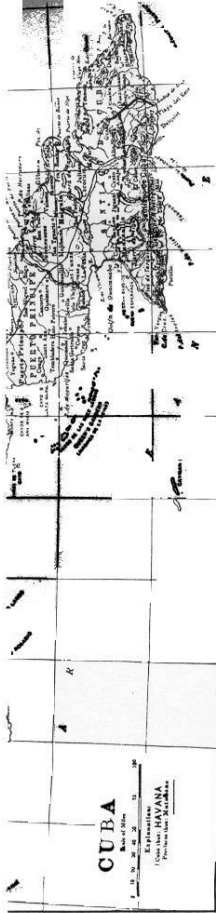
SCENE ON SOLEDAD PLANTATION RAILROAD, GUANTANAMO.

**27. Train Load of Sugar Cane Crossing a Bridge, Soledad Plantation Railroad, Guantanamo.** *Source:* United States War Department. *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1900. Report of the Lieutenant-General Commanding the Army.* 10 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900).



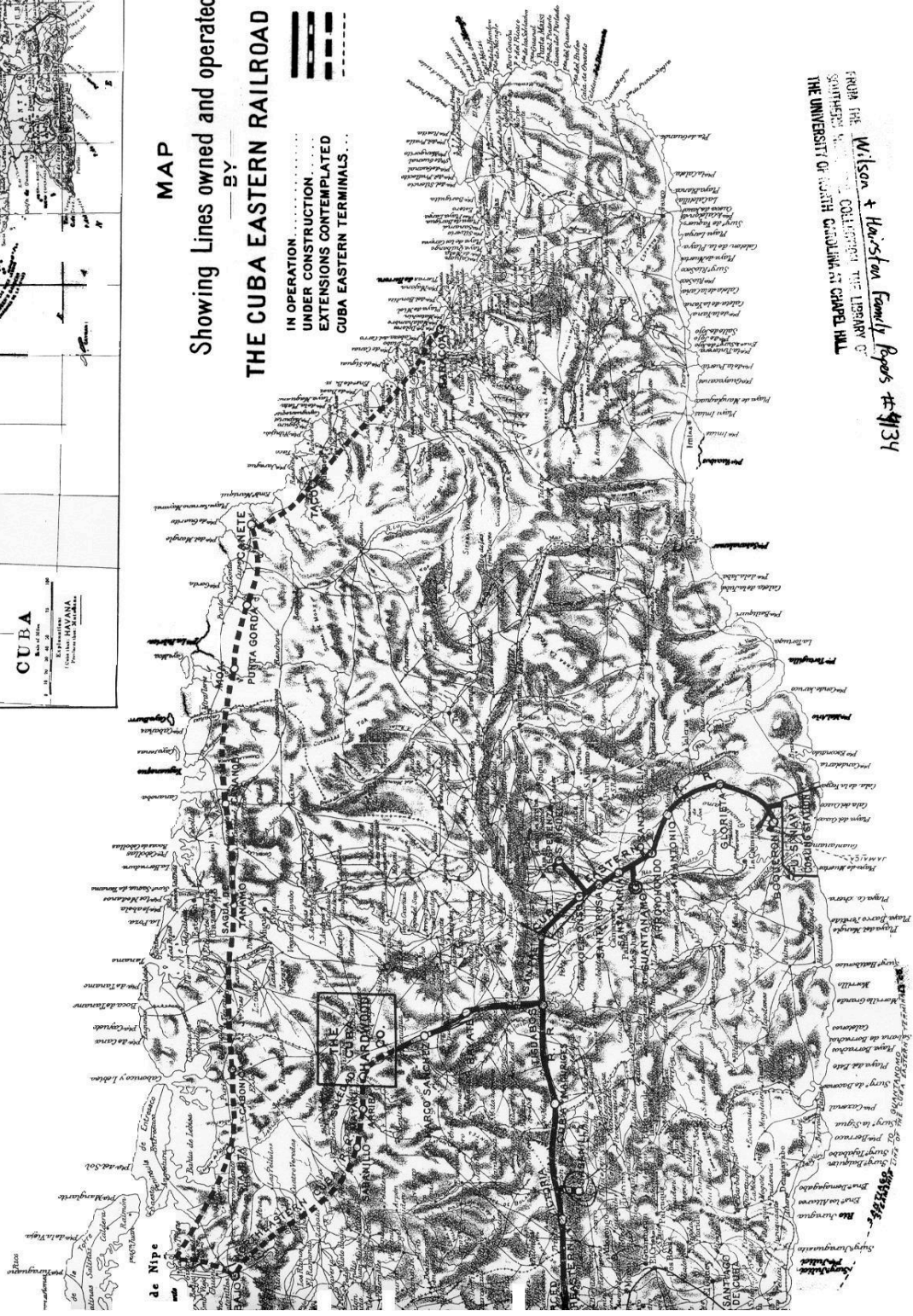
A TRAIN LOAD OF SUGAR CANE CROSSING A BRIDGE, SOLEDAD PLANTATION RAILROAD, GUANTANAMO.

**28. (Overleaf) Map Showing Lines owned and operated by The Cuba Eastern Railroad Co.** *Source:* University of North Carolina—Southern Historical Collection, Wilson and Hairston Family Papers (#4134).



MAP  
Showing Lines owned and operated  
BY  
THE CUBA EASTERN RAILROAD CO.

IN OPERATION .....  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION .....  
EXTENSIONS CONTEMPLATED .....  
CUBA EASTERN TERMINALS .....



FROM THE Wilson & Harrisson Family Papers #4334  
SOUTHERN RAILROAD COLLECTION THE LIBRARY OF  
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Audiencia de Santiago  
Bienes Embargados  
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Map Room



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